### Shifting Perspective

*by Boozombie, Serenechaos*

**Summary**

In a world where omegas are nothing more than slaves, Kurapika manages to hide his true gender. In York New, the Spiders happen upon Hisoka's plot and are determined to capture him and his accomplice.
Suspicions had and confirmed

When Machi had received the call from Hisoka, stating that he would like to have her present at Heaven’s Arena to probably reattach several limbs after his upcoming fight, the thread transmuter had mentally sighed. She didn’t want to go, Hisoka honestly gave her the creeps. But she couldn’t give a good reason why not.

There was also the point that if Hisoka really did lose an arm or leg, Chrollo might be irritated the next time he called the entire Troupe together.

Seeing the creepy clown willing have his arm taken off by his opponent had caused Machi not a little irritation and she made a mental note to upcharge the insane idiot for her services.

It was as she was holding his first arm, carefully aligning the limb so that she would connect the correct blood vessels, muscles, ligaments, and bones that she had felt that something wasn’t right. Being very aware of the body of her subjects whenever she treated injuries like this, especially their nen, the seamstress felt a small amount of nen that seemed out of place on Hisoka’s back.

At the time she dismissed it. Unlike most of the Troupe, Hisoka was a very public person. It was natural that he would cover up his tattoo with his texture surprise. But when she had been leaving, her suspicions rose when she had glanced back and saw that the tattoo was visible.

Suspicion continued to build as the months passed and when she delivered the message to be in York New for the auction, she honestly hoped he wouldn’t show.

Shalnark was playing with some of his gadgets, explaining them to anyone willing to listen. Machi had been listening to him because of their long standing comradery when he held up one particular device.

“This is a listening device, or a ‘bug’ in layman's terms,” the tech savvy beta explained with a bright smile. “You can plant it on a person or in a place to listen in on-”

Machi snagged the device and stared at it before her eyes shifted towards where Hisoka sat building yet another card castle. Her instincts kept telling her, rather forcefully at that, that something was wrong in regards to the clown.

Chrollo had been listening to Shalnark’s explanation as well and saw her shift.

“Machi?”

“It’s nothing,” Machi attempted to reassure as she handed the device back to Shalnark.

Chrollo considered Machi for a long moment before turning back to Shalnark. “I doubt you’ll need this for the mission tonight. What is the range?”

“I have it connected to the cellphone towers, so it should be good just about anywhere where there is reception.”

Chrollo nodded before turning his attention to Koltopi and waved the small figure over. He slipped the device into the small man’s hand. “Slip this somewhere on Hisoka’s person the moment you get the chance,” he ordered and Machi nodded. Koltopi was the best pickpocket in their group.

The diminutive Conjurer managed to fulfill the request less than an hour later when Franklin and
Phinks started a fight over a beer.

The radio that received the signals from the bug remained with Chrollo when Machi and Shalnark departed with their group for the auction that night.

Years later, Chrollo would admit that he only kept the radio on because he was somewhat curious about what Hisoka was up to. Normally he respected the privacy of the members of the Troupe, but normally Machi wasn’t suspicious of those members either. Now that he thought of it, Hisoka always kept a fair amount of space between himself and other members, especially Pakunoda when he had learned of her mind-reading abilities.

Turning up the volume a bit, Chrollo settled in to wait as he received a call that Uvo had been captured and that they were trying to track the Enhancer through the mafia’s own network.

“You move fast.”

Chrollo’s sharp ears caught the first bit of speech and his attention was immediately on the listening device he had stowed in his pocket. Both Pakunoda and Phinks glanced towards him as he dug the device from his pocket.

“No need for concern. I have no interest in fighting you now…” So, Hisoka was meeting one of his ‘fruits’ as he liked to call them. Chrollo was well aware that he was a target himself, but had been doing his best to discourage the behavior.

“I’m not here for idle chat!” a feminine sounding voice stated sharply, though the speaker was probably male due to using a masculine form of speech. “Tell me about your organization.”

Chrollo’s eyebrows rose in amusement. Uvo believed there might have been a ‘Judas’ among their numbers, but Chrollo had disagreed. Not even Hisoka would…

“Really? I love idle chat,” the clown replied and Chrollo felt a small confident smile pull at his lips. “There are 13 spiders, identifiable by their numbered spider tattoos. Members can change at a moments notice. An applicant defeating a standing member replaces them. If the Troupe loses a member for other reasons, the boss selects the replacement.”

Phinks stared at the radio and shrugged. Pakunoda looked bored. Chrollo relaxed, it wasn’t as if Hisoka had said anything that wasn’t as close to public knowledge as the Troupe got.

“The Troupe focuses primarily on stealing and killing. Sometimes they perform philanthropic work.”

The unfamiliar voice returned. “I already know all of that.”

Hisoka continued. “Two or three years ago, I replaced the man who was #4.”

“For what purpose?”

“So I could fight the boss.”

Chrollo stared at the radio and considered turning the device off. Thus far, the only thing he would call surprising about this conversation was that Hisoka didn’t seem to remember the exact time that he had joined the Phantom Troupe.

“The boss? Why would you want that?”
“Because he is strong…”

“You wished to test your strength?”

“Perhaps. But… It turns me on… Thinking about fighting the boss…” Hisoka’s breathing had changed, and Chrollo felt rather dirty in that moment. “But I’ve never had the chance. He never lowers his guard. At a minimum, two others always accompany him. And when a job ends, he vanishes. Without a trace. So I reached a conclusion that benefits us both.”

Chrollo leaned forward, faith in Hisoka now gone with that last sentence.

“Would you not agree that reaching out goals alone would be difficult?”

The unfamiliar person either knew Hisoka’s character or was very composed, evidenced by the fact that they were still relatively close to Hisoka and their voice was steady. “What are you trying to say?”

“I can tell you the Troupe members’ abilities. There are seven whose powers I already know.”

Chrollo shut off the radio. It didn’t matter what Hisoka told this unknown person or whether they agreed to team up with him or not, the Spider had been betrayed! Both Hisoka and his accomplice would need to be dealt with.

Lifting his phone, Chrollo called Shalnark and was pleasantly surprised when the other answered immediately.

“Danchou?”

“Hisoka has betrayed us,” Chrollo stated plainly into the phone. “We will attempt to deal with him when he returns to base.”

“Uvo isn’t willing to return right now,” the techno geek replied. “He’s obsessed with finding the chain-user who captured him.”

“Then make sure he doesn’t go anywhere alone,” Chrollo ordered.

“Yes sir!”

Shalnark had followed Uvogin just as danchou requested, remaining out of view each time that Uvo had entered a hotel to seek out the chain-user and interrogate the family members present when he wasn’t present.

It took until the following evening to find the right hotel, and Shalnark could admit that he was quite surprised. Rather than being an enforcer for the mafia community or someone in the running to become a Shadow Beast, it seemed the chain-user was actually a bodyguard for the daughter of one of the bosses. A daughter who according to some of the men that had been interrogated collected body parts and told fortunes that even the Dons paid attention to.

It seemed that although they had indeed had a traitor, that there was the distinct possibility that Hisoka hadn’t betrayed them to the mafia. Now they still needed to find the person that Hisoka had betrayed them to and neutralize that particular pawn.

The chain-user had been more than willing to fight Uvo again and the pair had agreed upon a place
to meet for their fight outside of the city.

“You sure he’ll show up?” Shalnark asked as he and Uvo settled in their car, the Enhancer ready to get moving.

“Definitely. That beta’s got fire in his eyes!” the alpha replied as he sat back and opened yet another can of beer. “Been drinking like ya said, when’ll those leeches start coming out?”

“Eggs. They should be eggs and not leeches and as I said before, when your urine goes from dark to clear again then you should be fine.”

“Heh. Well it hasn’t been dark yet.”

“There keep drinking.” The Manipulator turned his attention back to the road for a moment then his phone began to go off and he tossed it to Uvo.

“Yeah?” The Enhancer asked as he answered the phone. “Just tracked the bastard down and are moving to have our battle. Hisoka come back? Alright… Don’t see why but I’ll tell him. And I was right that we had a Judas!”

Uvogin ended the call and dropped the phone into the center console where Shalnark retrieved it. “Chrollo said Hisoka came back to base and they’re holding off on attacking him for now. Want us there to help restrain him so Paku can find out who he told.”

Shalnark shrugged in response. “Considering that Hisoka is probably the second best fighter and unpredictable, danchou probably wants to reduce possible casualties and has a plan.”

Uvo offered a slight laugh. “Least you recognize he’s only the second best fighter, but Phinks would probably throw a fit!”

Shalnark glanced at Uvo and shook his head. “Danchou might the only one of us who could fight Hisoka one-on-one without dying. Hisoka’s tricks would probably allow him to surprise and kill you, and that’s likely true for everyone else.”

“So why’s Chrollo delaying?”

“Probably to make sure that we all get out immediately if Hisoka somehow manages to escape. We’d need to change bases and probably leave York New fast.”

Uvo sat back with a grouchy expression. Running instead of fighting never sat well with him.

When the pair arrived at their destination, Shalnark was honestly surprised when he saw the blonde chain-user was already there. He stood in the center of the rock formation and seemed to be praying. This caused the Manipulator to laugh, prayer wouldn’t get him any mercy from Uvo.

The large alpha stepped out of the car as Shalnark settled in for a short wait and headed towards an alcove, his intentions obvious. The chain-user didn’t bother him and Shalnark glanced at his phone, wondering if he should call Chrollo back to see if he needed to help with any planning or bring some supplies. He decided against it and brought up a game instead, looking up in time to see Uvo and the chain-user begin their fight.

Uvo’s fist slammed into the ground, raising debris and shaking the ground. The chain-user leaped free of the dust cloud and retaliated with a chain. The chain followed Uvo’s movements gracefully and rapidly.
Shalnark’s eyebrows rose a bit as he spied the length of the chain before turning his eyes back on the wielder. There was no way he could carry around a chain of that length without it being cumbersome! So this guy was a Conjurer.

Uvo landed a serious blow then, one that should have smashed the bones in his opponent’s arm. But the boy was fine! Shalnark felt his brows knit together as he watched. There was no way that he could have blocked a full power punch from an Enhancer if he was a Conjurer! So how? Was he not actually a Conjurer?

The counter-attack of the chain-user was massive and Shalnark activated Gyo on reflex. It didn’t matter if a fighter was a Conjurer or Manipulator, if they attacked without their skill or weapon then there was an alternative motive! The chain was hidden with In!

Shal’s phone beeped again and he glanced at the text message. It was from danchou, asking them to get back immediately!

The situation was bad no matter how one looked at it and Shalnark decided he needed to act or he’d be returning without Uvo.

Starting the car engine, the blonde put the car into drive and sent the car into the crater area, causing the chain-user to jump back before he could entangle Uvo with that chain of his.

“Chrollo needs us, now!” Shalnark yelled at Uvo’s surprised face.

The Enhancer looked ready to argue then stopped and jumped into the car as Shal turned around and roared back to the city. Every speed limit was ignored in favor of the gas pedal and the one police car that attempted to follow them peeled away when they approached the deserted side of town.

When the pair arrived at the base, Uvo rushed out then paused by the door of the base as Shalnark got out of the car and ran to join him.

Hisoka had realized the peril he was in and had not waited for the rest of the Troupe to get organized after finding the bug. The clown had gone on the attack, determined to get away and had started by taking off one of Feitan’s legs and Franklin’s arms in one attack. He had ignored Shizuku and Bonolenov, broken Paku’s arm, and tried to decapitate Phinks. He was unsuccessful on the last part due to Chrollo’s quick action, summoning his book and teleporting Phinks away from the deranged clown.

Machi had sprung into action immediately and reconnected Feitan’s leg before Hisoka could mount another attack and the torturer had guarded her as she reconnected Franklin’s arms while Nobunaga attempted to engage Hisoka alongside Phinks. The pair didn’t usually work together and it showed since neither were as capable of covering the other.

The pair were still formidable though and especially so when Chrollo had joined the battle in a support role, teleporting one or the other back if Hisoka managed to get around their guard.

It ended when Franklin opened fire and Hisoka decided to get out, using Bungee Gum to propel himself out of a broken window so he could take off. With his leg still newly sewn on, Feitan couldn’t pursue the traitor.

Gon glanced around the plaza he had stationed himself at. The reward being offered for the Spiders was too generous to pass up, especially if he wanted to try to buy Greed Island. If they
could catch all seven of the people posted then the twelve- No, fourteen billion jenny, should help them purchase the game.

“Still nothing?” Gon asked Killua over his phone.

Killua sounded bored. “Haven’t even seen a real spider, much less one of those people.”

“Maybe we need to change tactics-GAH!”

“Gon?!” Killua’s voice demanded over the phone but Gon was focused on the figure that stood in front of him. Hisoka was staring down at him, a few cuts on his clothes and arms.

“Hello Gon, by any chance have you been in contact with Kurapika?” Hisoka asked silkily.

“No, he hasn’t called.”

“Too bad. Would you pass a message along for me? You see I seem to have lost my phone when I left the Phantom Troupe.”

“The Phantom Troupe?!” Over the phone, Killua demanded to know what was going on.

“Yes, they became suspicious of me recently and managed to place a bug right before I met with Kurapika. Naturally, since I shared sensitive information with him, they’ll be trying to find him soon as well.”

“Killua! I’m at Long Station! Get here fast!” Gon ordered before hanging up his phone then looking up Kurapika’s number on his contact list. Pressing the call button, the Enhancer tapped his foot impatiently as the phone began to ring. “Come on, pick up already!”

The phone rang and rang before finally going to voicemail.

“Kurapika, it’s Gon! Hisoka says the Phantom Troupe found out about the two of you and are looking for you! Call me back!”

Ending the call, Gon stared at the device, looking like he wanted nothing more than to throw it.

“Damn it…” Gon muttered before looking around helplessly. He didn’t know where Kurapika was and he couldn’t leave until Killua arrived. His eyes caught on Hisoka who had moved to a coffee shop and was standing in front of the cashier.

“I’ll have a venti hot chocolate with whipped cream, hazelnut syrup, and a caramel drizzle!” The man’s yellow eyes turned to Gon and offered a strange, wide smile. “Want anything?”

“No.”

“Make that two hot chocolates!”

Gon groaned as Hisoka pulled out the money to pay then moved down the counter to wait for the drinks.

“Why are you doing this?” the boy finally demanded. “The Phantom Troupe could be on their way here and you’re ordering hot chocolate?!”

“Of course I am, I need some sugar and caffeine to stay up. As for the Troupe, they won’t come after me straight away, they’ll want to have a plan and corner me in a particular place. Their first move will be to change their location after treating their injuries and then looking for Kurapika.”
“You know where their base is?”

“And where they will likely move,” Hisoka admitted as he accepted the drinks from the barista then pretty much shoved one of the cups into Gon’s hand.

“Tell me!” Gon demanded as he stared at the clown, completely unaware of the creepy aura that Hisoka began to exude, causing other patrons of the shop to shift uncomfortably.

“Such eyes and ferocity!” Hisoka moaned as he thrust his hips out slightly and ran a hand through his hair. “I love it Go~n!”

“SOMEONE CALL THE POLICE!” a random person screamed as a female beta tried to grab Gon’s arm.

“Little boy, I know you’re an alpha but you need to get away from that man,” the beta informed him as she attempted to drag Gon away.

“But I need to talk to him!” Gon argued as he shook off the woman’s hand. “Where are they?!”

“Hmm…” Hisoka’s eyes narrowed and then Killua arrived and he seemed to grow more excited as the shop went nuts.

“An omega! Who does it belong to?!”

“No... such a pretty little omega near that thing!”

“It’s ok, it seems to belong to the little alpha boy!”

“The Troupe sticks to the deserted areas around town,” Hisoka stated as he grabbed a sheet of paper and a pen from the counter, people calming a bit as the pedophile turned his attention Gon.

Killua noticed the drink in Gon’s hand then and grabbed it as Hisoka began to scribble on the paper. “Did he give you this?”

“Yeah, it’s hot chocol- Killua!” Gon yelled as the former assassin tossed the drink into the trash.

The murmurs from the patrons that had been worried for Gon started immediately. “Rude little thing, isn’t it?” and “Can’t believe its alpha lets it do that,” echoed through the shop.

“This map will take you to the headquarters, you should be able to observe what the Troupe is doing if they haven’t left yet,” Hisoka stated as he turned back to the pair and offered the paper he had drawn on.

Killua snatched it automatically, earning more whispers about his inappropriate behavior. “Let’s go, Gon.”

“Acting like it has authority! It needs to be retrained!” the beta who had tried to drag Gon from Hisoka snarled as Killua walked past her.

“What’s going on?” Killua demanded as soon as they were out of the shop.

“Hisoka said that the Phantom Troupe found out that he met with Kurapika and now they’re looking for him! They’re about to change bases so he gave us the map to their current base so we could watch them!”

Killua glanced at the map then and sighed. “Is Kurapika answering his phone?”
“No! If they’re after him then we can’t lose what little help we can offer!” Gon argued as he snatched the map. “We need to watch them and… Do you understand this Killua?”

“Yeah,” the silver haired omega admitted as he took the map back. “Guess we don’t have time for Kurapika to catch up. You call him and tell him we’re going to do surveillance. But promise me Gon, if they notice us or I say we need to leave, then we get out immediately. No questions asked.”

Gon stared at the map then nodded. “Okay.”
It didn’t take long for the troupe to find the clown’s abandoned phone on the warehouse’s dingy floor, it took even less time for Shalnark to delve into the full insanity of the alpha Hisoka.

Shalnark had been sure the last person the clown would have texted would be his accomplice, The plan was to trick the boy into an ambush, but Hisoka and Illumi Zoldyck had apparently flirted through the night after his traitorous moment.

“Illumi shouldn’t send Hisoka pictures of his little brother,” Shalnark commented lightly as he casually read the conversation and took in the small, cute omega boy. “Doesn’t he understand that children aren’t safe around him? Not like I care, just saying.”

Chrollo looked over at the technologically savvy beta with a brief look of agitation. The beta immediately got back to searching for the accomplice’s number. It only took Shalnark a few moments before he was holding up the number he was sure belonged to their next target.

“Ta-da!” he grinned as he tilted his head on the palm of his hand while holding out the phone to his boss. Chrollo took the offered phone with a tug at his lips.

“Good job Shalnark.”

“Someone’s here,” Koltopi suddenly spoke up from his spot on the other side of the room.

The troupe members scattered around the hideout jumped to attention.

Chrollo had ordered Koltopi to stay focused on the En copies of the hideout, even multiply the number of them in order to stay on the alert considering the Mafia was still after them on top of their Hisoka issue.

“Machi, Phinks, Pakunoda, Nobunaga, go!” Chrollo barked, not willing to let anyone get the jump on them while some of his troupe were still healing. Chrollo trusted them despite the disgruntled look Uvogin sent him at not being one of the chosen to go on the attack.
“Calm down, we need catch, not cause earthquake!” Feitan glared irritably, his legs still not feeling quite right.

The members glared at each other before settling back to wait for the dispatched members to come back with whatever intruder was stupid enough to approach the troupe on such a bad day.

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“Gon remember don’t get too close,” Killua hissed over Gon’s phone, laid on the window seal of the building he chose for his stake out spot.

Gon had left a second message on Kurapika’s phone to let him know what they were up to but still was worried about the beta and why he wasn’t answering his phone.

“Got it Kil,” Gon confirmed quietly to the worried omega. Gon couldn’t help the small smile at the concern in Killua’s voice. Gon lifted a pair of binoculars to his face and looked over the motionless building.

“We could hear them if we got clos-“

“No way in hell,” Killua snapped over the receiver, both of them taking their eyes off the building for only a second to glare at their phones.

“Fine,” Gon grumbled angrily before looking back to the building. Gon’s eyes widened when his eyes caught sight of the pink haired woman in front of the building staring right at him.

“Run!” Gon’s legs kicked off the wall towards the exit only to stop short when he noticed the blonde blocking the doorway.

“Don’t do anything rash if you don’t want to lose a limb.” Gon shifted to keep both women in his line of sight. Gon’s heart was beating faster than a wild hummingbird and the sounds of fighting on the other end of the phone didn’t make the situation better.
“... An omega...” A deep voice awed over the phone before the line went dead. Gon tensed immediately, his instincts screaming at him to get to Killua as quickly as possible no matter how strong he knew his friend was.

Gon’s feet shifted in preparation, but the pink haired beta was suddenly behind him holding his shoulders as the blonde answered a call. A moment of tense silence passed that to Gon felt like a thousand years of agony.

“Little alpha, your omega has surrendered.” The tension in Gon’s shoulders released and he knew he had no way of escape even if he could leave Killua behind.

The pink haired women tied something around his wrists that felt like thread. Gon stayed silent as they lead him out of the room, his mind occupied with the well being of Killua.

Chrollo looked up as his troupe led in two young boys. He raised his brow at the unexpected captives, both were small and obviously hadn’t yet reached puberty, not to mention one was an omega.

Chrollo looked over the young omega and appraised him silently, the boy might go for a lot on the omega market.

“Hey danchou! You think we can get anything out of it?” Nobunaga yelled to his boss, his hand tightening on the omega’s neck.

Chrollo didn’t miss the way the small alpha growled or the way his eyes kept glancing to the marks on the omega’s ankles. Chrollo took that in mind, the omega must have put up a fight. Considering he’d never had an interaction with an omega before, he didn’t know if that raised or lowered the boy’s asking price.

“He’s rather young,” Chrollo hummed, factoring in the amount of research he’d have to do in order to best sell the captive.

“It might be a bad idea to sell that omega,” Shalnark spoke up, recognition in his eyes as his eyes roamed over the small thing.
“And why’s that?”

“Yeah, you’re just jealous that I’m the one that caught him!”

Phinks and Nobunaga devolved into an argument about who actually did the catching.

Chrollo rolled his eyes lightly at the two and turned to Shalnark for an explanation. The beta looked up at him before messing with the clown’s phone then tossing it at him.

“He’s a Zoldyck.” The room froze. Chrollo looked down at the picture on the phone, he look at the white haired boy, this time in a pixelated form. The picture looked like he didn’t know he was being photographed, and the caption read ‘my baby brother is too cute <3 <3’.

The white haired boy’s face had drained of color, his ivory skin a sickly grey color as the members of the troupe took in the boy with the new information in mind.

“We might be able to get more for that.”

“Isn’t just a picture of it worth a lot?”

“Is it worth the Zoldycks having a grudge on us though?”

“Enough,” Chrollo cut into the conversation his eyes on the small alpha, every word had made the small alpha tense further. He looked ready to go on the attack whether or not he had a hair’s breadth of a chance of them not killing him. “We can discuss this after we deal with Hisoka’s accomplice.” Chrollo didn’t miss how both boys tensed impossibly more.

“Danchou’s right.”

“The omega is the fun part though!”
“Let’s just question them so we can be fine with it.”

Chrollo held up his hand and his spiders silenced obediently. Chrollo gestured to Pakunoda to take the lead and she walked around to stare them down hauntingly.

“Answer honestly because you don’t have a choice anyway,” she told them coldly and both boys gulped, shivers running down their backs. “Why were you spying on us?”

The black and green haired alpha glanced to the shaking omega as he cleared his throat before answering in a strong voice. “The mafia has a bounty on you, we wanted that reward money.”

“He isn’t lying but he’s not telling the whole truth,” Pakunoda narrowed her eyes and laid a hand on his shoulder.

“Tell me, do you know a clown named Hisoka?”

The boy looked determined, his amber eyes shining with an unwavering bravery. The omega next to him was just as fascinating Chrollo mused silently. It was pretty sure, and there was no doubt that once he grew up he’d be a wonder to marvel at, but that wasn’t what made him so interesting.

Chrollo had never cared much for the omega trade but has heard a lot about omegas in his time, everyone knew omegas were submissive by nature and lived to please. Everyone knew they are wired to give pleasure, clean, and raise young.

Seeing as this was the troupe’s first time coming into contact with the rarity, nobody was that concerned with the omega’s withering glare and unsubmissive posture, most just assuming the omega was simply stressed at the thought of having to get a new alpha after they got rid of its current alpha.

After a few moments, Pakunoda stepped away from the alpha, having collected the memories needed she began to load her gun.

The bullet slammed into Chrollo’s skull with the same slight sting it always caused. His brain rattled and eyes slid shut, inwardly chuckling at the gaping faces of their captives from the display, memories that weren’t his began to play in his mind.
For the first time all night, Chrollo could relax because he now had all the information to begin forming a plan.

The first voice mail that rolled in as Kurapika began to get back his cell service was a surprise, Kurapika had forgotten his friends were somewhere in the city waiting for him. He had been so engrossed in trying to figure out what the hell he was doing with his life he’d forgotten once again about the promise to meet up with his friends.

Kurapika had left the empty desert behind with a burning disappointment and self doubt at his failure to kill his first spider, which only served to rouse the soul eating guilt at the thought of killing anyone, no matter how many sins they had committed.

Two more voicemails popped up and pulled Kurapika from his inner moral crisis. He looked at the names to see he had missed two calls from Gon and one from Leorio. Taking a moment to sigh in resignation, he played Leorio’s first.

“KURAPIKA!” He winced at the sound of Leorio’s angry shout into the receiver, it sounded like the man was running a marathon. “Where are you? We’ve been calling non-stop and I’m beginning to worry! Even the boys have disappeared!” Kurapika raised a delicate brow at the phone. It was normal for the boys to ditch Leorio when he held them back, why does he sound so freaked out?

Shaking his head he moved to the first voicemail from Gon, anticipating the boy would say he’d ditched Leorio to search for him.

Kurapika's eyes widened when the message played, his ears only able to fully comprehend a few words in the short message.

“Hisoka”

“Phantom troupe”
‘Damn Hisoka,’ Kurapika thought, he really didn’t want to involve his friend in this mess. Kurapika replayed the message a few times making sure he didn’t miss even one detail before turning to the last voicemail.

Dread was filling his stomach. Gon and Killua had a habit of jumping the gun and he hoped with everything in him that the two were laying low and waiting for him. He played the last message.

“Kurapika, we’ve got a map to where the spiders are.” No... “Killua and I are gonna do some reconnaissance so call us when you can!”

Kurapika’s entire being froze. He gripped the contact case he had in his hands with enough pressure he thought he’d break it. He was thankful he had replaced his old contacts as he listened to the messages or else he would have looked like a signal fire with the way his eyes flared in the desert night sky.

Kurapika’s breathing began to grow rapid, his chest heaving up and down as he panicked. The spiders could have killed his friends by now and he’d never know!

Gon, Killua, and Leorio were the only people Kurapika had to truly care about at the moment, they had become his pack. The boys were almost like the pups he didn’t believe he’d ever get to have. He can’t lose them!

The ring from his phone managed to drag him out of his slight panic attack and he almost sighed in relief when he looked to see it was a text from Gon.

His face blank, holding the hope that they were safe back until he knew for sure, Kurapika looked at the text.

Kurapika’s eyes widened impossibility further, his eyes stinging from the bright red they must be behind the black contacts.

‘Would you like to save them?’
The phone screen illuminated the horrific words, Kurapika didn’t have to think on those words for long. Of course he wanted to save them, they were his pack, not even the damn spider head himself could stop him.

The phone was ringing before he even realized he was calling Gon’s number.

“You took longer than expected,” a smooth voice answered on the third ring. Kurapika’s blood turned to slush in his veins as the voice washed over him.

“Where are they?!” He barked back into the phone.

“Calm down now or your little alpha might not survive the night,” the deep voice taunted on the other side.

Kurapika ground his teeth, his vision swimming as the strain of his eyes hit his head like a sledgehammer.

“Now you are going to listen to me very carefully,” the soothing voice started and Kurapika bit his tongue on the sharp retort he wanted to spit out, concern for Gon and Killua winning out over his hatred. “You will come to the address I’ve sent you by sunrise to die or we will take out your punishment on this little alpha.”

‘Do they not have Killua?’ Kurapika thought hopefully, knowing he couldn’t ask in case Killua was still hanging around and he blew Killua’s cover.

“Do you understand?” The voice asked again and it took everything in Kurapika just to snap the phone shut and end the call.

As promised, the message showed an address had been sent to him. Kurapika could only stare, an hour ago he would have been thrilled to have the address to the Phantom Troupe but now he felt sick.

Quickly Kurapika switched to Killua’s contact and with at least a little bit of hope, pressed the call button. The phone rang four times before it was picked up with a click.
“Calling again so soon?” That same voice chuckled, his voice like the tones of death in Kurapika’s ear. “Or were you worried for the omega? He is rather cute, do you all share it?” He snapped the phone shut again, refusing to listen to the sickening taunt.

Kurapika knew of the extreme prejudice against omegas in the world outside his home forest, you couldn't be around Killua without noticing the looks of disgust at his curt personality, yet never before had it ever made him so furious.

Kurapika moved the last mile to his borrowed car and hopped in with a feral snarl on his lips, Killua was most likely in the most danger, being an omega in the clutches of a group with no morals. Omegas go for millions, sometimes billions if they look nice enough the only thing Kurapika could hope for is that the Phantom Troupe wouldn’t be interested in touching an omega that’s so young. He hasn’t even had his first heat.

Kurapika took a calming breath, ceasing his shaking hands and steadying his breathing.

Once Kurapika had reasonably calmed down he started the car and shifted it into drive, heading in the direction of the provided address.

When Kurapika got close he stopped the car and got out, taking in the many similar buildings. Kurapika looked to the building that the troupe had instructed him to go to and looked it over skeptically.

Kurapika lifted his hand and called his dowsing chain.

“Point me to the boys,” he commanded the dowsing chain. Unsurprisingly, the ball and chain pointed at the building across from the one the troupe wanted him to go to. They were going to ambush him most likely. Switching to Gyo, he looked over the area. Every building except the one indicated by the chain had an aura around it. Kurapika scowled at the dummy buildings before he moved to hop the fence and approach the one true building cautiously.

Kurapika kept his Gyo up just to make sure he didn’t set off any traps, he looked over the outside of the building as he hid in the shadows. Just as he assumed, the Phantom Troupe hid in the scummiest building in the city.

After making sure no one was watching, Kurapika pulled himself up to look through a broken window with the utmost stealth. From this position he could see seven people, not including Gon
and Killua who were tied up and under guard. Gyo revealed nen enhanced threads wrapped around both of their throats. The worst was when voices began to filter through the broken glass.

“How much do you think it will go for?” Someone under the window asked in a happy-go-lucky tone.

“Well it’s young but healthy and strong, I bet you can find someone excited to have a Zoldyck Shalnark,” a different voice rose from the shadows. Kurapika’s eyes widened when he realized they were planning to sell Killua, he ground his teeth once again and tried to think of a plan.

The troupe wouldn’t just let go of a payday like an unattached omega and there wasn’t any way to just get them out, but if they had a better option, an omega of breeding age, they might release Killua.

Dropping from the window with his decision in mind and the resolve of it steadying his shoulders, Kurapika walked briskly to the front door and took a breath before lifting his hand and pushing it open.

Fourteen sets of eyes looked up at him as he stepped in, but it was the black eyes of the man who seemed to be the leader that held Kurapika like a butterfly stuck with pins.

“Well, nice of you to join us.” The dominant alpha’s pheromones hit Kurapika like a brick to the face. Compared to the three other alphas, in the room he trampled over them.

“Surprised I didn’t fall for your trick?” Kurapika asked lowly, his eyes looking around slowly, taking in the people around the room. His eyes lingered on the enhancer he had fought earlier. His eyes were filled with interest at Kurapika’s appearance, like he hadn’t expected to see him again and was pleasantly surprised.

“Actually yes, most little lambs walk right into our slaughter,” the dark man hummed as he looked over Kurapika slowly. He knew why and it made him shiver involuntarily.

“Release the boys, they don’t know anything,” Kurapika moved the conversation along with authority.

“We can release the alpha after you’re dead, but the omega stays with us,” the dark alpha stated.
calmly as one of the insufferable spiders moved to catch the new arrival from behind. Kurapika's chain lashed out, the ones he had kept hidden latching onto a alpha with long black hair and forced him into zetsu. A large beta with dangling ear lobes shot forward, grabbing the alpha and tearing him from Kurapika's chains.

Kurapika jumped to avoid an attack and ended up in the middle of the room, his chains circling around him like a protective cocoon.

“You don’t want to sell Killua, the Zoldycks will never forgive you. They’ll hunt you all down,” Kurapika snapped at the leader. The troupe leader remained composed, the thought of selling a Zoldyck didn’t scare him.

“Take me instead!” Kurapika ordered his chains dropping and the troupe members stopped around him, making sure he didn’t try anything funny.

The room bristled with laughter as the troupe members began to murmur.

“You think anyone would buy a beta over an omega?”

“He’s cute but you’re right, he wouldn’t go for much, betas are too common.”

“I’d take him but I no one would pay for him.”

“Kurapika! What the hell are you doing!?”

“Shh!” He snapped at Killua when he noticed the pink haired beta pull the strings on Killua taunt. “I’m bargaining.”

Kurapika turned back to the troupe boss as he waited for him to continue. “Killua would be too much of a hassle. He isn’t of breeding age and hasn’t even had his first heat. Not to mention the grudge you’ll get from the Zoldycks, so take me.” Kurapika took a breath and lifted his non-chained hand, the members stiffened, waiting for him to attack but Kurapika only grabbed the earring and pulled it from his ear.
The scent of an omega instantly replaced the almost nonexistent smell the earring caused him to have. “I’m an omega of breeding age, I won’t fight, just release my friends.” The alphas in the room stood at attention. The large enhancer physically stood, his eyes basically shining with interest as he looked him over again.

“Kurapika you’re a-“

“Yes Gon, I’ve been an omega this whole time,” Kurapika sighed before his eyes sharpened to look at the dark alpha.

“I find it hard to figure out why you don’t think we’ll just keep both of you,” the alpha hummed as he looked over him with a renewed interest.

“Because if you don’t release Killua, I will fight you until my last breath. I’ll make every step as difficult as possible,” Kurapika hissed. “But if you release them both unharmed, I’ll do everything you ask. I’ll play omega for you all and I won’t fight when you sell me off.”

“That’s quite a deal-“

“Kurapika no! My family can save me from anyone, but they won’t help you! Just run we’ll figure this out!”

“Shut up Killua! Do you even understand what a rich alpha would do to you? I won’t let that happen,” Kurapika snapped at Killua, looking back up at the alpha as him and his troupe began to discuss the deal.

“It is of breeding age”

“He’s just a regular omega!”

“The Zoldyck will sell better.”

“It is more unique than the blond.”
Kurapika clenched his fists as they all seemed to agree that Killua would sell better even with the threat of the Zoldycks coming for revenge.

“Would a Zoldyck sell better than a Kuruta?” Kurapika finally asked, his voice loud and confident, only betrayed by the shaking of his shoulders.

“Kurapika don’t!” Gon screamed as the air seemed to thicken, Kurapika’s hands moving to pull one contact from his eye. The room filled with scarlet light, his one illuminated eye bright in the dark space.

“Deal,” the alpha spoke with no hesitation. “Get rid of those two, we’re moving out.” Kurapika pulled the other contact from his eye with shaking fingers.

‘I just traded my freedom.’

Kurapika looked over the room, trying to keep his mind calm. Everything was about to change for him.
Chrollo circled the Kuruta omega as around them, the troupe readied themselves to move. What few bags they had were collected and the young alpha and omega pair were pulled to their feet by Nobunaga and Phinks.

“To ensure that you uphold your end of the deal, I do have something else I would like,” Chrollo stated as he stopped in front of the blonde. The omega’s scarlet eyes shined brightly in the dark and the troupe leader had to admit that the beauty before them would fetch a very high price.

“Which is?” Kurapika demanded, his anger causing his eyes to burn brighter.

“Your hatsu.”

Kurapika’s breath left him in that moment. Certainly this man couldn’t do such a thing?! “I already said I wouldn’t fight!”

“This is to ensure you don’t change your mind.” Chrollo’s response was punctuated as he held up a book in front of Kurapika. “Tell me about your hatsu.”

Kurapika stared at the alpha in front of him before his eyes shifted to Gon and Killua. Both boys were staring at him with expressions of shock and disbelief. Gon was nearing the point of trying to violently oppose what was happening and Kurapika doubted that the smirking alpha behind him would hesitate in hurting him if he started a ruckus.

“I have five chains, one for healing, one for restraining, one for finding things, and one for enforcing promises,” Kurapika stated.

“What of the fifth?” the dark-haired alpha asked smoothly, not missing a beat.

“I hadn’t decided on it yet.” The admission earned a snort from the alpha that looked like a samurai that was restraining Killua.

“Show me the chains.” The order was confusing but Kurapika let the five chains dangle from the rings connected to his fingers. “Now press your hand on the cover of this book.” As this order was given, the black book was held out to Kurapika who stared at the cover for a long moment. The handprint on the front was white but the background around it looked like it was inked in fresh blood.

“Kurapika!” Gon finally yelled and the blonde glanced to his young friend again. “Don’t!”

“We can still kill the young alpha,” the troupe leader offered and Kurapika automatically pressed his hand against the book.

The effect was immediate as the chains on Kurapika’s hand vanished and the Kuruta gasped as a part of him that he had only just become aware of vanished. Turning burning eyes to his right hand, he attempted to call his chains again but nothing happened.

In turn, the troupe leader withdrew the book and flipped through it, stopping on a certain page and nodding as he stepped away from Kurapika. “I see, several of these could be useful. I don’t believe you will be needing them anymore,” the alpha stated before nodding to the two alphas holding the
Kurapika turned his own head towards them as well, his tongue already feeling thick as he tried to think of how he’d say goodbye, but the opportunity was stolen from him as a brown cloth encircled him. Struggling did no good as the cloth seemed to automatically form a bag around him before settling on the floor.

Chrollo stooped and lifted the convenient bag holding the last Kuruta and likely the most valuable omega in the world. He estimated that with its beauty, eyes, and bloodline, the omega should sell easily for at least twice what he would have valued the Zoldyck at, and there would be no nasty backlash from a family of assassins.

“Toss those two out,” he ordered to Phinks and Nobunaga.

“No! Kurapika!” the little alpha shouted as he twisted and the omega looked similarly mutinous. “You can’t do this!”

“It’s an omega, selling them is normal,” Chrollo stated as he settled the bag into a coat pocket. “It’ll have a master soon enough.”

“He doesn’t want a master, Kurapika has friends!” the boy argued as he was hauled out by Phinks while Nobunaga dragged the omega.

“Use the car and dump them in a random part of the city,” Chrollo ordered. “We’ll send instructions of where the new base will be.”

“Ok, don’t start having fun without us!” Nobunaga called back, causing the small omega to glare at them in horror while the young alpha practically roared in rage.

Turning back to the rest of the troupe, Chrollo nodded at the assembled members that remained. Feitan required a crutch due to him refusing a wheelchair or being carried but otherwise they were all mobile.

“We’ll be heading out,” Chrollo informed them. “Hisoka knows of our second choice of base, so we’ll be doing a bit of searching to find an alternate. We’ll be headed to the deserted portion of the Sand District. We need a base that is defensible and will allow us to keep a proper eye on our newest acquisition until it can be sold.”

The response he received was a series of murmurs.

“Move in pairs. Uvo with Feitan, Paku with me, Franklin and Shizuku, Machi and Kortopi, Shalnark and Bonolenov.”

Nothing further was said as the group dispersed, each pair joining their partner before heading in different directions. As Pakunoda fell in step with Chrollo, the leader slipped his hand into his pocket to check on the omega. It was still currently, but a small amount of movement occurred in response to his hand brushing the sack.

“Out you go!” the alpha with the topknot called as the alpha who lacked eyebrows slowed the car near the harbor. It had taken an hour to get here and the men hadn’t received a call about where their new base would be.
Without hesitation, topknot guy shoved Gon and Killua out of the car before yanking the door shut.

“Feel free to try to find us again in a few years!” the guy called out of the window. “Love to play with a second omega before selling it!”

Gon growled angrily, his protective alpha personality rearing at even the thought of those alphas selling Killua. Or that they had pretty much just promised that they were going to sell Kurapika.

“Let’s go! If we run, we might be able to follow them!” Gon declared to his friend as Killua glared at the car that was now disappearing into the city expressway.

“Run after them?” Killua reminded.

“We can’t just let them take Kurapika and sell him! I wanna kick their butts!”

“I know!” Killua practically shouted and along the street people began to take notice of the pair.

“We need a better plan next time! And their leader can steal hatsu or did you miss that? Even if we get to Kurapika, he can’t fight!”

“Then what do we do?”

Killua looked very sick in that moment. “We need hatsu. To find our individual abilities. Having Kurapika around would have made this great but now I can only think of one person we could ask for help.”

Gon stared at the other boy, blinking in confusion.

If possible, Killua turned more grey than he had when the troupe had discussed selling him. “We only know one person in York Shin with hatsu. Hisoka.”

Franklin and Shizuku had found the new building that would now serve as the base for the spiders. It had probably once been a subway station, but the stone building was now hollowed out. The top area was large and airy with a broken skylight that allowed plenty of light to enter, but it was the bottom area that interested Chrollo.

The area he now stood in had only one entrance and the tunnels that the trains had once traveled through had collapsed and were filled with sand. Abandoned train cars would give some privacy when it was needed and old trash cans could be used to hold fires for cooking.

Shalnark checked the power and was surprised to find they had some even if the lights didn’t work.

The Kuruta omega had shown up with plenty of time before dawn, so at shortly after dawn Machi had called Phinks with directions to the new base. Knowing the boys now knew what the car looked like, Chrollo ordered for them to ditch the car as well before joining them. Then he began to evaluate the platform and where he should put the omega.

It needed to be placed somewhere that it could fulfill their requests and be restricted so that it wouldn’t try to escape in a moment of inattention, even if it had promised not to. There would also be sleeping arrangements to consider. Chrollo remembered hearing that omegas hated to sleep alone, that they would normally choose an alpha to sleep with at night.

Considering that this was the first breeding age omega Chrollo had ever encountered, he could
admit that he was interested in what would happen at night.

It took Phinks and Nobunaga almost an hour to arrive at the new base and by then Chrollo had decided on the restraint to be used for the omega. With Machi’s help, he had secured a length of chain to the floor that had a special nen type of lock on it. The effect was similar to the restraining chain the omega had once possessed and would force the being that was chained into zetsu. Releasing the chain would require the application of nen. Shalnark told them the lock could be further specialized to more specific requirements to unlock, but considering that the omega’s allies were two children and he didn’t plan to hold on to the omega for long, Chrollo doubted that was necessary.

Removing the Fun Fun Cloth from his pocket, Chrollo set the very still bag on the floor before letting the knot release, returning the bag and the omega to full size. The omega looked to be meditating but was quick to jump to its feet once released from confinement.

Machi didn’t hesitate, snatching the omega’s leg and locking the manacle on the slender ankle even as the omega looked ready to fight but forced itself to stop.

Chrollo glanced up and down the slender form before speaking. “Remove your shoes.”

The omega stared at him for a long moment. “My shoes?”

“Yes, then hand them to Machi.”

The look in the omega’s eyes was mutinous, but his instructions were followed as he slipped the shoes from his feet and handed them to Machi who accepted them wordlessly. The omega didn’t have socks on and Chrollo noted the careful manner that it set its feet down on the litter, sand, and rock strewn floor. A few cuts wouldn’t hurt its value and lacking shoes would mean that even if it got loose, it couldn’t run too far.

Around them, most of the troupe had settled down and were setting out their bedrolls since they hadn’t had any sleep the night before and a very limited amount in previous days. Phinks looked to be the most awake and Chrollo nodded towards him.

“You have first shift for guard duty. Wake Paku in a few hours to take over,” Chrollo ordered as he moved toward the entrance of their new hideout. “After that, get some sleep. If the omega starts trying to clean up, let it.”

Phinks shrugged before glancing up at the entrance as Chrollo collected his own bedroll and moved to the a side of the entrance that was shielded from view.

Kurapika watched the troupe settle down around him. One of the alphas, this one had a topknot, leered back at him and patted his bedroll, his invitation obvious but Kurapika narrowed his eyes in reflex.

The chain connected to the shackle on his ankle wasn’t very long but it did give him a lot more freedom of movement than Kurapika had anticipated. He made use of this by moving back on the platform to lean against one of the old train cars, his feet getting several nicks in the process from the rocks and trash on the floor.

Without nen, he felt weaker than he remembered ever being and the rocks he pushed aside to make his own space seemed larger and heavier than they should have.
Finally he managed to clear a small patch where he could sit away from where the troupe had settled. There wasn’t enough space to lie down, but he could lean back against the cold metal of the train. The alpha that had tried to invite him to lie down with him gave him a long stare before shrugging and settling back on his bedroll.

It was difficult to stay awake and Kurapika dozed more than once before managing to force himself awake. He missed when the alpha with the first watch changed out with a blonde female beta, but he was awake when most of the troupe began to stir again.

There was no sunlight to judge, but Kurapika estimated it to be late afternoon. Several of the troupe seemed surprised that he was exactly where he had settled but no one approached. One of them, a girl with glasses, did set out a broom and some pans while a very large beta with a large number of scars, piercings, and elongated earlobes pulled an old trash bin towards the entrance. Several old pieces of wood were tossed in and a fire was lit.

At first this confused Kurapika since it was very warm until he realized that this must be how the troupe prepared their meals. They probably couldn’t just run out most days to grab take out.

The troupe then moved away from where the fire bin had been set up and began talking, mostly about the plan for the auction. They didn’t bother to lower their voices and Kurapika listened for a few short minutes before realizing one thing: he couldn’t do anything. Still, listening to the plan and the powers these bandits possessed was interesting. One of them apparently had an ability that would allow him to make copies of the merchandise they would steal, making it look like everything was present and could be handed off to the “buyers” while another, a beta with blonde hair wearing a lavender outfit that Kurapika realized had been the one to break up his fight with the large Enhancer, would manage the money transfer, sending the collected funds to a troupe managed account to be divided among the members.

“What about the…” and Kurapika felt twelve sets of eyes glance back at him.

The dark eyes of the leader caught Kurapika’s eyes and he glared angrily. “Uvo and Nobunaga will remain behind to guard the omega.”

The large Enhancer groaned as did the alpha with the topknot.

“Really boss, babysitting?” topknot demanded.

“Can we take him off the chain?” the large alpha asked, his disappointment over sitting out on a mission was palpable. Kurapika understood since he had seen the alpha in action the night of the first auction: he was a battle tank.

“No, he is to remain chained for now,” the leader replied before the group broke up as the individuals began to check their equipment.

Kurapika remained in his small space as the troupe members moved about, the irony of his situation striking rather hard. He had aimed to chain the Phantom Troupe members in hell, instead he’d been stripped of his own powers and now sat chained in their base which seemed about as close to hell as one could get.

Several minutes crept by as he glanced from one spider to the next, feeling his eyes shift to scarlet every few minutes despite his efforts to calm himself. One of the women fiddled with what looked like a pincushion on the back of her hand, complete with needles while the one wearing glasses had pulled out a book. Tilting his head a bit, Kurapika found himself trying to see the title but turned his gaze away when the spider caught his eye.
“Aren’t you going to cook dinner?” the girl asked after a minute.

Kurapika was silent at first before he realized that the other spiders were staring at him expectantly. “Was I supposed to?”

“We set out some pans and even started a fire,” the girl continued.

“No one told me to cook.”

One of the alphas, this one lacking eyebrows, kicked a bag closer to where the pots and fire bin were set up. “Get to it, omega.”

Internally Kurapika groaned but stood from his spot and tried to wipe some of the dirt from his clothing before beginning to make his way towards the fire bin. The floor was treacherous without shoes and Kurapika had to be mindful of every step.

The bag the alpha had kicked towards the fire held some food items, mostly canned items. Several were cans of fruit, some were beans, and a few were canned stir fries. Towards the bottom there were several cans of sausages and Kurapika felt his eye twitch as he stared at the items. Not a single green vegetable, not even the canned sort.

Glancing around, Kurapika did a quick head count before pulling out four cans of beans and several of the cans of sausages. The pot closest to the fire pit looked big enough, and after a bit of tinkering he was able to figure out a way to suspend the pot over the fire using several thin metal rods from the floor.

A new problem arose when he turned his attention back to the cans and realized he lacked a can opener. The bag with the cans lacked one entirely and though the sausage cans had pull tabs, the beans lacked them.

Kurapika glanced at the alpha that had kicked the bag of food and found him to be focused on the small beta next to him. Turning his head, Kurapika hoped to see a can opener on the floor or a sharp piece of metal. Instead, his eyes met those of the large alpha he had fought the previous night. The alpha was watching him with some interest, occasionally responding to the alpha that was jabbering beside him.

Turning his attention back to his current problem, Kurapika thought for a moment about trying to grab a sharp rock to open the cans. Heaven knew, his feet had found plenty of them on the floor.

“Hey, need a hand?” a voice asked and a hand grabbed the can of beans Kurapika had been considering. Turning his head, the Kuruta found that the large alpha had moved with surprising silence to stand a bit behind him and currently held the can. It looked tiny in the giant’s gargantuan hand.

“Can opener,” Kurapika replied curtly before the giant responded by pretty much tearing the can in half over the pot, emptying the beans into the thing. The other three cans were quick to follow before the alpha moved back to sit with his comrade.

Pulling the tabs on the cans of sausages, Kurapika dumped them in with the beans then set the pot on the makeshift stove. His disinterest in the pot must have been apparent because he immediately returned to his spot and sat down again.

More than a few of the members glanced at him then the pot but Kurapika was unconcerned. It would take at least an hour before that food would be anywhere approaching warm. The blonde beta woman realized this when she approached the pot and poked the side of it then glanced down
at the fire inside the barrel. She did throw in several pieces of wood to make the fire larger.

An hour later the pot of food was barely warm but the troupe didn’t seem to mind. Most of them were about to head out and were quick to produce either bowls or plates to grab some of the hastily thrown together food.

Kurapika stared at the crowd and wasn’t sure what to do, he didn’t have a bowl, plate, or a utensil of any sort. He also really didn’t want to eat with the spiders.

In the end it didn’t matter, he didn’t account for how much the troupe could or would eat and what seemed like it should have been enough turned out to leave nothing for him. He realized this as the troupe moved away from the pot and Kurapika left his spot to check. There was maybe a spoonful of beans left and that was it.

“Hey, make sure to clean that up!” the alpha that had kicked the bag of cans to him called.

Kurapika was tempted to just leave the pot on the fire since he was obviously not getting anything after a long day but he bit back the snarl he wanted to let loose. It was just for a few days, then he’d be sold… And his hatsu that he’d just begun to develop, the power he needed to deliver these bandits to hell would be kept by their thrice damned leader.

There was some water in a bottle near the trash bin, Kurapika had noticed it when several of the spiders had filled cups from it.

The single mouthful of beans were quickly scooped into his mouth and then some of the water was dumped into the pot. There was no soap, no brush, so Kurapika just swirled the water in the pot then dumped it into a nearby drain.

Moving back to his spot, Kurapika felt his stomach grumble but refused to look at the troupe as they ate their lukewarm food. Luckily, they didn’t demand he wash their individual dishes and utensils, they did that themselves.

Kurapika estimated that it was about 7PM when the troupe members began to depart in small groups of two or three. Not one of them spared him a glance with the exception of the leader right before he left.

“Don’t hurt the omega,” he instructed the two who would be acting as guards. “It’s not allowed to have its shoes nor to go through any of the supplies that weren’t set out. Don’t let anyone enter unless they’re a member. Hisoka has a technique Machi told me of that could allow him to disguise himself, so if another member approaches, test them using cellphones. No one should be returning alone.”

Dark eyes checked on him once more, the warning in them obvious and Kurapika huffed. Luckily the troupe leader left and the air instantly felt less oppressive as the dominant alpha departed.

Things were quiet for a little while afterwards as the two alphas loitered around then the large alpha grabbed a piece of what had likely once been a concrete support pillar. He settled the thing on its side and then glanced at Kurapika.

“Hey, over here! I want to arm wrestle!”

Kurapika stared at the behemoth, wondering if the guy realized exactly what he was asking.

“Uvo! Chrollo said not to hurt it!” the alpha with the topknot all but yelled as he sat across the large alpha. “If you want to arm wrestle, I’ll go a few rounds.”
“He should be good at arm wrestling. He’s strong!” the large alpha argued. “He was giving a good fight until Shalnark dragged me away!”

“It’s been forced into zetsu!”

The large alpha blinked for a moment then groaned loudly but still glanced over at Kurapika again, even as he set his arm on the makeshift table he had made and held up his arm.

The few rounds of arm wrestling that the two went through were intensely one sided, the topknot alpha definitely putting as much strength as he could into the task, but no matter how much he struggled, he never could budge the arm of the large alpha, Uvo.

In turn, Uvo didn’t seem interested in letting the contest end too quickly. He just held his arm up, hand clasped in the other’s grip and grinned as he gave the other alpha a minute to try to move his arm.

Without anything else to do nor having a book to read, Kurapika found himself watching the competition. Around the second round, he noticed that large alpha was watching him still, grinning brightly before demonstrating his strength by slowly pushing the arm of his opponent until the back of his hand lightly hit the table.

The other alpha arm wrestled the large one for six rounds before he finally seemed to grow annoyed and bored. He stood from the “table” with a look of disgust and kicked a bit of the debris.

“I’m done, strongest of the troupe,” the alpha declared as he moved to sit on his bedroll.

Silence filled the air and Kurapika stared at the exit, wondering how Gon and Killua were doing. He hoped they were safe, but he knew the pair well enough to know that they were likely trying to figure out a way to save him. He hoped someone, namely Killua, was able to knock some sense into Gon since he didn’t have anything to trade if they got caught again.

Sitting and brooding was doing him any good, it was only going to end with him getting cramped. Sighing, he was doing a lot of that recently, Kurapika stood and began to push more of the rocks, trash, and various debris out of his area. The chain on his ankle jingled with each movement, and he could feel the alphas watching him.

Initially, Kurapika just aimed to clear enough space so he could lie down, but the way the rocks and every felt so heavy caused him to push harder, clearing a wider area. His muscles, already used to being reinforced by nen, protested and he began to develop a light sweat.

The cleared area was circular, covered in sand, and offered just enough space for him to lie down. Kurapika stared at it, remembering the circles his martial arts instructor had set him in as a child to learn the forms for the Kuruta martial art. It had no name, but every person in the clan was taught starting in childhood. The exception had been Pairo who had learned up until the fall that injured his legs and eyes.

Kurapika stretched in the circle, feeling the pull of his muscles as they stretched and released the tension that had been building since his surrender. A series of pops reached his ears and his back and shoulders began to feel significantly better.

It came by sheer instinct, a need to escape his current situation as Kurapika remembered the final form of the Kurutan martial arts. He’d learned it mere weeks before departing the village and he began to move through the forms, mindful of the chain that could tangle his feet as he shifted from one stance to the next.
But the feeling seemed so wrong now, without his nen his limbs felt heavier than they had ever felt, even when he’d initially learned this form as a twelve-year-old.

Finishing the form, Kurapika sat down in his little circle and continued to stretch. The large alpha was watching him again.

“What martial art was that?”

Kurapika didn’t even look at the spider.

“Seriously, what martial art was that?”

“It doesn’t have a name,” Kurapika replied curtly. This guy seemed like Gon and wouldn’t stop until he got an answer. Better to just give one and hope he’d get bored fast.

“When did ya learn nen?”

“Six months ago.”

“Who taught you?”

Kurapika narrowed his eyes and gave the alpha a flat look, earning a grin from the man. He seemed to like spirit.

“Well they were pretty good. Coulda sworn you’d had more experience and weren’t a newbie.” The compliment was earnest and surprised Kurapika a bit. “What kind of sweets do you like?”

Kurapika’s eyebrows rose. He really didn’t care for sweets normally and was about to open his mouth to say as such when the other alpha groaned and stood from his bedroll.

“It’s an omega, Uvo! It likes just about any kind of sweet, especially when it’s in heat!” The alpha stretched and began to walk backwards, obviously bored. “Soon as we sell it, it’s master will probably shower it with sweets and pretty things! Damn this is so bor~Unk!”

Kurapika bit his lip to hold in a laugh as the alpha got what was coming to him when he tripped over a rock and fell on his butt.

“Come on, get off your ass and start cleaning this place already!” the obnoxious alpha exploded as he lifted the rock he’d tripped over and might have hurled it at Kurapika if the large alpha hadn’t grabbed his arm.
Uvogin held Nobunaga’s arm in a crushing grip, no words needed to be said between them as they seemed to speak through eye contact.

“Hit him if ya like, but if danchou sees a bruise on him it’s your head,” Uvogin finally spoke.

Kurapika watched the display with a detached curiosity, his mind working on overdrive to dissect the intricate relationships that seemed to run deep in the troupe.

Kurapika didn’t care either way, he could take pain, it might just give him a break from the humiliation of being treated like a maid all day, not to mention the sexual comments.

After a tense minute, pheromones clashing against each other, violent and suffocating in the stale air, before Nobunaga dropped the rock with a THUNK. Uvogin let go of his arm and he glared at the little omega, blaming it for his friend reprimanding him.

“Well?! Get to it!” Nobunaga yelled at the red eyed omega who sat unafraid in his original spot. Nobunaga couldn’t believe the intense pheromones didn’t even seem to bother the thing.

Kurapika sighed as he pushed himself up and out of his little circle and began to move around carefully. The Kuruta eyed the broom distastefully, the household item would be no help in the sandy areas which seemed to be most of the place. Grabbing up the broom, Kurapika walked to the platform, dutifully ignoring the looks from the two alphas.

Kurapika sloppily swept the junk and debris from the platform and onto the abandoned tracks, missing large chunks here and there. After finishing that he task he threw the broom without care against the decrepit wall.

Uvogin watched the boy prattle around thoughtfully, he got the distinct impression that the the boy had never actually cleaned before, not that he had either. The boy walked around with the grace of a cat, avoiding sharp objects and obstacles with practiced footsteps. He began to collect the worse of the trash and debris from the sand, dropping them in a corner unceremoniously.
Uvogin couldn’t help but chuckle when he noticed the boy was spitefully making his trash pile where Nobunaga had slept. When the boy began to turn his attention to the large and heavy rocks, Uvogin jumped into action.

“Need another hand?” Nobunaga snorted but remained quiet, the blonde considered Uvogin suspiciously before nodding.

Kurapika was surprised the alpha would offer help once again but wasn’t one to deny making his job infinitely easier, the rocks really were heavy.

Uvogin began to clear the rocks as Kurapika’s eyes began to sting.

Kurapika stopped in place for a moment, half bent to remove a particularly long and sharp piece of metal, his head was beginning to spin from prolonged use of his eyes. He couldn’t help it, he had no control while in the presence of the troupe.

A ringing began in Kurapika’s ears as the two alphas took notice of the still omega. The piece of metal dropped from his hands as he stumbled forward, the giant quick in dropping the rock to catch the boy but not before his foot slid over the jagged piece of metal, cutting his foot from his pinky toe to his heel.

“Shit!” Uvogin called as blood began to stain the sand. Uvogin scooped the frail body up into his arms, quickly carrying him over the the small cleared area the omega had made for himself, dripping blood the whole way.

“Hey, don’t ya pass out on me,” Uvogin ordered the boy as his eyes began to slip shut. “Nobu! Get me the water!” He boomed loudly as Nobunaga jumped up to do as Uvogin asked, grabbing the large water bottle and moving it over to Uvogin.

“Let me see yer foot,” Uvogin asked more out of courtesy than anything else as he was already pulling the boy’s foot into his lap to look over the cut. It was deep but luckily the metal hadn’t looked rusted. Taking the water bottle in his giant hand and pouring a fair portion over the cut.

Kurapika hissed as the water washed over the contours of his foot. Uvogin kept his foot steady even as he tried to jerk away from the stinging sensation. The alpha was meticulous in his quest to clean out all the dirt, grime, and sand from the deep gash.
“Hey, what did I tell ya about passing out?” Uvogin snapped not unkindly at the omega when he noticed the boy’s breath quickening and his eyes began to lose focus. “Do ya have a fever?” He mumbled as he pressed on the tender flesh, forcing out blood and sand.

When the boy didn’t say anything his brow scrunched worriedly.

“What’s wrong with it?” Nobunaga squawked from behind Uvogin as he used the rest of the water to wash the boy’s foot of blood and ripped the cleanest bit of his shirt off without hesitation.

“I don’t know,” Uvogin sighed as he wrapped the frayed cloth around the tiny foot.

“Hey come on, talk to me,” Uvogin tried again hoping to keep the omega awake until he knew exactly what was wrong with him. “I didn’t catch yer name, would ya tell me?”

The omega cracked open one blindingly bright eye and panted lowly. “It’s Kurapika,” he managed. Uvogin rewarded him with a grin.

“That’s a nice name ya got. I’m Uvogin, most call me Uvo.” Uvogin finished tying his foot off as he spoke.

“I know,” Kurapika hissed between clenched teeth, he couldn’t see Uvogin’s resulting smile or Nobunaga’s aghast expression as he looked between the two. “I think I got sick,” the boy wheezed, his defenses finally coming down in a moment of panic.

“I see that, I’ll get ya some water okay?” Uvogin finally let go of the boy’s foot and allowed him to curl up on the sand and coddle his face into his arms.

Nobunaga was watching the scene with a mixture of befuddlement and excitement.

‘Finally,’ Nobunaga thought to himself as he watched the omega basically melt at Uvogin’s touch, the omega was finally acting like one. He felt rather satisfied with himself, the cleaning must have knocked sense back into it.

Uvogin moved to go find more water and Nobunaga was elated to have a little alone time with it.
Even if it was a little sick, it should be happy to get some attention from another alpha.

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“Why?” Was the first words Killua managed to speak when Gon and him reached the address Hisoka had given them after Killua refused to meet at his hotel room.

The pizza parlor/arcade was packed but it was easy to spot the striking red headed clown in the sea of children. Most of the children gave the creepy alpha a wide amount of space, their survival instincts telling them to steer clear or be snatched up.

Innocent Gon seemed almost confused about what could interest Hisoka here but after a confirmation look to Killua it donned on him and they both shivered.

“What a creep,” Killua growled before taking Gon’s hand and marching up to the alpha with determination.

“Oh, hello boys!” Hisoka called, many of the parents and employees looked between the three worriedly. The alpha oozed a frightening pheromone and no one wanted a child near him, even if that child was an alpha. Not to mention the omega.

“Hi Hisoka,” Gon offered as they reached his table. Hisoka looked up from the small boy he was leering at momentarily, the boy seemed to be frantically trying to hide behind anything he could find. “Can I get you two a soda?” Hisoka asked as he lost interest in the boy, his mother finally noticing the attention the man was giving him and swooping in to save him.

“We’re fine. Hisoka this is important,” Killua snapped at the man, calling his attention to them fully.

“How rude, don’t you act like that when you get an alpha,” a mother whispered to her omega child as she glared at Killua.

“Okay okay,” the clown soothed and looked over at the two wary children. The boys had only just managed to calm Leorio, who had caught up with them just as they managed to track down Hisoka’s number. The man had been beside himself upon hearing that Kurapika had been taken by the Phantom Troupe and they had to tie him up to keep him in his hotel room when they’d told him
Kurapika was an omega.

He’d screamed and yelled about marching into their hideout and taking their friend back, nen or no nen. Of course the boys had to stop him even if it resulted in a few bruises.

“So did you two manage to warn my little helper?” The way Hisoka asked made both boys feel like he could see into their heads.

“The troupe took Kurapika,” Killua stated as evenly as he could, watching the micro expressions on his face to gauge how much he already knew.

“Oh? That’s interesting,” the alpha mused, looking over the pairs downtrodden expressions, feeling a swell south of his chest at the spark of determination in their eyes. “Oh you boys do things to me!” he gasped lowly, bending back in his chair and grasping at the air. The wide space between them and the other customers increased, several getting their phones out to dial the police. “Tell me, why didn’t they kill my little helper?”

Both boys seemed unwilling to tell him of that little bit of information, which only intensified Hisoka’s thirst for the knowledge.

“Look Hisoka, we just need to ask you some questions about nen,” Killua continued to try to steer the conversation. “If you could give us some tips on hats-“

Hisoka suddenly stood before folding himself over the length of the table to get face to face with the white haired omega.

“Well if you two don’t want to tell me, then why should I help you?” He grinned at the pair, his eyes focused on Gon who squirmed in his seat, the information on the tip of his tongue as he gulped.

“We can’t tell you that.”

“Well then I guess we’re done here.” Hisoka sent them a wink and moved to leave but before he could take even one step, Gon jumped up and grabbed the clown’s arm. Hisoka looked into those pleading amber eyes and the swell in his nether regions grew as Gon held him in his eyes.
“Kurapika is an omega,” Gon spilled the beans.

“GON!” Killua snapped.

“What? We need to learn hatsu if we’re gonna save him!” While Killua and Gon fought with each other, Hisoka remained standing, his eyes gleaming over with glee.

‘My little fruit, an omega?’ Hisoka rejoiced. Illumi had tasked him with finding an omega to bare their children and the only one he had found up until now was Killua. Illumi had been very clear that they couldn’t use his little brother.

Kurapika being an omega solved his problem. All the omegas raised in the facilities were boring and they didn’t have time to wait for a child to grow up, if you can even find and kidnap one before anyone else does.

Although the troupe having their claws in him did hurt his chances a bit. Hisoka turned his eyes to the boys. If they can free him, it wouldn’t be hard to swoop in and take the omega.

“I can give you all the tips and help you’d like,” Hisoka finally decided.

“Really? You’ll help us get Kurapika back?”

“Of course, I have big plans for all three of you!” Hisoka grinned when the boys shuddered. He’d always loved the effect he had on his precious fruits.

Nobunaga waited for the omega to get a little sleep, wanting him to be at least a little energized for the activities omegas were best known for.

Uvogin had left to get water for it about an hour into the thing’s sleep and he was sure the giant
wouldn’t mind if he got the first turn with it.

Once the omega began to stir, Nobunaga put his sword away and approached the omega. It seemed to be doing better after resting for a bit. Even its color was beginning to return to normal. Sitting down in the omega’s small area, Nobunaga pulled the limp body into his lap.

The omega mumbled some kind of complaint, his sleep riddled mind not fully understanding the situation he was in.

“Pairo. . . I’m sleepy,” Kurapika mumbled as he cuddled his head into the warm arms he found himself in.

“That’s right little omega,” the voice called from above him.

‘That doesn’t sound like Pairo,’ Kurapika thought woozily, his mind slow and muddled as a hand began to pet his sweaty hair.

Nobunaga was having a grand time, the omega was sweet and soft just like he had imagined one being. After a few minutes of petting and drinking in the little mews and mumbles from the delirious thing, he lifted its face to steal a kiss, the first of many.

Kurapika felt someone moving his body and cracked his eyes open, his vision was red and fuzzy. Everything looked like a blob of color. Blinking a few times as someone pulled him closer, his vision finally began to clear. The alpha with the topknot was leaning into him, lips pursed and eyes closed. Kurapika yelped and swung a fist in fright, punching the alpha in the face.

“UCK!” The alpha shouted as he took the unexpected and weak hit. Heart beating fast, Kurapika pushed at the alpha’s chest and screamed profanities at him.

Nobunaga growled, slamming the omega into the ground and glaring at it. How dare it hit him! So it didn’t want him? Fine, he’d show it who was boss.

Kurapika struggled with frail and tired limbs as the alpha ripped the top layer of his clothes until they were nothing more than rags under him.
“Get off!” He screamed at the alpha as his chest was felt up. Swinging arms were pinned to the ground, small cuts already littering his skin.

“Think you’re too good for me?” The alpha hissed as he started to pull up his second layer.

“NOBUNAGA!” A harsh bark made them both pause. For a moment Nobunaga believed his friend had returned with the water, but he gulped when he saw the rest of the troupe had arrived, danchou looking furious.

Kurapika managed to kick the alpha off of him and scrambled up to run dizzily to a different corner, borderline collapsing as he huddled against the wall and hissed at the still alpha.

“Danchou I was just-” Nobunaga didn’t finish as he took in the dark look on his boss’s face.

“Where is Uvogin?” Chrollo finally managed after taking an ample amount of time to take in the full situation. The omega looked worn and pale, the only bit of color was the flush in its cheeks and the glow of its eyes. It was looking worse than it had when they left, not to mention it looked ready to attack anyone that approached it. A terrified and sickly omega would not sell well.

“He went to get water, the omega suddenly collapsed and cut its foot,” Nobunaga explained, not really understanding what the big deal was, it’s an omega! That’s what they’re for!

“So you decided to force it while it was with fever?” Chrollo raised a brow at his spider, the others looking on behind him in disapproval. Chrollo narrowed his eyes when Nobunaga had the nerve to not look ashamed. His eyes spoke it all.

“What happened?” Uvogin dropped the jug of water when he too entered the subterranean building to see a frightened Kurapika and an angry danchou currently giving Nobunaga the evil eye.

Hurrying forward, Uvogin passed his beloved boss and went straight to the omega who was shaking against the wall.

To Chrollo's surprise, the omega didn’t attack Uvogin. He almost looked relieved at his presence. The omega allowed Uvogin to fret over him and check the bloody binding on his foot, although it made it clear that it didn’t want to be touched more than necessary.
“Nobu! He’s sick, ya can’t just force yerself on him!” Uvogin snarled at his friend, causing many of the spiders to raise a brow at the giant alpha’s odd behavior.

Nobunaga opened his mouth to make a rebuttal but was stopped by a raised hand from Chrollo.

“I agree,” Chrollo said simply. “If we harm it too much, it’s price will go down. From now on if the omega doesn’t come to you willingly, you cannot sleep with it.” Chrollo didn’t honestly think the omega would keep its distance forever. They’d all get a turn once the omega settled in and accepted its temporary masters.

“But danch-“

“This is an order.” Nobunaga’s mouth snapped shut and he glared at the omega spitefully.

Sighing, Chrollo looked back to the sickly omega and felt curiosity at its sudden turn in health. Well the best way to learn of something you don’t understand is just to ask.

“Omega, what’s wrong with you?” He asked. Irritation reared its ugly head when the omega pinched its lips and glared at him stubbornly although Chrollo kept his face blank and stature calm. “Alright then,” Chrollo sighed again before taking out his skill hunter and flipping to a certain page.

The omega seemed to recognize the action and tried to jump out of the way but like before, the fun fun cloth wrapped around him until he was stuck in the pocket sized bag.

Picking it up, Chrollo held the little bag up and watched the tiny movements that indicated a struggle and smirked at it.

“We’re going to be traveling for awhile, so you might as well rest and get better. I can’t sell a sick thing.” Chrollo didn’t miss the fallen look on Uvogin’s face at the reminder that the omega would be sold soon.

“Alright everyone, we’re moving to base #4,” Chrollo told them as he slipped the bag into his coat pocket with the rest of his treasures. “Hisoka has never seen that one, groups of no more than three
pair off and be there by tomorrow at sundown."

Shalnark walked forward with a box of protein bars they’d snatched on their way home. “Eat up guys!” He grinned happily after the smooth and highly successful mission.

Uvogin grabbed two protein bars, eating the first one whole without thinking, his mind still stuck on the saddening fact that soon Kurapika would be sold and he’d most likely never see him again.

Taking half of the second protein bar in one bite as he caught a small movement in danchou’s pocket, a thought suddenly striking him.

“Have we fed Kurapika at all?” Uvogin frowned before quickly wrapping the remaining half of the protein bar up in its wrapper and sticking it in his pocket to give to Kurapika later.

Chrollo watched Uvogin from the corner of his eye skeptically before shrugging it off and turning his attention back to Nobunaga who seemed to be convinced that their newest acquisition was defective.

Chrollo thought on the idea, it was possible. The omega hadn’t behaved how he had expected so far and if he was defective it would bring down the price. But there was still the possibility that it was simply untrained and if that was the case, they only needed to train it. It would take time and they’d have to keep it longer, but if it meant selling the omega at the price he envisioned, it would be worth a few weeks of dealing with it.
The cloth that Kurapika found himself wrapped in for a second time folded around him like a sack, but he was aware enough of the movements outside the bag to know that something was wrong. It didn’t feel like he was being carried by someone in a fashion that he was familiar with nor was he in a vehicle.

What was more, the deep voice of the alpha that led the Phantom Troupe, when he had instructed Kurapika to rest had sounded large, like the speaker towered above him.

The limited light that came through the cloth had been cut off soon after and as the bag was settled in something. Before Kurapika had meditated to pass the time and he tried to do that again, but an hour in he felt his fever spike and had instead settled down to try to sleep.

Sleep was interrupted by dreams of an alpha with what seemed like impossible strength holding him down and ripping at his clothes. It was made worse when during a waking moment he realized that the chain that rendered him powerless was still attached to his ankle. Somehow they had disconnected it from the floor so that it had been swept up into the bag as well.

Hunger gripped his stomach and thirst eventually caused him to kick at the side of the bag, but the only response felt like a giant hand poking the bag.

It must have been some time that next day that Kurapika finally felt like he recognized the pattern of movement as walking, but it felt like he was feeling the motion from around the hip area of whoever carried him and that made no sense.

It was Gon and Killua who dominated most of his waking thoughts. The troupe was leaving York Shin, so the two should be safe now. He doubted the boys would be capable of tracking the troupe, even if Gon was technically a Hunter.

He could only hope they didn’t do something incredibly stupid to try to track the troupe. It would be better if they waited for him to call them after he was sold and escaped from whoever his buyer was.

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Chrollo departed York Shin in the company of Paku and Bonolenov. Due to the fragile luggage he was carrying in his pocket and aware of the intense heat, rather than move on foot, the three stole a car. Pakunoda drove while Chrollo occupied the passenger seat. Bonolenov took the backseat for good reason: the tribesman had severe motion sickness though he never complained of it.

It was the morning after the heist when they arrived at the #4 base, Paku having drove through the night. York Shin was far behind them and the forest rose high around the car. It was cooler here, and since they could move under the cover of the trees, Chrollo had them abandon the stolen vehicle in a town that was an hour from the base.

Breakfast was the some fruit that Paku swiped from a stand in the morning farmers market held in the town and then they arrived at the base while it was still morning.

The #4 base had once been a sanitarium with a nasty reputation for patients being abused and
experimented on. It had been abandoned about 50 years previous and Chrollo had bought the building six years ago. The first, second, and third stories of the crumbling behemoth of a building were left as they were while the troupe had taken up residence in the basement.

During their time there, Shalnark had installed internet and electrical appliances while Franklin, Uvo, and Phinks had demonstrated their ability in the area of construction by repairing walls, installing insulation, and dividing the basement into rooms. They’d been able to make a kitchen, two bathrooms, a computer room, training room, a lounge/living area, and several bedrooms. They had to share, but this base was meant for function, not privacy.

It had also not been occupied for over a month with Nobunaga being the last to stay here, and he was not known to either clean or do the dishes. Since the omega needed some training, this seemed as good of a place to start as any.

“Bono, run a patrol of the area,” Chrollo ordered as the building came into sight. “Paku, patrol inside the building. If you find anyone, squatters or otherwise, get rid of them. I’m get the generator running.”

“Yes sir,” Paku replied as Bono disappeared without a word.

Paku entered the building as Chrollo rounded the building, heading to the shed where they kept the fuel for the generator. Perhaps he should let Shalnark try those solar panels he spoke about sometimes, sparing them from having to check for fuel for the generator.

Just as he suspected, Nobunaga had not left any fuel for the generator. It was likely that if he tried to start the thing, it would be running on fumes if it even started at all.

Removing the fun fun cloth from his pocket, Chrollo walked into the building and found that Paku was chasing out a group of teenagers at gunpoint. The kids had scared themselves witless by staying overnight after listening to the urban legends about the haunting of the building, though there was likely a decent body count that had built up since the troupe had started using the place as a base.

“Hold on to this,” Chrollo stated as he handed the still bag to Pakunoda who accepted it with a raised eyebrow. “I need to get fuel for the generator. I’ll get lunch and dinner for us while in town.”

“Okay,” Paku replied as she adjusted her grip on the sack. There shouldn’t be any threats she couldn’t take care of in the building.

The trek back to town took less time than it had to get to the base and Chrollo made certain to remove his danchou-coat and replace it with a plain white button-up shirt before entering the hardware store where he bought several canisters of fuel. They were too cumbersome to carry on his own, so he borrowed a truck to drive them up to the base. Before he left town, he bought some take-out for lunch for himself, Paku, and Bono. He’d get dinner when he returned the truck.

The road back to the base took far longer than it took to walk because of the curving and poorly maintained roads. An hour long walk turned into a two hour drive, with him arriving back at the base right at noon. Paku had finished with her patrol and Bono was getting rid of the body of what Chrollo could only guess had once been a belligerent and slightly crazed hobo. She settled the bag holding the omega on the porch in the shade before helping Chrollo unload the fuel and carrying it back to the generator. The tank was quickly filled and the extra cans settled in the supply shed.

Chrollo handed the food to her before climbing back into the truck for the long drive, even refilling
the tank before returning the truck. He had a decent relationship with the owner and the man knew nothing about the troupe. Chrollo maintained the relationship simply because it was convenient for this base.

Machi, Uvo, and Kortopi arrived in town as Chrollo was considering entering the bookstore of the town, bringing his attention back to the task at hand, namely finding dinner and heading back to the base.

Kortopi joined him in getting takeout from a small restaurant. Though Chrollo could admit he found some of the pasta dishes interesting, he settled on three salads since they were unlikely to spoil in the heat before they got to the base. Kortopi got something similar.

Uvo had a bag in hand and was chowing down on a sandwich when they met at the edge of town, Machi apparently already going ahead. Not much was said as they headed to the base, just a comfortable silence. Chrollo doubted they would have had much to say to each other any way.

Paku had already opened the door to the basement when they arrived and the lights in the basement were on.

“The water has been turned on,” Paku reported as Chrollo entered and headed towards the kitchen to stow their salads in the refrigerator which was decently cool now. “We should have enough warm water for everyone to shower if we stagger the showers.”

“Very well then, you may take the first shower,” Chrollo informed the woman who nodded and held out the fun fun cloth bag. Accepting it, Chrollo thought of releasing the omega but decided against it for now. He’d prefer to have everyone here and the door sealed before letting it out.

“This place is a mess,” Machi stated as Kortopi walked into a notable cobweb and started batting at the sticky tendrils.

“The omega will be cleaning it as part of its training,” Chrollo assured the beta as he shrugged on his coat and settled the fun fun cloth back in his pocket.

“Then shouldn’t you release it so it can get started?”

“After everyone arrives.”

Nobunaga, Shizuku, and Franklin arrived an hour later and an hour after that, right at 5PM, Shalnark, Feitan, and Phinks arrived. The door to the base was shut and locked with a nen lock by Chrollo himself, drawing out the twelve-legged spider himself to activate the lock. Immediately after, he finally removed the bag containing the omega from his pocket and released the omega.

The omega stumbled out of the bag, favoring its foot with the crude bandage. Without nen, that cut wouldn’t heal very fast and it would be open to infections, especially without shoes to protect its feet. Not to mention that any scar would drive down the value of the omega. Chrollo made a mental note to have Machi fix the wound.

“This is the door of this base,” Chrollo explained while nodding at the newly sealed door. “It is sealed shut with nen, so for now you’ll be allowed to walk around with the chain not anchored. Don’t think this is a kindness, you are untrained and we’ll be correcting that here.”

The omega looked angry and insulted but kept its mouth shut. Good, it knew what its place was.

Chrollo moved to step around the omega when the other’s eyes went wide with shock and a touch of terror. Following its gaze, Chrollo felt a smirk pull at his lips. It seemed the omega was afraid of
Moving back to the lounge area, Chrollo found most of the troupe spread out in the wide area. The entire place needed to be swept, mopped, and dusted. The blankets probably needed to be washed and they all had laundry… The omega would definitely be busy tomorrow.

“Machi, tend to the omega’s foot before going to bed,” Chrollo stated as he headed towards the kitchen to collect his salad. “We can’t afford it getting an infection.”

“Alright,” Machi replied flatly though she didn’t get up from where she was currently playing cards with several other members of the troupe.

Chrollo entered the kitchen then and glanced around unlike the first time he had entered to drop off the food. The entire room was a wreck! Spilled liquids and grease made sticky spots every few feet. Pots, pans, and dishes that hadn’t been properly rinsed littered every surface, thankfully there wasn’t any rotting food that he could see.

Checking the cupboards, Chrollo found they had enough plates for breakfast tomorrow, but the omega would need to do the dishes.

Finally moving to the fridge, Chrollo removed his salad and returned to the lounge. The omega wasn’t present, probably exploring the base.

The evening went by slowly as the troupe played several different card games in different groups while several insisted on turning out most of the lights and watching a movie. Chrollo pulled out a book and read most of the evening. Finally he decided it was time to turn in and glanced around the room.

“We’ll need to start selling the items from the auction tomorrow as well as researching so we can better sell the omega,” Chrollo stated as he set aside his book and stood. “I’ll be heading to bed. Sleeping arrangements for now will have the alphas sleeping in the west room. Betas can divide the rooms on the east hall. The omega will be sleeping in the alpha room.”

Machi stood and stretched. “I’ll fix its foot now,” she stated as she glanced around. “Where is it?” Uvo looked up as did Nobunaga and most of the troupe.

“Machi and I will find the omega. Its chain will remain in place so it doesn’t have nen right now. If you happen upon it, don’t hurt it.”

Chrollo hadn’t seen the omega enter the lounge even once, so he headed back towards the entrance of the base, Machi behind him. They didn’t have to go far, the omega was in the bathroom across from the training room, attempting to treat its foot.

Machi groaned as she saw the deep cut on the foot. “Should have dealt with it last night,” she observed as she approached the omega.

The blonde stared at Machi as it clutched its foot, its eyes shifting to scarlet and a hiss reverberating in its throat. Machi’s response was a flat stare.

“I’m going to treat your foot. It can be easy or difficult for you.”

The omega stared at her for a long moment before allowing the beta see his foot.

“Just hold still.” Machi started her thread technique and connected it to a needle before her hand
moved rapidly over the wound, drawing a small gasp from the omega. “Done.”

Chrollo glanced at the appendage and nodded, the wound now nearly imperceptible. It would likely be gone in the morning.

“Thank you, Machi,” he stated as she left the room before focusing on the omega. “Come.”

The omega stared at him as he turned and left the bathroom but the clinking of the chain indicated that it was following. A number of the troupe members were still in the lounge when Chrollo passed through and collected his own small bag, and then he moved to the small hallway that had a single bathroom and bedroom. Pushing open the door to the room, Chrollo nodded in, signaling the omega to step through.

Inside the room, Uvo and Phinks were dividing up the room using blankets to provide each of the occupants with some privacy. The omega froze just inside the door, eyes widening as Chrollo stepped in as well and shut the door.

“You’ll be sleeping in here with the alphas,” Chrollo stated as he stooped and grabbed the chain still attached to the omega’s ankle. “You may not leave the room during the night without permission and an alpha going with you during the night.” Chrollo anchored the chain to the floor in the center of the room.

The omega looked shocked and appalled but didn’t say anything as its eyes travelled around the room, but each wall was claimed by a different alpha. It instead sat in the center of the room as Chrollo moved to the far wall and set out his own bedroll.

Nobunaga ambled in minutes later and set out his own bedroll in a sloppy manner, eyes glancing at the omega in the center of the room. “Who’s it sharing with first?” the enhancer asked and the omega tensed instantly.

“It’ll choose,” Chrollo replied as he settled into his own bedroll. Phinks was also settling, leaving a notable amount of space next to him.

Uvo was situated closest to the light switch and Chrollo expected the large alpha to switch it off but a loud gurgling noise caught his ear and Chrollo’s eyes snapped to the omega as Uvo began patting at his pocket then withdrew a wrapper that Chrollo recognized as the protein bars they’d eaten the previous day. Come to think of it, when was the last time they had fed the omega?

The answer occurred to him as Uvo handed the remainder of the bar to the omega: they hadn’t. It had probably drank some water before he and Machi found it in the bathroom, but they hadn’t even offered that much. Little wonder it got sick.

It would need something more substantial than the protein bar in the morning.

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Kurapika stared at the half a protein bar the large alpha, Uvo, had given him. It had obviously been in the alpha’s pocket for a while, but he didn’t care in that moment as his stomach betrayed his hunger yet again.

The bar was gone inside of four bites, but it was better than nothing.

Around the room, the alphas settled and Uvogin switched off the light. Feet bare on the concrete floor, Kurapika shivered at the chill of the room as he tried to curl up on himself for a bit of
The darkness of the room seemed to make it seem colder and after a few minutes Kurapika tried to reach for one of the hanging blankets. He tried to tug at it with the hope of covering himself only to have his hand slapped.

“If you want a blanket, you share with an alpha,” the deep voice of the troupe leader stated.

Kurapika couldn’t see the other in the darkness, but he refused to even entertain the idea of sleeping with an alpha, especially since he remembered the order from the troupe leader when the alpha had stopped his rape: he could only be touched if he willingly approached an alpha. A blanket would come at the cost of his body being used as a plaything.

Curling up near the center of the room, away from each private area, Kurapika wrapped his arms around himself as he shut his eyes.

Sleep came and went on the cold floor and more than once Kurapika woke shivering. The darkness in the room was so absolute that even after his eyes should have adjusted, he still couldn’t see anything. He longed for a blanket, to be less cold, but he refused to consider laying with one of the alphas since he knew the price.

It was during one of his drifting moments that an alarm of some sort went off and the light in the room snapped on.

As his vision cleared, Kurapika saw that the troupe leader was staring at an empty space on his bedroll and then glanced at where Kurapika still lay with confusion. Then the man grabbed a small device and the sound stopped.

“Wha’s tha ‘bout?” a sleep muddled voice asked as the troupe leader extracted himself from his bedroll and moved towards Kurapka.

“The omega needs to clean up in the kitchen and start breakfast,” was the response as the chain was released from the floor.

Kurapika rose on shaking legs to cold feet as the troupe leader moved past him to the door. It was shoved open and Kurapika followed the alpha into the hall where he was pointed into a bathroom.

“Don’t lock the door or you won’t be allowed to even close it in the future.” The order caused Kurapika to pause as he had been about to lock the door, but he held off and moved to the toilet. The bathroom floor was disgusting, covered in hair and filth. Kurapika tried not to look as he used the toilet then washed his hands before opening the door again.

This time the alpha led him down the hall to what looked like a large gathering room and then through a door where a light was flicked on to reveal a kitchen that was in utter shambles.

Kurapika’s feet instantly felt sticky on the disgusting floor and he itched just seeing the filthy dishes.

“I would suggest that you focus on cleaning the items you’ll need to cook breakfast as well as the dishes and utensils needed. You can get the rest later,” the troupe leader stated. “After finishing the kitchen, you’ll be cleaning the bathrooms, the lounge, and other rooms. You’ll sweep, dust, do laundry, and whatever else is requested of you. If something isn’t done to the standard we demand, then you’ll redo it. Not performing the tasks will mean you won’t eat. Understand?”

“Yes,” Kurapika snarled and turned with the intent of starting the dishes only for his arm to be caught in one hand and his chin grabbed by another, forcing him to turn back to the troupe leader.
“You will answer all questions with a ‘yes sir’ or a ‘no sir’, madam if the person speaking is female. No snarls. Now I repeat, understand?”

Kurapika took a few seconds to beat down his anger over the situation and the demand. “Yes sir.”

The dark-haired alpha nodded before moving to the next room and switching on a lamp. Kurapika heard a book being opened as he moved over the disgusting floor to the sink. It was filled with plates and cups and the Kuruta had to remove them so he could fill the sink with warm water and soap.

The plates practically needed to be scraped to get the dried bits off of them and Kurapika scrubbed them with soap and the dish brush he found. There was no dishwasher, so he cleaned the plates as well as he could then set them on a drying rack. The utensils received similar treatment, and then Kurapika turned his attention to the stack of pots and pans. He chose a pan then checked the fridge. There were two large packs of eggs and a couple of apples.

Turning his attention back to the pan, Kurapika washed it then set it to dry on the stove as he dragged out the eggs and apples. He chopped the apples into slices then whisked the eggs in a bowl as the pan warmed. Checking the cupboards, Kurapika found a coffee maker and some coffee.

Adding water to the maker then measuring out the coffee, Kurapika set it to brew then turned his attention back to the eggs. He had cracked thirty eggs, assuming each member of the troupe would eat at least two. He prepared the eggs by simply scrambling them in the pan in batches, depositing the finished eggs on a plate, and Kurapika had to grab and clean another plate between batches of eggs.

Finally the eggs were finished and Kurapika wasn’t certain what to do. Should he just take a portion or-

“Move,” the nasty alpha that had tried to rape him declared as he shoved Kurapika aside, and he saw the rest of the troupe was already moving into the kitchen.

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Though Nobunaga had shoved the omega aside, Chrollo was automatically at the front of the line and he took hold of two plates. On one of the plates he scooped up some eggs and apple slices, on the other he put a single scoop of eggs, maybe about one egg worth, and set it aside.

Chrollo had advised the rest of the troupe that he would be setting aside a plate for the omega and not to touch it, so he felt there was nothing wrong with leaving the filthy kitchen as the rest of the troupe got their breakfast. He completely missed Shizuku staring at the spare plate in confusion for a moment before she grabbed it, took another couple scoops of eggs and some of the apple slices before following the rest of the troupe out as Phinks collected the rest of the eggs.

“Yeesh, doesn’t sleep with alphas and can’t cook!” Nobunaga complained after tasting the eggs as the troupe settled in the lounge. “It didn’t use any butter or salt on these eggs!”

“It just needs training,” Chrollo stated plainly. “And since it seems cooking needs to be worked on as well, if you have a dish you want the omega to make, give it the recipe.”

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Kurapika stared at the empty dish and pan, all of the eggs were gone and there was two apple slices
left. The coffee was almost gone and Kurapika knew the troupe would be bringing their plates in once they were done.

For a moment he thought of trying to cook more eggs and he glanced at the fridge, but the sound of a throat clearing drew his eyes to the door.

The person who entered was a blonde beta with a rather disturbing grin who made a beeline for the coffee pot. He emptied the pot into his mug before turning to Kurapika. “Danchou didn’t give you permission to cook anything just for yourself. Just be happy with what you get.”

Kurapika’s stomach growled loudly as the blonde snagged one of the remaining apple slices and the beta paused before glancing at the counter, as though searching for something. His eyebrows rose but he just shrugged and turned to leave. “Might want to get to cleaning, omega.”

The last apple slice was ignored as Kurapika turned back to the sink and angrily began to scrub the dishes, not even looking as the troupe members came in and dumped their plates into the sink. The dishes took a while to finish and then while they dried, Kurapika wiped down the counters. The floors were too sticky to sweep and there was no mop, so Kurapika ended up using a towel to clean the floor. His hands felt raw from dipping them into the water in the sink and wringing out the towel before returning to the floor.

He had barely finished the floor of the kitchen when the large beta with drooping ears appeared. The beta glanced around the kitchen then nodded and directed him back to the bathrooms.

There were two bathrooms in the base, both in terrible shape. The only upside was that he was directed to where the troupe kept their limited cleaning supplies and then he was sweeping both spaces, scrubbing the disgusting showers and toilets, mopping the floors on his hands and knees again, and cleaning the sink areas.

Laundry came next and Kurapika was thankful that there was a washing machine in the base. The clothes were to be separated, cleaned, and then hung up in a long room that had the only window outside. Kurapika stared at the bar covered window for a moment, but one of the spiders was there and was quick to call him back to task.

Between the loads of laundry, Kurapika swept the halls and had to clear cobwebs. Once the loads were finished, he focused on the sweeping of the entire base. During this time, Kurapika found his vision getting fuzzy as he tried to keep moving. It was as he entered the lounge, sweeping dust and debris that a hand landed on Kurapika’s shoulder.

The hand belonged to a very short male beta who glared at Kurapika. “When make dinner?”

“Dinner?” Kurapika asked faintly, not quite realizing that that much time had passed. A weakness was settling in his limbs and he wasn’t sure how much longer he could continue. Maybe if he worked himself to the bone, it would hurt his selling price? God, Kurapika hoped so. Anything that could spite the troupe without him going back on his word.

“Forget?” the small beta’s accusation was sharp and then Kurapika found himself shoved hard against the wall. “Stupid, lazy omega.”

Kurapika didn’t even get the opportunity to counter as the beta dragged him to the kitchen and Kurapika could have screamed when he saw the mess that had already been made. Someone had pulled out several pots and dishes, used them, then left them in the sink. Either soup or a thin sauce had been spilled over the counter and floor yet again, making it look like he hadn’t cleaned in here before.
A piece of paper was shoved into his face and the beta barked out the word, “Make,” before storming out.

Kurapika grabbed the paper to take a look at what it was and found a recipe. Macaroni and cheese. Ok, that should be easy eno-

The room spun for a moment and Kurapika had to grab the counter to steady himself as he stared at the recipe. This wasn’t an easy form of macaroni… It did allow the use of boxed noodles that were cooked, but then it went further and required shredded cheese and browned beef and was baked. There was also a note on the side to include some form vegetable.

Still feeling unsteady, Kurapika tried to move to the fridge to check for some cheese, beef, and vegetables but found it was completely unstocked. There was no beef, no vegetables, only the remaining eggs and three oranges. The freezer contained a tub of ice cream. The pantry held some cans of beans, corn, peas and a few boxes of spaghetti, but not the pasta required for the macaroni.

They wanted him to make something that was impossible! He didn’t have the ingredients!

The spinning of the room finally slowed as Kurapika moved to the door of the kitchen and shoved the recipe into the chest of the small beta. “I can’t make this!”

The beta wasn’t taking that and shoved Kurapika hard, and he fell back against the fridge. “Make it!”

“I can’t!”

“You no try!”

“You don’t have the ingredients!”

The beta blinked at him then glanced at the recipe. “Your fault, not check earlier.”

“Feitan, what’s going on?” asked the smooth, deep voice of who Kurapika now recognized as the troupe leader.

“Omega dawdle,” the beta who Kurapika now knew was named Feitan replied. His eyes were narrowed dangerously, daring Kurapika to object. “Didn’t check recipe earlier, now says can’t cook due to no ingredients.”

The troupe leader’s response was to check the recipe himself before sighing. “A bit too late to get groceries now. Guess we had better head to town if we want food. Feitan, would you remain and watch the omega?”

“Bring taco,” the beta replied.

“Very well,” the alpha replied before focusing on Kurapika. “If you even want to hope to have breakfast tomorrow then you will clean up this mess, finish the sweeping and the bathrooms. There is more laundry to be done as well.”

Kurapika gaped at the man as he turned and left, the short one sending him a snide look before turning and leaving the room.

The room spun horribly as Kurapika regained his feet then stared at the mess. He’d aimed so high, becoming a Hunter. He’d gained his nen abilities, worked hard and now… He was just the slave of the Phantom Troupe. An omega that was waiting for them to sell to the highest bidder.
The tears burned behind his eyes as Kurapika washed the dishes yet again then got another towel to use as a mop. His burning hands could barely hold the towel as he cleaned and mopped up the spills.

The diminutive spider was reading a book but Kurapika’s spinning head couldn’t focus on it as he stumbled towards the bathroom across from the alpha room. The horror that filled him was worse than the one time he’d been told that he was just as bad as Leorio. It looked like he hadn’t cleaned at all! Towels littered the floor, hair was everywhere, someone had shaved at the sink and hadn’t even attempted to rinse it out!

Turning on the tap for the sink, Kurapika stared at the water that rinsed the sink before cupping his hands to bring some to his mouth. It helped somewhat to bring him back to focus and he had to admit the bathroom wasn’t as bad as he had thought. Collecting the towels, he used them to wipe up the various surfaces then carried them to the laundry room where he found another pile of clothes waiting for him.

Head spinning again, Kurapika headed for the second bathroom and found it wasn’t as bad as the first, just some towels strewn around. Those were carried to the laundry room and Kurapika sort the items quickly, chucking the first load into the washer with detergent before standing to return to the sweeping, but the room swayed horribly under his feet and Kurapika caught himself on the wall in reflex.

Kurapika had gone hungry before, but never like this. He’d usually had something to break up the long periods, at least something more substantial than half a protein bar and a mouthful of beans.

He was shivering as he returned to where he’d left the broom, the world spinning yet again as he managed to finish sweeping the lounge area then dusted under the watchful eye of the troupe member present.

Kurapika was about to begin sweeping the hall towards the entrance and dealing with the cobwebs when he heard the door open and several voices enter. The troupe had returned, several of them carrying boxes that still had fragrant food in them and Kurapika’s mouth watered automatically as his stomach grumbled, but he received nothing more than an admonishing look from several of the troupe members.

The smell of food made the world settle for a long moment but the broom in his hands felt like it was made of lead as he began to sweep again. Walking into a cobweb made Kurapika stumbled a bit, and then he was trying to pick the horrible thing off as the buzzer from the washer went off.

“Oi! Omega, the laundry!” a voice shouted at him, but Kurapika couldn’t even tell if the speaker was male or female anymore. But he still turned with the intent of trying to get the next load in. Maybe it was a false hope, but some food tomorrow was all he could think of anymore.

The troupe ignored him as he stumbled through the lounge to the hall where the laundry room was and pulled the heavy, wet laundry from the washer, set it in a basket to hang, and then put in the next load.

Earlier the laundry basket hadn’t felt too heavy, now it felt like the stones from the subway platform and Kurapika was wheezing before he managed to reach the room to hang the laundry.

Grabbing the first item, Kurapika couldn’t have said what it was as he hung it over the line because his vision wasn’t working too well. The second item was the same way, and on the third his vision blacked entirely and Kurapika fell to his knees, accidentally knocking over the laundry basket as he fell.
The noise should have only been a slight bump, but someone either heard or was checking on him since they were next to him a moment later.

“Hey? Is it alright?” a voice asked as the murk and gloom began to clear from Kurapika’s head.

“It might be sick again,” another voice offered. “It hasn’t eaten today, or even once since we took it.”

“I set aside a plate at breakfast for it,” a deep voice argued as the world began to come back into focus and Kurapika found he was on his hands and knees. There were three troupe members in the room, two blonde betas, one the male from this morning and the other female, and the troupe leader.

“It didn’t get it, I think someone picked it up on accident,” the blonde male replied. “When I filled my coffee cup, it was staring at the empty pan and there wasn’t anything left nor a plate with anything on it, not even crumbs.”

The female beta might have had a brief flash of pity, but the troupe leader looked like he was exasperated and slightly worried.

“And Feitan didn’t give it an opportunity to check for ingredients earlier,” the female finally added. “He gave the recipe to the omega five minutes before accusing it of dawdling.”

The troupe leader finally stepped forward and dragged Kurapika to his feet by a hand on his shoulder then to the lounge where most of the troupe was still gathered.

“Are there any leftovers from the takeout?” the alpha asked.

One voice after another called out in the negative before the alpha sighed and dragged Kurapika to the kitchen, releasing him inside the door before heading into the pantry. He returned a minute later, grabbed a bowl from the cupboard, and opened a can. Using a spoon, he scooped out a few lumps into the bowl then shoved the can into the fridge and pushed the bowl into Kurapika’s hands.

“This’ll tide you over until breakfast, but don’t expect to get handouts every day,” the alpha snapped as Kurapika glanced into the bowl. Peaches.

No utensil was offered and Kurapika found he didn’t care in that moment, his fingers digging into the soft flesh of the fruit, delivering chunks of the fruit to his mouth. He gagged after a moment and forced himself to slow down, eating the chunks of peach one piece at a time. It took a minute to realize that the troupe leader hadn’t left and was instead watching him intently as Kurapika finished the small amount of food.

“Wash the dish and head for the bedroom.”

The order was stated in a quiet voice that offered no room for argument, not that Kurapika felt he could argue then. Instead he did as ordered and washed the bowl then headed towards that horrible room where the alphas slept. The troupe leader followed him there and connected the chain to an anchor before leaving, shutting the door and leaving Kurapika alone in the room.

“What was that about?” Machi asked when Chrollo returned to the lounge and sat down with his book.
“We overloaded the omega, forgetting it doesn’t have nen now and it hasn’t been fed for three
days,” Chrollo replied. “It’ll be doing chores again tomorrow, but we’ll be limiting the amount.
And giving it ample time to tell us if it needs groceries.”

“Oh kay, I’ll check if we have ingredients for pancakes,” Shalnark called as he headed into the
kitchen.

“It did well for cleaning today,” Franklin pointed out.

“Which is why it’ll receive breakfast tomorrow.”

Shalnark returned to the lounge with a pinched expression. “We really don’t have anything,” the
Manipulator admitted. “Someone will need to go shopping tomorrow, we definitely don’t have
ingredients for anything other than pasta and beans.”

“So what’ll we do for breakfast?” Phinks demanded.

“We’ll be eating from cans. Thankfully we have plenty of canned fruit and if we boil the remaining
eggs, we should each be able to have one.”

“I intended to go to the bookshop tomorrow, I’ll take the omega with me and pick up groceries as
well,” Chrollo decided. “Pick out recipes for the next few days so we can have a list of what we
need.”

An hour later when Chrollo headed for bed, he expected to find the omega curled up in someone’s
bedroll. Instead it was curled up as it had been the night before on the floor. Perhaps it still needed
another few days to get used to its temporary masters?

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The alarm went off again the next morning and Kurapika woke up automatically. His body ached
terribly from the cold floor and being overworked. The lights snapped on after a moment and
Kurapika blinked as the only decent-seeming alpha gave him a long look before settling down
again.

The troupe leader was already on his feet and releasing the chain from the anchor. That morning
seemed a repeat of the previous day as Kurapika was allowed to use the bathroom and then sent to
the kitchen, a thankfully clean kitchen except for a stack of papers on the counter.

Kurapika stared at them and realized after a moment that they were recipes and on top of them was
a shopping list. There was also a note telling him to just boil the remaining eggs and open some
canned fruit for breakfast.

It was easy enough to pull out a pot, fill it with water and set that to boil then grab the remaining
eggs from the fridge. Eighteen eggs remained, so Kurapika pulled out five cans of fruit as well as
the canned peaches that had been used to feed him the night before. He thought of trying to heat
some beans and went with it since the eggs and fruit didn’t seem like much.

When the water boiled, Kurapika dropped the eggs in and checked the beans. A crack for the pot of
eggs drew his attention and Kurapika saw that the shell of one of the eggs had cracked and the
white was running out. Had that happened when they boiled the spider-eagle eggs? No… Menchi
had added something to the pot to prevent that… Sugar?

Kurapika had never had a boiled egg that tasted of sugar, but you did peel them after they were
cooked, so wouldn’t that keep them from being sugary?

Looking through the cupboards, Kurapika found a couple small packets of sugar, obviously meant for coffee, and added them to the pot. More of the eggs cracked in that time, and then things settled a bit.

The beans were warm now and Kurapika turned off the heat on that burner then turned his attention to the cans of fruit. They had peaches, pineapple, and cocktail so people could mix however they like.

A loud crack sounded from the pot again and Kurapika glanced in at the eggs, unsure of what was happening. The shells of each egg seemed to be breaking now, the whites spilling into the water looking a bit like jelly. Congealed jelly.

Mentally Kurapika gagged as he wondered what was wrong now. Was the water too hot? No, that was impossible, water maintained the same temperature when it boiled, staying exactly 100 C… At sea level. Were they higher in altitude? That would make the water boil at a lower temperature but adding the sugar should have raised the boiling point again. Maybe there was too much sugar?

“You look confused,” a voice stated and Kurapika glanced to his right to see the blonde female beta.

Kurapika shrugged and the woman glanced into the pot as well.

“What… Did you not add any vinegar?”

“Vinegar?” Kurapika asked, his eyebrows rising in confusion. “I thought it was sugar!”

The woman’s jaw dropped at his response and Kurapika knew immediately that he’d guessed wrong. Her hand was on his shoulder a moment later.

“You honestly thought you were supposed to add sugar?”

Kurapika didn’t get a chance to respond before the topknot alpha grabbed Kurapika and shoved a sword into his hands.

“Clean this,” the alpha stated simply. “Sharpen it also. Supplies are in the training room. No breakfast til it’s done.” The alpha grabbed a slotted spoon to fish out one of the eggs and the female beta looked like she was about to object before her eyes landed on Kurapika. She gave a slight nod to the door, telling him to leave and Kurapika found he didn’t mind in that moment. He really didn’t want to be around that particular alpha.

Having no real idea of where the training room was, Kurapika moved through the mostly empty lounge with the sword in hand towards the entrance hall, the only part of the base he hadn’t really been through.

Kurapika opened one door after another, noting a supply closet that seemed to contain building supplies, the bathroom from the other day, a locked door, and finally the training room. A cabinet contained a whetstone, rags, and the oil to clean the blade.

Using the tools was relaxing as Kurapika cared for the blade, sharpening it with practiced strokes from the whetstone then oiling the blade and using a cloth to work the oil along the metal. The amount of blood present near the hilt reminded him of exactly who this blade belonged to and what it was used for. This blade had probably been used to kill his people…
Red filled his vision as Kurapika finished the job quickly then moved to return the supplies to the cabinet when he froze at the sight of a tube on top of the cabinet. Builders glue. It really didn’t belong here, but someone had been careless. Kurapika stared at the tube for a long moment before he glanced at the now clean katana in his hands and the sheath.

He could always claim that he confused it for the cleaner Kurapika decided as he grabbed the glue and spread a generous amount along the length of the blade before sliding it into the sheath.
Pakunoda moved from the kitchen after taking the time to place a small bowl of fruit for the omega in the fridge with a note attached for nobody to eat it. She didn’t care much for the omega, but if they continued to starve it then they’d never get anything for it.

She’d grabbed a bit of fruit and beans for herself, ignoring the sweetened eggs with a grimace. The boy’s memories had revealed he wasn’t just a bad cook, he had simply never cooked before.

Pakunoda briefly glanced around to find Chrollo. She wanted to warn him not to eat the eggs and talk to him about a better method of teaching the omega to cook. Leaving it to its own devices in the kitchen was obviously not working.

Chrollo was just putting down his book to grab breakfast as Pakunoda approached him in the lounge. Just as she opened her mouth to call his attention, Nobunaga began to gag and cough loudly.

“This is disgusting! What the hell did it put in these eggs?!” He squawked dropping his plate to spit the egg on the floor.

Chrollo raised a brow and looked to Pakunoda’s blank face. Many wouldn’t be able to see any emotion but Chrollo could read her like a book, she was slightly amused to watch the samurai scrape at his tongue desperately.

“So I’m assuming I shouldn’t eat the eggs?” Chrollo asked dully, apparently the omega had been able to ruin something as simple as boiled eggs.

“No, the omega thought you add sugar instead of vinegar or salt,” Pakunoda stated as she moved past an aghast Nobunaga. He sputtered and gaped at the mashed egg on the floor.

“That stupid thing can’t even boil an egg right?” He growled, glaring at the kitchen even though he knew the omega wasn’t in there. “He better clean my sword right,” his face shifting into a snarl.

“Sword?” Chrollo turned to Nobunaga, his face perfectly blank except for his narrowed eyes.
“Yeah, I told him to clean and sharpen my sword or else no breakfast,” Nobunaga barked while turning to march to the training room and force the stupid omega to read a cookbook.

“Nobunaga.” Chrollo’s voice was dark and Nobunaga froze in place. Chrollo kept himself calm but inside he felt more than a little irritation. “I believe I told you all I had already selected its chores for the day, and it has more than earned its breakfast this morning.”

“Come on, not after this stunt! It probably did it on purpose!” Nobunaga screamed and Chrollo looked to Pakunoda to confirm that the boy didn’t purposely ruin the food. She shook her head, silently confirming it was an honest mistake.

“Nobunaga, I’m disappointed in you for disobeying me and when I get back from town I’ll deal with you.” Chrollo turned then to leave, deciding he’d get something in town instead of canned fruit and beans.

Machi should have finished one of the omega-styled outfits for their acquisition by now, the outfits she was making should help them better sell the omega later on.

Chrollo found Machi in the kitchen giving the eggs an evaluating look, her instincts telling her not to touch the jelitized mess.

“Machi, have you finished any of the omega outfits?” Chrollo asked as pushed the pot to the back of the stove, confirming to her that the eggs were no good.

“Yeah, one of them is ready. You taking it to town now?”

“Yes. If you’ll grab the outfit, I’ll find the omega,” Chrollo confirmed. The beta nodded and grabbed a can of peaches before leaving to do as he asked.

Chrollo took a quick look around to find the omega but didn’t see him loitering anywhere in sight. Nobunaga has ordered him to clean and sharpen his sword, so he decided to check the training room.

The boy was just sheathing the sword when he entered, the sword looked wonderful from the small
glance he got at it. Chrollo took in the empty tube of builders glue on the floor and found that if the omega did what he suspected, then it was well justified.

“We’re going to town for shopping,” Chrollo stated plainly and turned expecting the omega to follow. After a moment the clinking of the chain told him the omega was following. He met Machi in the lounge with the omega trailing behind him.

Machi handed Chrollo a bundle of white and blue with blue ballet slippers with long pretty ribbons. She looked over the omega and snatched the clothes back.

Chrollo looked back at the omega and realized the problem: he was filthy. His hair was a tangled mess, dust and cobwebs mixed in with the dirty strains of hair. His skin was sweaty and covered in grime. His feet were the worst, practically grey from the sheer amount of dust and dirt.

“You’re right, it needs to be cleaned,” Chrollo confirmed before taking the clothes back and the omega’s arm, pulling him to the bathroom. He shoved the omega into the bathroom and placed the clothes on the counter.

“Wash up in the shower and remember you are not to lock the door. Everything you’ll need is either in the shower or under the counter.” Chrollo stepped back from the omega before bending down to remove the chain that dragged from its ankle. The shackle would remain on but now would just look like a bracelet. “When you’re done, get dressed and meet me in the lounge, don’t dawdle.”

Kurapika flinched when Chrollo pulled the chain out of the bathroom and shut the door.

Sighing, Kurapika stayed rooted for a moment, looking at the lock but decided not to risk it. Catching a glimpse of himself in the mirror was eye opening, he looked downright disgusting. After the brief look at himself, he could practically feel germs crawling all over him. And was that a bug in his hair?

“I feel so gross!” Kurapika gagged at the smell of himself as he threw off his white shirt. . . Well it used to be white. His pants went next before he stepped into the shower, trying hard not to look at his sticky skin.

Kurapika turned on the water and messed with the dials until the water was a reasonable temperature. He sighed as he stepped fully under the spray of water, feeling the ache in his muscles
Kurapika looked over the selection of soaps in the shower and decided on the black bottle that smelled like peppermint. The soap tingled a bit and it made him feel very clean.

He took the extra time to wash all the dirt from his feet and brush out the tangles in his hair under the water before rinsing out the shampoo and dapping a small amount of conditioner before turning off the water and wringing out his hair. Then he stepped out of the shower to look for a towel.

The clothes Kurapika had been wearing were gone and a towel was set on the towel seat.

Kurapika shivered as he realized someone had been in the bathroom while he had showered. Deciding there was nothing he could do about that creepy fact, he grabbed the towel and dried off his body. He towel dried his hair until it was fluffy and just a bit damp before even attempting to look at whatever clothing the troupe leader had picked out for him.

The troupe had demonstrated so far that they were just as taken in by the stereotypes of omegas as the rest of the world. Kurapika had discovered immediately the discrimination omegas were under in the modern world, people borderline hated omegas in the outside world. They thought of them as weak, submissive, and almost less than human. People believed omegas loved to cook, clean, and please. It was all the omega trade’s fault from what Kurapika understood.

Years ago the omega slave traders had begun stealing omegas from the already dwindling population and brainwashing them. Nowadays omega children rarely made it to ten without someone kidnapping them, raping them, forcing them into the facilities, or just all three. Sometimes they were just killed.

Kurapika sighed miserably again at the state of his life before picking up the bundle of fabric to see what embarrassing outfit the troupe would give him. Unfolding the outfit caused Kurapika to freeze, he wanted to scream and tear the stupid thing up. They seriously want him to wear a romper?!

“Hurry up omega!” A snarl came through the door. “Danchou is waiting on you and he says if you don’t hurry I can go in there and get you!”

Jumping into action, Kurapika quickly undid the many buttons on the back and jumped into the romper and did up the buttons as quick as lightning before turning his attention to the attached sash.
and simply tied it in a loose knot so it hung in front of him.

Without taking a look in the mirror, Kurapika slipped on the dainty shoes and tied the blue ribbons sloppily around his ankles and stumbled out of the bathroom.

“Done!” He yelled, the door hitting the obnoxious alpha in the face as he raced to the lounge, ribbons trailing after him.

Chrollo looked up when the omega raced into lounge. Its outfit looked hastily put on and it hadn’t tied a single ribbon or the sash right, even the buttons on the back were wrong. Machi was up and approaching the omega immediately, annoyed that it couldn’t even put on omega clothes right.

“The sash goes in a bow, not a knot!” she told it as she turned it around and redid the buttons, giving everyone a peek at the smooth pale back of the omega. Once she had the buttons done, she grabbed the sash and wrapped it tightly around his waist before tying it in a large bow on his back. After she was done she stooped to completely redo the ribbons on the omega’s ankles, the shackle only slightly getting in the way.

“There,” Machi nodded as she messed with the omega’s hair a bit, its face flushed with either embarrassment or anger, it wasn’t clear.

Chrollo took a moment to circle the omega. The romper Machi had made was thin and lovely, the bottoms frilly but airy and not too girly. The top was loose with spaghetti straps complimenting the omega’s small shoulders, chest and shapely legs that seemed to grow no hair.

The romper was a pristine white with lovely blue flowers, going nicely with the blue ballet slippers. With the dirt washed away and its eyes a beautiful grey, Chrollo could admit that the omega was exquisite. Its golden hair and the nice new clothes made it look like an actual work of art.

Phink gave a whistle when he got a look at the omega and Chrollo agreed.

“Big deal,” Feitan grumbled as he left the room.

Kurapika felt exposed in the short outfit, he had never gone without at least two layers before. He found himself pulling uncomfortably at the ends of the romper thing to get it to cover more skin.
“Don’t pull at the fabric!” Machi ordered. “I’m making you outfits for your sale, so don’t ruin them.” She smacked the omega’s hand away and he barely suppressed a growl.

“Come,” Chrollo ordered while moving to the door, trusting that the omega would follow him. He quickly drew the twelve legged spider to open the nen lock.

The omega followed him with a safe distance between them, its head bobbing around as it took in the only new scenery it had seen for days, even if it is just a decrepit building.

“Town is about an hours walk, when we get back you’ll give back the shoes and don’t even think about running. You do not want to find out what happens if you become more trouble than you’re worth,” Chrollo told the omega

“Yes sir,” Kurapika grumbled behind the troupe leader, fretting with the ends of the ridiculous outfit again.

The walk to town was silent, neither really cared to speak to the other, not that they believed they had anything to say to each other.

The town was about as regular as any other small town. Kurapika still whipped his head around, drinking in the sight of normal people. Kurapika knew this wouldn’t last and until the troupe actual sold him, he wouldn’t be seeing the outside world for a bit.

“We’re stopping by the bookstore first,” the troupe leader told him calmly. Kurapika visibly brightened behind the troupe leader.

“A bookstore?” Kurapika asked with the first bit of any happiness in his voice for days.

Chrollo stopped and turned back to look over the omega again, he raised a brow and shook his head at the excited gleam in his eyes. Incredible, keep a omega locked up for a few days and it will get excited about anything.

“Yes a bookstore” the troupe leader confirmed as the Kuruta looked him over. The troupe leader looked different when he was trying to blend into a crowd, gone was his odd choice in jacket and
he had a wrap around his forehead. He looked so ordinary. “Come.”

Kurapika followed a little closer now, excited to get to the bookstore.

Chrollo led the omega through the town, taking in the looks of wonder the townsfolk gave him when they spotted such a high grade omega trailing him. Alphas looked at him with envy, as he felt the omega inch a little closer as the bookstore neared.

Kurapika was riding on cloud nine when they entered the bookstore, it was small but after the last three days it looked like heaven. He was almost about to rush past the alpha but his arm was caught up in his warm hand before he could get too far.

“Sit down, be quiet, and I’ll even let you snack on a pastry before shopping.”

“But!”

“No buts, just sit.” The alpha pushed Kurapika over to a group of tables, snagging a pastry off the small bakery counter before placing it on the table and forcing him into a seat.

Chrollo gave the counter girl a few jenny and left the omega at the table.

Kurapika gapped at the danish that had been placed in front of him for a moment or two before looking longingly at the rows of bookshelves. Kurapika would do almost anything for a book at this moment.

Kurapika watched the troupe leader walk about and noticed him lingering around a particular bookshelf, mythology. He could spot a personal favorite, ‘Ivan’, and it somehow irritated him that the troupe leader walked past it without even giving it a look.

After about twenty minutes of searching for whatever he was looking for, the troupe leader finally came back for him. The danish was long gone and as Kurapika stood to join the alpha he spied the book the troupe leader had picked ‘The Hero With a Thousand Faces.’

Kuraprika rolled his eyes and scoffed at the book.
Chrollo looked at the omega with surprise and raised a brow, silently asking for him to explain himself.

“Really? Hero of a Thousand Faces?”

“Yes? What would you know?” Chrollo began to turn away from the omega but was stopped by angry red eyes.

“Oh, just that Joseph Campbell based his theories on Freud's Work which has been completely discredited and he completely ignored a mass amount of myth and folklore!” Kurapika growled at him, crossing his arms as his eyes faded.

“Yes, but that doesn’t take away the pattern Campbell found in many thousands of legends,” Chrollo argued, turning fully to the omega.

“Only if you ignore that many of those legends had been watered down! Campbell purposely ignored the origin stories of over half his examples stories.” ‘Not to mention he completely ignored any story centered on an omega hero,’ Kurapika added in his mind bitterly.

“Many stories have many origins,” Chrollo argued weakly and Kurapika knew he’d won the small debate but the alpha didn’t seem very upset by it. “Fine then, what book would you suggest?”

Kurapika smirked and moved to grab the book he had been eyeing.

Chrollo was handed the book he recognized as one he had passed many times, it’s title simply ‘Ivan.’

“This book doesn’t present itself as the only true model for mythological story set up and ties in many stories like the Odyssey and even some of the rarest origin stories of dragons. It’s much better,” the omega nodded and Chrollo couldn’t help but smile a bit. Maybe, just maybe, spending a little time with the omega won’t be as boring as he thought.
Breaking the Ice

Chapter by Serenechaos

“So aside from ‘Hero of a Thousand Faces’ supposedly being a rip off, what else do you know of mythology?” Chrollo asked as he and the omega left the bookstore. He’d purchased the book the omega had pointed out of sheer curiosity.

The conversation and debate that followed as Chrollo guided the omega to the market to collect groceries was one of the best that he had experienced in quite some time as the omega and he went through tales such as the Odyssey, the Iliad, and the possibility of the reality of the Trojan War.

“They believe that they found the ruins of Troy, so there is a possibility of Halen of Troy being real!” the omega argued as he collected noodles for the macaroni bake. “Even without Halen, then there may have been something that happened.”

“And the supposed horse used to invade the city?” Chrollo pointed out. “Do you believe that a people would believe they were left such a gift by an army? And why bring it into the city?”

“There are plenty of historical accounts of ancient societies constructing a marker or symbol when they decide to retreat,” the omega pointed out as it checked the grocery list. “We still need beef. As for bringing the horse into the city, back then it would have been the same as a trophy.”

“Note to self: don’t collect trophies large enough for a small army to hide in,” Chrollo found himself joking and then he saw something that made him pause: the omega smiled. It was brief, lasting only a moment, but the omega looked angelic. One picture of a smile like that and alphas everywhere would melt.

That thought caused Chrollo to glance around and sure enough, the small crowd of alphas that had been following them since arriving at the market all looked starstruck.

“What kind of vegetable would go with baked macaroni?” the omega’s voice asked and Chrollo saw that they were passing by the vegetable section. “What about this thing?”

Remembering the sugared eggs, Chrollo prepared himself for the worst as he looked at what the omega was holding. Eggplant. The purple vegetable was being carefully examined by the omega.

“Do you know how to cook that?” Chrollo asked.

“No. But how hard can it be?”

“Put it back.”

The omega stared at him in confusion. “There are 14 people eating, won’t something like this go farther in achieving that?”

“Not if you don’t know what you’re doing. And I don’t think anyone in the troupe knows how to cook that!”

The omega raised a delicate eyebrow then moved a bit further. “What about this?”

Potatoes. “Those don’t go well with what you’re going to be making.”

“But I know how to cook them!”
Somehow Chrollo doubted that the omega could cook them. Well that is.

The omega was reaching for a jicama when Chrollo moved forward and grabbed two heads of broccoli and shoved them into the omega’s arms. The omega blinked at them and didn’t seem to recognize the vegetable. “Oh, these are big enough!”

Good thing they aimed to sell this omega to someone rich, if they didn’t have a cook then Chrollo suspected that the troupe would be receiving demands for a refund. Either that, or Paku’s technique was being tricked and the omega was trying to find a way to kill the troupe through food poisoning.

Since they already had spaghetti, once they had the beef Chrollo made a quick pass to grab some tomato sauce. This allowed some flexibility in their menu.

The discussion of mythology started up again as they waited in the check out line and Chrollo paid for the food. It continued to the edge of town where Chrollo took the bags of groceries and wrapped them in the fun fun cloth then tucked them into his pocket.

Somehow, being back in the forest seemed to break the spell that had fallen for the omega who now stared at the trees without the wonder he’d had during the trip to town. It took Chrollo a moment to remember that the Kuruta had lived deep in a forest, and the irony wasn’t lost on him. But he was also unwilling to lose the conversation so soon.

“We’ve been talking about ancient mythology thus far, do you know much about myths of the Middle Ages?” Chrollo asked.

“Such as the shift away from gods to nature and other forms of immortal beings?” the omega asked, his eyes sharpening a bit.

“I believe those myths still included gods, and the humans in such myths were classified as both animal and god: highest of animals and lowest of the gods,” Chrollo elaborated.

“But the structure of power was near identical as those used by humans, with the kings and queens being declared gods. Myths at that time were very political!”

“Myths have always been political!” Chrollo was internally grinning as the new argument shifted so that he was now arguing about how all myths were built on politics and the omega argued about politics being more apparent in myths that were created by societies that had a more rigid power structure like what was seen in the Middle Ages.

This new argument lasted until the building the base was in came into view, at which point the omega clammed up. Chrollo found he didn’t mind too much since he now had his new book to look forward to. Unfortunately, he’d forgotten something.

Nobunaga was practically on top of them the moment that the two entered the basement base, Chrollo barely even having time to lock the door again before the red faced samurai was on them.

“Dumbass omega!” Nobunaga roared as he rushed the pair, and Kurapika stood his ground as the enraged alpha came to a stop in front of them. “I ordered you to sharpen and clean my katana! Why can’t I get it out of the sheath?!”

“Nobunaga.” Chrollo’s voice was calm and flat but ignored by the samurai.
The enhancer’s calloused hand grabbed Kurapika’s throat and the currently nen-less boy found himself practically being thrown into the wall behind him. The alpha’s other hand whipped up to strike Kurapika but was stopped by a sudden grip on his wrist.

“You went against my orders,” Chrollo stated in a particularly deep tone. “The result is your punishment for that. You also said that the omega would not be allowed breakfast unless it completed the task, and you know quite well it got nothing this morning despite me saying that it had earned the meal. You are not to touch it, I don’t want a single bruise on the omega. With your strength and it being without nen, you could cause permanent harm or kill it.”

The alpha continued to stare at Kurapika in rage but a wave of dominance was exuded by the troupe leader in that moment and he released Kurapika’s throat before stepping back. The fury in the topknot alpha’s eyes was still present and he spat on the floor before turning and marching away.

The dominant alpha sighed before moving down the hall. “Come, you still have chores,” he ordered and after a moment where Kurapika glanced at the door out, he followed.

The pink-haired beta woman was in the lounge messing with a piece of cloth that almost had Kurapika sweating as he remembered his present ridiculous attire. She glanced up when her leader entered.

“Its clothes are in the bag, have it change out of that.” The voice was flat and uninterested as she pointed to a bag by the door.

Kurapika was almost terrified of what heinous outfit they would make him wear next, but to his shock, when the bag was handed to him and he glanced in, he recognized his own clothes. They were just as filthy as they had been when they’d been taken from him this morning and the smell almost made him gag.

He didn’t notice the way the troupe leader’s eyebrows furrowed until the bag was snatched from him.

“Does anyone have some old clothes they could spare the omega?” the alpha asked as he dropped the bag to the floor.

The blonde male beta with the eerie smile glanced up from his cellphone. “Doesn’t it have clothes?”

“The clothes it was taken in are filthy, I’d rather not smell it as it cleans or cooks.”

Several of the troupe members shrugged and got up to check their stuff while their leader focused on Kurapika again.

“Shoes,” he ordered, eyes still cold.

Kurapika’s fingers were still unfamiliar with the ribbons as he untied the ballet slippers, and then his bare feet were on the cold floor of the hideout once again as he set the slippers aside. He may not have cared for the design of the shoes, but they had protected his feet.

Several of the members had returned in that time, some with clothes that were obviously very old. A pair of pants was thrown at him by the eerie blonde beta, a bespectacled female beta passed over a shirt, and Uvo handed him a shirt with a grin. The items were old, worn, and faded in color, but infinitely better than the romper in Kurapika’s mind.
The troupe leader directed him to the bathroom again to change and Kurapika went quickly, eager to be out of the thin, short outfit. The bow of the romper and buttons were more frustrating to take off since he was intimately reminded of just how feminine and stereotypical the outfit was.

The cast off clothes from the troupe were far more comfortable in his opinion, even if they really didn’t fit. The pants were large on him and the shirt from the alpha made him look like he was drowning in fabric. The shirt from the female beta was the only item that fit and Kurapika cursed at the blow to his masculinity. Unfortunately, that was one of the things that was typical of omegas, male and female alike, to have small, thin bodies.

At least the clothes were clean for now.

The troupe leader was waiting on the other side of the door, surprising Kurapika as he automatically knelt and attached the chain to the shackle on his ankle. “Finish sweeping the floor of the hall to the entrance and clear the cobwebs then mop the floor of the hall and the lounge,” the alpha ordered as he stood up. “Someone will alert you when it’s time to start dinner.”

“Yes sir,” Kurapika stated dully as he handed over the romper then moved to the hall and stopped short when he got a good look at the hall. Someone had strewn dirt and sand all along the hallway, smearing it on the walls.

“Looks like you need to clean the walls, omega,” the topknot alpha sneered as he marched past Kurapika, not even attempting to hide the dirt on his hands.

Sweeping the mess and cobwebs took over an hour, and then Kurapika moved to the kitchen to grab a towel to scrub the walls and ‘mop’ the floor. A large, sticky spill in the lounge drew his attention as he passed but the troupe members largely ignored it and him. The exception was Uvo who was giving the topknot alpha a dark look.

His hands still felt raw from the previous day, and the towel felt just as rough in. The cement walls that he scrubbed felt like sandpaper as he scrubbed the dirt and mud off of them. When he rinsed the towel off, Kurapika felt as though his pulse was hammering in his hands, causing them to ache.

The floor of the hall was difficult to scrub and the towel had to be rinsed out multiple times as bits of dirt mixed with the water and formed mud. When the mud was finally wiped up, Kurapika moved to the lounge. He’s managed to sweep it out the day before so it should be just a quick mop up, including the spot caused by the topknot alpha. But as Kurapika entered the lounge yet again, the alpha was grinning maliciously as he dropped a bowl of fruit on the floor, the mushy fruit and syrup/juices making a large mess that filled the air of the room with a fruity smell.

But the fruit wasn’t the only new mess, Kurapika counted at least seven new stains/messes as well as the sticky mess. Uvo looked less than pleased as he stood and gave the other alpha a dark look before moving to grab the broken pieces of the bowl.

“Uvo, let the omega clean it up! That’s the only thing it can do right!” the topknot alpha objected as the large alpha scooped up the broken pieces.

“That fruit was supposed to be the omega’s breakfast.” This statement was made by the blonde female as Kurapika moved through the room, determined to ignore the asshole alpha.

“It’ll be getting breakfast tomorrow, and no chores added to the ones I assign,” the troupe leader stated, staring hard at the topknot alpha as he made the statement.

The reminder that he hadn’t really had breakfast, just a small danish this morning reminded
Kurapika of his hunger and as he rinsed and wrung out the towel, he could admit that he was looking forward to making dinner, if for no other reason other than being able to sneak some food.

Mopping the lounge was a bit more difficult than the hall had been. Most of the troupe members cleared out of the lounge, but the troupe leader, Uvo, and the jerk alpha remained in the lounge. The leader was reading “Ivan” on the couch and stayed out of his way, but the jerk jumped on the messes he had made, spreading them. Uvo finally seemed to have enough and grabbed the other by the back of his robe, dragging him from the room.

Most of the spills and messes just required a bit of elbow grease to clean up, and Kurapika managed to clean them with few problems. It was as he was trying to scoop up the pulverized fruit when the troupe leader checked his watch.

“You should start dinner now,” the man stated as he shut his book and rose from the couch.

Kurapika stood as well, his legs a bit shaky after yet another day without an actual meal and moved towards the kitchen, not trying to appear eager.

The recipe was on the counter and Kurapika read through it quickly before heading to the pantry to grab the noodles. The boxes had been delivered to the shelves and he pulled them out quickly before finding a large pot and filling it with water to cook the noodles.

It was as he dumped the pasta into the pot that he became aware of someone behind him and turned to glance at who had come. It was one of the members he hadn’t interacted with, a large man with scars and piercings. He stood several feet behind Kurapika, observing what he was doing.

“Don’t mind me, I’m just supposed to keep you from blowing anything up,” the giant beta stated in an even tone. He seemed reasonable, but Kurapika could already see that his plan to sneak food was foiled.

Kurapika struggled with the skillet and baking dishes after, the giant actually having to give him a hand with draining the pasta because Kurapika couldn’t maneuver the pot. But the man did do something surprising: he encouraged Kurapika to taste things, starting with the pasta.

“You obviously haven’t cooked before, just remember to taste things like pasta. It’s how you know if it’s done.”

The single noodle that Kurapika got out of that wasn’t the mouthful he’d hoped for.

The browning of the beef surprised the Kuruta who hadn’t anticipated things like hot grease. Then there was grating the cheese and mixing everything together in a large baking dish and casserole dish. Because of the sheer amount of food being made, there wasn’t a single dish big enough.

It was as Kurapika dug out the green vegetable that he saw a new problem: he didn’t know how to cook this thing. He knew what broccoli was, but hadn’t ever been bothered to learn to cook it. When he’d had it after leaving his village, he’d eaten it raw.

The giant beta must have seen his confusion because he directed Kurapika to wash the ‘heads’ as he called them, then to cut them up a bit, cover with oil, and put them on a cookie sheet to roast in the oven.

The instructions sounded simple enough, but Kurapika was ready to throw the knife long before he finished cutting the damn things up. The oil couldn’t just be any oil as it turned out, and he had the macaroni to consider when putting the vegetable in the oven.
Kurapika was tired by the time it was complete and then realized that he had no idea of how long the macaroni had been in the oven. It didn’t matter that much, did it? Everything had been cooked already and as long as it didn’t burn, then it should be fine!

Turning his attention to the sink, Kurapika began to wash the dishes and utensils he’d used, knowing he’d have to deal with them sooner or later.

He’d grabbed the towel again after finishing the dishes and was about to check the state of the lounge when the Frankenstein’s monster-like beta returned. He seemed to be sniffing the air and Kurapika felt an eyebrow rise.

“Have you checked the food?” the beta prompted and Kurapika glanced at the single oven before shrugging and pulling it open. The sides of the baking dish looked dark and the smell of burnt cheese finally struck his nose.

Kurapika glanced around, uncertain of what to do before remembering the towel in his hand and using that to reach in and drag the baking dish and casserole pan out of the oven before grabbing out the broccoli as well. The vegetable was a bit dark on some of the ends but looked alright otherwise and the macaroni looked like the top and sides were a bit crispy… Very crispy actually, but edible.

Some mutters were the warning Kurapika received before he was once again shoved away from the food, the troupe seeming to have some sort of magical ability to know when the food was done and arriving to take their meal. Once again the one to shove him aside was the rude alpha while the beta who’d been watching him glanced back as he tripped over someone’s leg because of the rough push. He didn’t try to help Kurapika at all though his eyes showed some small amount of pity.

Kurapika stared in fury as the band of murderers formed a line around the food, the bandits who had murdered his people and planned to sell him to the highest bidder. His head and body ached right then and he already knew what would happen if he waited for a portion: they’d leave him nothing. It was how it had been for the last four days even when he was promised a meal. Well he’d been promised breakfast today and he’d received nothing with the exception of a small danish and he was officially at wits end!

The troupe leader had two plates in his hand and Kurapika didn’t wait when he saw one receive a scoop of the macaroni he’d made. His shoulder collided hard with the back of the samurai-like alpha, his blazing eyes shocking the troupe as he snatched at one of the plates the troupe leader held. The alpha was surprised by Kurapika’s attack to the point where he didn’t have to fight for it at all.

Plate of food in hand, Kurapika’s other hand dove into the utensil drawer and grabbed a fork before he all but marched from the room.

“Danchou, you can’t be planning on letting it get away with that!” a voice declared as Kurapika passed through the lounge.

“It hasn’t been given any meals when it waited, even when they were promised,” the cool, deep voice of the troupe leader floated from the kitchen as Kurapika settled in the hall towards the entrance. “I’ll allow it this time since it hasn’t been properly fed for four days.”

The food wasn’t anything that Kurapika would have normally eaten, so he thought it was fine even if the noodles were a bit crunchy and the cheese a bit burned. The vegetable wasn’t bad either. Most of the troupe seemed to think the same when he saw them move throughout the lounge and
eat their portions. The notable exception was the alpha that seemed to love to antagonize him. That one dumped his plate on the floor.

“Bitch can’t do anything right!” the man complained as he returned to the kitchen and left his plate.

No one looked up when Kurapika moved to deliver his own plate to the kitchen and clean up whatever mess now remained.

The dishes he’d used to bake the macaroni still held some small amount of the food left, enough that Kurapika wouldn’t have gone completely hungry but definitely wouldn’t have made a full portion. The vegetable was gone completely.

There hadn’t been leftovers that he knew of thus far and Kurapika was at a loss as to what to do with them. Toss them out? Put it in the fridge?

A hand landed on Kurapika’s shoulder before he could decide and the Uvogin was grinning down at him.

“Pretty good tonight!” the man complimented then noticed the small amount remaining. “Mind if I finish it?”

“Go ahead,” Kurapika replied, pleased to have the problem taken care of as he began the dishes.

None of the rest of the troupe said anything to him as they delivered their dishes to the kitchen with one exception. The troupe leader as he settled his plate and fork on the counter next to the sink glanced at Kurapika for a moment.

“You were right, that book is a good one,” he admitted before heading back towards the lounge, ignoring the shocked and considering look he received from seamstress of the troupe.

Chrollo headed back to the lounge and picked up the book that the omega had pointed out to him again. He was having difficulty putting it down as he read about the omega prince.

“Well that wasn’t the worst,” Shalnark declared as his evaluation of the meal they’d just had. “Guess the omega just needs practice and instruction on how to cook.”

Franklin, the troupe’s normal cook, glanced at Shalnark and shrugged. “It’s not used to ovens,” he stated. “Or cooking. A bit of practice and it’ll be adequate.”

“All well and good but it’s still defective!” Nobunaga argued. “It cleans ok, I’ll give it that. But it doesn’t know what its place is in regards to alphas!”

“That might not be as much of an issue,” Machi interjected as she glanced at Chrollo.

Most of the troupe glanced at Machi then before their eyes shifted to Chrollo.

“Nobunaga, the omega is busy. Clean up your mess.”

“It’s got to mop the rest of the room!”

“And it will, but pick up the mess you caused.”
The murmurs began and Phinks grinned brightly. If the omega was finally about to act like a proper omega, then they’d finally be able to have some fun! He didn’t notice the way Feitan’s mood darkened.

It took the omega almost an hour to finish the dishes and then it returned to the lounge and finished up the mopping it was assigned to do. It also seemed to be getting sleepy from the way it rubbed its eyes and Chrollo understood why: it had been cold and hungry for days now and finally had a full belly. It would be more open to crawling into bed with an alpha tonight.

Chrollo watched the omega as it finished the ‘mopping’ then took the towel it had used to the laundry room. As soon as it was back in the lounge, Chrollo stood.

“Come,” he ordered and the omega followed quietly back to the alpha room, none of the other alphas following.

The chain was immediately attached to the anchor and Chrollo headed to his bedroll, settling into the cushioned area and moving to one side, leaving a relatively large space for the omega to settle into. The light was off but Chrollo was certain the omega could easily find him and waited as for the feeling of soft, smooth skin to touch his, but the feeling never came.

Even as the other alphas entered the room and Chrollo glanced over at the space the omega had occupied for the last several days, he saw the small figure huddled on the floor.

When Chrollo finally fell asleep, he wondered what was still wrong with the omega.

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Kurapika was roused by the alarm yet again and woke on the cold, hard floor of the Spider’s base yet again. The light came on and he was greeted by the sight of the alphas staring at him in surprise while their leader rose quickly and released the chain from the anchor.

The bathroom was still clean somehow, and Kurapika used the facilities quickly before he was marched to the kitchen. The leader moved to the pantry and returned with a box of some sort, yellow in color and Kurapika was able to guess based upon the picture on it what he going to be expected to make that morning.

“Pancakes,” the alpha stated as he handed the box to Kurapika. “Instructions are on the side of the box. Get some fruit to go with it.”

“Yes sir,” Kurapika responded robotically as he turned the box to read the instructions then pulled out a bowl and some measuring cups. The exact measurements were comfortable for Kurapika, but as he made they mix he found the little lumps of dry powder that formed extremely annoying. He stirred and beat the mixture, determined to make it smooth.

“You want it to have those annoying little lumps,” the troupe leader’s voice called out. “I’m sure you can understand that gluten will form if you overmix the batter?”

Kurapika stopped the extreme mixing as he considered that, though he wasn’t particularly concerned. Picking up the box again, he read the cooking instructions then pulled out a skillet and set it on the stove then turned up the temperature.

“You’re not trying to boil a pot of water as fast as you can,” the deep voice chided and Kurapika glanced at the box again.
The box called for medium heat, so he lowered the temperature to the heat labeled on the stove. Spooning some of the batter into the pan to form pancakes, Kurapika watched the batter for a moment before deciding he had a minute and went to the pantry. There were still several cans of fruit and he grabbed them and carried them to the counter.

Grabbing the can opener from the drawer, he opened one can then checked the pancakes again. They had grown more than he thought they would and had bled together a bit, but the tops were bubbly like the box said.

Glancing around, Kurapika grabbed a fork and attempted to work that under the edge of the pancakes and found that they were stuck together and that flipping them was harder than he thought it would be.

“Use the spatula,” the troupe leader called out behind him as Kurapika considered grabbing a knife to separate the pancakes.

“The what?”

The response was the troupe leader ambling over and pulling what looked like a sturdy fly-swatter from the drawer. The device was forced into Kurapika’s hand and then his hand was directed to show how to separate the small cakes and flip them. It was far easier to flip the cakes with the spatula.

“Now just give them a minute and then put them on a plate,” the alpha instructed as he moved away from Kurapika.

Kurapika did as instructed and had to admit that the cakes didn’t look half bad. Spooning more of the mix into the pan, he turned his attention back the the cans of fruit and opened two more before glancing at the cakes and found that they seemed to look rather solid already.

Flipping them, Kurapika found the cakes were very dark but should be fine. He still watched them more closely before removing them from the pan.

The troupe members were ambling in as Kurapika spooned more batter into the pan, several forks appearing to remove pancakes from the plate that he had set the finished cakes on. Uvo even grabbed the can opener and opened the final two cans of fruit so Kurapika didn’t have to turn away from the stove.

He flipped the third batch a little too soon, causing the cakes to be rather pale but he transferred them to the plate since the looked fine otherwise. The plate was empty again within seconds as he started the fourth batch.

The cycle continued until the batter was gone, Kurapika not paying attention to the number of batches he made, just the continuously empty plate beside him as the amount of batter dwindled. Finally the batter was gone and the final batch of pancakes were cooking and Kurapika glanced behind him, praying that there were no troupe members waiting for more. Luck seemed to be on his side when there weren’t any as he flipped the cakes over.

This final batch was small, just three cakes and Kurapika’s mouth watered as he examined them. The color looked right and the smell was definitely good. Transferring the last three cakes to the plate, Kurapika turned off the stove and moved the skillet to a cool burner and moved the batter bowl to the sink before looking to the plate.

The short beta stood there, two of the three cakes on his plate and Kurapika felt his jaw drop as the
man gave him a glare and took the final cake before turning and leaving the kitchen.

Kurapika’s nails dug into his palms as he watched the beta move out of the kitchen before he turned his attention to the cans of fruit but found that half of them were missing. Those that were present were empty with the exception of juice and syrup.

“Finished?” a voice asked and Kurapika turned to see the blonde female beta by the door. “Once you finish the dishes, Chrollo wants you to clean the training room.” The woman’s eyes were not soft in any way and Kurapika knew better than to voice his objections.

The dishes were finished with a quick rinse and then Kurapika dealt with the empty cans. To his surprise, a can of fruit was in the fridge which Kurapika found when he returned the syrup to its place.

There was only a few pieces in the can, but Kurapika ate them without complaint before grabbing the broom and heading towards the training room. The room was empty as Kurapika began to sweep the place, noting the mats and gently sweeping them. Dust clung to most of the surfaces in the room so Kurapika left to get a moist towel.

The grime came up easily, most of it just dust. Some small spots were from sweat and remained a bit oily even as Kurapika wiped the areas. After freshening up the towel, Kurapika decided to attack the mats next before mopping the rest of the floor.

Color returned the the mats as Kurapika scrubbed them, removing the ground in layers of dust, dirt, and sweat.

When he was about half done, Kurapika stood to freshen the towel and examined his work. Half the mat was red again while the other half was still a reddish-greyish-brown. The difference was significant and made the room look much more clean.

Heading towards the kitchen, Kurapika washed out the towel and wrung it out before returning to the training room. As he knelt to start scrubbing the rest of the mat, a presence entered the room. Kurapika tried to ignore it, but the presence stood behind him.

“So, the omega can clean and it’s starting to learn to cook. Very good,” the topknot alpha declared sarcastically. “But it’s still not doing what omegas are supposed to.”

Before Kurapika could attempt to defend himself, the alpha’s hand were on him, forcing him down on the mat and roughly forcing him onto his back.

“NO!” Kurapika shouted as he attempted to claw at the man’s hands but only had the breath knocked out of him as he was roughly pushed against the mat.

“Defective or not, omegas should know their place!” the alpha roared.
Uvogin has been stewing for days now, the omega only improved in his opinion. The more he saw of him, the more he didn’t want his fellow spiders to sell him.

He was so deep in thought that he hadn’t realized his pacing was bringing him closer to the training room, exactly where the star of his thoughts should be cleaning.

It was as he approached, alarming sounds began to filter to Uvogin’s ears. Sounds like tearing and muffled screaming. Taking the last four meters to the door in only two strides, Uvogin burst into the training room.

He hated that he could believe what he was seeing. His best friend, Nobunaga, was yet again attacking the defenceless omega.

Kurapika was desperately trying to move his head from a descending pair of lips, hoping to steal a kiss and Uvogin was about to jump forward to help the boy when Nobunaga suddenly went still and a long pained groan dropped from his gaping mouth.

Okay, maybe the omega wasn’t completely defenceless. Straight after kneeing the alpha in the balls, Kurapika jerked his hands from Nobunaga's grip and began to punch him with a passion Uvogin had only seen once before.

“You will not get my first kiss you bastard!” The omega snarled when the alpha regained himself and moved to recapture the omega’s wrists with a snarl of his own. Uvogin couldn't take the time to fully analyze the boy’s words, his entire thought process focused on saving the boy before Nobunaga completely ruined him.

Just as the boy let off a shriek that rivaled his own Uvogin shot forward, elbowing his best friend hard enough to send him crashing into the wall, breaking it in the process. Uvogin stood over the hysterical omega, shoulders hunched and face dark as he released his pheromones in a dominating wave of anger, coating the omega in his scent.

“What the hell?!” Nobunaga got up, his own pheromones spreading out to fight Uvogin’s.
It took Nobunaga a moment to recognize his best friend, facing him with such a viscous expression. The fight washed out of him for the barest second before he growled deep in his throat and matched Uvogin’s expression.

“What the hell are you doing?” Nobunaga snarled when Uvogin didn’t reply to him, his friend had never attacked him in such a way.

“What are ye doing?!” He snarled back, the omega at his feet regaining himself enough to get up and hide behind the giant.

Kurapika could barely calm his racing heart, the attack had been unexpected at best, he hadn’t thought even the jerk alpha would disobey his leader.

“Teaching that bitch a lesson!” Nobunaga pointed to the red-eyed boy and Uvogin narrowed his eyes at his friend.

“Danchou ordere-“

“I don’t give a damn!” Nobunaga interrupted with a snap of his teeth. “The bitch needs to learn a lesson and danchou will thank me tonight when it finally understands its place!”

“I think I understand plenty now,” a new pheromone washed through the training room, so overpowering it erased the other two almost instantly.

Kurapika’s head turned, his fingers digging into Uvogin’s back to see the troupe leader looking positively deadly.

Chrollo has been in a relatively good mood that morning, breakfast hadn’t become a battleground, he’d managed to get the omega fed, and his book had proved to be better than he’d expected. He had thought all his ducks were in a row until a scream had alerted everyone of whatever was happening in the trailing room.
Chrollo has stopped everyone from following with a glare, all except Pakunoda who loyally followed behind him.

Before even getting to the hall that contained whatever event had disrupted his morning, he could smell the massive amounts of dominance pheromones radiating out of the training room, so powerful Pakunoda had to cover her nose in disgust. Chrollo had rarely had to deal with his alpha spiders rampaging out of control, it was rare for an alpha to try and challenge him but he could easily pick up the slight scent of distress. The omega seemed to be the cause of another issue.

The display Chrollo walked in on was infuriating, never before had Nubonaga, one of his most disobedient spiders, disrespected him in such a way.

Still, Chrollo interrupted the argument calmly, washing the air with his own scent to establish that he was the alpha in control.

Chrollo shifted his glare to the omega for a moment, it had caused many problems in the last few days. The root of this fight seemed to be the omega’s continued refusal to share a bed with an alpha. The unmarked omega’s pheromones has been driving his alphas wild and now it had finally reached a climax.

“Nobunaga, I’m sending you on a mission.” Chrollo finally decided he needed to lessen the pressure all his alphas were under, moving bases and sending the alpha that seemed to most out of his head away for a bit was the only way. “Go to the lounge and await orders.”

“What? But-“

“No buts! Get to the lounge now!” Chrollo finally commanded in his deepest tone. Nobunaga was not going to be allowed to challenge his decisions anymore.

Nobunaga's shoulder hunched before he clenched his jaw and stomped out of the trailing room, his eyes glaring at the omega the entire time.

The four left in the room stood awkwardly for a time as Chrollo decided how to deal with Uvogin and the omega.

“Danchou,” Uvogin tried to call as he dropped his domineering posture but he kept the omega
behind him protectively. Chrollo raised an inquisitive brow at that.

“Uvogin pack up, we’re moving bases,” Chrollo sighed, dropping his own scent as well before indicating for Uvogin to move away from the omega.

The omega opened his mouth to defend itself but snapped its mouth shut when it saw the look on Chrollo’s face.

“Come.” Kurapika felt unsteady on his feet but he still managed to follow the alpha when he turned abruptly and moved to leave the room.

Kurapika managed to give Uvogin a small wave and a whispered “thanks,” as the troupe leader led him to the kitchen, right past the sulking samurai.

The troupe leader wordlessly handed Kurapika a bottle of water and two protein bars. Kurapika stared at the offerings in befuddlement, he was so distracted by the gesture that he didn’t notice that alpha opened his book and the cloth that he’d been kept in appeared suddenly.

Kurapika almost dropped the bundle in his arm in surprise but before he could move, the cloth was swallowing him whole, chain and all.

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Chrollo picked up the squirming bag, the omega obviously trying to get comfortable in the sack. Before placing the omega in his pocket he held it up and just stared at the bag.

The omega had surprised Chrollo. It had clearly had a great time with him, sharing its thoughts with him and all. So why did it not pick him last night? Or anyone else for that matter? Uvogin or Chrollo could have been picked if the omega was finally getting comfortable with them, so why was it still choosing to sleep on the cold floor?

“We’ll be traveling most of the day so might as well get comfortable,” Chrollo told the omega before slipping it into his pocket.
Sighing heavily at the mess he had to deal with now, Chrollo moved from the kitchen to the lounge where all of his spiders had gathered. A few of them were giving Nobunaga dark looks, surprisingly Machi was one of them.

“We’re going to base #6, pairs of two leaving in intervals of one hour, phinks, Franklin and Phinks, you’re with me. Nobunaga, I’ll be having a word with you before I leave.”

Nobunaga froze before accepting his fate and following Chrollo out of the room. Chrollo led Nobunaga to the alpha bunking room and made it clear to the other alpha that he shouldn’t pack his bags.

“You’re staying here,” Chrollo told him stoically, ignoring Nobunaga’s gasp of indignation. “There is a mansion just past the village, the duke living there has three first additions. Steal them and meet us at the base in no less than a week. Make sure to clear your head and think on your actions.”

Chrollo didn’t waste any time, he left Nobunaga to think over his actions and packed his own bags, leaving him there to sulk.

“Let’s go.” He called to his companions of this journey. “See you all by the end of the day.”

Chrollo was sure this would give his spiders time to calm down, especially his alphas. Uvogin and Nobunaga fighting? This omega was having a disastrous effect on his troupe.

Chrollo approached base #6 and instantly wondered why he didn’t use the base more often. The base was perfectly hidden on a sea lining cliff and collapsed concrete.

The base used to be a medical experiment ward, many of the experiments illegal and horrific. The building had been condemned but no one had known about the many basement levels of the building.

The troupe, like with many of their bases, had picked out the best of the floors and refurbished it. Chrollo had picked the second level of the basement, the crumbling of the cliff wall had advanced enough to allow the troupe to build a balcony and windows on the side on the cliff. And because of
the rocks in the ocean below, no ship could get close enough to see the coastal base.

Chrollo looked through the wreckage for the hidden entrance before finding the dark stairwell near the cliff edge.

“Franklin, patrol the first floor. I don’t want a single squatter,” Chrollo told the beta before turning to Phinks. “Collect dinner for the three of us, it’s too late for the omega cook anything.”

Both spiders nodded and went ahead on their tasks. Chrollo happily watched them go, already his spiders were back in hand.

Chrollo moved down the stairs, taking in the sounds of shuffling from Franklin, as he moved past the first floor to the second and unlocked the nen enhanced door.

Machi has been the last to inhabit the base a few odd years ago, so the dirtiest part of the base was the dust. Chrollo moved past the balcony door into the kitchen and passed it to where they had placed the generator room for this base.

It was just like Machi to leave enough gas for whoever came to the base next, and Chrollo had packed up the gas and food from the last base as well so he was well prepared and didn’t have to go into town this time.

After starting the generator, Chrollo picked out what room the alphas would have and installed the chain anchor in the center of the room.

The omega had done well with members coming and going in the last base and Chrollo decided it would be fine to release the omega once Franklin returned and the door was locked. Chrollo had finished the book the omega had recommended and was looking forward to talking about it with the omega.

Franklin was back after about twenty minutes and he locked the door since Phinks wouldn’t be back for awhile.

“I’m releasing the omega,” was Franklin's only warning before Chrollo was taking the bag from his pocket and placing it on the floor to release the knot.
The omega emerged from the fun fun cloth with a clatter, awkward as ever when released from the bag. The empty water bottle and wrappers fell to the floor.

“You could warn me first,” the omega grumbled bitterly before taking a look around. Its face fell as it looked around the dirty living room, cobwebs and grime on the unpainted drywall. The omega sighed heavily and slumped its shoulders a little miserably.

“Sweeping and dusting should come first and of course every room needs mopping,” Chrollo told the omega casually as he thought of what part of the book to bring up first. The meaning behind the three bird wizards, or even the punishment of giving up the chase for the princess? The story was full of rich folklore from its region and Chrollo could barely wait to discuss it.

Franklin watched the omega walk to find a towel to begin his chores and his eyes caught on the omegas red, raw hands. Franklin decided to take pity on the omega.

“There’s a mop in this base,” Franklin told the omega and pointed to a supply closet, the omega brightened a bit.

Kurapika was glad he had actual cleaning supplies this time around, but the prospect of cleaning a whole new base was disheartening at best.

Kurapika found the broom and mop, he pulled the supplies into the living room, figuring he’d get it done before the rest of the troupe showed up.

“So, what did you think of the three bird wizards?” Chrollo asked him suddenly, causing the omega to freeze before he’d even gotten started.

“You already finished it?” The omega asked as he began to sweep.

Chrollo hummed as he watched the omega sweep the area. “Yes, it was very good. Now my question?”

“The bird wizard always seemed like a metaphor for the process of growing up and becoming a leader. In the beginning he was a bored prince left alone while his wife went to fight a war, but his
journey is a growing experience,” the omega summarized.

Franklin looked between the two thoughtfully, Machi’s words the other night replaying in his head before he shrugged and left to get his bedroll ready in the beta room.

Kurapika was once again sucked into a debate with the troupe leader, Kurapika arguing that the story was about the trails of growing up and taking on the responsibilities of adulthood while the alpha argued it was a political piece on the dangers of disobeying leadership and the trials of fixing mistakes you could have avoided.

By the time they had talked of the entire book and all its ties ins to other myths, at least six of the troupe members had arrived and the living room had been swept and mopped.

Kurapika automatically moved to the kitchen, the dust on the countertops and stove was his first target in the grimy room. Kurapika had only just finished the counter tops when Chrollo entered the kitchen.

“Time for bed, come.” Chrollo bent to pick up the chain and led the omega to the alpha’s room, once again Uvogin and Phinks were already dividing up the room with blankets so everyone had their own private areas. Chrollo was closest to the light switch this time so after attaching the chain to the anchor, Chrollo flicked off the light. He listened to the sounds up everyone getting comfortable and again ended up leaving a large space for the omega to crawl in.

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Kurapika woke to the alarm, shivering on the cold and cracked marble floor. The light flickered on and once again the alphas looked at him in confusion. All except Uvogin who looked like he just had a theory proven right.

The troupe leader got up slowly and unhooked his chain and they walked through the morning routine of bathroom then making breakfast. Like always, the recipe they wanted was on the countertop.

Omelettes, that shouldn’t be too hard.

Giving the recipe a quick read through, Kurapika then checked the fridge to find it had been
stocked with everything needed to make breakfast.

Kurapika checked the pantry for the onions and found three kinds, red, yellow, and white. Kurapika was just reaching for the red onion when a throat cleared behind him.

“Red onion is not good for omelettes,” the scarred beta told him helpfully. Kurapika looked at him a little confused since they were all onions, what does the color matter? Kurapika reached for the white onions next but the beta cleared his throat again, so Kurapika ended up with the yellow onions.

Kurapika brought the three yellow onions to the table and made a quick search for a cutting board and giving the wooden plank a quick rinse before placing one of the onions on the middle board.

Kurapika stared at the vegetable curiously, how does one cut one of these?

“Cut it in half at the root,” the beta called when he noticed the omega’s confusion.

Kurapika took the large knife and rinsed it as well before doing as the beta had instructed. The beta got distracted when the only mated alpha came into the kitchen to talk with him as Kurapika began to debate how to cut the rest of the vegetable.

Shrugging since it didn’t seem like it mattered considering the onion was layered, Kurapika began to chop rather thick slices of the onion.

“Shit! I take my eyes off you for one second!” The beta yelled running up to stop the omega from continuing. “You have to take the skin off!” The beta clicked his tongue as he tried to help pick out the bits of crusty skin from the onion.

“Oh,” was all Kurapika could say, the beta leaned over his shoulder as he diced the next two onions. The spinach proved easier, they only needed the stems removed after a quick wash.

Kurapika quickly cracked the eggs the beta had laid out into a bowl before grabbing a spoon, the spoon in turn was grabbed from his hands and replaced by a handle with wires.
“Using the whisk is better.”

“Whisk? This looks like an instrument of torture!” The beta laughed a bit at him and made a motion with his hand to show him how to mix the eggs.

“That’s good,” the beta complimented Kurapika when he was able to mix the eggs without getting any on himself.

The rest of cooking the omelettes didn’t go as well.

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“Eh danchou?” Uvogin called quietly after Bonolenov left to ask Franklin to keep the omega distracted long enough for him to bring up a plan he had been forming. If the omega knew, it wouldn’t work.

“Yes?” Chrollo asked as he continued to stare thoughtfully out the window at the storming sea morning.

“I think he’s a virgin.” A few heads snapped to the giant with the announcement.

Chrollo looked to his spider inquiringly. The omega, a virgin? If he hadn’t known the omega had been pretending to be a beta, he could have dismissed the thought but it would answer quite a few questions.

“Why do you think this?” Chrollo asked slowly.

“Well when Nobu was attacking him, he yelled something ‘bout his first kiss,” Uvogin admitted as he took a seat across from his boss.

“Then it just isn’t use to an alpha’s touch!” Shalnark called, his mind also putting it all together.

“And the only touch its experienced would be an angry alpha pawing at its body.” Chrollo sighed
as he thought of the mess Nobunaga had caused.

“I have a idea,” Uvogin told the growing group, sweat gathering in his palms. This plan was a bit selfish and he wasn’t sure danchou would approve of it.

“Alright,” Chrollo looked at his spider with a raised brow. Never had he seen the giant so nervous.

“I was thinking if Kurapika didn’t know I was getting him used to touching, he’d be easier to teach,” the giant started. “So if I could take off the nen binder and wrestle him, he wouldn’t know what was up,” he finished.

“Hmm,” Chrollo sat back and thought on the proposal. The omega certainly couldn’t escape them, and it was the most comfortable with Uvogin. If Uvogin could get the omega used to close quarters with an alpha, it would be worth it.

“I approve but only when all member are in the base and the door is locked.”

“Yes!” Uvogin grinned before quickly sitting back down and clearing his throat sheepishly.

“Take this serious Uvogin,” Chrollo told him as he turned back to the window. Hopefully Uvogin could fix the omega, he wasn’t sure how much longer his alphas could restrain themselves.
“OFF THE HEAT! Get it off the heat!”

Outside of battle, none of the troupe had ever heard Franklin yell. Despite one of the traits for Emitters being hot-bloodedness and impulsivity, Franklin was usually quite reasonable and level headed. His loyalty was unquestionable and he was surprisingly patient. More than once, Phinks had joked that the man would have been a nurse or a teacher if he’d not been born in Ryuuseigai.

Shalnark glanced at the door to the kitchen nervously before putting his cellphone into his pocket. “You know, if we found the right buyer we wouldn’t have to worry about teaching the omega to cook. It’s pretty enough that it’ll likely only be used in the bedroom.”

“That’s not a guaranteed thing,” Chrollo responded even as he shifted nervously. Omelettes weren’t that different from pancakes, were they?

“Don’t tilt the skillet that far! The- FIRE!”

The shuffling inside the kitchen was matched in the lounge as Feitan’s eyebrows rose while Shalnark left the room.

“NO! Bono don’t throw water on it!”

It sounded like there was a rather notable fiasco unfolding in the kitchen.

“I just remembered I had something I needed to get! I’ll take care of myself for breakfast!” Shalnark called as he returned to the lounge then headed towards the exit of the base. Kortopi jumped up to follow him as did Feitan who dragged Phinks to his feet.

“Sit.” The command was coupled by a wave of dominance from Chrollo. “The omega won’t improve without practice, and you will not waste food.”

“Easy, watch the heat…”

Pakunoda jumped when a loud crash came from the kitchen. Chrollo felt a groan rise in his throat.

“No! Bono you just ruined the filling!”

Well, at least the omega wasn’t the only one messing up.

“No! The five second rule is false!” the omega’s voice rang out, obviously opposing a suggestion that Bono would likely have gotten from Nobunaga or Phinks.

“Danchou! I’m sending Bono out with some vegetables to chop, make sure he does it!” Franklin’s voice called from the kitchen.

Sure enough, Bono was shoved out of the kitchen with an onion, some spinach, a cutting board, a knife, a hunk of cheese, and some ham.

“We saved enough filling ingredients for most of the omelettes, but four people will be getting plain if he doesn’t chop those!” Franklin called out.
Two minutes later, Franklin exited the kitchen with a plate and a fork in hand. He handed these to Chrollo who glanced at the omelette, anticipating a blackened thing. Instead what was presented looked… Okay. A bit darker than he’d want, but edible.

“He didn’t use salt or pepper, those are still new to him,” Franklin explained as he set down the shakers in front of Chrollo.

“You might need to explain seasoning to him…” Chrollo admitted as he cut a piece of the omelette and transferred it to his mouth. He chewed for a long moment then reached for the salt and pepper. The rest of the troupe sighed in relief when Chrollo just added some from both and went back to eating. Franklin nodded and moved back to the kitchen.

After several bites, Chrollo noticed that Bono wasn’t chopping the filling ingredients and raised an eyebrow. “If Bono doesn’t finish prepping those replacement ingredients, then four people will be getting plain omelettes. Franklin and the omega will not be among them.”

Unsurprisingly, Bono was immediately made to start chopping by the other members, Shizuku being the most aggressive of the group.

Looking back, Chrollo decided that from then on, he was not taking the first serving of whatever the omega made until he was competent. His omelette was a bit burned and desperately needed seasoning. Uvo took the second one and shouted at the kitchen that it was pretty good.

By the time Shalnark accepted the fourth to last omelette, the omelettes were looking far better. Once he had a general idea of what he was doing (and instructions about using salt and pepper), the omega seemed to understand far better. Shalnark had glanced around at everyone else, noting that even Feitan seemed to not mind the food, before taking a bite and relaxing.

“Bit over salted,” he admitted as he chewed. “Not very fluffy, but definitely better than Nobunaga or Machi!”

The flat look he received from the pink-haired woman caused Shalnark’s normal smile to become a bit strained.

Two minutes later, Franklin appeared again with a plate for Bono, the alpha having chopped the veggies, cheese, and ham to replace what he had knocked over. “You’re banned from the kitchen when the omega cooks for a while,” the Emitter told the tribesman flatly before returning to the kitchen.

Several minutes later as most of the troupe finished their breakfast and were getting up to put their plates in the kitchen, Franklin exited the kitchen with his own omelette. Chrollo stood as well to take his plate into the kitchen.

The omega was still at the stove when he entered, a slightly uncertain hand pushing egg off of the edges of the skillet as he watched the eggs cook. This last omelette looked like it would be a bit smaller than those that the troupe had eaten, but it was more than what it had received since they had taken it.

It glanced at the sink as troupe members delivered their plates but kept its attention on the eggs, testing them every so often before delivering the last of the filling onto half of the omelette and folding it over carefully with a spatula. The clothes it currently wore were very large on it, not particularly flattering.

For a moment Chrollo thought about borrowing an outfit for the omega and taking it to the
bookstore today, possibly buying some coffee while there and discussing more books. Maybe move the subject from mythology and discuss ancient civilizations, see if the omega was well read in that area too. A presence nearby caused him to pause and he glanced to the side to notice Machi was watching him, one eyebrow slightly raised. In that moment Chrollo realized that he’d been standing by the omega for at least a minute and he quickly set his plate and fork down and left.

They had just arrived at this base, the omega was needed here today to clean the place. Uvo could also help it blow off some steam by wrestling, helping them to take another step forward in their plans to sell the omega.

Gon was torn. His goal in Yorkshin had been to get the Greed Island game that his father had made, but now his aim was to rescue Kurapika. Hisoka was insisting that playing the game would help achieve that.

He and Killua had been training near non-stop to develop their hatsu, Hisoka giving them tips the entire time. To motivate them, he had even attached them to each other with his bungee gum. The intent of this was twofold: to keep themselves separate they had to remain aware of whenever Hisoka deemed to make the gum contract, so they had to be ready to use Gyo at a moment’s notice. The other thing was to amuse Hisoka whenever they wound up stuck to each other. It gained another purpose when Killua started throwing electric sparks: control his power or he’d zap Gon.

The pair had approached Battera about playing the game, Hisoka leaning over them during the trials, and of all things, a girl in a pink dress had come to their rescue.

“Um… Biscuit?” Gon asked as she dragged them away from Hisoka, Killua breathing an audible sigh of relief at the beta dragging them away from the clown.

“Not now! We need to get away from that pervert!” the girl ordered. “And call me Biscuit-chan! Or Biscuit-chama! Yes, -chama sounds cute!”

“-Chama?” Killua asked in a confused voice.

“-Chan and -sama combined!” the girl declared with a laugh as she settled in line. “Why were you with that pervert?”

“He was teaching us-” Gon’s mouth was covered almost instantly, the horror on the girl’s face apparent to anyone.

“Not anymore!” she ordered.

“Of course not, I don’t think Hisoka is going to Greed Island!”

“I might!” the clown called from the back of the room, and every alpha and beta shifted in discomfort before glancing at Killua.

The girl, Biscuit, sent a glare that cowed most of the gathered people before rifling through her pocket for something and pressing it into Killua’s hand. “Rub this over your scent glands before going in if you don’t want to be discriminated against.”

What Killua had been handed resembled deodorant and he stared at it for a long moment before shrugging and rubbing it over the glands on his neck. The effect was instantaneous as his omega scent disappeared, leaving him smelling like a beta.
Gon gaped at his friend while Killua didn’t feel anything was wrong. He did notice Gon’s face though.

“What did that do?” the assassin demanded.

“Made sure that no one would think you were easy or asking to be kidnapped,” the girl replied as she grabbed the bar back. “It’s a special recipe that Cookie-chan made for me!”

Killua stared at the girl before taking a deep breath, sniffing her scent and trying to find some hint of what he now suspected.

“ Noticed already?” the girl asked with a grin. “Yep! I’m an omega too! See you inside!”

Kurapika finished his breakfast and quickly did the dishes before starting on cleaning the kitchen. After the mess of the previous base, it was a relief that most of the rooms only needed a quick dusting and mopping. A few of the rooms needed a bit more attention, but it wasn’t the raw elbow grease that the previous base had required. It also helped that Kurapika wasn’t going on an empty stomach, only receiving a small snack over a number of days.

He had just reached the balcony and was about to head back inside to start towards the training room when Uvo appeared behind him.

“Hey, Kurapika. Put those away and come to the training room,” Uvogin instructed as he moved towards the hall.

Kurapika watched the giant alpha for a moment then dragged the broom and mop plus bucket back to the kitchen. He needed to freshen the water anyway, so leaving them there would be easier than putting them in the supply closet.

As Kurapika approached the training room, he heard a dragging noise and found himself confused for a moment.

“Remember, the omega needs to start dinner in just over an hour,” came a voice that Kurapika recognized. “We’ll be having pasta tonight and you know how danchou feels about that canned sauce.”

“Pasta is easy and fast!” Uvo’s voice argued.

“Good sauce isn’t, and it’s also not flammable, usually.”

Kurapika felt his eyes narrow at the same time that his lip quirked. He really didn’t think he was to blame for the fire, but it had been rather hilarious to watch a beta tackle an alpha over a glass of water.

The pair must have heard the clinking of the chain on the shackle because they were both looking at the open door when he entered. Kurapika in turn felt his own confusion rise. The pair had been dragging out mats over the floor.

“Hey, come over here!” Uvo called as he kicked off his own shoes and waited for Kurapika to approach.

The blonde felt his confusion increase, as well as a small amount of fear. What could they possibly
want on the mats? That confusion increased exponentially when the large alpha reached down and applied some of his nen to the shackle, causing the thing to open and release Kurapika from the weight of the chain as well as freeing his nen.

“Our fight was interrupted and danchou decided to let us have a form of rematch,” Uvogin explained as Kurapika fought the urge to rub his ankle. “Can’t let you escape or get hurt, so we’re going to be having a wrestling match.”

Kurapika felt slightly lost as Uvo explained some very simple rules for the match and got into a squared-off position. Having never wrestled before, Kurapika stared at him for a long moment before imitating the stance.

The fight started without warning as Uvo rushed the omega, intent to knock him over and doing just that. He moved to pin Kurapika, but the Kuruta now had a running idea of what was happening and rolled to avoid the large hands of the other.

Kicking up to regain his feet, Kurapika dodged the next swipe by backing out of Uvo’s reach then countered with a roundhouse kick into Uvo’s side. The blow was solid, but lacked the power needed to hurt an Enhancer. It did serve to knock Uvo to the side a few inches.

“Never wrestled, have you?” the giant alpha asked with a laugh, grinning brightly as he regained his balance. “It’s more of a grappling art.”

“No, I’d be at a rather notable disadvantage,” Kurapika admitted. “I can definitely defeat you by using other forms.”

“Too bad!” Uvo rushed the blonde again, but unlike the first time, Kurapika was ready.

Jumping forward, Kurapika’s foot connected with the back of Uvo’s neck as the Kuruta sprang over the alpha before flipping and sending his fist into the space where the kidney should be. With his nen back, when Kurapika’s eyes shifted to scarlet in that moment and he regained his Specialist status, his punch became as powerful as an Enhancer’s. This time, Uvo was blown off his feet and onto his stomach.

Kurapika was on the man a moment later, his small hands grasping at the wrists of the other with the intent of trying to restrain them, but he was neither fast nor strong enough and Uvo was smart enough to counter in a way Kurapika didn’t anticipate: he rolled over.

The yelp that Uvo earned and the tiny fists pounding against his sides and shoulders were rather amusing and he settled back for a long moment. The omega was a spitfire!

Standing up, Uvo turned with the intent of giving Kurapika a hand up but found that he was already back on his feet, looking ready for another round no less!

Kurapika was definitely a spitfire and Uvo grinned as he started the next round with the first move.

The yells, laughter, and thuds that came from the training room almost seemed homey and right in place at the base. If Chrollo didn’t know better, he would have sworn that the troupe was just there and two of them were having fun in the training room. It didn’t feel right knowing that one of the ones fighting was an omega and Chrollo found himself glancing in the direction of the training room every so often.
When Uvo emerged with the omega, he had a large grin on his face but the omega looked like he had more than a few objections. The shackle was back in place and the chain clinked as he headed towards the kitchen, Franklin getting up to head there himself.

Once again, Franklin set the omega to chopping some vegetables and sausage as well as some basil. The omega must have remembered the onion from this morning because it cut it correctly this time, what tripped it up was removing the uncooked sausages from their casings to brown for the sauce.

“Wouldn’t it be better in slices?” the omega asked.

“If you had time to brown it properly, perhaps,” Franklin replied. “For this sauce, it’s easier to remove the casing and brown it as crumbles. That way it can’t be collected or actively gathered by certain members.”

Tomatoes turned into a pulverized mess on the cutting board as Franklin tried to instruct the omega in how to peel them. That was easily overlooked. Luckily the garlic was already minced so they didn’t have to listen to Franklin explaining how to peel that particular mess. Chrollo never could understand how something that tasted as wonderful as garlic could be such a headache to prepare.

The ingredients went into the pan with some olive oil and Chrollo listened to the sound of the cooking food.

“Where’s the basil?”

Franklin’s question was innocent enough, but half the troupe was instantly staring at the door, terrified that the omega was just throwing things into the pot.

“Right there!”

The collective sigh of relief in the lounge was notable.

“Now just a pinch of salt… HELL!”

“Spoon...spoon…”

“Phinks! Did you unscrew the lid for the salt shaker?!”

“Why’re you using the salt shaker?!” Phinks yelled back into the kitchen, but his expression of guilt confirmed that he had. And likely meant it to be a prank to pull on an individual, not for it to wind up in the pot.

“Shouldn’t I just add some sugar to neutralize it?”

Phinks was being glared at as the members began to sweat.

“No, and we can’t scoop enough of the salt out…” Franklin was deliberately talking towards the door and making a motion that Phinks was to come into the kitchen. He hated when food went to waste.

Following that, Phinks ended up chopping most of the vegetables and prepping the last of the sausage they had while the omega got a second chance at cooking the sauce. They had just set the sauce to simmer when Franklin returned to the lounge, giving Phinks a particularly dark look.

“We need more supplies,” the large beta announced and Chrollo almost smirked at the convenient
reason to go to town.

“I’ll take the omega shopping tomorrow. Machi, do you have any other outfits ready?”

“Yes, I just finished another one today,” the seamstress admitted, and Chrollo was certain he saw a flash of pride in the woman’s eyes.

“Very well then, would you mind if I see it?”

Machi stood and headed towards her small studio in this base, a luxury she didn’t have in a number of their bases. Opening the door, she directed Chrollo’s attention to the costume.

A beautiful dress was before Chrollo, a knee-length lolita dress in pink and white. The sleeves were long and had white lace cuffs that would cover the hands. The bodice was white and crisscrossed by pink ribbons that formed a bow around where the sternum would be. A frilly pink bow was at the waist and on either side of the bow, a trail of frills ran down the length of the skirt. White lace lined the bottom of the skirt. A pair of pink and white shoes complete with ribbons and bows sat on floor under the dress.

Chrollo examined the dress, enjoying the details of it. The omega would look quite beautiful!

Yet another night spent on the floor, and Kurapika woke to the alarm going off as the troupe leader turned on the lights. Once again, there was a notable space left empty on the alpha’s bedroll, but Kurapika preferred the cold, hard floor to what little comfort the bedroll offered. The price was too steep for him.

The routine was the same as ever: use the bathroom without locking the door before being marched to the kitchen to make breakfast for the troupe. The large beta was already there and he was writing a list.

“You’re making french toast today,” the large man stated as he pointed to the dish and skillet he’d already set out. “We’ll make it easy and just make the toast and cut up some berries.”

“Ok….” Kurapika replied, not sure where to start or what to do as the beta continued writing his list. Toast indicated some sort of bread so...

There were several loaves of bread in the pantry and Kurapika stared at them before grabbing the biggest.

“That’s sandwich bread,” the beta informed him when he returned to the counter.

“Isn’t all bread sandwich bread?”

The gruff laugh he received in response told him that wasn’t correct. “Some are better for sandwiches, some for other purposes. We have brioche in there, two loaves of it. Grab that.”

“What’s brioche?”

“Bread.”

Feeling rather annoyed at the amusement the beta seemed to be getting from this, Kurapika returned to the pantry with the bread and glanced at the other loaves. Luckily there were only two,
meaning they were the brioche, and they looked a lot more cakey that the bread he’d grabbed.

Carrying those to the counter, Kurapika saw that thankfully the loaves were already sliced. He still needed to cut up the berries and toast the bread but otherwise this seemed simple enough!

Moving to the fridge, Kurapika grabbed a large carton of strawberries and one of blueberries then pulled out the cutting board. As he opened the cartons, the beta spoke again.

“Wash them.”

Kurapika felt his eyebrow rise in reflex as he glanced at the berries. How was he supposed to soap all of these up and wash them? Guess he was about to find out.

Moving to the sink, Kurapika turned on the water then reached for the soap, pouring a generous amount over the berries before sticking them under the water, determined to make sure he got this right. Digging his fingers into the mound of strawberries, he began attempting to work the soap over all the berries.

“How are the berries foaming?” the beta demanded as he finished the list and glanced at where Kurapika was trying to move the soap through the berries.

“I’m washing them,” Kurapika reminded the beta but his hands were jerked away from the berries.

The beta grabbed one of the soapy strawberries and sniffed it before turning his head to stare at Kurapika. “You’re not supposed to use soap on them. Just rinse.”

“Oh…”

The beta tossed the berry back into the carton and turned up the water. “We’ll let them rinse for a while. For now rinse the blueberries then get the eggs and cream.”

Kurapika automatically rinsed the blueberries, feeling a bit sheepish to have made such a mistake. Turning to the fridge, he pulled out the large carton of eggs and the milk.

“Cream, not milk.”

Kurapika didn’t see much difference, milk and cream tasted similar and milk had significantly less fat. But he switched the items then followed the beta’s instructions to crack the eggs, adding some cream, vanilla, and cinnamon, then used the whisk as he had been shown the day before.

“Now heat the pan, a bit warmer than you did for pancakes,” Kurapika turned the knob for the burner on the stove, earning a nod from the beta. “And use a bit of butter.”

Kurapika followed the man’s instructions though he tore a large number of the pieces of bread at first after they got soggy in the egg mix. At least he didn’t burn any too badly though more than a few had black on their edges.

The beta checked the strawberries every few minutes then finally seemed to decide they were clean enough of the soap. He pulled the strawberries out from under the water and set them on the counter for the members who began streaming in as soon as the first piece of toast was finished.

Both loaves were used and Kurapika was optimistic when the troupe leader set two slices of the not-toast on a plate that he set near Kurapika’s other side.

“Danchou, here’s the shopping list,” the beta stated as he handed his leader the list he’d been
making earlier.

“Thank you Franklin,” the man replied before dark eyes had caught Kurapika’s. “You will be coming as well, omega. Take a shower after finishing breakfast and cleaning up.”

“Yes sir.” Kurapika was divided in that moment, part of him hoping for another visit to a bookstore. The other part dreaded what they might try to make him wear. Hopefully not another romper!

Clean up was fast and easy, even with syrup on the plates and then Kurapika was directed to the alpha bathroom to shower. He wasn’t as dirty as he had been before his first shower, but his feet were once again well on their way to being grey.

Kurapika once again used the peppermint shampoo and conditioner, taking care to scrub his feet extra well. A towel was waiting for him once he was out of the shower, as was the thing they wanted him to wear.

Kurapika stared, mouth agape at the pink monstrosity that hung from a hook on the door.

“I’d rather wear the romper…” he told the empty air.
“So why are you in such a rush to develop your hatsus?” Biscuit asked the two boys as they took a break from her training regiment. The boys were panting on one side of the pit while their chosen opponent rested on the other.

Gon’s amber eyes found pink ones, his mouth opening to tell the trusted teacher the entire story. Killua elbowed him hard in his side to stay the tongue of the naive alpha from spilling their every secret.

“Killua!”

“Just remember not to mention them,” Killua hissed behind his hand, thoroughly convinced the girl could read their lips.

“I got it,” Gon pouted adorably, not liking that his friend thought so little of him.

“I’m waiting!” Biscuit yelled as she sat on the edge of the pit.

“Well, we kinda got captured by some bad people while trying to help a friend out,” Gon started, his voice more than a little sad as he began the story. He explained how Kurapika had been working with an informant that got caught before they had been tipped off on the situation. He told her about how they tried to help and only made the entire situation worse. “They were going to sell Kil and kill me but Kurapika revealed that he was an omega. He traded himself for our lives! We have to save him!”

Biscuit’s eyes watered and she grinned down at the two children she had accepted as her new students.

“Your friend sounds amazing and I’ll do whatever I can to help you take on those awful people!” Biscuit called as she jumped up to begin instructing them again. “By the way, who did you say you’d be facing?”

“We don’t know who they were actually,” Killua lied smoothly before ending the conversation by
starting up their training again.

Gon didn’t like lying to Biscuit, but would she keep training them if she knew they would use her teachings against the Phantom Troupe?

“This is ridiculous!” the omega grumbled once again. Since leaving the base the omega had been pouting and complaining about the outfit for this trip. Personally, Chrollo thought it looked rather cute, the pouting only made the omega more adorable in the little lolita dress.

The omega crossed it's arms in the car Phinks had acquired the other day, frowning down at the pink material.

“I just don’t understand why you insist on dressing me like a Barbie doll!” the omega snapped when Chrollo’s only reply was a chuckle.

“Because you’re an omega, this is what omegas wear.” Kurapika wanted to scratch the man's eyes out, he didn’t believe any omega would wear something like this willingly!

Chrollo felt a small smile pull at his lips when he looked over at the omega sulking in the passenger seat. The boy had not been happy when it had come from the bathroom, not wearing the outfit properly once again, but Machi had fixed that.

“Just admit you look adorable,” Chrollo jokingly teased the omega, something about its grumpy attitude making Chrollo just want to pick on it.

“I’m not adorable, I’m a warrior,” Kurapika snarled which turned into an angry growl when Chrollo laughed out loud.

“Alright, sure, you’re a warrior,” Chrollo continued to laugh lightly. The car fell silent after a while, the air strangely comfortable between them.

Several times Chrollo thought about starting up a conversation but decided against it, he didn’t
want to shatter the moment. The hour long ride to the large city felt like nothing, Chrollo drove them down the busy morning streets until he found what he was looking for, a large bookstore.

The omega got just as excited as it had the first time Chrollo had directed him to a bookstore, only this time he tried to hide the excitement.

Chrollo left the car and watched as the omega followed him. Looking around, the unattached omega was already drawing a crowd so Chrollo moved to take the boy’s arm. He directed them both into the bookstore, ignoring the looks of envy and jealousy as he moved past the crowd.

“It’s like moths to a flame,” Chrollo mused when alphas inside the store immediately turned to find the omega they could smell entering the store.

“Why do you think omegas hide their scent?” The omega yanked his arm from Chrollo’s grip as he looked over the alphas in disgust at their behavior.

Chrollo raised a brow when the omega turned to move to a table with hunched shoulders, one could practically taste the longing rolling off him as he looked over the books. He must think Chrollo was going to send him away to wait for him again.

Kurapika paused when the troupe leader caught his hand and pulled him back to stand next to him.

“I’m going to need help picking out a book again,” the alpha hummed as he began to lead the way through the shelves. “Tell me what do you know of ancient civilizations?”

Kurapika and Chrollo spent an hour discussing and debating different cultures, pouring over different books they had both already read and talking of the meanings, personal theories, and favorites within the genre.

Eventually they just devolved into discussing their preferred topics to read and talk about. Both didn’t care much for fiction besides reading for fun, they agreed it had its merits, but they’d rather read up on events that actually happened.
Kurapika hated to admit that he was having fun, never before had he found another person that knew as much about about ancient civilizations as him.

Chrollo was pleased with the amount of knowledge the omega had, he rarely found others that could hold such a debate with him. Mythology was one thing but he hadn’t expected the omega to be this well read.

As the debate was winding down, Chrollo felt a small pricking of desperation to prolong the encounter. Chrollo looked around for the history section of the store and instead spotted a large sign advertising a new museum. Chrollo tilted his head a bit and wondered if they’d have anything worth taking, casing the place wouldn’t be the worst idea. Turning back to the boy, he found it was also staring at the poster, longing returning to his eyes.

“Should we head to the museum?” The boy jumped, startled by the sudden suggestion.

“Don’t we have to go shopping?” Kurapika asked the troupe leader, confused by his behavior especially since he still had chores to finish.

“We have a few hours.” Chrollo stood, grabbing the book he had decided on. It was an in-depth study on the clansmen living on Death Mountain, their history was rich and shaped by legends of shapeshifters. The omega had recommended it.

“Okay then.” Chrollo felt another smile pull at his lips as the omega and him left the bookstore and headed in the direction of the museum, the conversation between they just as lively as it had been before.

The museum was only a ten minute walk from the bookstore and Kurapika took the opportunity to feel the sun on his face and simply not think about the state of his life. Enjoy the afternoon even if he’s stuck with a killer for a little bit longer.

Once they sell him Kurapika would be free again, it wouldn’t take much to escape from someone expecting a submissive little slave.

The museum wasn’t busy and Chrollo was a little excited to have the place mostly to themselves. Looking around, he could almost scoff at their security: only one guard at the entrance and no cameras whatsoever. It would be easy to take everything they had but considering the lack of care, Chrollo doubted they had anything of worth. Maybe he’d take the omega to a better museum later
“That’s fake,” the omega called. Chrollo had been so lost in thought he hadn’t realized he’d been staring at the fifth Dynasty bowl near the entrance for longer than intended.

Chrollo felt surprise lift his eyebrows as he actually looked over the bowl in detail and the omega was right, it was fake.

“How can you tell?” Chrollo asked, keeping his voice perfectly even. Was it a lucky guess or did the omega actually know? Chrollo wanted to know.

“Well there is a bit of discoloration on the base, that means it wasn’t heated how it would have been in the fifth dynasty, and it looks like the cracks have been filled with gold but if you look closely, it’s obviously only painted over whatever glue was used. It’s a good fake but still a fake.” Chrollo felt his appreciation for the omega rise in him, most wouldn’t have noticed such small details or have had the practical knowledge to appraise a piece like this.

Chrollo watched the omega walk around the museum as he rested against one of the pillars. There was nothing he felt the need to steal so for now, Chrollo just watched it- him, Chrollo just watched him.

“What took long?” The small beta gripped the second Kurapika stepped through the base door followed by the troupe leader.

“Museum,” Kurapika answered curtly to the rude man as he walked past, ready to get out of the ridiculous outfit and return it to the she-demon who taunted him with the most god awful clothes.

“Went museum?” Feitan turned to Chrollo when the omega left the room, a museum didn’t seem like the type of place where an omega would thrive. Chrollo must have been bored with that thing trailing him.

“Yes, it was fun,” Chrollo told the room lightly, ignoring the looks of disbelief he got in return from Phinks and Feitan. Chrollo left them to find Machi, to have her take back the omega’s clothes before giving the boy his chores before he starts dinner. It was also Machi’s turn to pick a recipe
for dinner, might as well pick that up from her as well.

“Oh danchou, can I ask you something?” Franklin called. Chrollo stopped and turned to the beta expectedly, and the man took his que. “I want to make Phinks cook tonight, as punishment for making us waste food.”

Chrollo thought on the idea, Phinks definitely needed to be punished for his stunt. “Make sure the omega watches so he’s still learning.” With that decided, Chrollo moved on.

Chrollo found Machi and the omega in the training room, the omega already giving his outfit back to the seamstress. Chrollo paused to look over the clothes the boy was swimming in, they were beginning to become dirty as well.

“Omega, the laundry needs to get done and you may clean your own clothes as well,” he decided, dismissing the boy. “Franklin will get you when it’s time to make dinner.”

The omega left without a word to him and Chrollo frowned, he thought the boy was warming up to him but as soon as they got to the base, the omega clammed up once again.

“You outdid yourself Machi,” Chrollo called to the pink haired beta, ignoring the disappointment in his chest. “He looked beautiful in your dress.”

“Thanks danchou.” Machi nodded and turned back to her thread while on the inside she felt herself become more certain about her theory. Danchou wasn’t calling the omega ‘it’ anymore.

“Oh, may I get the recipe you chose for dinner?” Chrollo asked and the beta quickly handed him the paper and he left her in peace.

Kurapika was just finishing hanging up the laundry to dry when the scarred beta came to get him to make dinner. The beta found most things he did amusing when he wasn’t ruining food, Kurapika was pained to say he didn’t mind the beta.
“You’re just watching tonight, Phinks is cooking because of his prank.” Kurapika breathed a sigh of relief, he himself knew he wasn’t good at it. The beta grinned at him. “No need to look so relieved. You aren’t a hopeless case, you just haven’t done it before.”

“I shampooed the strawberries and apparently I make sandwiches wrong. You aren’t calling that hopeless?”

The beta laughed again and patted Kurapika on the back. “Hey kids learn, so can you.”

Kurapika scoffed half at the suggestion that he knew less than a child about something and half at the friendly tone the spider spoke with.

The beta opened his mouth and Kurapika recognizes the look in his eyes. “I swear if you call me cute, I will strangle you with this chain!” Kurapika snapped and the beta chuckled as he led him to the kitchen with a look of mock surrender.

The blond alpha was pulling out pots and pans, grumbling to himself angrily when Kurapika entered the kitchen.

“Here’s your assistant Phinks, but remember you’re the cook tonight,” the scarred beta warned him before leaving them alone. The blonde alpha glared at the empty space the other man had inhabited.

“Hey uh... Come over here and chop some garlic for me.” Kurapika nodded and went to the cutting board the alpha had laid out for him. “We’re making chicken piccata tonight, it’s pretty easy and I’ve don’t it a few times so we’ll get it done quick.” Kurapika nodded silently and went back to the garlic, chopping it up the same way he had the other night.

The alpha was using a hammer to whack pieces of raw chicken and Kurapika shook his head. So far cooking was ridiculously over complicated and randomly violent, and apparently highly flammable.

Kurapika watched the man from the corner of his eye as he dipped the raw chicken in egg and then into bread crumbs, after a bit he began to whistle. When the alpha noticed he had finished with the garlic, he pushed a small bag of what looked like small, deformed onions.
“Cut up the shallots next,” he muttered while he started peppering the chicken with different spices Kurapika hadn’t used before.

The shallots were some odd cross between onion and garlic, but Kurapika managed to cut them. The blonde alpha directed him to grab a large pan before pointing him to snap the ends off of a large bag of green beans.

Kurapika watched the alpha pour a small amount of oil in the pan and heat the metal, he threw in the bits of shallot and the kitchen filled with the sound of popping and sizzling.

“I’m doing something called sautéing, once the shallot is caramelized we will add the garlic and cream. Garlic becomes bitter if you cook it too much so that’s why we’re adding it after, okay?” The alpha explained and Kurapika nodded again. The alpha looked over at him with narrowed eyes. “Do you speak?”

“Yes,” Kurapika muttered as he finished up the green beans and gave them one last quick rinse. The alpha seemed a little put out but didn’t comment further.

“Okay, throw those in a pot with a lid and we’ll steam them.” Kurapika did as he asked, the alpha continuing to shake and move the sizzling pan. The alpha gestured for him to take the pan suddenly. “I need to season the green beans so just copy what I’m doing with this until the shallots go from clear to yellow, okay?

“Yes sir,” Kurapika took the pan and tried to copy the alpha’s technique in softly shaking and flipping the contents of the pan.

Phinks felt accomplished that there hadn’t been a disaster yet, Franklin had made cooking with the omega seem much more difficult. Phinks sprinkled a bit of pepper and soy sauce over the pot of green beans before filling it with a bit of water and setting it on the stove with the lid. The omega reached to turn on the heat but Phinks stopped him.

“We’ll wait to cook them, it won’t take long and we don’t want them to get overdone.” The omega nodded again. Phinks frowned again, Uvogin and danchou made talking to the omega seem so easy. This was a bit awkward.

Phinks made sure to keep one eye on the pan he’d left the omega in charge of, not completely trusting his ability to not burn the shallots. Once they were cooked through, he gently pushed the
omega out of the way and tossed in the garlic. Phinks handed the omega a wooden spoon and instructed him to stir it continuously.

The alpha watched Kurapika, probably making sure he knew how to stir before grabbing a small pot and filling it with cream. Everything was going well, the alpha placed the cream on the stove and turned the heat on low and scraped the shallots and garlic into it, he also added a scoop of some white powder into the cream without explaining what it was.

“Alright everything is pretty much done. Clean up the dishes we aren’t using and I guess you can just watch,” Phinks told the omega, rather proud they got through the first half of cooking without setting the base on fire.

“Yes sir.” Kurapika moved to take the cutting board, pan and knife to the sink.

“You can call me Phinks if you want,” the alpha called and Kurapika froze. Kurapika felt his grip on the knife tighten, these murderers were much too friendly with him. They should sell him already so they can all be done with each other but instead they were playing house with him, asking him to call them by name.

“I don’t want to,” Kurapika finally spat.

Like most nights on the cold floor, sleep came and went. Kurapika’s muscles were beginning to burn because of the constant abuse of improper sleep.

The alarm went off and Kurapika immediately began to stand, even before the lights clicked on. Looking around, Kurapika took in new expressions from the alphas. Uvogin looked at him with dark determination, Phinks looked slightly disappointed and for a brief moment the troupe leader flickered with a fallen look. After a moment the troupe leader's face went back to the cool mask he normally had and they went about their normal morning routine.

Kurapika made eggs and toast with bacon, the troupe leader making sure he used butter and salt. Thirty minutes later everyone was eating and Kurapika was starting the dishes.
It didn’t take long before Kurapika was moving onto finishing sweeping and mopping the floors and just like the dishes, the chores ended up taking less time than anticipated. For the first time since the troupe made him into their maid, Kurapika had finished all the chores.

Kurapika was at a loss of what else to do, he’d finished the laundry and had even been able to wash his spare clothes. Everything had been dusted, swept, and mopped.

Kurapika walked to the living room and looked around for the troupe leader. Spotting him on the couch with the book Kurapika had recommended, he immediately approached.

Chrollo looked up at the omega curiously, he had never approached willingly before.

“I’m done.”

“Done?” Chrollo asked as he shut his book.

“Yes, I finished my chores.”

“Oh yes that,” Chrollo cleared his throat a little sheepishly. Looking around, he confirmed that the omega had finished his chores. “Then you may rest,” Chrollo was about to open his book again, sure the omega would go off to do something else, but he stayed as if unsure of what to do.

“You have been rather good so I suppose you deserve a treat. Would you like a book?” The smile that broke out on the boy’s faces was like seeing the sun. He nodded enthusiastically and Chrollo felt yet another rare smile curl his lips.

It only took a few minutes for Kurapika to sort through a few of the offered books before he settled on an older book that the title on the cover had faded from. Kurapika felt compelled to find out what would be written in those pages.

Chrollo settled back on the couch and felt an odd jump in his chest when the omega decided to settle on the opposite side and read with him.
Phinks glanced into the kitchen at where the omega was making dinner under the direction of Franklin. There were a few bruises that he could see on the its arms from it being made to wrestle with Uvo again today, the omega complaining about being dragged away from the book it had been reading rather loudly.

The words it had said the night before when it had turned down his offer to use his name rang through Phinks’s head. How could it not want to use names? And it had been so steadfast in avoiding meeting his gaze… Oh.

Dinner would be ready soon and the troupe members had begun to congregate in the lounge outside of the kitchen. Shalnark had brought a deck of cards and started a game of Doubt while placing bets on the side about whether the omega would manage to set something on fire, make a decent dish, or cause Franklin to shout.

Chrollo was still reading on the couch, the book he had loaned to the omega was on the table next to him, page marked with a bookmark. Phinks approached him as he turned the page.

Clearing his throat, the Enhancer waited for his danchou to look up. “Danchou, I think it’s shy.”

Chrollo stared at Phinks for a long moment as the other members looked up at him. “What is shy?”

“The omega! I told it that it could call me by name last night and it said it didn’t want to! It’s been avoiding eye contact and talking as much as it can!”

The Specialist continued to stare at Phinks before glancing into the kitchen where the boy was answering Franklin with either actions, grunts, or single word responses. “He’s spoken plenty when… We were in the bookstore or museum.”

“Has he used your name?” Phinks pressed.

“No.”

The admission caused Phinks to gain an expression that could only be read as a triumphant “Hah!”

“This could hurt its selling price,” Shalnark pointed out. “I’m not sure how much most would want omegas to speak, but not at all or only on subjects it’s comfortable with could be very bad. Especially since it seems to be completely new to sex and alphas. Perhaps I should start my lessons for it tomorrow?”

“He’s completed his chores for this base today, so he won’t be needed to clean tomorrow,” Chrollo replied. “You can start your lessons tomorrow after breakfast.”

“Yes sir!” Shalnark’s smile was slightly disturbing as he stood and entered the kitchen. Everyone stared as the beta headed to the fridge, pulled open the door, and promptly was beset by Franklin.

“Get out of there!” the beta ordered. “He’s working hard to make dinner and you’re going to eat it even if I have to cram the burned portions down your thin, pale throat!”

Chrollo shifted slightly in his seat. Guess tonight was a mediocre night, meaning the omega was
improving. Franklin might be annoyed and on edge, but he wasn’t yelling.

Thirty minutes later, Chrollo could honestly say he believed that Franklin was overreacting. The stuffed bell peppers that Kortopi had requested looked fine! The peppers looked soft and cooked but had held their shapes beautifully, the filling didn’t look burned, and the smell was excellent.

Cutting the pepper on his plate, he studied the meat and vegetables inside and was happy to see that it looked juicy and was definitely cooked. Around him, the rest of the troupe was looking similarly flummoxed as they studied their own food.

“It looks fine…” Machi stated though she looked like something was telling her not to eat it.

Glancing over at Franklin, Chrollo noted that the man had brought in a large glass of milk and looked to be preparing himself. His pepper also looked fine as he cut it up.

Taking a deep breath, Chrollo got up and went to the kitchen to grab a glass of water, noting the omega eating in the corner of the kitchen. He had a large glass of water in front of him as well, and seemed to be taking large gulps from it after every bite.

Glass in hand, Chrollo returned to the lounge and saw that no one was eating yet. Instead, every eye watched him as he settled back into his seat and grabbed his plate once more. Since his pepper was already cut up, Chrollo took a scoop of the filling as most of the troupe did the same, Machi being the key exception, and brought it to his mouth.

The flavor of the food wasn’t bad, in fact it was actually rather good. The beef wasn’t overcooked, the vegetables still had a bit of texture, and the seasoning…

The fire was delayed but the moment it started to burn, it BLAZED! Heat rushed from Chrollo’s tongue to his cheeks and ears, sweat popping up on his forehead and he grabbed his glass of water automatically while Franklin was in a tug-of-war against Phinks for his milk.

Paku jumped up and rushed to the kitchen, her face blazing with heat, Shizuku on her heels as they began a shoving match to gain control of the faucet at the sink. Bono was sitting in absolute shock, Uvo had disappeared and he heard the alpha yelling at Shalnark to move over a second later and realized both had run into the same bathroom. The shower started running a moment later, so both were getting much needed water. That left Kortopi and Feitan…

Chrollo’s eyes watered when he saw both of their shortest members eating their peppers with gusto, Feitan and Kortopi looking like they were thoroughly enjoying the food.

Machi was staring at the pair as well. “Kortopi, did you give your recipe for stuffed peppers?” the seamstress asked after a long moment.

“Yes! It seems the omega got it right!” The Conjurer sounded absolutely delighted. “It even added extra spice!”

“His hand slipped,” Franklin pointed out. “These would have been too much even without that.”

Chrollo glanced down at his pepper, knowing he couldn’t let it go to waste and winced. “Franklin, until the omega can do it, you may alter any recipe from Kortopi to make it less... seasoned.”
the troupe. Wake up with the alarm while the alphas look disappointed/fallen that he wasn’t curled up in one of their bedrolls. His muscles burned and ached, joints popping loudly as he was escorted to the bathroom then the kitchen.

Breakfast that morning was something Kurapika found in the past he had liked: waffles. The waffle iron was surprisingly easy to use, the light indicating when it was ready and forgiving to him checking the waffles.

Surprisingly, the troupe leader stood next to him, allowing him to focus entirely on the waffles while he cut up more fruit and got the sausage started. Kurapika finished the sausage between waffles as they cooked, troupe members milling in to grab breakfast.

“Omega, you’re with me after you finish breakfast and clean up,” the blonde beta with the eerie smile declared as his sly fingers snuck into the skillet and grabbed one of the finished sausages that Kurapika was about to transfer to a paper towel to drain.

Something about that made Kurapika pause, this beta had not shown any form of interest in him before, so why now? Probably intended to have him do some sort of special task, though Kurapika wasn’t certain what this beta did. Wasn’t he usually playing with his cellphone?

The thought of getting his hands on a phone gave Kurapika momentary hope, even if the likelihood of him keeping it was remote at best.

Breakfast seemed to go well, the foods were usually easy to make and the troupe members didn’t complain about the food usually. They were also becoming mindful of the fact that Kurapika needed to eat also and didn’t take everything. This time, Kurapika even got one of the sausage links to go with his waffle.

It was as he was cleaning up the dishes from breakfast that the troupe leader approached him again. This wasn’t unusual since this was when he would give Kurapika the chores he would be completing for the day. However, hadn’t that beta said that he’d be with him today?

“Omega, you are to use our names.”

The order caused Kurapika to pause in the middle of scrubbing the batter bowl to glance at the alpha. The dark eyes of the alpha bore into his and Kurapika narrowed his eyes in anger and turned his head. He’d promised to not fight, to follow their orders until he was sold in exchange for Gon and Killua’s freedom and in that moment he couldn’t look at the alpha. The urge to argue, to fight, was too strong.

Chrollo in turn continued to stare at the omega, noting the way the boy only held his gaze for a very short amount of time. He really was shy. It was cute… And not something he believed a potential buyer would be interested in. They’d want a well-trained and eager sex kitten… And it was disturbing how that made his insides twist a bit.

The dishes were finished and Kurapika was honestly at a loss of what to do. Was he supposed to go looking for the beta whose name he didn’t even know? And why the hell did the leader want him to use their names?!

It was infuriating to him that the man would make such a demand, especially knowing what he and his troupe had done. Not using the names of the murderers of his clan was the only means he
currently had to rebel.

Luckily, the problem of finding the blonde beta was resolved almost as soon as when Kurapika stepped out of the door of the kitchen and into the lounge. The eerie smiler had been waiting for him it seemed.

“Finally!” the blonde declared as he jumped up from the sofa. “Hold on!” The beta practically skipped past him into the kitchen to the counter and grabbed several bananas. “Let’s go!”

Kurapika was more than a bit confused as he followed the beta down the hall to a room that had been locked except for the brief amount of time it had taken for him to sweep and mop. The beta unlocked it with a nen trick of some sort and entered the room, holding the door open for Kurapika to enter the room before closing and locking the door.

Kurapika stared at the window that allowed in a cool sea breeze. This room was plain, tiled like the rest of the base with stone walls.

“Ok, we’ll be selling you soon as we think you’re ready. Though the others think it’s important you know how to cook and clean, I think your buyer and future alpha won’t require such things from you.”

Kurapika was incredibly nervous already, but was confused when the beta handed him a banana and went to grab a laptop that was against the wall. Considering that his normal meal was still very small, Kurapika glanced at the snack he’d been handed then peeled it and took a bite.

“For you, that’s going to mean soft pillows, fluffy blankets, and great food being provided. What you’ll need to do is be able to please this alpha.”

The bite of banana in Kurapika’s mouth instantly got caught in the back of Kurapika’s throat as he gagged at what the beta had just said. In turn, the beta turned to look at him and noticed the banana in Kurapika’s hand.

“No! You don’t eat it!” he exclaimed as he snatched the item from Kurapika’s limp grasp. “I’m going to show you a video on how to give a blow job and you’re going to practice!” As the beta stated this, he handed the pale omega a new banana.

“I-I would never,” Kurapika sputtered as he stared at the banana in his hand as though it were a vile, infected thing. “I would never do something so undignified!”

The beta stared at him for a long moment, his smile turning a bit dark before he angled his head towards the door. “I could get one of the alphas for you to practice on if you’d prefer.”

Kurapika’s jaw snapped shut on reflex before popping open, terrified at even the thought of having to do something like…. THAT on one of the alphas. The banana was bad enough!

“So, shall we proceed with the banana or do I grab an alpha? Pretty certain one of them would love to finally get a bit of action.”

“Just start the video,” Kurapika groused as he turned his gaze on the banana in his hand.

Kurapika didn’t think the morning could get worse than having to practice giving a blow job on a banana, but then his tormentor had started correcting him and encouraging him to “deep throat” the banana.

Once the beta felt he’d done enough with the banana, Kurapika all but threw the damn thing out of
the window. He was never going to eat or even look at a banana again if he didn’t have to.

“A bit of practice and you should be ok,” the beta continued, seeming to either not care about Kurapika’s disgust in the slightest. “At least you’ll have an idea for what you’re doing when the time comes. Alright, next portion will be about other activities to please an alpha.”

Tension flashed through Kurapika’s form and caused every muscle in his body to jump. This the beta seemed to notice.

“Don’t worry, I won’t make you do something like practice riding someone. We’re going over things that you won’t instinctually feel the need for.”

Somehow that made it worse.

Over the next several hours, the beta made him practice hand jobs, footsies, and watch demonstration on massages, the erotic kind. Kurapika was thoroughly flushed when the beta finally decided that they had gone over enough for that day.

“Ok, we’ll break for today and continue at a later date,” the beta stated as he shut the laptop. “I’d suggest you practice blowjobs a bit.”

Kurapika barely held back a sarcastic remark as he gratefully left the room. This was insane!

“Oi! Kurapika!”

It was almost a relief when Uvo came running up to him. The giant might have been insane about fights, but he’d been decent enough thus far. But after what Kurapika had just gone through, he wanted nothing more than to grab the book the troupe leader had loaned him and read. In fact, he could see it waiting for him on the side table next to the couch.

“Come on! We’re going to do some more wrestling today!” the giant declared. “And I want you to actually try to wrestle rather than use your martial arts.”

That wording caused Kurapika to pause and stare at the Enhancer before following him to the training room where the mats were already set out. Uvo kicked off his shoes before turning to Kurapika and reaching to unclasp the shackle that kept Kurapika’s nen bound.

Tension hit in that moment as Uvo’s hand contacted his flesh and Kurapika’s mouth went dry as the other jumped up and grinned at him. It couldn’t be… Could it?

“Alright, remember that you need to try to use my weight and force against me,” the giant instructed as he got in position and Kurapika slowly moved to stand before him.

As the other raised his large hands, Kurapika felt a shiver run up his spine as he thought about what wrestling entailed. Touching, a lot of it. And pushing down. Pinning.

His distraction cost him when Uvo started and Kurapika couldn’t even begin to mount a defence or dodge. The giant had him pinned in under a second and Kurapika’s face flushed as he mentally took in their position. Uvogin was on top of him, hands pinning his shoulders with ham-sized thighs planted on either side of his hips. The giant was staring straight down at him, a look of disappointment on his face.

“Usually do better than that, what were you thinking?”

Kurapika’s tongue was thick, unwilling to reply as he considered his situation and the wrestling
matches he’d engaged in against Uvogin. The number of times that he’d grabbed or attempted to pin the large man and the positions…

Uvo watched as the young omega’s face flushed a deeper shade of scarlet as he stared at their position. He wasn’t sure in that moment if this was a good thing or not.
Kurapika’s face burned with a heat hotter than the sun. Each moment spent pinned under to giant was another moment he became aware of the tension the position caused.

“Kurapika?” The alpha called again as Kurapika’s breath grew a little heavy, he was beginning to panic. After a moment the alpha simply released him so they could start once again.

This time Kurapika was determined not to be pinned. Whether or not this was all some trick, he wouldn’t allow the alphas to think him easy. Rubbing his aching cheeks and forcing himself to focus, Kurapika dropped into position.

Uvogin was curious about where this would go. He knew Shalnark had started his lessons with Kurapika this morning but the reactions of the boy were more extreme than he had been expecting. For the first time the omega seemed to be aware of sexual touch and couldn’t handle it. Once the boy dropped into position he lunged.

Kurapika had to jump to the side to avoid Uvogin’s grabbing hands, placing his hands on the unprotected elbow of the alpha and twisting it behind his back. He used the momentum of his own jump as well of the alpha’s forward movement to accomplish the task: his body swung around and he ended up with his knees digging into the giant’s spine while he twisted the arm behind and up.

Uvogin stumbled but managed to stay upright, a grin spread across his face as the omega finally got into the match. Laughing, Uvogin countered Kurapika by simply letting himself fall backwards onto his back.

Kurapika gasped when he realized the alpha was going to crush him, letting go of his arm he rolled out of the way, barely managing to get away by the skin of his teeth. Acting quickly, Kurapika threw his leg over the alpha’s stomach and reached to pin his hands to the mat. He managed to pin one before the heat of the alpha’s body pressed against his privates made him stall and begin to blush furiously.

Clenching his teeth, Kurapika ignored the way the alpha’s rolling, laughing muscles made him feel and tried for the other hand. Uvogin grinned at him and Kurapika’s face blushed redder before the unexpected happened.
Uvogin shot his hand forward and pressed his large fingers into the boy’s side and began to tickle him.

Kurapika’s eyes widened and flashed red as he squirmed and squealed at the sudden action, his hand going loose on the giant’s so he could free himself to double the attack.

Kurapika wildly scanned the alpha’s face and caught a brief glimpse of his worst nightmare: lust. Shining in the alpha's eyes was lust.

Uvogin froze when Kurapika all but threw himself away from him, his breathing was heavy and his eyes accusing, face red as the blood that gathered beneath his skin. Even though there was no sign of tears in his eyes, the boy looked ready to cry.

Kurapika knew it was stupid, that Uvogin was a mass murderer and not his friend but he couldn’t help feeling betrayed by him in the moments of silence that stretched like a chasm between them.

Finally after ages, Kurapika tore his eyes away from Uvogin and stomped from the room.

Chrollo looked up curiously when the omega came stomping into the living room, a snarl twisting his pretty lips and a low growl reverberating from his chest. Raising a brow at the odd behavior, Chrollo almost set down his book to ask the omega what was wrong but was stopped in the act when the omega snatched up his borrowed book and made a point of sitting on the floor as far from Chrollo as possible.

Both eyebrows lifted in surprise at this. So far the omega had been rather well behaved considering, and even just yesterday he had been comfortable enough to sit close to Chrollo to read. What happened in the last four hours since breakfast?

The dregs of a blush remained on the omega’s cheeks, and his pitched pout told Chrollo everything he needed to know. His chronic shyness has gotten the best of him during Shalnark’s lessons.

Chrollo was deciding whether or not to just leave him alone for now when Uvogin cleared his throat from the doorway. Chrollo did not miss the omega stiffening at the alpha’s appearance. He also didn’t miss that the boy was missing his chain.
“Danchou,” Uvogin jerked his head to the kitchen, out of the omega’s range of hearing. Silently asking to talk. Chrollo nodded but raised a hand for him to wait where he was. He couldn’t leave the omega with his nen alone, with nen he could jump from the balcony and survive.

“Where’s his chain?” He finally asked when he realized the chain wasn’t in the immediate vicinity. Uvogin realized he’d forgotten it and quickly left to grab it.

Chrollo looked over the tense boy curiously, figuring whatever sour mood he was in had something to do with Uvogin, surprising considering the bond the two had formed. Not that Chrollo cared that the omega seemed to like Uvogin better than him, just an observation.

Had Uvogin made a move on him? Was that the reason for his adorable snarling red cheeks and vague scent of arousal? Chrollo felt that disturbing twist in his gut again at the thought.

Uvogin couldn’t have come back sooner and Chrollo distracted himself with taking the chain from Uvogin and moving to the omega.

The omega made an effort not to react when Chrollo approached with the nen blocking chain, but it was obvious he had been hoping they would forget about it all together. Chrollo made quick work of snapping the shackle in place on the opposite leg that it had been on for the last week, noticing the slight bruise growing on his ankle from the shackle. He muttered a quick word about getting someone to make treat the bruise before standing to lead Uvogin into the kitchen.

Uvogin felt rather awkward, Kurapika had reacted dramatically from some light touching and tickling. He hadn’t expected the boy to freak out the way he did. The cute blushing and distracted behavior had been odd but understandable when you knew the massive amount of information Shalnark had available on the internet. It would be scary to the little virgin to just be thrown into the deep end of it.

Yet Uvogin was concerned that now that sexual touching had been brought to the omega’s attention he would recede into himself, refuse to touch and be touched even casually. The problem needed to be dealt with before he could place guards and walls up.

“I am guessing this is about the omega,” Chrollo stated, everything the troupe had brought to him the past week had been about the omega. It was to be expected, he was their most valuable acquisition in years.
“Yeah.” Uvogin rubbed his neck awkwardly again, not really knowing how best to explain the issue, if he knew danchou he already had an idea. “I tried to wrestle ‘im again and he was blushing, uncomfortable with it all,” Uvogin started. “He uh...”

Clearing his throat Uvogin tried to make it simple. “He’s been made aware of sexual touch and now he’s uncomfortable, the best course would be to not let ‘im withdraw into himself, get him comfortable with being touched innit?” Uvogin was blushing a bit himself at the end of his speech, just thinking of the cute omega becoming more sexually knowledgeable and thus more confident sexually was an overwhelming thought to him. Uvogin was already knocked on his ass by the boy, his heart couldn’t race any faster in excitement.

“You’re right, if we don’t act fast we might lose the perfect chance to teach him.” Chrollo thought on the matter. He wouldn’t be made a liar by forcing the omega to have sex before he decided on it, but he also couldn’t allow him to withdraw because of his shyness. A lesser alpha would simply beat him into compliance. Chrollo didn’t like the idea of anyone hurting the omega, so he would do whatever was necessary to ensure the boy was ready for the life they would sell him into.

“I’ll handle this, thank you,” Chrollo finally decided, leaving the kitchen and reentered the living room. Bono, Phinks, Machi, and Pakunoda had gathered in the time he had been talking with Uvogin. Chrollo sighed because he knew the omega may or not not be pushed past his limit with this next order. “Omega,” Chrollo called to the boy who was squished into a corner, his eyes flickering suspiciously at the troupe around him. The boy looked up at him before his eyes fell to the floor with a light dusted blush. Cute.

“From now on if you are not busy you will sit next to an alpha, skin contact if possible.” The omega’s eyes flew to his and he blanched, gaping at him as red swirled in his grey eyes.

“What?” He managed to stutter out, a few members of the troupe looking at Chrollo curiously. Machi has a brief look flicker across her face that Chrollo couldn’t describe and so kept his focus on the slightly shaking omega.

Kurapika felt his stomach roll with apprehension, speaking the names of the people that killed off his people was one thing, but now they expected him to have full contact with their alphas when ever he wasn’t acting as their glorified maid?!

“But-“
“No buts. You need to become comfortable with constantly touching an alpha. Your master will not be pleased with your shy nature.”

Kurapika almost laughed when he realized the troupe leader thought his avoidance of them all was a matter of him being shy. No, he just hated them and wanted them all to be wiped from existence.

Chrollo watched a parade of emotions wash across the boy’s face before he slowly got up, unsure of what to do but Chrollo wasn’t done with him yet. It hadn’t escaped his notice that he was avoiding sentences where it would be proper to say their names.

“Do you understand?”

“Yes si-”

“Omega, I believe I told you to use our names,” Chrollo interrupted once again. The omega bristled, his red eyes glaring at the floor as he shifted from foot to foot. Chrollo waited patiently for the omega to gain the courage to say what he wanted.

“I don’t know your name,” he finally admitted irritably and the room froze. Chrollo blinked, it just occurred to him that everyone called him danchou and it’s not like he ever introduced himself to the omega. Of course he didn’t know his name.

“My name is Chrollo Lucifer, omega,” Chrollo told the boy and waited again for the boy to do as he asked. The omega fidgeted and muttered to himself, his little hand clenching and unclenching.

“Yes . . .” The blush intensified a bit and his lip curled in an indistinguishable emotion. “Chrollo”

The syllables rolled off the omega’s tongue like a caress and Chrollo didn’t want to analyze the fluttering feeling that happened in his stomach upon hearing of his own name from those pink lips for the first time.

The troupe leader, as Kurapika was determined to continue to call him in his head, nodded in satisfaction. Looking around Kurapika next had to deal with his next ridiculous order. He had to choose an alpha to sit with. He gulped, hoping whoever he picked didn’t read to much into it when night came along.
The troupe leader sat back on the couch with his book, leaving a space wide open between him and the arm of the couch. His silent invitation was blatantly ignored as Kurapika looked around to find the bonded alpha that slept in the beta room every night. He was the best choice in alpha to sit next to, Kurapika could practically taste the happy pheromones from the man whenever he overheard him speaking of his mate. He wouldn’t try anything with him.

Uvogin also left a bit of space next to him but Kurapika ignored it as well as he made his way over to the bonded alpha.

“An Unbonded alpha, omega,” the troupe leader called. Kurapika bit down on a growl, counting to ten in his head and turned around to eye the three choices he had.

Chrollo didn’t have to guess who the omega would choose, he was upset with Uvogin earlier and he’d never even seen Phinks and the omega have a conversation. He should be the only option.

Kurapika hated the smug look on the troupe leader's face, his eyes mocking him with the conclusion he himself had come too, Kurapika wanted nothing more than to prove to the condescending man just how spiteful he could be.

“Yes Chrollo,” Kurapika snarled as he stomped over to Uvogin, determined to ignore the excited light in his eyes, so incredibly happy to be forgiven.

Chrollo felt a strange mix of disappointment and amusement when the omega stomped his way to Uvogin and plopped down next to him with as much space between them as he could manage, Chrollo noticing the moonstruck look in the giant alpha’s eyes. He didn’t like it. The omega threw a leg over Uvogin’s lap and leaned against the wall. The omega gave him a glare before going back to reading, not even looking at Uvogin once.

The next few days settled into a new routine for Kurapika, he woke up to the same disappointment that was slowly bleeding into disbelief and frustration. The troupe leader walked him to the bathroom and then he started breakfast. The troupe leader hung around the kitchen every morning, sometimes trying to start up conversation but now Kurapika was ready for him. He needed to stop acting so friendly with these spiders and it started with the troupe leader.
The leader would frown when he brushed off conversation starters that worked in the past with grunts and vague gestures. Yet the alpha never called him out on it.

Kurapika would eat his breakfast with his feet propped up on Uvogin’s lap, avoiding all conversation with him, only feeling slightly bad for the kicked puppy look he sometimes sent Kurapika’s way. The lessons with the disturbing beta, who introduced himself as Shalnark, continued as well.

The lessons proved to be the most awkward and tense part of his day, Kurapika almost wished for another shopping trip with the troupe leader just to skip them. Almost. The shopping trips were dangerous, he got too close to the dark alpha for comfort, and in ridiculous outfits as well.

After the beta’s ‘lessons’, Uvogin would ask for another wrestling match, of which Kurapika would try to avoid with simple dodges and ducks never trying to pin while keeping the alpha at arm’s length. After the match, he’d do a few touch ups around the base then sit down to read until dinner.

Kurapika hated the longing looks the alphas sent his way or the calculating way the pink haired beta stared at him. She looked at him like she had seen his entire life unfurl before her and was making moves to adjust it to her favor.

The morning of Kurapika’s 14th day with the Phantom Troupe was no different, he went through the motions of the day before he was finally released to begin his chores. Kurapika saved his favorite chore for last, sweeping the balcony.

Kurapika hummed to himself as he swept the light dust that had gathered off the makeshift platform with no railing before his eyes caught on the sea beyond.

Kurapika had grown up in a landlocked forest, the ocean held a wonder that always managed to capture the Kuruta whenever he saw it. The waves crashed against the cliff side that stretched for miles, the light of day reflected like shimmering scales off a giant and mysterious creature. The ocean was everything he didn’t feel these last two weeks, powerful and free. He missed that feeling.

Inside the base, Chrollo thought on the newest development the omega had thrown his way. The boy was avoiding everyone, receding into himself and treating them like they were the worst of scum. This probably wouldn’t be such a big deal if Chrollo wasn’t so frustrated by the odd twisting
sensation in his gut that worsened every day of this treatment.

Chrollo was just thinking on if he should take the omega out to a nicer museum when the nenlock on the base door loudly clicked. Looking up, Chrollo watched as his wayward spider pushed the door open.

Nobunaga had returned.
The Better Museum
Chapter by Serenechaos

Nobunaga tossed Chrollo the bag he carried with a grin plastered on his face. “Looks like ya taught the omega to clean, does it fuck yet? I could really go…”

Nobunaga’s speech trailed off when he received a rather acidic glare from Uvo.

Shalnark had given Nobunaga a wave when he came in, now he glanced up from his cellphone. “I’ve been training it in erotic arts,” the techno geek explained. “It’s learning to give blowjobs, massage, and the like. The fucking part should take care of itself when it has its next heat.”

From the balcony, Kurapika didn’t look up from his sweeping though he heard every word since his would be rapist had arrived. He snorted derisively, there was no way that something like a heat would get the better of him! And definitely not with one of them!

“What about a blowjob?” the topknot alpha asked.

“Only practiced on bananas thus far, I’ll move it to a dildo tomorrow.”

Internally Kurapika felt himself whither a bit, his hatred for the group only increasing.

Inside, Chrollo glanced over at the omega and could practically see the boy tensing. It might be too soon to have the omega near Nobunaga all day so soon after being reintroduced, especially with how the alpha immediately started asking about sex.

“We’ll be going to the Harven Cultural Museum, so the lesson will have to wait Shalnark,” Chrollo interjected. “I’ll be taking the omega with me.”

On the balcony, Kurapika’s ears perked as his head turned towards the troupe leader. Another museum?

“Harven?” Shalnark asked then shrugged. “Alright, means more time for gaming for me!”

Chrollo glanced towards the omega and saw a slight smile on the boy’s face, easily missed without the light from the ocean behind him. The sight seemed to make him look angelic, even in the overly large cast off clothing from the troupe.

“Paku, Uvo, I’d like to discuss something with you,” the dark alpha stated in his smooth, deep voice as he stood and moved towards a hall where there should be several private rooms.

The two he’d requested followed him without objection into the room he selected and Uvo shut the door behind them.

“Danchou?” Paku asked.

“I’d like the two of you to go to the museum as well, we’ll be checking whether they have anything worthy of being taken. Same signal as last time, if I tap a case or item three times, mark it for stealing. Keep your own eyes peeled as well for anything worth taking.”

“Okay,” Pakunoda replied as her eyebrows knitted together. “Why couldn’t you have discussed this in the other room?”
“Because we don’t know if the omega might have risked the plan if he knew,” Chrollo replied. And he didn’t want to make that smile disappear.

There was a happy spring to the omega’s step for the rest of the day, a bounce that persisted as he took his usual seat next to Uvo, cooked dinner, and cleaned up afterwards. Franklin hadn’t had to yell or do much to keep the boy on task for several days now and tonight he pretty much was hovering as the excited omega tried his hand at making beef bourguignon.

The recipe was a bit difficult for someone new to cooking, but was honestly one of Chrollo’s favorite dishes. He had a love of French and Italian cuisine and felt that a well rounded cook should be able to make some dishes of either cuisine.

Despite hovering, Franklin apparently didn’t have to do too much in regards to the food for once. Some of the vegetables were a bit burned but still tender and the soup was generously salted, but there was a balance that had been lacking from previous dishes.

“Damn, it actually learned to cook!” Nobunaga declared as he dug into his stew that night then glanced at where the omega once again sat next to Uvo, feet on the alpha’s lap. The omega’s bowl was smaller than the rest and he wasn’t allowed seconds without permission. Chrollo had started to give permission when he saw that the boy was losing some weight.

As the omega cleaned up in the kitchen, Machi approached Chrollo.

“You’ll be wanting an outfit for the omega?” Though worded like a question, it was definitely a statement and Chrollo rose automatically to follow the seamstress.

“Yes, I’ve finished several, you’ll have your pick.”

The door to the sewing room was pushed open and Chrollo looked to the back wall where sure enough, several new garments hung. He ignored all but one almost automatically, feeling the dress was perfect for tomorrow.

Yellow in color, Bohemian in style, the dress was an off-the-shoulder garment with long sleeves. Embroidered red and white flowers with greens leaves decorated the torso and sleeves of the dress and beneath the dress was a pair of leather sandals with yellow rhinestones decorating them.

Machi followed his eyes and smiled. “Thought you’d like that one. This is honestly proving fun, making clothes for the omega. Like dressing up the little doll I never had.”

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It took most of the night for Kurapika to remember that he was supposed to be acting hostile and unhappy with the troupe, especially their leader. It took up until he was ushered to the bathroom that morning and noticing his ugly grey feet to remember that he would also be allowed to shower and then forced to dress up in some heinous outfit.

The thought of the outfit was what finally grounded Kurapika and despite that he had been hoping to see the Harven museum for years now, he found himself dreading the upcoming ordeal. First a romper then a lolita dress, what would be thrown at him this time?

His focus slipped a bit but the pancakes didn’t seem to suffer too much since he knew what he was doing with them, but the bacon was definitely dark and crispy.
Thoughts of some hideous outfit killed most of his appetite that morning and hovered over his head as he finished the dishes. Too soon he found himself escorted to the bathroom of the alphas and the chain was removed from shackle so he could shower.

The troupe didn’t let him shower anywhere near enough it seemed. This was his fifteenth day with them and he could count the number of showers he’d been allowed on one hand. Naturally the dirt, oil, and grime took a while to scrub off and Kurapika noticed that unlike the last time he’d been allowed to shower, there were two new bottles of shampoo and bodywash in the shower, likely belonging to the samurai alpha.

Grabbing the peppermint shampoo and conditioner that he’d used previously, Kurapika washed his hair happily then worked hard to scrub his grey and dirty feet. Luckily this base was nowhere near as filthy as the first one and Kurapika had managed to clean the floors well enough that his feet weren’t in too bad of shape.

Like all the times before, someone had entered the bathroom while he’d been showering and left a towel and what he was supposed to wear.

Yellow. It was a big yellow dress! Kurapika felt his eye twitch in aggravation as he stared at the thing. It was easier to look at than the lolita dress had been, but it was still a dress! And this one looked like it wouldn’t even cover his shoulders!

It didn’t. Not if he didn’t want his groin and butt exposed to the world, and Kurapika decided quickly that those areas took precedence over his shoulders. When situated the way he believed the dress was supposed to fit, once again his hands were almost covered in fabric but his shoulders were completely exposed and the dress only went down to his mid-thigh. Tugging at it to try to cover more only exposed more of the opposite area.

Whoever made this dress needed to put less fabric on the sleeves and more everywhere else! The sleeves seemed like they contained half of the material for the dress!

Kurapika had slid the sandals onto his feet and was about to exit the bathroom when a knock came at the door.

“Are you decent?” the voice of the seamstress responsible for his clothing called.

“Barely.” Seriously, if this dress moved up or down even two inches in either direction, he’d be exposed!

The door was pushed open automatically and the pink haired woman looked him up and down before nodding slightly and pulling out a small bag. From the bag, she pulled out a hair dryer, a curling iron, a brush, scissors, and some clips. Kurapika stared at them, terrified of what was evidently to come.

Chrollo was waiting a bit longer than what he believed was usual for the omega to be finished but found he was fine at the moment. Machi had already stated that she was going to be showing him how to do his hair and that it would take a few minutes.

Even Chrollo could admit that the omega’s hair needed a bit of a trim. His bangs had been long when they’d taken him, naturally they had grown and were definitely in his eyes at this point.

Pakunoda and Uvogin had already headed out and Chrollo knew it would take them longer to reach
the city. He and the omega would easily have an hour on them even if they left now.

The sound of Machi clearing her throat caused him to glance up.

“Is he ready?”

“Not quite yet,” Machi admitted. “I needed to grab something else and was wondering if you would happen to have an old shirt you wouldn’t miss?”

“Why?”

“The omega needs more clothes than just the cast-offs from the rest of the troupe for everyday use. I’m gathering some clothes to tailor to fit him.”

“Oh, yes I believe I have one.” Standing, Chrollo moved to the back hall where the alpha’s room was and went through his travel bag quickly. Towards the bottom of the pack was an old, white button-up. He had several and this one was definitely the oldest and it had a tear in one of the seams along one of the sleeves. He should have thrown it out a while ago but it now would have a new purpose.

Machi was guiding the omega into the lounge when he returned and Chrollo felt his eyes snap on the boy. The dress looked perfect, cute but modern and playful. Machi had done well with his hair also, trimming the bangs and giving the rest a slight curl, held back with several small clips. He was breathtaking, even with the pout on his face.

“Another dress?” the boy complained as his hand moved to tug the bottom of the dress only for him to think better of it when Machi made a noise.

Chrollo barely remembered to hand the shirt he had retrieved to Machi before escorting the omega through the door of the base.

Hisoka groaned in boredom as he watched the boys continue to train under the instruction of the strange pink-thing they had found. Honestly, she was better at teaching than he likely would have been and his fruits were developing well right before his eyes, but he was BORED!

It would still be at least another month before he’d be willing to help them track down the troupe to try to rescue the Kuruta omega/fruit and by then they could have sold it! He’d truly miss out on the possibility to fight Chrollo but it would be easier to retrieve the omega…

Hisoka’s mouth watered at the thought of such a delectable fruit. When he and Illumi had first gotten together, they had been certain it would be a temporary thing, Illumi was the eldest son of the Zoldyck family and a capable assassin, he had believed at the time that he would continue to be the heir. As the heir and future head of the family, he would need to produce an heir of his own, something two alphas really couldn’t do.

Then Killua had displaced Illumi and his lifeplan was also uprooted.

For several weeks Illumi had been distraught over no longer being the heir, that is until Hisoka had pointed out that it did free him from the expectation that he would sire his own children. Not being the heir meant he could be with Hisoka, and when he decided he did want offspring then they only needed to find an appropriate omega or female beta. Neither were interested in the female form whether it be beta or omega.
The pretty little Kuruta, his fruit with scarlet eyes, when Hisoka had told Illumi the other had agreed readily to him being an excellent choice. Highly intelligent, a nen user, spirited, and so so beautiful. Had Killua been an alpha, Illumi would have probably been forced to forfeit the Kuruta to him as a mate.

It would be fun breaking him in, twisting the little blonde and siring their children. More importantly, neither he nor Illumi would have to sacrifice their careers to raise the children.

The perfect opportunity. Now he just needed to watch these boys train and present just that so that he could carry the little omega off.

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Dress or not, the moment that Chrollo stopped the car in front of the Harven museum for a valet to park, Kurapika was looking at the marble entrance in excitement. The smile on his face caused Chrollo to pause as he moved to stand by the boy, that odd twisting happening in his chest yet again.

In the peripheral vision of the thief, he could see a number of alphas automatically turning to the scent of an unattached omega and just as had occurred previously, jealousy and envy colored the eyes and faces of the onlookers as Chrollo guided the omega into the museum entrance.

The boy’s eyes flitted over posters of exhibits and pamphlets as they waited in the short line to buy tickets and then Chrollo caught the omega’s wrist as they headed towards the entrance, slipping a wristband around the slender appendage.

“What’s this for?” the omega demanded as he reached with the obvious intent of tugging the thing off and Chrollo stopped him by placing his hand over the band.

“I paid for us to enter some of the restricted exhibits, this is how they know,” he explained and the boy immediately stopped any further attempts to remove the band.

After days of the boy giving Chrollo the cold shoulder and refusing to speak, to see those walls come down was like a breath of fresh air as they moved through exhibits.

Chrollo had just noticed Paku and Uvo and was about to tap on a display when the omega glanced at the jeweled scepter, turned his head slightly, eyes narrowing, and stepped around the case, even kneeling at one point.

“This is a fake,” the boy finally determined and Chrollo withdrew his hand, earning a slightly raised eyebrow from Paku.

“How can you tell?” Chrollo asked, having believed the scepter was real.

The omega pointed at the top of the scepter. “If you kneel down, you’ll see an engraving of an eagle. The real scepter wielded by Prince Kutanni-”

“Had a condor,” Chrollo finished as he checked on the small engraving and nodded. “What made you suspicious?”

“It didn’t look right in general,” the omega replied. “The grip of the scepter looked faintly off in regards to the scale that I remembered reading of.”

Chrollo smiled then nodded towards the next display. “I think that one is a fake as well.”
Now the boy glanced at it with a scrutinizing eye.

“Can you see what’s wrong with it?” Chrollo’s smile was a bit teasing as he asked.

The omega huffed and moved to the display, circling the chalice case. He studied each gem, the angles of the cup and the neck before shaking his head. “It’s real,” he argued after a minute. “The gems are placed in the exact angle and order that the texts say they should be and it even has the small engravings of a sword and rose on the left side of the rises in the body of the cup. In turn, the three leaves on the handle are also present.”

“Very good,” Chrollo congratulated as he tapped the display three times, earning a sharp look from the omega.

“You did that deliberately, to see if I could tell!”

“Guilty as charged!” The laugh that came from Chrollo’s lips was accompanied by him raising his hands as though in surrender.

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Uvo watched his danchou and Kurapika as they moved through the museum, his mouth unhinging slightly at the sight of the blonde’s smiles and Chrollo’s laughter. With his enhanced hearing, he could also hear their discussions and the contest that the pair started, trying to trick the other into believing that something was real or fake every so often.

In all of his years knowing Chrollo, Uvo had never heard the alpha laugh like that.

Around the pair, several betas were glancing at the pair approvingly while a number of the alphas stepped back a bit, acknowledging a good match even if the omega wasn’t mated or marked.

It hurt to admit, his stomach twisting a bit, but Uvo could admit that the pair seemed like an excellent match. Both enjoyed reading and he could recall some of their debates and the way that both would trade points on opposing viewpoints and at no point did their arguments devolve into yells of how the other was stupid and they were right. Once again, another point Uvo couldn’t claim.

“Uvo?” Paku asked as she made another mark on the museum map she carried as Chrollo tapped three times on another display. “Is something wrong?”

The Enhancer automatically shook his head. No, things were perfect even if he was very disappointed. “Danchou is laughing every so often.”

“Really?” the mind reader asked as she glanced at the pair they were following right in time to see her danchou smile brightly and try to hold back a chuckle as he and the omega started visibly tearing apart a large display, pointing at different items in turn. The woman’s brow furrowed at the sight before she looked down to mark another display as Chrollo turned his attention to a display and tapped it three times.

Uvo was the only one to notice when Kurapika’s head turned in the opposite direction of Chrollo’s and he practically skipped through a door.

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“Even if the color of the sapphires on the tiara look slightly off, this crown itself is real. I’ll bet the original stones were traded out so they better matched a necklace that was made later,” Chrollo stated as he stared at the tiara on display in the case.

There was no immediate response in either the positive or negative and Chrollo turned his head to try to see if the omega was studying the piece before giving his own assessment, but the boy was notably absent.

Turning sharply, Chrollo looked around for a blonde head, expecting the boy to be nearby but found that the surrounding displays utterly lacked any blondes.

“Ome-” the call Chrollo was about to make froze on his lips as he realized that he was about to call ‘omega’. That was fine in the base, but definitely not in public when posing as a couple. No, a name was needed… What was the omega’s name? Had the omega ever said what it was? Had he even asked?

That needed to change, and little wonder the boy wasn’t comfortable with them! Calling him it or omega was likely in no way comfortable.

Uvo caught his gaze then and the Enhancer pointed towards a door.

Pointing at the door himself, Uvo nodded and Chrollo walked rapidly towards the room.

Displays on books! Kurapika had just spied the pair he was headed toward from the other room and now he moved toward them, thoroughly intrigued.

The books looked to be made from leather and the ink was dark and blotted. The letters weren’t unfamiliar, in fact he could read several of them. They looked like an early version of the Kuruta language!

“Book… of the… Ceremony…”

“You can read that?” a voice called out and Kurapika turned to see an elderly man in a tweed suit and bow tie with a cane hobbling around the display. A bright, intrigued smile lit his face.

“Some.” The admission drew an even brighter smile. “Some of these characters look similar to my native language.”

“They do? Intriguing!” the man declared. “Excuse my manners, my name is Dr. Henry Neffer. I’m the Director of Ancient Philology.”

“So ancient languages and books?” Kurapika clarified.

“Indeed! These particular books hail from the ancient Cellic people, a civilization that used to extend from current day Trinton to Lukso. They are estimated to be almost 1300 years old! Would you mind too much if I were to pick your brain a bit?”

“I-” Kurapika was cut off when an arm wrapped around his shoulders.

“There you are! You had me worried when you disappeared like that,” the deep voice of the troupe leader stated. In front of Kurapika, the elderly alpha seemed to visibly deflate as he examined the other alpha.
There was a slight tightening of the alpha’s fingers on Kurapika’s shoulder and he became aware that the elderly alpha was doing his version of ‘hitting on’ Kurapika. Since the troupe intended to sell him, and likely to someone far more wealthy than a museum curator, it was natural that the man would be looking to “safeguard” Kurapika from an inappropriate suitor.

“Dr. Neffer!” a young woman called as she approached their small group which had descended into uncomfortable silence. “The tomes from the Giza valley are written in the ancient Ezypian language like you believed. Pennel has already started the translation.”

“Thank you,” the elderly man replied before turning his attention back on Chrollo and Kurapika. “You have a most interesting companion, would you mind if I asked him some questions?”

Kurapika bristled as the man turned his attention to Chrollo rather than asking him, but the troupe leader responded with a smooth, “Go right ahead.”

Nodding, the doctor looked to Kurapika again. “I’ve been trying to translate these books for a few years, but many of the meanings of the characters elude me. I have several I was working on right now…” The alpha’s old hand reached into his pocket then and after a bit of shuffling, he withdrew a pocket notebook. He handed this to Kurapika.

“Can you identify any of the symbols?”

Flipping open the book, Kurapika found page after page of characters and symbols. Some of them had meanings written next to them, but many lacked that. He knew a number of the symbols, or rather what they had meant in the Kuruta language.

“I know some of them, however the language is different and I’m not sure they’ll be accurate,” Kurapika admitted as the troupe leader gazed over his shoulder.

“That’s fine! It gives us a starting point!” the elderly doctor declared as he produced a pencil.

It took a few minutes for Kurapika to write out the definitions of the words he knew, during which, he failed to notice the doctor giving Chrollo a meaningful look and glancing towards a man, a low-level alpha in the room as well who was staring at the omega between them.

The alpha looked to be the greasy sort, a prowler eager to snatch any omega he found. Chrollo narrowed his eyes and shifted into a slightly more aggressive stance, making it clear that the omega was not available.

There was no fight as the lower alpha immediately backed off and left the room right as Kurapika finished writing in the notebook.

“I wrote down the definitions I knew, but remember they might not be accurate,” Kurapika urged the doctor with a smile as he handed back the notebook. The elderly man accepted the book with a smile and then pressed something into Kurapika’s hand.

“Thank you so much, that pass is for lunch in the museum restaurant. It’s not much, but the least I can offer. It should be good for both of you. Have a nice day and enjoy the rest of the museum!”

Kurapika stared after the departing alpha, wishing the conversation could have been longer. Maybe he’d come back after getting away from whoever the troupe sold him to.

“Omega, what’s your name?”
Uvogin dropped his head in his palm when he over heard his danchou have to ASK Kurapika his name, and so bluntly too. At the very least Uvogin had explained first that he hadn’t caught it before asking, and that was two weeks ago!

Uvogin watched how his danchou had to prod the boy a bit to get him to reveal his name, all while he despaired how danchou could have missed something so simple. Danchou was going to need help and Uvogin was willing to give that help if it meant Kurapika and danchou’s happiness. They suited each other so well, one day Kurapika would thank him for stopping him from being sold.

“Don’t you dare!” Kurapika’s voice brought him out of his thought process in how he’d get danchou to admit to wanting the omega for himself. Uvogin looked over to see danchou about to tap on the book display, signaling that they were to steal it, but a fire had entered the omega’s eyes at the action, stopping the alpha in his tracks.

Danchou grinned at the boy and laugh loudly, causing the room to look over to him. “How long have you known?”

“Please, you think I didn’t notice them trailing us?” Kurapika gestured over to Pakunoda and Uvogin across the room, both easily towering over everyone else in the museum.

Chrollo couldn’t help it, Kurapika managed to surprise him at every turn. It was exciting to find anyone that could manage the task, Chrollo liked that Kurapika was a worthy opponent. Life was never boring when he was around.

Still smiling, Chrollo surrendered, passing by the books to tap three times on a display of clay bowls. Chrollo watched how the omega reacted, he had resigned himself apparently. He couldn’t stop the troupe from robbing the museum blind but Chrollo was willing to spare the books if it meant he wouldn’t blow the plan completely.

“Should we break for lunch?”
Chrollo left Kurapika at a small table by the window and left to order them both a meal at the counter, he passed the gift shop with a small smile. They had a few cute items that he knew the boy would like. There was a pillow set decorated with pictures of some of the museum’s most popular exhibits that just begged him to gift them to the omega. Chrollo shook his head at the strange urge to buy the omega something, it’s not like they are out on an actual date.

Chrollo forced himself to leave the gift shop behind and wait in line at the counter. Looking over the menu he quickly picked out what he and Kurapika would be eating, ignoring everything around him except for the quickly dwindling line.

It didn’t take long before Chrollo had ordered and he stood by the order pick up counter patiently, his eyes drifting to the blonde boy. Kurapika was staring out the window, the sun low in the sky still, eclipsed by the body of the omega. The light reflected off him setting him on fire in a way that made everyone stare, and he didn’t even know it. He didn’t care that he was the most beautiful thing in the museum.

“He’s gorgeous, I bet he cost you a pretty penny,” a slimy voice called Chrollo's attention away from the heavenly sight of his omega to his immediate right.

The alpha that had been staring at Kurapika earlier had made a reappearance, his eyes locked onto Kurapika as well. Chrollo didn’t think he liked that.

Chrollo didn’t answer him, it wasn’t his business. He only narrowed his eyes at the lowly alpha.

“No need to be so aggressive, I’m just admiring like everyone else. It’s rare for an alpha to even let their omega leave the house. But I guess I could understand,” he mused with a causal stance, like he didn’t care that Chrollo’s scent was screaming death, so much so that other alphas had shifted away from them. “I bet he repays you quite nicely for taking him out like this, am I right?”

Chrollo’s look darkened at the crude comment. He barely tolerated Nobunaga’s nonsense towards Kurapika, this man was walking on a razor’s edge.

“Well,” he sighed as Chrollo blatantly ignored the alpha and turned to gather his food. “Nice talking to you, I hope we see each other soon.” The fox grin on his face told Chrollo this wasn’t the last he’d see of the man, and he decided he’d have fun killing him.
Uvogin has been bored out of his mind by the time Chrollo had given him and Pakunoda the okay to leave. The second they had left Uvogin basically raced home, he needed to strategize and he wouldn’t waste another second!

Uvogin managed to get back to the base a whole hour ahead of Pakunoda but by the time she arrived, he still hadn’t come up with anything he could do short of somehow getting the omega to sleep with danchou.

Danchou was a prime alpha, a rank above Uvogin. Plus he’d earned Uvogin’s everlasting respect. There was no alpha better that Kurapika could hope for than danchou, he could always bring up this point to Kurapika but he got the distinct feeling that he would withdraw completely from Chrollo if he knew the other liked him. Uvogin didn’t think Chrollo even knew he liked Kurapika.

After more thought, Uvo finally decided he’d think better on a full stomach.

“Oi Franklin! Did ya make lunch?” Uvogin yelled into the lounge at the beta relaxing on the couch.

Franklin looked up at his giant of a friend curiously, he had been back for awhile and yet this was the first he had heard anything about food. Normally the alpha was raiding the kitchen the second he stepped through the doors.

“Yeah, I saved you a few sandwiches.” Franklin finally told him, only briefly wondering what the man could be up to.

Uvogin has already turned to the kitchen before the man even finished talking. Raiding the fridge as he discussed with himself how he’d bring up all Chrollo’s good points, Uvogin didn’t notice when Nobunaga followed him into the kitchen.

“Hey!” Nobunaga called and Uvogin turned with five sandwiches stacked in his large grip. Uvo looked over his friend sceptically, the two hadn’t spoken since Nobunaga had tried to rape Kurapika over a week ago.

“Hey,” he huffed back, pulling over a stool to hunch over the kitchen counter to devour his bounty.
Nobunaga has never been one for apologies so Uvogin didn’t expect one from the alpha.

“Hey, look, you’re not still mad right?” Nobunaga finally asked and Uvo felt that Nobunaga didn’t have the right to ask that. Not only had he tried to attack someone Uvogin cared about, but he’d disobeyed danchou, it was a heavy sin. “You can’t really be thinking of letting a sex toy come between us?” Nobunaga shouted when Uvogin remained quiet.

“He isn’t a sex toy,” Uvogin argued immediately.

“Oh come on! It’s an omega, and you can’t tell me something hasn’t happened between you two, it’s almost in your lap every day!” Nobunaga yelled at him and Uvogin ripped into his last sandwich, trying to ignore the anger and memories the alpha raised in him.

Uvo couldn’t help picturing that day in the training room, the faint smell of arousal, the feeling of Kurapika against him and then every day after being like torture because of the omega plopping down right next to him.

“He’s only sitting by me because danchou order him to sit by an . . . Alpha.” Suddenly Uvogin knew exactly how to make the omega spend even more time with Chrollo than he does now.

“Nobu I could almost forgive you!”

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Despite everything, Kurapika was enjoying himself. The troupe leader and him had just finished their second pass through the entire museum, going more in-depth with each piece.

The alpha he had met earlier even gave them a private tour of a restricted exhibit!

When Kurapika and the troupe leader finally left the museum, hours had passed and it was almost time to start making dinner. His stomach dropped at the thought of going back to the base since his would-be rapist had come back. He’d have to deal with that guy’s narcissistic self-entitlement again.
“How about we grab dinner in town?” the troupe leader asked.

“What about the others?” Chrollo gave a happy hum when the boy thought of the rest of the troupe, an instinctual part of him rumbling in pleasure at the omega thinking of his packs’ needs. Again Chrollo shook off the strange and out of nowhere thought.

“We’ll just pick up something quick for everyone and eat back at the base,” Chrollo finally decided when the omega turned to him curiously.

It didn’t take much time for Chrollo and Kurapika to pick out a diner and decide their own food, Chrollo took a bit of extra time to call the troupe and ask what they would like from the menu.

Chrollo kept up the conversation as they waited for their food, asking what exhibits Kurapika found the most interesting. They laughed about the rather obvious fakes the museum ironically boosted.

Kurapika found himself being sucked into the conversation the entire way back to the car.

Once in the car both settled in for the long drive back to the base, Kurapika finally had a moment to think as the troupe leader seemed willing to let them both fall into comfortable silence.

Kurapika felt a bubbling anger rumble through him as he thought back on the day. The troupe leader had demanded his name, surprising even Kurapika that he hadn’t picked it up from Uvogin. In the end, Kurapika hadn’t thought it a was a big deal and even ended up teasing the alpha a bit before giving in.

Kurapika had to remind himself why the museum and bookstore trips were dangerous: because he let himself get too close to the alpha. Before long the troupe leader was going to expect things from Kurapika, already he gives him that fallen look every morning.

The hour long drive flew by in a daze, all things considered the situation was terrible. But Kurapika couldn’t understand why they hadn’t sold him yet. Did they really think he was going to be with whoever buys him long enough to need those lessons? Or maybe they're all just idiots and can’t see past a stereotype?

“Just sell me already,” Kurapika muttered as he looked over at the alpha who seemed to be more
concerned with taking him to museums than actually researching to sell him.

Chrollo looked at the omega curiously, sure that he’d heard him say something but hadn’t caught it. Maybe it didn’t matter anyway.

Machi couldn’t help the swirl of excitement when she finished the last stitch on the omega’s new shirt, and just in time too. Only a few minutes later Chrollo was unlocking the base door and Machi had to calm herself a bit so the others didn’t raise a brow at her behavior.

Machi had been waiting years to fashion clothes for the person who would stand next to Chrollo, she had hoped it would be for . . . Someone else, but nevertheless she was enjoying herself.

Quickly folding up the clothes she had finished, Machi moved to meet the pair at the door. The omega, like normal, looked forlorn and exasperated but the dress still looked to be in excellent condition.

“Here,” Machi pushed the folded clothes into the omega’s arms. “These are for you to wear in the base from now on.” The omega looked skeptical at the clothes but he knew that he couldn’t exactly deny them.

Kurapika pulled a face at the bundle in his hands, Chrollo seemed intrigued by what the beta had given him to wear but instead chose to take the food into the kitchen. Kurapika heaved a sigh and trudged to the bathroom to change.

Kurapika grabbed the pair of jeans first and didn’t even look at them before throwing them on, the excitement of finally having pants taking over.

The jean capris were tight on his legs, the seams on the sides decorated with embroidered pink and blue flowers, green vines on the rolled up cuffs wrapped around his shins and up his legs to delicately hold the flowers.

“Okay, that’s not awful.” Kurapika nodded, still on the girly side, but they were pants! Buttoning up the waist, Kurapika frowned at the way the jeans hugged him like a second skin.
Shrugging it off, Kurapika finally removed the dress and picked up the next article of clothing. It was a white button up that smelled like the peppermint shampoo he’d used that morning.

Pulling on the shirt, Kurapika felt the skepticism rise again. There was no way that the pink haired she-demon made him clothes that actually covered him! Looking into the mirror Kurapika’s stomach dropped.

“Of course,” Kurapika spat. The shirt was long sleeved, the cuffs rolled up as well. Like the pants, the cuffs were embroidered delicate with lines of blue swirling thread. The intricate lines continued their pattern around the buttons of the shirt and down the sides of the shirt. It was all well and good except for the fact that the material was so thin you could see his nipples through the shirt!

“Dear lord!” Kurapika looked through the last two pieces of cloth the beta had handed him and found what looked like two yellow Bandannas but one was bigger, much bigger, than the other. Holding up the larger bandanna looking thing, Kurapika glared at it.

“What the hell is this?” It looked like it could be a belt but it didn’t open anywhere. The smaller one was obviously a hair band but he didn’t really know how to put it on either.

After staring at the articles of clothing for a full five minutes, Kurapika finally decided just to ask what the hell he was suppose to do with them. He searched his memory for the pink haired beta’s name before cracking the door open.

“Hey, uhh, Machi?” Kurapika called out the door.

It only took a moment for the beta to come to the bathroom. Machi looked over the omega hiding his body behind the door.

“Yes?” Machi asked, raising a brow. Had he not dressed yet? He had such a problem with the dresses she figured he would be ecstatic over the jeans and shirt.

“Um…” The boy looked at the floor and opened the door wider and Machi saw that he hadn’t put on the thin tube top that was suppose to go under the thin button up. “This is see through and I don’t know how to put on this belt.”
Machi couldn’t help it, she chuckled a bit and pushed into the bathroom.

“Take off the shirt” she told him and took the tube top from his hand. “Now this is a kind of undershirt, not a belt. You put this on first and then the button up”

The omega looked at the tube top like it had betrayed him in not stating it purpose before. Soon he’d stripped off the white bottom up and squeezed the tube top over his head.

“Why do none of the clothes you make me not cover anything?!?” The omega snarled as he tried to stretch the material to cover both his chest and stomach.

“Don’t stretch it!” Machi ordered, yanking Kurapika’s hands off the top. “Now put on the button up, I need to fix your hair up a bit.”

Kurapika grumbled to himself as the beta started brushing his hair and taking out the clips and pins she had put in earlier.

Machi hummed a but as she pulled the omega’s hair back with the hair band and pulled a few pieces of hair to curl around his pale, pretty face.

“There,” she nodded. Machi patted herself on the back. The omega looked ridiculously cute in the outfit she had created.

Kurapika looked back in the mirror, you could clearly see his toned stomach and tiny shoulders through the white shirt, the yellow tube top forced the eye to appreciate how thin Kurapika’s body was under the white shirt.

“Now if I just tuck in the shirt a bit,” Machi mumbled to herself as she messed with the outfit for awhile. “Alright, danchou has your food.” The swell of excitement multiplied as she sent the boy to Chrollo. The boy had already smelled faintly of Chrollo from spending the day with him and washing himself with Chrollo’s shampoo, but now he smelled so strongly of Chrollo that it was almost like he had been scented by the alpha.

Kurapika continued grumbling as he walked back to the lounge to get his food. He couldn’t smell his own scent so he didn’t know what he was walking into.
Chrollo’s head snapped up from his book when he caught his own scent moving into the lounge, that twisting feeling coming back with full force when he witnessed the omega enter the room.

Kurapika looked innocent, cute, and oh so tempting in his new outfit. Chrollo followed the curves of the omega’s body under his own shirt, the smell of him stroking his alpha pride making his chest swell.

Kurapika crossed his arms angrily at the lusting looks on the alpha’s faces. The blonde alpha looked ready to jump him right then and there, and his would be rapist would definitely be helping.

The topknot alpha whistled, “Damn.”

“God, danchou. Do we seriously have to wait for him to pick one of us?” Phinks gasped as his boss pathetically.

“Just give me my food so I can sit down,” Kurapika snapped at the troupe leader.

Chrollo laughed a bit at the cute look of fury on the omega’s face and handed over his food.

“Make sure you eat it all, we’re headed out tonight and we’ll be traveling for awhile.”

“You’re gonna put me in that bag again, aren’t you?” Kurapika accused and took his food with an angry stomp.

“How else am I supposed to transport you?” The troupe leader grinned and Kurapika couldn’t even form the words to shout at him, so instead he turned with the intent to find Uvogin and sit down. Kurapika froze when he realized there was no Uvogin.

“Umm... Where’s Uvogin?” Kurapika asked, a little lost on what to do.

“He went out or something.” The topknot alpha grinned and patted the space next to him. Kurapika glared at him, just knowing that if he came within three feet of the alpha he’d get felt up. “You can
sit next to me cutie.” The alpha winked and Kurapika shuddered.

Kurapika looked over to the blonde alpha and considered the consequences of sitting next to him but that plan went straight to Hell when the small, mean beta jumped to the alpha’s side and glared right back at Kurapika.

It’s probably not a good idea to get in the way of that beta’s relationship, although Kurapika couldn’t understand why the alpha kept coming onto him when the beta clearly wanted him.

Turning to his last option, Kurapika looked to the troupe leader with a resigned sigh. The dark alpha smiled when he moved to sit by him.

Kurapika stayed on the very edge of the couch, keeping a two foot distance between them.

Chrollo could almost laugh again when the omega scrunched up shyly away from him. “I believe I said skin contact Kurapika,” Chrollo reminded the omega lightly. His little shoulders shook and he basically threw his body back on the couch so their shoulders rubbed against each other.

“Happy?” Kurapika ground out between clenched teeth.

“Very much so.” Chrollo smiled and promptly turned to eat his food.

Kurapika pouted but gave up and turned to his own food. The mean beta kept glaring at Kurapika as the blonde alpha kept up a conversation with the topknot alpha.

“It’s easy to forget how sexy it is when it’s all dirty.”

“I can’t wait for it's heat to come.”

“You’re telling me, you should have seen its last outfit!”

Kurapika felt his face heat up in embarrassment and anger, never before this moment had he felt so dirty. Even when the alpha attacked him.
The tension in the room spiked when the dark alpha’s pheromones began to waft over Kurapika and the other alphas took notice of it. The little ravenette beta smiled cruelly.

“Danchou get first turn,” he called and the alphas stopped and immediately agreed with the beta. Kurapika shifted uncomfortably next to the alpha, almost choking on his bite of fillet steak salad.

The tension only broke when the base door unlocked and opened. Kurapika jumped up when Uvogin came through the door.

“Uvogin! We got you food so sit down now!” Kurapika desperately yelled at the surprised alpha.

“Ahh... Yea, sure.” He grabbed his food as Kurapika trailed after him like a lost puppy.

Uvogin felt bad for what he was about to do, but this was for Kurapika’s own good. He’d be happier with an amazing alpha like danchou and not some random creep.

Kurapika felt his being deflate when Uvogin slid down to sit in the corner, making it impossible to just put his feet in his lap, his shoulder pressed tightly against topknot like a shield.

Kurapika felt the betrayal deep in his gut, everyone except maybe the man himself knew he wouldn’t be coming anywhere near the Samurai. Kurapika had no choice but to sit back on the couch with the troupe leader.

The second Kurapika finished his food, which was done in record time, the troupe leader turned to him with a serious look.

“Get yourself some water bottles and something you’d like to snack on in the kitchen,” Chrollo dismissed the boy. They wouldn’t be leaving for a few more hours but the annoyance he felt at his spiders for leering at Kurapika was, well, annoying. Chrollo decided it would be better to just wrap him up in the fun fun cloth and be done with it.

Chrollo ignored the other alphas comments as he waited for the omega to come back.
The omega returned with four water bottles and an equal number of protein bars. Chrollo didn’t waste a moment before wrapping the omega up in the cloth and slipping him out of sight in his pocket. It’s not like he was being possessive because he smelled like him. And no matter how smug Uvogin looked, it wouldn’t change that.
Over the next few hours, the troupe packed up and got ready to leave the base.

Turning Blinky out to so the mouth of her beloved vacuum hung off the balcony, Shizuku finally took care of a particularly grisly task that she had forgotten about thus far and emptied the bodies from the first auction from Blinky’s bag. The bodies were all crushed together in a wet paste of limbs, hair, and clothes by now and it chummed the water heavily.

Chrollo usually didn’t mind such things, but he was quite glad that Shizuku had waited until that moment to perform the task. He had a feeling that Kurapika knew some of the deceased and might have been upset…

Shoving that thought aside, the thief gently touched his pocket as he ensured his things were together, assuring himself that the omega was safely tucked away.

“Paku, with me. You too Machi,” Chrollo called as he determined what his strike team and travel group would be. “For the rest of you, after we strike the museum, we’ll be headed for base #9. Hisoka has been to that one, but it is unlikely he realized it was a permanent base since the last time he was there, it was with Machi and Shal for a brief job.”

“I didn’t tell him it was a base, danchou. Just called it a meeting point. He didn’t even go inside once he heard you weren’t there.”

Chrollo nodded at Machi, pleased to hear this bit of good news.

“Following the strike on the museum, the three of us will depart in the car. Try to arrive at the base by tomorrow evening.”

The rest of the troupe called out their acknowledgement of the order and they moved outside. Shizuku and Kortopi joined Chrollo and his companions in the car for the trip to the city, jumping out before the rest of them continued on. Paku was driving and she turned the car into a parking garage located four blocks from the museum.

As they exited the car, Chrollo thought for a long moment to leave the bundle carrying the omega in the car. In case of a scuffle, it would be far safer for Kurapika to be in the car. However, if anyone else got in the car, they might release the boy or accidentally crush him.

“Did you notice the security?” Chrollo asked Paku as they left the parking garage.

“I noted the cameras around the museum and Shalnark hacked the system. He’s already created a loop feed for the cameras and the other security systems can easily be brought down by cutting the power.” A sardonic smile crossed the woman’s face. “The backup generator can only support the cameras apparently.”

In other words, security was pathetic, especially for what the museum contained. Uvo was going to be disappointed with how smoothly this should go.

Being in the car gave the three an enormous head start and it would be over an hour before the other members of the troupe would arrive and get in position. There happened to be a bookstore with a coffee shop just a block over from the museum and the trio went there as they waited for
The alpha stared at the weak male, knowing that he was looking for Kurapika and felt his teeth
being slightly bared. Before he could try to approach, his phone went off and the weakling ran for it in the moment that Chrollo was distracted with pulling out his phone.

“Hey danchou!” a chipper voice declared over the phone. “Everyone else has reported that they’re in position and I’ll be cutting the power to the museum in 10 minutes! Video loop will be starting in five minutes!”

“Thank you Shal,” Chrollo replied, causing Paku to look up then get up to go grab Machi. The seamstress had a bag in hand that obviously contained a magazine, which she quickly tucked into her mission bag when she saw Paku approaching.

The three were out of the door not even a minute later.

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Having finished the initial training exercise that Biscuit had given them, Gon and Killua were both eager to start the next part of their training, hoping it would be just as interesting and fun as fighting Binolt was.

Instead they had been handed shovels.

Killua was certain within several hours that they had finally reached hell, and it involved shovels and a number forming old lady pretending to be young who could throw him over a mountain. Even after figuring out Shu, using nen to reinforce the shovels, both he and Gon were exhausted within minutes.

Now the icing to top off this shit-cake: Biscuit thought she was being nice by making dinner. The hag couldn’t cook at all! The soup had tasted like sweat and water with unidentifiable chunks of what Killua HOPED was some of the food they had brought with them.

Killua was an excellent cook and had demonstrated that in the Hunter Exam and Gon was decent. He had told Biscuit that he would prefer if she let him or Gon cook until she had some lesson.

He had counted twenty-six ridges that he and Gon would have to tunnel through to reach Masadora on the trip up when Biscuit had punched him. Then he had seen Hisoka taking a bath and had screamed bloody murder all the way back to the ground after the disturbing alpha had blown him a kiss.

“How long until we can go after Kurapika?” Gon managed to gasp at him as they toiled through the next day, well aware that Biscuit was outside of their little tunnel and Hisoka not much further away.

“I say we try after reaching Masadora!” Killua spat some dirt from his mouth, not certain he’d be able to last until then.

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Stealing the marked items from the museum was staggeringly easy, especially with the power out. The troupe pretty much waltzed in, grabbed the things Chrollo had marked, Kortopi had copied them and the copies were set in the place of the originals, and the originals were sucked into bags if they were fragile or sucked into Shizuku’s vacuum if they weren’t.

Chrollo stood by the books he had not marked at Kurapika’s urging and eyed them for a long
moment before moving on. Apparently, the curator they had met was eager to try to translate the books because they had already been replaced by fake versions that Chrollo wouldn’t even call very good fakes. Not marking the books had turned out to be a good thing.

A giggle drew his attention back to where Franklin, Shizuku, and Shalnark were picking through some jewelry that Kortopi had just copied, Shizuku setting a tiara on Franklin’s head while Shal snapped a picture.

Franklin actually played along in that moment and didn’t try to remove the tiara immediately, instead walking in an exaggerated fashion as he placed the forgeries in the place of the originals.

The entire job took only thirty minutes and then the 12 of them walked out the backdoor and Shalnark restored power and rearmed the system. 24 hours from now, the alarms would go off as the forged items disappeared right in front of the cameras.

When Paku, Machi, and himself returned to the car, they quickly loaded most of the fragile items into the car and then he slid behind the wheel of the car, mindful of his pocket for a long moment before sighing, fishing out the cloth, and setting it in the center console. The sack was still and he imagined that Kurapika was likely asleep, it wasn’t as though he had much else he could do in there.

Machi switched on the light and fished the magazine from her bag and began to read as they drove away from the city, Chrollo could hear the flipping pages. Paku checked the bag holding the omega then began making a list, one that Chrollo recognized as a grocery list and the thought of taking Kurapika out again in just a few days excited him.

Of course there was likely going to be some boxed and canned items for the first day or two, something Chrollo was fine with for now.

It was five in the morning when they reached base #9 and Paku took the car to dispose of it.

Unlike their previous bases, #9 was originally a warehouse. Even though the living space was once again in the basement, unlike in other bases it wasn’t divided into rooms. The entire area was open with a number of supports scattered about, the troupe usually dividing the area using blankets. The only rooms that were officially walled off and private were the bathrooms, there once again being two.

The laundry machine was set right next to the kitchen area and Shalnark’s internet connection cables were on the other side of the kitchen. There were no other official spaces or rooms, so other pieces of equipment were pushed up against the walls of the cavernous area.

Unlike in previous bases, Chrollo found he didn’t care to wait until everyone arrived before releasing Kurapika. His nen was sealed and with the chain anchored, he could be allowed to walk around a bit.

“Machi, I’m going to let the omega out,” he informed the seamstress as she settled her pack against a far wall.

Machi didn’t seemed concerned. “What about when the others start arriving?”

“He’ll be chained, so there shouldn’t be an issue.”

Moving through the base, Chrollo considered the length of the chain and the placement of the kitchen and bathrooms. Since Machi and Shal had been the last ones here, they had left the base in decent shape. Unfortunately, that had also been months ago so while there was plenty of fuel for
the generator, there was still a notable build up of dust, dirt, grime, and vermin.

Finally selecting a place that would allow for the boy to reach the bathrooms, kitchen and most of the base, Chrollo gently settled the bag on the ground and released the knot.

Unlike previous times when the boy had burst from confinement wild-eyed and angry, this time Chrollo found himself staring in slight mute shock as the cloth revealed the omega to still be asleep. He was curled up on his side, hair framing the angelic face that was set in a peaceful expression.

Quietly as he could, though he wasn’t sure why he didn’t want to disturb the sleeping omega, Chrollo gently grabbed the end of the chain and set it into the anchor. For a long moment he considered settling a blanket over the small form but shoved the thought aside. The boy was still far too shy and a blanket was an incentive at this point, a reward for when he could finally overcome that shyness and sleep with an alpha.

While the omega continued to sleep, Chrollo took inventory of what was available in the base. There was a broom thankfully but no mop. Plenty of canned and non-perishable food items. But everything needed a cleaning very badly.

Kurapika stirred an hour later as Chrollo tried to figure out if he’d get less dusty sitting on the floor or one of the sofas.

“Awake already?” Chrollo called out when the boy’s eyes opened and he watched Kurapika pull a face at him before standing and attempting to knock the dirt and dust off of his clothes. Grey eyes took in the ‘base’ and there was a slight slumping in the boy’s shoulders, especially when he saw the chain that once again imprisoned him.

“There’s a broom in that corner,” Chrollo called out, giving the boy an idea of what chores he was about to be assigned. “For now just sweep and address the dust.”

Machi and Paku both returned from their patrols as Kurapika grabbed the broom and began to gather the dust and debris in a small pile near the center of the expansive room. Unlike in the last base where the floors had been marble, this base had cement floors and a large amount of dust and rocks had quickly collected. It took over an hour for Kurapika to sweep the floor to a satisfying level of cleanliness and then he turned his attention to wiping down the various counters and tables. Finally he turned his attention towards the couches and other articles of furniture, long after Chrollo had decided to set out his bedroll on a swept portion of basement.

There was nowhere to take the cushion to beat them. Thankfully, the material used to upholster most of the furniture seemed to be either leather or something of the sort. It was old and cracked, but cleaning it was as simple as wiping it down with a wet cloth.

Dishes hadn’t been left out, so the kitchen was in order. That meant that the next task would likely be mopping. Glancing around, Kurapika didn’t see a mop anywhere and shivered in horror at the thought of having to get down on his hands and knees again.

A knock came at the door to the base as Kurapika began to check for a cloth to mop with and Chrollo rose to open the door. The first two arrivals at the base turned out to be the topknot alpha and Shalnark. The blonde at least had knocked off the dirt from his clothes and shoes, the jerk on the other hand…

Kurapika felt his eye beginning to twitch as the jerk alpha tracked mud and leaves into the space, wringing water out of his clothes.
“Man, it’s really coming down out there danchou!” the alpha declared as he moved to set down his pack while Shalnark attempted to towel off next to the door, not trailing water through the base.

Chrollo found himself glaring at the samurai as he carelessly undid all of Kurapika’s hard work. His mood further darkened when the other alpha’s eyes had sought out Kurapika who was wringing out a towel.

“It’s gonna cold tonight,” Nobunaga called out in the direction of the omega. “Got plenty of space in my bedroll!”

“Nobunaga, you’ve made a mess,” Chrollo gritted as his irritation spiked.

“Yeah, and we got an omega who still needs training to clean it up!”

Chrollo’s irritation increased as he turned to ask Shal if he knew where any of the others were when one of Shalnark’s previous statements played in his mind. Kurapika would likely be bought by a rich alpha who already had maids or cooks and the omega likely wouldn’t be needed to cook or clean. Regardless, it was a plus if he knew how to keep a house and part of that involved directing and working with a staff.

The boy was about to start scrubbing the floor as the smirk on Chrollo’s face took on a wicked tint, even causing Shalnark to attempt to edge away from his danchou.

“You’re right Nobunaga, the omega does need training.” Nobunaga looked triumphant while Kurapika glanced at him with a look of exhausted exasperation. Chrollo’s smirk put both on edge.

“Part of it should include how to deal with staff and giving directions for tasks that need to be completed.”

The boy’s eyebrows rose while Nobunaga just looked confused.

“Kurapika, for the rest of the day, anyone I deem to assign to you is to be treated as a maid. You are to direct them to different tasks you want completed as well as give instructions on how you want it completed. Nobunaga is your first maid.”

Kurapika’s jaw had gone a bit slack but he still looked fairly dignified even in his shock. Nobunaga on the other hand looked as though he’d just been told to break his precious sword (which he still couldn’t free from its sheath) and become a farmer.

“You can’t be serious danchou!” Nobunaga yelled. “I’m not a maid!”

“There likely will be several in the omega’s future home, especially if his future master or mate is wealthy. He needs to learn to give instructions.” It would also help with Kurapika’s shyness since it would mean he’d have to be somewhat assertive.

“But-”

The door of the base swung open again and Phinks arrived with Feitan, Kortopi and Uvo behind them trying to dry off and wring water from their hair and clothes. The former pair hadn’t attempted to do any such thing and were dripping water, dirt, and mud on the floor.

“It seems that you’ve gained another two maids, Kurapika.”

An hour later and Kurapika peeked out of the bathroom at where the three “maids” as the other spiders jokingly called them, were still scrubbing the floor. Hoping to draw the blonde alpha’s attention away from him, he’d initially paired the alpha with his beta admirer to scrub one of the
bathrooms while the topknot alpha was set to scrubbing the floors.

The final three of the troupe arrived, the mated alpha, the beta teaching him to cook, and the bespectacled female beta. The large beta teaching him to cook, Franklin, had accidentally trailed in some of the water from outside and got assigned to Kurapika as well. Kurapika set him on kitchen and laundry duty as he scrubbed the second bathroom.

The good news: he didn’t have to cook that night though he was made to watch as soon as his bathroom was finished. He’d also set the alpha and beta pair to cleaning the floor also once they had finished with their bathroom, though there was only about half a floor left.

The bad news: though the fiery beta seemed to realize what Kurapika’s intent was in pairing him with the blonde alpha, the alpha still made remarks on Kurapika being cute and attractive.

Other good news: the topknot alpha seemed embarrassed enough to not make passes or remarks towards Kurapika of a sexual sort and the cooking beta seemed to realize that Kurapika had deliberately put him on tasks he was good at rather than making him clean the bathroom.

Other bad news: Uvo seemed to be avoiding him, deliberately placing himself so that Kurapika couldn’t or wouldn’t sit next to him.

Kurapika’s arm brushed the troupe leader’s as he picked at his small plate of rice and beans at dinner that night. He was still not allowed to sit on his own.

“Learning to work with maids?” Shizuku asked her leader as she clarified why four troupe members had to follow Kurapika’s orders that night. “I guess he’d be expected to learn that sooner or later… But wouldn’t babies also be important?”

Kurapika went rigid. Babies?!

“Hmm… That’s right,” the blonde female beta stated with a thoughtful expression. “Omegas probably receive some sort of training in childcare at those facilities.”

Kurapika couldn’t help the groan that was issued from his throat.
The poems I included in this chapter are from the book of poetry ‘the princess saves herself in this one’ by Amanda Lovelace.

Kurapika was sitting in a rocking chair, the window of the balcony was open letting in a gentle summer breeze. Despite how silly his clothes felt against his skin and how beautiful his surroundings were, his insides felt hollow.

Pulling the wiggling bundle in his arms closer, he looked at the baby that was his last thread of joy. A cloth covered the child’s face but Kurapika knew that he’d always love this child.

“Okay sweetie, let’s see you this morning.” Kurapika’s smile was a little strained but the joy of his little one was too great as he pulled the cloth from the baby’s face.

“Mommy!” Kurapika screamed, jumping from the chair as he stared down at a pink wrinkled baby with the adult face of Leorio. Baby Leorio squealed in a high pitched cry as he reached towards Kurapika’s face.

Kurapika was wide eyed as children began to circle him, the faces of the troupe members, Gon and Killua took over his vision. They screamed for him in an endless chant of “Mommy! Mommy!”

Kurapika looked down at himself as his stomach began to bloat, swelling with child and then more. If it didn’t stop he’d explode! Baby Leorio suddenly grabbed his face.

“THIS IS YOUR LIFE NOW!” he mocked in a demonic tone. Kurapika screamed and threw the baby at the wall.

Kurapika woke screaming, the room was dark and his panting filled the room as troupe members woke enough to tell him to keep quiet.
Thunder roared suddenly, so loud he was surprised the sky didn’t break. His teeth rattled and he squeaked pathetically when his chest squeezed around his chest. The effects of the nightmare was only beginning to die when the thunder rattled the floor once again.

“Omega, if you’re scared you can crawl over here and I’ll protect you,” one of the alpha’s slurred sleepily. The panic obscured the voice, he couldn’t tell who said it but in the end it calmed him by anchoring him in rage.

After a few deep breaths, Kurapika laid back down but then turned over when he cringed at the numb feeling in his other arm.

Kurapika sighed into his still feeling arm. As the troupe had gotten more and more aggressive with ‘training’ him, he knew this subject would come up but he just really wished it wouldn’t have.

Children was something Kurapika didn’t allow himself to think of. He had too much to do to have children, he figured that maybe one day he’d meet a nice man and settle down but as the objective of taking down the troupe and getting back his people eyes grew, he had to put that dream to the side. And now the tool he had crafted to take down the troupe was gone forever, Chrollo won’t ever be giving it back.

For a time Gon and Killua had filled the hole in his heart and now they were gone too.

Kurapika closed his eyes and tried to fall back asleep, hopefully not to see a naked baby Leorio this time around.

“Never,” Kurapika hissed as he backed away from the offered clothes, there was no way he was switching his pants for another dress!

“No, the jeans are better!” He snapped.
“Kurapika go shower and change this minute or I’ll strip you down and clean you myself,” Chrollo growled as he put down his book. When the statement fully processed in his mind, Chrollo found he didn’t mind the alternative happening if the omega continued to refuse.

Kurapika gave an angry huff before turning and stomping into the bathroom, leaving Chrollo mildly disappointed.

“Machi, do me a favor and wash his clothes while we’re gone. Okay?” Chrollo called, the omega would probably like to slip back into them when they returned.

Machi nodded her agreement as Chrollo heard Kurapika turn on the shower. Chrollo turned his attention back to the task at hand: teaching the omega how to care for a baby.

A few of his troupe were beginning to discuss the possibility of just taking a baby from the nearby city hospital to give the omega some hands-on experience when the omega came stomping out of the bathroom, straight for Nobunaga, Phinks, and Feitan.

Kurapika had heard the ridiculous suggestions to kidnap a child from the bathroom, he had quickly thrown on the dress the she-devil had made him, today’s being a white lace dress with a silk sash. Kurapika had just gotten the gladiator style sandals in his feet when he kicked open the door.

“You will definitely not steal a child!” The omega yelled as he approached Nobunaga. The boy hadn’t dared go near him since he got back, but apparently he didn’t like the idea of the man even speaking of a child.

“And what makes you think you have any say in anything I do?” Nobunaga glared at the omega, taking in his cute look of the day. Nobunaga couldn’t help but leer at the snarling omega.

Chrollo actually agreed with Nobunaga on the point that the omega didn’t have a say on what they did or didn’t do.

“Kurapika, do not overstep your bounds,” Chrollo called. To him taking a child didn’t seem like a completely horrid plan, Kurapika would get real time training with a baby and they can always drop it off at a police station or just leave it somewhere when they’re done with it. It’s not like it matters.
“Oh? So you want a screaming, scared newborn to constantly wail in your ear and wake you up every two hours?” Kurapika raised a brow at Chrollo and he had to admit that was a good point. “Besides it’s not like I haven’t ever taken care of a child before,” the omega mumbled under his breath but Chrollo still caught it.

Deciding to leave that comment alone, Chrollo stood and turned to Pakunoda, she had the most experience with children and so this would be the perfect task for her.

“Paku, I’d like you to decide on a childcare lesson for Kurapika.” Pakunoda gave her agreement to this and Chrollo was satisfied, now he could go out with Kurapika and not worry about it. “Come along Kurapika.”

The omega seemed satisfied that the stealing-a-child plot was abandoned and quickly followed him out of the base.

The base was in a deserted area of a large city, overgrown flora and dirt was strewn about the ill taken care of streets. The sidewalk and abandoned buildings were riddled with cracks and graffiti. This meant they only had to walk about twenty minutes before reaching the city’s center.

“How is it that every city has some kind of disgusting dwelling for you to take shelter in?” Kurapika cringed as he looked back at the dark streets they came from.

Chrollo thought on the answer for a moment, it wasn’t a hard question but he felt like teasing the omega a bit.

“Oh Kurapika, spiders can crawl in from anywhere.” Chrollo chuckled when the omega shuddered at his joke.

“Let’s just get to the bookstore, I can only take so much crazy.”

Chrollo found himself laughing again, he couldn’t help it. He liked Kurapika’s sassy attitude and defiant personality.

Kurapika brightened a bit when the three story bookstore came into view. He couldn’t wait to
discover everything the store had to offer.

The front area of the bookstore had a small seating area before opening up to the entire store, only one woman sat in the front area. Of course it had to be an omega with a baby. The woman looked up at him with a badly controlled excitement to have someone else to sit with.

“Hello!” The omega called, anticipating Kurapika being sent to wait for his alpha like she herself had been.

Kurapika gave a brief wave and tried to walk straight past her with Chrollo behind.

“Wait, please do you think you could hold my baby for a moment?” The omega women stood suddenly when Chrollo didn’t stop Kurapika from trying to enter the store.

“What? Why would you want me to hold your child?” he gasped, looking down at the child. Kurapika had never been out as an omega around mothers before, but he had seen something like this happen with Killua a few times. Omega or not, people shouldn’t just trust strangers with children.

“Well the bathroom doesn’t have anywhere to put her down and I really have to go. My alpha has been in there for hours. Please, it will only take a minute!” Kurapika had to bite his tongue when he realized she was addressing Chrollo and not him.

“Well the bathroom doesn’t have anywhere to put her down and I really have to go. My alpha has been in there for hours. Please, it will only take a minute!” Kurapika had to bite his tongue when he realized she was addressing Chrollo and not him.

“Sure, Kurapika can hold the child for a moment.” Chrollo smiled at the perfect opportunity of fate, he could see how much he had to work with in regards to Kurapika’s ability with children.

“But Chrollo!” Kurapika tried to protest but suddenly his hands were full of 8 pounds of tiny human and he had to shift his focus on keeping the child calm.

“Thank you so much!” The women called as she rushed by them to the bathroom.

Kurapika glared at Chrollo before turning his attention on the already panicked child, the little girl did not like being held by a stranger. The baby girl raised her tiny fists and scrunched up her face as she began to wail.
“Hey, hey, shh it’s okay mommy will be back in a second,” Kurapika cooed down at the child, adjusting his grip so he was holding the child in a more comforting manner. Unfortunately, that put the child within reaching distance of Kurapika’s hair. The baby latched onto his blonde locks and tugged full force. “Ow!” Kurapika had to adjust himself again so he could take the baby’s little hand.

Chrollo felt an odd swelling in his chest as Kurapika became completely engaged in keeping the small child in his arms calm. Kurapika looked... Good with a child, he held the baby right and that tiny smile just made the whole scene adorable.

Kurapika’s body began to rock gently as the baby stopped fussing and went back to drifting to sleep. Chrollo nodded his head as he took the new information in, omegas must have some form of instinct for childcare. Though he could tell that Kurapika had dealt with kids before.

“You are better than I anticipated,” Chrollo smiled as Kurapika began to bounce a bit as the baby stretched, still a little worried without its mother in the immediate area.

“Well I did grow up in a close knit clan, I’ve held a baby before,” the omega snapped under his breath, instinct forcing him to keep his voice down for the baby.

Chrollo nodded as he took in this new information. The omega does seem to have some basic skill with children, but that doesn’t mean he’s ever changed a diaper, fed a baby, or had to wake up in the middle of the night to care for a child. Whoever buys him will be expecting all of that.

“Thank you so much!” The omega returned quickly and was already lifting the baby into her own arms before he even noticed her.

“It’s no problem,” Chrollo answered smoothly, cutting off Kurapika from whatever rude remark was about to fall from his lips.

“So when are you two going to have one of your own?” Kurapika felt his face go pale, the troupe leader seemed to freeze at the question as well.

Chrollo side-eyed Kurapika as suddenly a new world of possibilities opened up to his imagination. Kurapika having his child was a more attractive image than he cared to admit.
“We haven’t decided on it yet,” Chrollo finally decided as he took Kurapika’s hand and stepped around the woman, finally entering the book store.

Chrollo couldn’t get the image of Kurapika holding his child out of his head, no matter how many times he reminded himself that they would be selling the boy soon.

He walked around the shelves a little lost in thought. Kurapika was smart, sassy, adorable, an incredibly fast learner, and strong. Maybe he should tell Shalnark to up his price, Kurapika was worth a lot more than he had originally thought.

Chrollo grabbed a random book from the shelf as he watched the omega look through the shelves. Cracking open the book, Chrollo glanced down at it and jumped slightly.

It was poetry, the world was just throwing coincidences at him today. Chrollo shrugged and read the poem on the page, the piece was titled ‘Fiction has Nothing on You’.

‘My boy?

He is even

Better than

Books.’

Chrollo looked back up at Kurapika and he caught his eye.

From outside the bookstore, the alpha watched the omega walk between the shelves, the glimmer of intelligence was plain to see in his eyes. This would be his big payday.

Kurapika didn’t know why Chrollo was staring at him but it was beginning to make him feel awkward. Kurapika tried to ignore the alpha as he roamed the psychology section. That’s when Kurapika saw it, it was in a case but it was the first edition ‘Fighting the Demon’ that Kurapika had never been able to find before.

He had heard amazing reviews of this book, it was an in-depth research of the darker side of personality traits, he’d even heard that the author was a hunter and went deeper into theories on personality and nen type, although you can only read it with Gyo activated.
Sadly you could only read the book if you bought it since there’s only four copies and Kurapika didn’t exactly have any money, the troupe still had his wallet and Hunter license.

“Are you ready to go?” Chrollo was suddenly by his side. Kurapika nodded, giving one last longing look at the glass case. Kurapika turned back to Chrollo and raised a brow at the book of poetry in his hand.

Chrollo didn’t notice the odd look Kurapika was giving him, no he was looking at the book that had caught Kurapika’s eye. He’d probably be happy if Chrollo could get it for him.

“Here take this and wait in the seating area for a moment.” Chrollo handed Kurapika the small book.

Kurapika huffed a bit at being sent away like a typical omega. Taking the poetry book with a roll of his eyes, he left for the front seating area. The omega with the baby was gone and the area was silent.

Having nothing else to do kurapika decided to open the book out of curiosity. Kurapika had never been a fan of poetry himself, finding it a waste of time but he hadn’t expected the troupe leader to be interested in it so decided to crack it open onto a random page.

The first poem to catch his eye was titled ‘I will never be your expectations of me’.

‘They say
They only want
Flowers
To grow from
My mouth,

So I will
Look them
Dead
In the Eye

As I Shove
Soft petals
Past
My lips,

Chew
With
My jaw
Completely
Unhinged,

& spit
Them
Down
At
Their feet.’

The poem resonated with Kurapika. He had pretended for so long to be a beta. He had dealt with and ignored the stereotype of omegas and now that someone was forcing him to conform to those ideals, he was angry. But it was useless anger until the troupe sold him, he didn’t doubt the troupe was petty enough to go after Gon and Killua should he actually manage to escape.

The question still remained: why the hell does Chrollo want this book?
Kurapika hummed as he hung the laundry, everything was done thanks to him having his own personal staff. This was the last of the laundry for the day and he was excited to sit down with a good book. He wondered briefly if Chrollo had another book he could borrow.

While hanging up Uvogin’s shirt something caught his attention. A smell, it was spicy and oddly alluring. Kurapika leaned forward, sniffing to find the source of the smell.

Strangely Kurapika found the smell coming from Uvogin’s shirt. Kurapika almost wanted to bury his nose in it but held himself back. The troupe must have gotten a new detergent, it was good.

Although Nobunaga's clothes must have been really dirty because they smelled worse than they had in weeks.

Shaking his head, Kurapika finished hanging the laundry and moved back to find the dark troupe leader reading on the sofa.

He had a few hours before he had to finish up dinner, the roast already slow cooking in the oven. Rain was pitter pattering from above as Kurapika made his way to sit by the alpha.

The alluring smell of leather, coffee and something sweet, vanilla maybe, became apparent the closer he got to the troupe leader. Sitting down, a weird feeling dropped into his stomach when his arm brushed the alpha’s.

“Here.” Kurapika almost jumped when a book landed in his lap. It was the book from a few days ago. This book cost a fortune! Although he doubted Chrollo really paid for anything.

“I bought it so you can stop looking at me with disgust, it’s yours now.” Chrollo didn’t like the tingling feeling in his gut when the omega smiled down at the book and flipped it open with vigor.

Chrollo badly noticed the slightly sweeter scent of the boy, to preoccupied with convincing himself that giving that book didn’t mean anything.
Poetry and Kitchen Fires
Chapter by Serenechaos

The book resting in his hand was strange in that he was focusing on it as hard as he could, but Chrollo couldn’t read the text printed upon it. Turning the page brought only another page of dim scribbles that he couldn’t translate. Why couldn’t he read-?

A delicious aroma reached his nose and Chrollo looked up, but the sight that greeted him wasn’t a base of the troupe’s, but rather his private home. Very few knew where it was and he never invited anyone here, but there was definitely someone.

The answer came in the form of a blonde head peeking around the corner at him then slipping out of the kitchen wearing only a smile and a white apron. Kurapika seemed to glow as he glided to the sofa and curled up next to Chrollo, his sweet scent tickling the alpha’s nose and Chrollo’s hand automatically went to the omega’s stomach where a telling bump had formed.

“He’s been active today,” Kurapika purred as his fingers laced over Chrollo’s.

Chrollo’s thumb stroked over the smooth, milky skin even as his palm remained pressed against the other’s stomach. “I wish I could feel.”

“Soon enough, what are you reading?” Kurapika laid his head on Chrollo’s shoulder as he tried to read the book in the alpha’s hand.

The words suddenly became clear on the page for the thief and he read them out loud.

“In winter
It’s the snowflakes.

In spring
It’s the raindrops.

In summer
It’s the flower petals.

In autumn
It's the leaves.

All of these things
Will eventually fall,

But not one of them
Will fall as hard

As I do for you when I
Wake up every morning.”

“More poetry Chrollo?”

“Can’t help it, I’ve come to like it a lot more for some time now,” Chrollo replied with a laugh as he leaned toward his mate to press a kiss against his luscious lips-

BEEP BEEP BEEP!
Chrollo’s eyes flew open and he cursed and praised the infernal alarm while trying to get his bearings as quickly as he could. His fingers fumbled with the lightswitch and shutting off the alarm as he sat up and when he glanced around the room, the disappointment he found at Kurapika once again sleeping on the cement floor in the middle of the room was practically suffocating.

He needed to get control of this, push these thoughts away! The omega would be sold soon and then it was unlikely that he’d ever encounter Kurapika, or any omega like him, ever again.

The bile that rose in his throat at the thought was disturbing.

This was not the day to have gone to sleep in just his underwear and thankfully he never did that around the troupe anymore. His pants barely hid his arousal and he didn’t seem to be the only one with problems. Uvo was definitely keeping his blankets on his lap and Phinks was quick to jump up and run for one of the bathrooms.

“Oi, omega! I got a—” Nobunaga was cut off by Uvo’s pillow as the slightly dazed Kurapika blinked at Chrollo.

Grabbing his coat, Chrollo was quick to hustle Kurapika to the remaining bathroom with the typical warning to not lock the door.

Kurapika was quick to finish before he was sent to the kitchen area to begin breakfast. Today Franklin had requested french toast and was sitting back, watching, as the boy moved about the kitchen, collecting ingredients and beginning to mix the eggs and cream, grabbing the correct bread from the pantry.

“He’s better,” he finally stated as he watched the omega put a bit of butter into the skillet before putting the first slice of custard-soaked bread in.

Chrollo glanced up at his subordinate then towards the kitchen as Kurapika glanced back as Phinks finally exited the second bathroom. The glance wasn’t shy or even really aimed at him, he just met the other’s gaze as he turned his eyes back to the skillet and his interrupted dream came rushing back from the back of his mind.

Back in the areas where the bedrolls were situated, most of the troupe was rousing and sitting up to the sounds and smells of breakfast being made. Nobunaga was once again attempting to free his precious sword from its sheath, his agitation growing before his eyes turned to his large friend.

“Oh, Uvo! Would you g—” The samurai alpha’s words cut off rather suddenly as he loudly sniffed the air and grimaced. “Geez! Take a shower! You reek!”

“I showered last night!” Uvo declared grumpily as he raised his arm and sniffed himself then leaned towards Nobunaga. “You’re smelling yourself!”

“No! It’s you!” Nobu argued as Phinks moved to straighten up his bedroll, an odd practice he had taken to in the past couple of weeks. Both Nobunaga and Uvogin did a double-take as he passed.

“Phinks! You smell!” Uvo stated flatly, earning him a surprised and offended look from the other Enhancer.

“No, both of you smell!”

Shizuku approached the trio before the argument could devolve into a fight. She sniffed each of them in turn, earning shocked expressions. “You all smell alright to me.”
Bonolenov spoke up then. “It’s their pheromones reacting to an unmated omega. They will begin to smell terrible to each other as a means of trying to smell dangerous and scare the others away.”

“Oh…” Shizuku stated as her eyes located Kurapika in the kitchen area where he was flipping a piece of toast. “So they want to mate him.”

In the kitchen area, Kurapika’s hand slipped and he dropped the spatula as he was attempting to flip the last piece of toast in the skillet. His eyes were large as he turned his head to stare.

“They can’t have him unless he comes to them, and no mating. We can’t sell a mated omega.” Chrollo’s comment seemed to help the omega to relax and turn his attention back to the breakfast.

Over the next several days, things almost seemed to settle down. The troupe stayed in the base as they sold off the items they had stolen from the museum.

One thing that did change was that the alphas of the troupe for the first time ever moved their bedrolls so they were no closer than 10 feet from each other. Even Chrollo could admit that he couldn’t stand the smell of the others. It was worse when he smelled them on Kurapika.

More than once a day, the alphas found a reason to brush against the omega, leaving their scent on him and the others seemed to take offense to it. Even Chrollo found himself trying to brush against the boy several times a day to get the scent of the other alphas off of him.

Kurapika himself was starting to smell very sweet under the scent of the other alphas.

It wasn’t noticeable at first, but Chrollo began to notice that at night when he slept, the omega was beginning to edge towards his bedroll. It seemed that Kurapika was finally getting used to them and would choose soon.

That thought went out the window when Phinks had offered the boy a bit of chocolate several days after Chrollo had bought Kurapika the book, and that night the boy had shifted slightly towards Phinks’s bedroll.

Then Uvo did what had to be the craziest theft of his life: a sweet shop. The giant alpha returned to the base with a pile of treats larger than he was and dumped them next to Kurapika. The boy had looked shocked and had… blushed. And shifted towards Uvo during the night.

Chrollo finally realized what was happening that day as he woke to find Kurapika farther than he’d ever been from his bedroll. Kurapika was finally about to choose, and his biology was demanding the selection of the alpha be whoever he liked the most. Alphas showed their interest through gifts!

Unfortunately, the other alphas seemed to notice that as well and for several days things went crazy as the alphas tried to outdo each other. Phinks would come in with a flower and Uvogin would come in with a bouquet. Nobunaga would offer some candy, Chrollo would offer a book.

Since Uvo and Chrollo slept perpendicular to each other, Kurapika began to inhabit a place between the two most nights. When he wasn’t there, he was closer to Phinks. Nobunaga was never approached.

What truly confused Chrollo was when Uvo would come in, shove some sort of gift into his arms, obviously meant for him to give to Kurapika, and would then situate himself somewhere where Kurapika wouldn’t approach, usually next to Nobunaga.

Things came to a head one day, almost a month after capturing Kurapika, when Nobunaga came marching through the door of the base with several grocery bags in hand. He grinned cheekily
towards where Kurapika sat next to Chrollo, reading in the few minutes he had before he’d need to start dinner.

“Oi, omega!” The alpha called as he set down the bags, though he hadn’t needed to shout. Just the sight of Nobunaga carrying the bags had everyone curious. “I’m cooking dinner tonight so you can just stay there!”

Half of the troupe was instantly on edge while Shalnark looked disappointed. “But I wanted the omega to make cajun pasta!” the blonde argued as the alpha began pulling out a collection of vegetables and shrimp.

Kurapika tried to turn his attention back to his book but instead found himself riveted as the alpha filled a pan with oil then pulled out a cutting board and began to slice a number of the vegetables.

Phinks ambled through the door with Feitan close behind, both doing a double-take at the sight of Nobunaga in the kitchen.

“You can cook?” Phinks asked blankly as he stared while the other alpha skillfully maneuvered his knife to cut the vegetables.

“Ain’t hard!” the samurai replied before glancing in Kurapika’s direction and winking.

Internally, Kurapika cringed while externally he barely kept a straight face. The alpha seemed to know what he was doing at least…

A white box was shoved under Kurapika’s nose right then and he blinked in confusion, catching sight of the short beta’s sour look before focusing on the box that was being shoved at him by the blonde alpha.

“You seemed to like the chocolate marzipan and nut clusters…” the alpha offered, his voice trailing off as he gazed at Kurapika’s eyes.

Kurapika glanced at the box before his eyes shifted to the short beta who sent a final evil look his way before turning away to sulk. Beside him, Chrollo noticed the small eye movements and followed the gaze of the other.

Chrollo had known Feitan for quite some time, since they were children actually. He’d seen the way Feitan’s feelings had developed towards Phinks and shortly before they’d taken Kurapika it had seemed that he was beginning to notice the beta. It was best to address this issue before Phinks did something that would ruin his chances with someone he did have a future with.

The fact that it would also, hopefully, cause Phinks to give up this pursuit was not in any way shape or form a factor.

“Why are you giving me this? Isn’t there someone else?”

Chrollo snapped his head towards Kurapika and realized the boy was already attempting to send Phinks in Feitan’s direction.

“Someone else?” Phinks’s confusion was strange.

“He means that Feitan has obviously been trying to get your attention,” Chrollo clarified as he shifted, bumping Kurapika’s shoulder slightly as he straightened up. “Each time you have given Kurapika anything, Feitan has looked downtrodden.”
“Feitan? But… He’s a beta?” Phinks didn’t sound too certain.

“He seems to like you.” Kurapika glanced in the direction of the beta who glanced over at the trio. “Maybe you should try giving him these?”

Kurapika pushed the box of candies back into Phinks’s hand, but Chrollo saw the slight tremor in the boy’s fingers. He wanted those treats, but for the good of a member of the troupe was willing to pass on them. Once again, a portion of Chrollo’s mind purred at the boy’s action for taking care of the troupe.

As Phinks stared at the box then turned in a rather uncertain manner to look for Feitan, Chrollo purposefully bumped Kurapika’s shoulder once more to convey his appreciation before settling back to read again.

“We’ll go into town to get some sweets later,” he promised, unsure why the brightening of the boy’s eyes caused his heart to skip a beat. A crash in the kitchen caused both to look in that direction. “Probably need to get dinner as well.”

Nobunaga had somehow made a bag of flour explode. Franklin was having a minor freak out over the kitchen now looking as though a snowstorm had blown through and Shizuku was attempting to get to the mess, Blinky in hand.

“Shizuku, Nobunaga made the mess, he can clean it up,” Chrollo ordered flatly.

“Okay danchou!” the bespectacled girl called out as her conjured vacuum disappeared.

“This’ll be worth it!” Nobunaga insisted sharply. “Tempura is great! Fried just enough to be crispy without the batter being heavy!”

“Have you ever made it?!” Franklin demanded though they all knew the answer.

Nobunaga on the other hand grinned as he tossed several of the vegetables into a mixing bowl to coat in the thin batter. “Wait’ll you try it! Take ya straight to heaven!”

Kurapika hadn’t cooked very much before being taken prisoner by the troupe, but he’d made plenty of mistakes in his first few days. Enough of them that he knew what was about to happen when the topknot alpha grabbed the handful of vegetables from the bowl and moved towards the pot holding the hot oil.

“DON’T THROW IT!” Kurapika shouted too late as the handful of vegetables hit the oil and caused a wave of it to go over the side of the pot and into the gas flame of the stove.

Franklin yelled and dragged Nobunaga back by the back of his robe, probably saving his eyebrows, as the flames leapt up the side of the pot. Nobunaga yelled as the oil in the pot erupted into flames, far bigger than the ones that Kurapika had once caused and they leapt towards the ceiling rapidly.

“Shizuku!” Chrollo yelled and the girl jumped forward, vacuum already in hand.

“Got it!” the girl called as she aimed the vacuum towards the pot and started the suction, drawing in the flaming oil. The moment the pot was empty, Franklin yanked it off of the burner and turned off the stove.

Kurapika gaped at the scene as Chrollo rose to inspect the damage. Aside from the massacre of vegetables and shrimp and the explosion of flour, the kitchen didn’t look to have suffered too badly.
“I believe that everyone should take care of themselves for dinner tonight. That being said, I’ll be taking Kurapika and the car. Nobunaga, you will have this cleaned up before breakfast tomorrow. You may not ask Shizuku for help.”

Franklin had already grabbed the shrimp and a number of the vegetables and was shoving them into the freezer and fridge respectively. Heading back to the couch, Chrollo offered Kurapika his hand but it was ignored as the omega rose on his own. Instead, Chrollo reached down and released the chain from the omega’s foot, noticed his bare feet, and rose to request a pair of shoes from Machi only for the seamstress to beat him there as she passed a pair of sandals to Kurapika.

Kurapika was quick to put the flimsy shoes onto his feet as they headed towards the door, several of the other members including Shalnark and Kortopi beating them out of the door.

“How’s the book?” Chrollo asked as they settled into the car and began the drive to the next city. He already had a restaurant in mind and it would be a long walk without the car.

“It’s very good,” Kurapika admitted, a small smile tugging at his lips. “I can’t get the full scope of the book since you need to use Gyo to read it, but what I can read makes me excited for those parts.”

“Hmm… I suppose that if everyone is present in the base and the door is locked, we could release the shackle for an hour or so.”

Kurapika glanced at the alpha in surprise. “Really?”

“We do it already when you wrestle with Uvo, I don’t see why we can’t leave it off for an additional hour each day. Provided that you are behaving.” Chrollo added the last part to make himself feel that he was being firm, but the momentary smile that lit across the omega’s face was… divine.

It took twenty minutes to reach the restaurant that Chrollo had in mind and he parked the car in a small side lot before leading Kurapika to the front of the surprisingly small and shabby looking front of the restaurant.

Kurapika was honestly surprised when Chrollo ushered him through the door and he found himself in a rather well appointed dining room. The murmur of conversation filled the room and the place was rather dim with people sitting at tables dressed in white and blue tablecloths.

A maitre’d stared at the pair for a long moment before smiling as Chrollo gave the woman a smile and she grabbed a menu before guiding the pair to a small table, setting the only menu in front of Chrollo.

“Wait! Could I have-?” Kurapika was utterly ignored by the woman as she headed back to the front of the restaurant.

“We can share this menu,” Chrollo informed Kurapika as he glanced over the menu then passed it to Kurapika. “I already know what I want.”

Kurapika accepted the menu and glanced at the entrees, Italian. Chrollo had brought him to an Italian restaurant. Kurapika had had things like spaghetti before, but most of the things listed were items he’d never heard of or hadn’t tried.

His eyes landed on a dish he did know, chicken piccata. The dish he’d had to watch and partially help Phinks prepare. He remembered that he’d only gotten a few bites of dinner that night but what little he’d gotten to try had been good.
The server came after a minute to fill their water glasses and then focused on Chrollo. “Do you know what you’d like or do you need a few minutes?”

Chrollo glanced at Kurapika who nodded slightly. “I’ll have the chicken scarpariello.”

“Alright, good choice. For two?”

Chrollo stared at the man for a moment before sighing as he remembered this was how most people thought alphas and omegas were supposed to act. “Ask him.”

The server was definitely surprised as he turned his eyes towards Kurapika.

“I’d like the chicken piccata.”

The beta stared at Kurapika for a long moment, his eyes glancing at the omega’s neck, before nodding slightly and moving away from the table.

Chrollo watched the server leave for a moment then turned his attention back to Kurapika. “Why did you order the piccata?”

The boy seemed a bit flustered for a moment. “I didn’t really get to try it the night Phinks made it,” the boy replied quietly after a long pause. “What little I did get to try seemed good.

Chrollo leaned back as he considered the response, his dark eyes glancing at the boy’s form. He’d gotten thinner over the month he’d been with them, and he knew that the amount of food he’d received despite being made to cook hadn’t been enough most of the time, especially during the first week or so.

It was also natural that considering how Feitan seemed interested in Phinks, that he’d try to show extra appreciation for food he cooked.

“So, you were talking about the chapter where nen abilities were likened to certain characters found in the book D Hunter. You spoke as though you have your own opinions on his evaluations.”

“Because he likened some in extremely superficial ways, completely ignoring the deeper qualities and strengths of some of the characters! He showed some appreciation for omegas, but indicated that most betas and omegas are willing to just take orders! If one considered his beliefs in their purest form, then he’d argue that neither betas nor omegas could be Specialists!”

Chrollo felt his lips twitch as he considered what Kurapika had said and that launched a new debate for them, arguing over nen types. The argument lasted throughout their meal and Chrollo ordered tiramisu for dessert. The debate continued as they discussed the possibilities in regards to nen types and distribution of the nen types.

Remembering his promise to buy Kurapika more sweets, once they were finished and the meal had been paid for, Chrollo escorted the omega down the street to a small sweet shop. Both paused at the door of the shop, Kurapika to breathe in the oddly addicting smell of sweets which he normally didn’t care for, and Chrollo because a flyer had caught his eye.

A new museum had opened in this city and it claimed to have a large collection of artifacts from the rise of Kakin from a minor kingdom to a member of the V6.
Kurapika felt himself almost vibrating on the concrete floor of the base as he thought on the last week of his life. The alphas of the troupe had for some reason scrambling over each other to give him things, Uvogin had even come in with a pile of sweets bigger than himself!

He hadn’t even been shy about it, just plopped it down in front of Kurapika like it was just something you do. Oddly enough he had randomly blushed and cursed himself before almost turning away with a brief “yer welcome.”

The blonde alpha had thankfully given Kurapika almost no attention when he had returned from dinner with the troupe leader. Kurapika had been free to stash his newest box of chocolates with the rest he had hidden behind the couch.

Kurapika didn’t know why he felt compelled to stash the best of the candy and sweets he had been given, but that is what he was doing. He just felt like he was going to need it soon, very soon.

Kurapika tried to close his eyes to sleep, but like every night this week he was restless. Kurapika had been moving in his sleep the last couple of nights, rolling around the floor and ending up closer to one of the alphas than he’d like. Tonight was no different.

Kurapika tossed and turned as the swirling energy that had been building in his gut for days screamed like a symphony for him to move, go somewhere. Kurapika had no idea what was wrong with him these last few days, nothing like this had ever happened. It definitely didn’t help that three of the alphas had apparently decided to change their cologne. All of them smelled so good he had to physically stop himself from moving closer to get a better whiff of it.

Bonolenov stirred to the sound of the omega shuffling around, whimpering softly. He was gently edging towards Danchou’s bedroll, but Bonolenov had seen enough omegas in their first heat to understand that it wasn’t conscious.

He hadn’t cared much about the omega in the beginning and that hadn’t changed much, but Bonolenov wasn’t an idiot. He saw the way his leader had come to look at the boy and he’d be kidding himself if he said he didn’t feel a small kinship to the boy’s plight. Like him, the omega
was from a small, secluded clan that didn't share the values of the outside world. Omegas were a gift to the world, they were stronger than anyone. Bonolenov’s own mate was one great example of this.

Bonolenov turned away and smiled softly to himself, admitting he wouldn’t mind the conclusion to this situation should his Danchou do what any smart alpha would do.

“We should definitely check that city first,” Killua confirmed as him and Gon poured over theories and guesses on where the Phantom Troupe could be. The break in their search came when they got word of an entire sweet shop being robbed blind, not one chocolate was left. “This is just diabolical!” Killua yelled pointing out the city on the map.

“And it's only about a day away from that museum that got robbed too, it’s a good place to start,” Gon agreed. In truth Gon was confused about why the troupe, if they had been the ones to do it mind you, would rob a sweet store but Killua seemed to take great offense to it and so had been going off about it for the last twenty minutes.

Once their destination was set however, Killua went silent, a forlorn look on his face.

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“Gon, what if he goes into heat?” Killua had once explained to Gon the effects of a heat, never having had one himself yet but having had enough omegas explain it to him in graphic detail, Killua had made it sound like the worst experience in the world.

“We’ll find him, we won’t let them have Kurapika.” Gon found himself growling, it didn’t matter if Kurapika was a beta or an omega, he was their friend.

They would save him no matter what.

Like many mornings this week, Chrollo was glad he always wore his pants to bed, especially with the sweet smell of milk and honey that hung over him. Opening his eyes, Chrollo almost jumped when the first thing he saw was the adorable sleeping face of Kurapika.
Not three feet away, just out of reach, the omega was slowly starting to stir in response to the alarm still blaring in his ear.

The omega had never gotten this close to anyone at night before. Chrollo felt something purr inside him as he immediately tried to think how he’d top yesterday to make the final push to get Kurapika in his bed.

Chrollo felt slightly smug when the others woke to see Kurapika so close to him, the slow smile that spread over his face wasn’t necessarily directed at anyone as he shut off the alarm and switched on the lights. Chrollo led the boy into the bathroom as he thought of all the things he could do with Kurapika today.

“Kurapika.”

“Yeah, yeah I know. Don’t lock the door,” Kurapika said a little grudgingly as Chrollo stopped him from fully closing the bathroom door.

“No, take a shower. We’re going out today,” Chrollo clarified.

“What about breakfast?” Chrollo cracked a smile.

“Don’t worry about it, just take a shower.” Chrollo pulled the door shut and ignored the odd looks a few members of his troupe were giving him. Instead Chrollo moved to the kitchen and began to gather ingredients for an old favorite of his.

Chrollo had the entire day planned out within minutes. He’d make Kurapika breakfast, take him out to get coffee at this small cafe he knew of that also had a small selection of books that you could only read in the store. They’d maybe spend a few hours there and then head to that museum. It was going to be perfect.

In the bathroom Kurapika felt oddly pleased to be able to take another shower so soon after the last one. He was quick to remove his clothes, having worn his old undertunic to bed that night. Kurapika spared a moment to cringe at whatever horrible outfit he’d be forced into that day. Shrugging since there was nothing he could do about that, Kurapika folded up his clothes and set them on the counter and hopped into the shower.
The steam immediately began to fill the bathroom as Kurapika kept turning up the heat, he’d never been partial to hot showers but this morning he couldn’t seem to get the water hot enough. Once he had the water as hot as it would go, he automatically grabbed the black bottle of shampoo and began to scrub at the grime in his hair then rinsed.

His muscles began to unwind as he simply stood under the spray for what felt like ten minutes. Grabbing up the body wash, Kurapika started up the task of washing his body. He froze again at the feeling of something slick and slimy on his backside. Whatever could that be, Kurapika wondered. Maybe he’d rolled over into something during the night.

Kurapika couldn’t help but notice how sensitive he was feeling, if he rubbed too hard on any particular spot it almost hurt and he oddly liked it.

Decidedly ignoring the strange feelings, Kurapika finished with a dab of conditioner in his hair and turned off the shower. Taking a deep breath, Kurapika pulled the curtain aside and grabbed up the towel waiting for him. He bit his lip at the feeling of the soft towel over his skin and finished the task of drying himself quickly then almost grinned when the outfit waiting for him on the counter wasn’t an embarrassing dress, but his jeans and white button up, clean and fresh.

Kurapika didn’t question the change and quickly threw it on and did up his hair the way the pink haired beta had showed him with the yellow bandana.

He slipped on the provided sandals and and tucked in the white shirt the way the beta had showed him before opening the bathroom door.

Kurapika didn’t notice the way his scent wafted out of the bathroom along with the steam, making every alpha stand at attention. Chrollo almost shuddered in pleasure at the way the scent intermingled with his own and a low growl from the three other alphas could be heard as they registered the underlining smell of another alpha with the sweet scent.

Bonolenov had to keep himself from laughing as he watched the scene play out, it was like watching children having their first crush. Even the ones that were beginning to fall out of the race for the omega’s attentions couldn’t help but be affected by the alluring smell of preheat. Bonolenov was enjoying the show enough that he didn’t feel inclined to share his knowledge with them.

Kurapika was mildly surprised to see the troupe leader finishing up breakfast, not realizing he’d taken that long in the bathroom. The dark alpha was shaking some kind of white power over two
plates, both with some kind of cake on them piled high with strawberries.

“Perfect timing!” Chrollo grinned when he looked up to the omega, something inside him curled in pleasure at the boy looking so cute in his shirt and smelling like him from his shower.

Chrollo motioned for Kurapika to join him at the kitchen counter and slid the heaping plate of Dutch pancakes over to him.

Kurapika looked over the offering skeptically, it smelled delicious but why was he serving cake for breakfast? The flat fluffy cake looked rather buttery and smelled sweet. Deciding to simply go for it, Kurapika took the offered fork and cut easily into the cake, taking a strawberry with it.

It tasted divine, the cake reminded him of pancakes but this melted in his mouth, buttery and sweet with the perfect blend of tang from the juicy strawberry. Kurapika's eyes widened in surprise and immediately decided this was his favorite breakfast yet.

“Do you like it?” Chrollo asked a little nervously but calmed immensely when Kurapika nodded his head and took an enthusiastic second bite of the baked pancake. “Good, once you’re done we will head out.” Chrollo began digging into his own plate as the rest of the troupe made a line to grab some breakfast as well.

Chrollo watched as Kurapika ate every bite, his eyes glued to the boy’s plump lips. The little peek of his tongue licking at his lips caused Chrollo to remember the dreams plaguing him each night, never once had the dream reached any kind of conclusion. Which Chrollo hoped to rectify tonight.

“Umm. . . Chrollo?” The troupe leader seemed to snap out of whatever deep thought he was having and focused yet again.

“Yes?”

“Can I have another?”

“Of course.”
Kurapika’s clothes felt tight and restricting the entire time at the cafe, which was a shame because he couldn’t focus on the excellent book he had picked out because of it.

There was an itch he couldn’t seem to scratch no matter how much he squirmed and he feared the museum the alpha had promised would end just the same. Kurapika didn’t like this feeling, it was overwhelming and impossible to control without knowledge of what it was. One second he was burning up, aching for something, and the next he was distracted and almost scatterbrained, almost losing control of all focus. The troupe leader's new cologne was not helping either, in fact it made it worse.

The alpha had seemed to notice his inability to focus and ushered him out of the store and into the car for the drive to the museum.

“Anything on your mind?” The troupe leader asked him as they settled in for the car ride. It took Kurapika a moment to figure out he was being spoken too.

“Oh no, I’m just distracted. Sorry.”

Chrollo took the excuse with a nod, barely restraining himself from asking if he was okay. He seemed off today but Chrollo had to hold himself back.

It was the dream’s fault he was so concerned about the omega. He could understand having wet dreams about the boy sure, he’s gorgeous, but why were they so domestic? Every dream had been featured in his private home, somewhere he never invited anyone for Hisoka related reasons. He also liked his privacy.

Chrollo assured himself it was just because he’d prefer to deflower anyone somewhere private, so of course his mind would fill in the blank to the most private place he owned.

By the time Chrollo had decided whether or not to ask the omega what had him so distracted today, they were already at the museum and Kurapika was opening his door.

Kurapika needed out of that car, it had been easy to ignore the scent of the other man before he had spoken to him, but the second he was focused again he realized he was trapped in an enclosed
space with the dizzying scent. Kurapika had barely hidden the red of his face as the heady smell had made his insides twist in confounding ways.

Luckily the wind had picked up so when Kurapika practically jumped from the car the air had swept the wafting cloud of alpha scent far away from him.

Chrollo looked over at the omega and briefly wondered if he was getting a fever, they hadn’t exactly been gentle with him. Chrollo felt a microscopic amount of guilt for denying him even a blanket but it passed quickly. Tonight Kurapika would crawl into his bedroll and he’d be very warm after that.

Security at the door was far better than the last two museums Chrollo had taken the omega to, idly he guessed it was because of the robbery the troupe had committed only a week previous.

“So who’s following us around today?” Kurapika asked bitterly, not liking the troupe leader using him to decide which priceless artifacts to steal.

“No one, this is just for our entertainment,” Chrollo promised the omega lightly as he bought the tickets to enter the building. The boy smiled softly in response, Kurapika had no business looking that stunning with the soft smile Chrollo had roused from him. Chrollo had no business being so flustered about it he reminded himself.

The museum was packed and the smell was overwhelming for Kurapika. His head began to spin only twenty minutes into the endeavor, making it easy not to see the way people began to whisper about him. Alphas immediately noticed the smell of heat and looked for the omega.

Chrollo was so focused on finding something that would capture the omega’s attention and start up a debate that he didn’t notice Kurapika begin to wander farther away from him, he definitely didn’t notice the sleazy alpha that had been following them for a week. It only took a moment and then Kurapika and the alpha were gone.

Kurapika’s heart was beating out of his chest, the disgusting smelling alpha had grabbed his arm in an iron tight grip and dragged him further and further away from the troupe leader. No one seemed to take notice and Kurapika was too dizzy to realize what was happening until the alpha had dragged him out into the now pouring day.
There was only one reason Kurapika was not struggling when he realized what exactly was happening and it could be summarized in his first clear thought.

‘Wow this saves me the trouble of escaping.’

The alpha didn’t understand who he was messing with, and all Kurapika would have to do was convince the stupid man to remove the shackle and he was home free.

“Don’t worry, soon you’ll be in the hands of real omega merchants,” the man promised in what he probably believed was a charming voice. Like many people since Kurapika had been outed as an omega, this alpha treated him like he was breakable. He’d laugh if the alpha didn’t smell putrid, like three week old chicken in the sink and topknot’s crusty socks.

The rain helped, it wiped both of their scents away but Kurapika knew that the troupe weren’t stupid and so took immediate action to get the chain shackle from his foot.

“The shackle, it has a tracker!” Kurapika cried as he moved with the alpha around the building and onto the busy street, already soaked to the bone. Kurapika knew he had to play this right if he wanted to get away. First things first, make this alpha think he’s just as obedient as the next omega. Second convince him it was imperative to get the shackle off as soon as possible. He’d have to bring him to a Hunter to be sure they’d know what nen was, but he’d play it up like he didn’t know himself. The second they turn away from him, he’d be gone and no one would be the wiser.

Let’s do this.

The scent of milk and honey being swallowed up by the crowd was Chrollo's first clue that the omega was gone. For a moment Chrollo simply assumed Kurapika had wandered off to look at something that caught his attention once again and so he didn’t worry as he began to try and track him through the crowd.

As Chrollo followed the slight lingering scent, he began to feel an icy grip coil around his heart. As he got closer to the exit, his steps quickened.
Every whisper of ‘failed alpha,’ and ‘should have marked him while he had the chance,’ made the grip on his heart tighten until it was basically in his throat. Kurapika wouldn’t run, he knew better. Did someone take him? But Kurapika was so strong, a regular alpha wouldn’t be able to take him...

The nen chain

Chrollo cursed as he got out and saw no sign of that lovely golden hair, pulling out his phone he pressed the top speed dial in his phone.

Shalnark answered on the second ring.

“Danchou what’s up?”

“Track the omega’s shackle now! Send me his exact location!” Chrollo barked into the phone. It didn’t take any time at all for Shalnark to send him the location.

Chrollo took in the slowly moving blue dot on the map of his phone screen and snarled before tearing down the stairs at full speed.

Chrollo was around the corner faster than most could blink, checking his phone to be sure which way he was looking and then he was off down the road, eyes snapping left and right to find Kurapika’s blonde head.

Chrollo’s eyes narrowed when he recognized the alpha from a week ago with his hands on HIS omega. He snarled as they turned down an alleyway and he sped up to a point he could make the argument he was flying.

He turned down the alley and stopped to breathe as he watched the man begin to fumble with a large metal door down the alley. Chrollo's eyes took in a compliant Kurapika with burning anger.

“I’m telling you you need to get this chain off me quickly, you don’t want them finding you!” Kurapika seem to be growing frustrated with the man and Chrollo's face darkened. Kurapika was trying to run from him, but he couldn’t focus on that right now because Kurapika’s smell was dulled by the disgusting smell of that omega trafficker!
“Don’t you worry, we can protect you and you already have a buyer so you’ll be out of here in no time.”

“You can’t protect him,” Chrollo growled as he was behind him in a flash. The man jumped and Chrollo was proud of himself for not just bashing his head open on the brick wall. Instead he opened his skill hunter and flipped to the fun fun cloth. The alpha was trapped in the small bag in seconds and Chrollo had a hard time not hoping for the water the bag had fallen in to drown the man.

Chrollo growled when Kurapika pivoted to bolt down the alleyway, he lashed out and grabbed kurapikas arm. Kurapika gasped when his back hit the brick wall. Chrollo couldn’t stop himself as he descended upon the boy, he caged the boy between his arms and growled down at him.

Both of them were soaked with water but Chrollo could still smell the other alpha on him, it had soaked into his clothes.

Chrollo felt a snarl build up in his throat as Kurapika remained defiant, scarlet eyes glaring up at him.

Chrollo felt an insanity grip him as he decided in that moment Kurapika had to be out of those filthy clothes, he couldn’t keep smelling that man on him.

“What the hell are you doing?!” Kurapika gasped when the dark alpha suddenly tore open his shirt and began trying to yank the soaking material off his body.

“This has to go,” Chrollo growled in a frenzy of possessive intent.

“Stop it!” Kurapika tried to push back on his shoulders only for him to catch his hands and pin them on the wall above his head. Next thing he knows, the sound of a knife tearing through fabric was all he could hear. “Please Chrollo! Stop it!”

Chrollo could hear Kurapika screaming but he couldn’t register it while he smelled like that alpha. Kurapika squirmed as he was laid bare in front of the alpha, his clouded eyes couldn’t focus as he began to rub himself against the boy borderline hysterically.
Kurapika whimpered almost in tears, some part of himself liked this, the rational part of him was terrified. Was this the moment he was raped by his family’s killer? Or could he stop this somehow?

Kurapika didn’t get to decide as Chrollo stilled, calmed himself, breathing deeply into his hair and then pulled away and released his hands. Kurapika immediately tried to cover his naked flesh with his hands.

Chrollo felt himself deflate, what the hell did he just do? Quickly taking off his jacket, Chrollo stepped forward to wrap the material around the boy’s shoulders. The jacket hung off him like a dress and the boy clutched it like it was his only shield against him.

Chrollo didn’t like the slight glimmer of fear Kurapika sent his way so he turned to grab up the bag containing the omega trafficker. The fear had not left Kurapika’s eyes when he turned back around so he tried to ignore it as he began to lead the boy back to the car. Chrollo didn’t often apologize and he wasn’t going to now either.

In fact Chrollo had decided the omega needed to be punished, he’d get to that after dealing with the sleazy alpha.

Chapter End Notes

Red alert guys!!! Next chapter is gonna be good!
The drive back to the base was silent and uncomfortable. More than once Chrollo had glanced at the omega, remembering his strange behavior throughout the day. This attempt to steal Kurapika by that alpha looked to have been planned solely by the alpha, the boy was attempting to take advantage by trying to convince him to release the shackle.

So if it hadn’t been nerves, why had the boy been so fidgety? It hadn’t been nerves…

Glancing towards the omega again, Chrollo felt an eyebrow raise at the sight of the boy’s face. He was flushed, jittery, but his nose was pressed against the coat Chrollo had wrapped him in. It was as though he liked Chrollo’s scent but was trying to hide from him at the same time.

Add to it that the boy seemed borderline delirious…

Concern shot through the thief as he considered all the events of that day, including how compliant and distracted the boy had been. Was he sick? If that were true, rather than taking him out, Chrollo should have left him in the base where he’d be dry and… Well, not warm. It was October now and the area they were in was beginning to get chilly, especially at night…

Still, what was done was done. He’d punish the omega properly once the trafficker was dealt with.

Their arrival back at the base once again saw Kurapika practically scrambling to escape the car, but Chrollo was now certain that he was sick. He had felt the heat rising from the boy’s skin and he seemed less than steady on his feet now. In fact, he looked to be bordering on collapsing. He didn’t fight when Chrollo grabbed his arm and guided him to the door for the base.

It seemed that a number of the troupe members had taken the opportunity to step out for the day so it was just Shalnark, Bono, and Nobunaga who looked up when they entered. Nobunaga’s eyebrows rose suggestively at him when he saw Kurapika’s lack of clothing.

“Get dressed,” Chrollo ordered gruffly, not taking his coat back yet. He found that despite the agreement to share the omega, he didn’t want Kurapika to be seen.

In turn, the boy practically ran on shaking legs to grab what few garments he had and head for the bathroom. Chrollo watched as he once again assessed the boy’s condition. The boy was definitely ill, too bad. He would allow him a blanket just for tonight.

“Dare I to ask if I even want to see the condition of the car?” Shalnark asked though his smile was bright. It took Chrollo a moment to realize what the technologically competent spider was asking.

“There was an attempted snatch by an omega trafficker,” Chrollo clarified, finding he didn’t want to admit his loss of control and would let the troupe fill in their own blanks. “When the others return, we will be finding out how he already had a buyer lined up.”

“Already?” Shalnark demanded with a raised eyebrow as Chrollo moved to collect his ‘danchou’ coat, pants, and boots. “I’ve been looking for buyers for almost a week! Guess he has different contacts.”

Kurapika came out of the bathroom as Chrollo headed into the second one and he noted that the boy looked steadier yet more flushed. The fever must be picking up. He barely withheld a snarl at
the scent of Uvo’s old shirt on the boy’s thin frame but held himself back.

In turn, Kurapika felt better with actual clothes on again. He clutched at the large shirt he had received from Uvogin, feeling more comfortable in the loose, large clothes than he had in the now destroyed jeans and shirt. At the same time, he longed for his under clothes and not the garments provided by the troupe and glanced at the laundry area.

His legs were still shaking as he headed towards the area and started picking through the garments. Unlike in some of their previous places the troupe had stayed, there wasn’t space to hang clothes to dry here so someone had splurged to get a dryer.

No one bothered him as he checked on the clothes then opened the dryer. The warm aroma of clean clothes and heat that met him almost had Kurapika trying to climb into the dryer. The thing that kept him from doing so was the disgusting smell of a shabby, grey robe.

Kurapika’s hand grabbed the thing and tossed it into the laundry basket in disgust. The next item was a pair of pants that smelled intoxicating: vanilla and coffee. The blonde breathed in the scent deeply before it registered in his mind that these pants were Chrollo’s, but even then it didn’t seem to matter. He wanted them.

Several items made it into the laundry basket, but Kurapika held on to a number of things: shorts and tank tops that belonged to Uvo, an undershirt that belonged to Phinks, several pairs of pants and an odd shirt that belonged to Chrollo. Kurapika didn’t know why he wanted these things, but he almost purred at their warmth and scent, cuddling the pile.

Franklin had just returned when Kurapika wandered out of the laundry area with his large pile of laundry and he moved to the sleeping area automatically, settling the pile in his usual spot before a hand grabbed his shoulder firmly.

Turning his head, the Kuruta saw Chrollo, decked out in his ‘danchou’ outfit with the chain in hand. He didn’t react as the other gave him a cold look before kneeling and attaching the chain to his shackle, but on the inside Kurapika’s insides twisted. The fur on that coat looked so soft and smelled so good…

Chrollo moved away before Kurapika could touch the coat to confirm his thoughts and the younger shook himself before turning his attention back to his warm mound of laundry. Instinct took over as he arranged the clothes, almost like he was making a bed or a cushion and he curled up on it, enjoying the lingering warmth from the dryer and the delicious smells of the colognes of the alphas.

His body felt wrong! Heavy and weary but also charged with a strange energy. The scents of the three alphas invoked something else and Kurapika shifted in his nest of shirts and pants, trying to get comfortable. It was wonderful after almost a month spent sleeping on cold floors of cement or marble, but not quite soft enough.

Chrollo attempted to ignore the omega after attaching the chain once again, it was not easy. Something kept drawing his attention back to the small, huddled form which seemed to be trying to sleep. As more of the troupe members returned, it became more difficult to maintain distance as Uvo and then Phinks returned, all of them immediately told that a trafficker had attempted to snatch Kurapika and seemed to already have a buyer.

“Want know?” Feitan asked as he stared at the small bundle that held the weak alpha.

“Once the others have returned. I believe we’ve played around with the omega long enough,”
Chrollo replied. “If the offer is a good one, then we can sell it and be done.”

Machi stared at her boss for a long moment before her eyes shifted to where the omega was shifting, looking a bit ill. Uvo similarly seemed upset by the revelation that this would soon be over.

Shalnark in turn laughed as he produced several pictures. “These’ll probably drive up the price!”

The pictures were of Kurapika in the various outfits Machi had made. Chrollo stared at the images for a long moment, noting how adorable and beautiful he looked in each. His new master would get to see this every day, as well as his small smiles when he was pleased or happy…

Closing his eyes for a moment, Chrollo drove the domestic dreams he had had from his mind. This was business and they had an omega to sell.

It seemed to take forever before the troupe was finally together and Chrollo fixed his expression into a hard, dark look of general disinterest as he opened the knot then twisted his hand, hiding his satisfaction as the weak alpha spilled from the bag and landed almost head first on the cement floor. He was surrounded before he even knew what had happened.

Taking a long breath, Chrollo released pheromones that demanded submission, causing the rest of the troupe to shift in a way to show that they deferred to him while the trafficker’s eyes bulged as he practically fell on his face once more as his hands lost their purchase on the floor and he collapsed. Chrollo barely stopped his head from turning when he heard Kurapika groan.

The alpha hadn’t been interesting to look at before and he looked even more mediocre now, his features in no way handsome. The sickening odor of old meat had been far more offensive on Kurapika, now it was just annoying.

“You…” The alpha sputtered. “I-I-”

“You attempted to take something from me,” Chrollo stated, his voice ice cold and deep.

“He… That omega…” the alpha’s pallor was pasty as he stared up at Chrollo before his nose twitched as his attention shifted towards where Kurapika lay amongst the bedrolls. Chrollo shifted automatically, blocking the man’s view of the omega. “That little bitch wanted it! Ready to spread its legs for any alpha! I didn’t want to, you seem like a great alpha, but I’m only human-”

The kick Chrollo delivered snapped the man’s arm like a twig and earned him a surprised and pained scream.

“I know you’re lying.”

The alpha clutched at his arm, terror and tears on his face.

“I’m telling you that it wanted it! It didn’t try to escape and any alpha or even a beta could have seen that with the way it was walking in the museum! It was obviously not satisfied and was inviting more!”

Chrollo’s foot lashed out again, this time snapping the weakling’s left femur. The scream that was issued covered the upset groan from Kurapika, but somehow Chrollo’s sensitive ears heard the upset noise.

“I heard you as you tried to drag him away, saying you already had a buyer for him.”
Chrollo watched as the alpha seemed to somehow pale even more, turning as white as a sheet.
“A… buyer?”

“Who is the buyer? How much did they offer for an omega that you didn’t even have?”

“You’re… Not planning to mark him?” The alpha’s eyes gained a slight shred of hope as well as a calculating edge. “Are you interested in selling him?”

“Danchou ask for buyer!” Feitan snapped as his hand lashed out and he drove a finger into the site of the break on the man’s arm, earning a muffled scream.

“Prince Tserriednich!” the man finally yelled. “He offered 10 billion after seeing the short video I sent of him from the museum you visited and robbed!”

“10 billion?” Chrollo asked, the number seeming both too low for Kurapika and much higher than he’d ever heard an omega selling for.

“Yes, there’s a rising interest among old families and the ultra rich in omegas that are strong and smart,” the alpha admitted, the slyness in his eyes never fading even when Feitan had dug his fingers into his broken arm. “That omega is definitely intelligent, beautiful as well. The belief is that he’d bear strong and smart offspring, exactly what rich and powerful alphas would want. That he’s good looking just adds to his value!”

“So you sought to take an omega that you believed would fetch such a price,” Chrollo concluded, his eyes still narrowed at the man.

The alpha, despite not being able to stand, tried to straighten himself up. “I thought that I would be doing this omega a favor, selling it to such an alpha as a prince, but I believe I see that you are a keen business man yourself. I know a number of contacts and you could set up your own little auction, possibly even provide a few more omegas for the bidding. We could split the profits 50/50.”

Dark eyes stared at the man blankly, like the powerful alpha before him was confused by his offer. In turn, a number of the people that surrounded him looked amused.

“I’m afraid that Kurapika is the only omega we know of, aside from a Zoldyck,” Chrollo stated coldly. “Shalnark, Feitan, find out who these contacts are. I want to be in communication with these contacts and have an auction set up within the next three days.”

“Yes sir!” Shalnark called cheerily.

“And take that thing out of the base to kill once you’re done,” Chrollo continued. Kurapika and his ‘maids’ had worked hard to get the floor clean, there was no reason to soil it with the blood of this foul smelling alpha.

Both Machi and Uvo shifted again, their eyes coming in contact as they noticed that the other didn’t look comfortable.

“Hey! Ya hear that omega? Might be sold and on your way to your new master soon!” Nobunaga called as he turned his head in the direction of Kurapika. “Are?”

Phinks noticed Nobunaga’s confusion and turned his head to check on the omega as did the rest of the troupe minus Feitan and Shalnark who were herding the limping and sobbing alpha out of the door of the base, begging ineffectively for mercy. “What’s that thing he made?”
Bonolenov sighed. “A nest. Omegas make them during the time of their heat. They like soft things the most, like pillows and blankets, and will line those nests with things that belong to alphas they like. Nests make them feel safe and comfortable.”

Chrollo’s eyebrows rose. He had been wondering how to punish Kurapika and with the intended date for the auction so close, he couldn’t use physical punishments. If rather than being ill, Kurapika was in heat or close to it, then that also left him in a fragile and not quite comprehending state.

“Will he be requiring anything else?” Chrollo asked as he glanced at the Gyudondon tribesman.

The Conjurer nodded towards the sofa where they all knew the omega tended to stash most of the sweets and chocolate he had recently received. “He’ll likely be trying to collect those sweets soon. Omegas tend to crave them horribly during heat.”

Chrollo nodded before walking towards the couch. Stooping, he scooped up the boxes of candy and piled them on the sofa in full view of the omega and the rest of the troupe. Turning his head to ensure he had Kurapika’s attention, the alpha made eye contact and held it.

“For your behavior today, you’ve lost these. We will also be keeping the door open for Shalnark and Feitan.”

The look the boy gave him was one of tearful disbelief as Chrollo collected the candy boxes and carried them out of the base, leaving the door open as he moved towards a far corner of the warehouse and dumped the boxes.

Shalnark and Feitan had dragged the trafficker to another corner of the warehouse and Chrollo approached them. “Move this closer to the entrance, I want the omega to listen to him scream as he’s killed.”

“Fine,” Feitan replied as he grabbed the alpha by the collar.

Shalnark straightened up, his trademark smile in place. “I’m done anyway, he already gave me the contact information for the buyers.”

“Then try to establish communication,” Chrollo ordered as they both headed back into the base.

With the door left open, everyone in the base heard the tortured screams of the omega trafficker, including at least two of the contacts that Shalnark called that evening before the screams turned to groans and then silence. Kurapika remained huddled in his makeshift nest, though he seemed disturbed by the screams and every so often would glance at Chrollo tearfully. At no point did the alpha relent to the looks and offer any kind of comfort or a book.

As the screams finally died down, most of the troupe started moving around the base a bit more, Franklin making dinner while the others continued on with their own activities.

Nobunaga moved into the sleeping area to study the nest and found himself a bit confused. With the exception of a few of Phinks’s things, everything in the nest appeared to belong to either Uvo or Chrollo, both having a very clear majority. Absolutely nothing of his was in the nest that he could see.

“Oi, Bono! What does it mean for someone’s things to be in an omega’s nest?” the topknot alpha called.

“Normally with an unmated omega it means those that they would be most welcoming to, that they
like them most.”

“And if nothing of yours is in the nest?”

“Then don’t go near it! The omega doesn’t want anything to do with someone whose things they refuse to touch during heat.”

Nobunaga’s eyes widened in reflex before he glanced at the ‘nest’ again. It was thin and Kurapika barely fit on it, so maybe he’d be accepted if he offered something?

Moving to his bag, Nobunaga pulled out a worn old robe of his and shook it out. Moving back to the nest, he offered the garment proudly only for Kurapika to barely react except to bury his nose into a pair of what looked to be Chrollo’s pants.

“Hey, this is comfy too!” Nobunaga implored as he pushed the robe closer. This time Kurapika seemed to recoil slightly while making a noise that seemed to be halfway between a hiss and a growl.

The noise caused the samurai to take a step back for a moment, some instinct telling him to move away, but his brain kicked in as well. Omegas were supposed to be submissive, lavishing alphas that showed them attention or interest with affection. They were meant for sex and childbearing, simple as that! And if he, an alpha, offered something to an omega, they should gratefully accept it!

Growling, the topknot alpha shoved the robe into the nest, determined to have his way even as his instincts screamed that it was time to stop. The omega was growling now also, upset over his nest being disturbed and glaring angrily at Nobunaga. He regarded the robe as though it were something disgusting and tried to shove it out of the nest only for Nobunaga to shove it in again.

Losing patience, Kurapika finally snarled in anger over the foul smelling alpha trying to shove the robe into his nest. The noise surprised the samurai and he jumped back as Kurapika seized the robe, a triumphant expression on his face. That expression faded fast as Kurapika shredded the robe, tossing pieces of the garment from his nest rapidly, not a single scrap remaining in the nest.

“Nobunaga, don’t disturb him,” Chrollo called as Nobunaga grabbed the largest piece of the shredded robe.

The alpha seemed ready to argue, but relented after Chrollo sent him a dark look.

Shalnark was definitely hard at work on his computer and phone, loading pictures of Kurapika to a website that he had set up for the possible buyers. Despite the short notice, the number of interested buyers grew by the hour.

“Danchou, the buyers want to know how long the auction will last since we’re setting it up online!” Shalnark called.

Chrollo thought for a moment before glancing at Kurapika. “Tell them the auction will be in three days and last 24 hours.” That would be time enough for the interested buyers to gather their resources and make their bids. “Also, tell them that payment will be expected when the omega is delivered.”

Shalnark nodded and turned back to his computer where he began to set up the sight where they would host the auction, posting pictures and a few recordings of Kurapika. He made sure that each bidder would have to sign in, though they wouldn’t have to give an address unless they won the auction. Even as most of the troupe eventually headed towards their bedrolls, Shal stayed by his
computer, working to make the website as close to perfect as he could.

The blonde finally signed off in the early hours of the morning, standing and stretching. The interest they had garnered already was more than they had thought possible after the first couple of days when they hadn’t known where to look for buyers. The Kuruta omega could be their single most lucrative sale!

Thinking of the omega caused Shalnark to glance in the direction of the thing. Currently the omega was snuggled into its nest, but its sleep seemed disturbed. Shal couldn’t find it in himself to view that as mattering very much. Just as he had predicted, the interested buyers were not just wealthy, they were extremely rich and powerful. In a matter of days, the omega would be done with sleeping on cold cement floors or piles of laundry as well as cooking and cleaning even favor of soft pillows, beds, and being able to read as much as it wanted, especially since the alphas wanted a smart omega.

The beta noted that his alpha comrades seemed to also be disturbed in their sleep, the four unmated ones that is. All had shifted in their bedrolls to face the direction of the omega and were either grunting or growling in their sleep.

When the alarm went off several hours later, everyone could feel the shift in the air. The day before must have been a preheat of some sort because even the betas could smell a difference in the omega now. The boy was curled up tightly on his small, messy nest, faint whimpers and moans being issued every so often.

Surprisingly, it was Phinks who rose and headed towards the kitchen to make breakfast as Chrollo turned off the alarm.

“Hey, Feitan, what do you want for breakfast?” the blonde alpha called as he shifted around in the kitchen, checking for pots and skillets as well as what they had.

The torturer’s eyes brightened as he stood from his own bedroll and moved to join Phinks in the kitchen area.

In the sleeping area, Nobunaga groaned in agitation while Uvo and Chrollo both stared at Kurapika. The boy’s scent was now of very sweet milk and honey, fertility. It called to them, telling them that he was healthy and ready.

Chrollo swallowed thickly as he sat up, realizing from the slightly sticky feeling of his skin that he had slept in his coat. He definitely needed a shower.

Rising himself, his eyes fell on Kurapika yet again and he felt a jolt as he noted the hooded eyes of the omega. They were dark with desire now, staring at him yearningly…

Stepping away from the sleeping area, Chrollo walked to the kitchen and saw that Phinks and Feitan were hard at work slicing bananas and mixing something. He almost asked what they were making but found he didn’t much care in that moment. At least not when he could feel Kurapika’s eyes still on him.

“Hey, danchou.”

After turning his head to Phinks to show the other alpha had his attention, the other continued. “Would you watch the skillet for me? I want to grab my shoes.”

“Fine.”
Phinks moved towards the sleeping area where his shoes were situated next to his bedroll as Nobunaga stood and stretched.

Normally the samurai alpha didn’t mind following orders too much. Everyone followed them and they usually made sense. He was not seeing the sense of danchou’s order to not just drag the omega into their beds! They had never encountered one like this at breeding age, much less an unmated one, especially during heat! Nobunaga had expected to get a couple of rounds with the brat by now, but the auction date would be in just a few days and then they’d all lose the opportunity to lay with an omega!

Finally fed up and more than slightly aroused due to the sweet scent of the omega’s heat, Nobunaga lurched up and turned his head towards the shabby nest where the little omega lay, eyes locked on Chrollo. They wouldn’t be for long!

Nobunaga’s calloused hands latched onto the boy’s arms and with a mighty heave, he dragged the omega from its pathetic nest, earning a distressed scream from the thing as he turned with the intent of dragging it to his bedroll.

Uvo had already headed to the bathroom, so he couldn’t object, but it was slightly surprising when Phinks grabbed Nobunaga’s arm instead.

“What are you doing?” the blonde alpha demanded, earning a growl from Nobunaga.

“Putting the omega to use the way it’s supposed to be used!” the topknot alpha snarled as he attempted to shake off the other Enhancer’s hold while maintaining his grip on Kurapika’s arms. The omega was struggling, unable to scratch at him and seemed a little weak on his legs. A distressed scent was coming from him as Chrollo handed the skillet automatically to Feitan and moved towards the fight.

“He’s distressed!” Phinks argued as he tried to pry at Nobunaga’s grip but the other shook him off.

“Needs to learn that what he wants is irrelevant! It’s about what alphas want when it comes to omegas-!”

Chrollo grabbed Kurapika around the waist, yanking him from Nobunaga’s grip. The samurai in turn didn’t dare to try to fight the obvious order from his boss. None noticed the way Kurapika curled into Chrollo’s form and pressed his face into the alpha’s coat.

“The boy is in heat, we cannot sell a pregnant omega,” the dark alpha stated blandly to Nobunaga before turning and releasing the omega, causing Kurapika to fall into his nest despite his attempts to keep a hold of Chrollo. “I’m going to take a shower and I want these shenanigans to cease.”

Phinks shrugged and moved back to the kitchen as Uvo finally exited the bathroom, the steam from his shower billowing out of the door. Chrollo moved to the other bathroom and shut the door behind him, forgetting to lock the door in his haste to get into the shower.

The alpha undressed quickly, settling his coat, pants, and underwear in a neat stack on the counter before stepping into the shower. Turning on the water, he focused on getting the water to just the right temperature then stepped in.

In his nest, Kurapika stared at the door that Chrollo had just stepped through, his mind foggy since the other had grabbed him. That coat… It had smelled so wonderful! The vanilla and coffee layered with the leather and just a faint undertone of peppermint. The fur was soft and warm, just as he had imagined while the rest of the coat was warm from Chrollo’s body heat. The arms in that
coat had felt strong and safe… He wanted it…

The rest of the room and its occupants seemed to fade into nothing as Kurapika forced himself out of his nest and took a shaking step towards the bathroom. At first this was ignored but as his journey continued, Machi and Uvo were the first to notice Kurapika’s destination. Both felt a surge of hope as the boy managed to reach the door.

“Do you think-?” Pakunoda asked Machi quietly as the boy twisted the handle, and all felt their jaws drop when the door proved to not be locked.

Nobunaga’s eyes widened as the omega stepped into the bathroom. “Danchou is about to get it in the shower?”

In the warmth of the shower, Chrollo had just begun to lather his hair with his peppermint shampoo when the sweet scent he couldn’t seem to escape intensified. Stiffening, he poked his head around the curtain and saw the door to the bathroom was open and the omega was hobbling into the space, a possessed look on his face.

“If you need to go then make it fast,” Chrollo ordered shortly, certain that the boy couldn’t be thinking of joining him in the shower, even if he was hopeful.

The boy’s eyes caught his own and Chrollo’s breath froze at the hazy, lust-filled grey eyes. Kurapika stared at him for a moment, a small smile crossing his face as he closed his eyes and breathed deeply, obviously loving Chrollo’s scent and the bolt ran through the alpha, going straight to his loins.

Kurapika’s hands reached up and he gripped the tank top he had gotten from Uvo, pulling it over his head and Chrollo’s heart jumped to his throat. He had been hating that top recently, so seeing the boy willing take it off was wonderful!

Chrollo was fixated as the boy’s hands wandered down, expecting him to remove his pants but his heart stopped when instead of his pants, the omega’s hands fell on his coat!

“Kurapika…” Chrollo began in warning, but he didn’t get the opportunity to finish as the omega gave him a playful yet seductive smile and grabbed the coat, and the rest of Chrollo’s clothes, and bolted out of the door.

The leader of the Phantom troupe rarely did things without thinking about it thoroughly, but he wasn’t thinking in that moment as he leaped out of the shower, grabbing his towel, and tore after Kurapika.

The omega hadn’t gone far he realized as he entered the main room, just back to his nest where he was cuddling Chrollo’s coat! Towel barely on his waist, the alpha practically stomped over to where the omega was rubbing his face and body against the coat and roughly grabbed hold of the garment.

“Let go!” he ordered sharply, which Kurapika responded to with snarls and growls that were occasionally purrs when Chrollo’s flesh touched his. The struggle over the coat pulled Chrollo into the nest and on top of Kurapika for a long moment before he rolled them out of the pile of laundry and onto the cement floor.

Kurapika went wild as their bare chests met, scratching, kicking, and snarling while at the same time he seemed to try to continue to cuddle both the coat and Chrollo, his face pushing into the material and the alpha’s neck as their struggle caused them to roll over two bedrolls and into a
Using the wall for support, the dark alpha managed to regain his feet, hands still clutching his precious coat as he rose and yanked Kurapika up as well. The omega refused to give in though, yanking and snarling to try to keep possession of the coat.

Chrollo realized their position a moment later when their struggles brought a door frame into his field of vision and he twisted hard, sending Kurapika in the direction of the door. A sweep of his foot sent the chain into the room and then Chrollo found himself chest to chest with Kurapika, the omega’s eyes now red and lustful as the omega kissed him full on the lips.

There was a long moment as Chrollo instinctually deepened the kiss before his brain caught up to him and with a twist, he managed to free his coat and push Kurapika back before grabbing the door and wrenching it shut. A bit of fiddling allowed him to grab a nearby chair to wedge under the handle, barricading the door shut.

The towel was over halfway off his hips and his hair still soapy as Chrollo turned back to the rest of the room, determined to return to his shower.

“Danchou, you have to be the bravest man alive,” Bono stated as Chrollo took a step back towards the bathroom where the shower was still running.

This surprised the man quite a bit. “Why do you say that, Bonolenov?”

The tribesman smiled faintly. “Because I wouldn’t have attempted to approach the nest of an omega, even my own mate, and remove something in anything less than full body armor.”

Chrollo blinked at the man, understanding only a bit of what he meant. The Gyudondon were proud of their body piercings, viewing it as cowardly and sinful to cover them, especially when going into battle. That he would willing do that, especially with armor was a rather big statement.

As he headed back to finish his shower, Shizuku finally spoke. “So since danchou locked the omega in the second bathroom, we now have 12 people sharing one…”
Chrollo returned from his shower to find 11 eyes glued to the second bathroom door, the expressions varied from concern to befuddlement. It took Chrollo a moment to register the desperate pounding and screaming coming from the other side. It sounded like a bloody murder was happening and Chrollo shouldn’t be as concerned as he was about the little omega locked in the bathroom.

“Bonolenov,” Chrollo called the only spider that wasn’t staring at the door. Bonolenov looked at him expectedly and Chrollo did not like the smug look on the man’s face. “Should we be worried?” Chrollo believed his meaning was clear: could Kurapika harm himself and hurt his price while in there alone?

“No, his heat seems rather mild compared to others. He’s simply touch-starved and worried unwelcome alphas will touch his nest.” Nobunaga huffed at the explanation, angry that he was the only alpha that wasn't being treated as such by the omega.

“This is mild?!” Phinks yelled. The boy fought Chrollo for his signature coat, he even looked close to biting off the man’s hand in the struggle!

“Considering he didn’t take any of your pillows and only jumped an alpha in desperation, yes, it seems rather mild. My mate normally deals out scars and her nest sometimes takes over our entire bedroom.” He didn’t dare mention the night he woke to find himself tied to the bed by his piercings. Bonolenov shivered at the memory, he had to wait days for the woman to come back to her right mind before being untied.

It was Feitan surprisingly that brought up the point that everyone seemed to have missed.

“How feed him?”

Everyone turned to the door, thinking on the problem as the desperate sobbing continued.
“Anyone else got any bright ideas?” Shalnark snapped grumpily at the group. Phinks had suggested the betas opening the door and feeding the omega. Since the omega wouldn’t be attracted to them they thought he’d be calm.

Unfortunately that was not the case! The second the door had been opened Shalnark had a claw slashing at his face and a wiggling omega trying to climb over him to get out of the room. Shalnark had let out an embarrassing scream at the surprising action and Machi had to stab a needle into one of the omega’s pressure points to get him to let go of the blonde beta’s hair.

The food had been dropped to the floor when the attack started and the omega had been shoved back into the bathroom in the end, the door slammed shut and barricaded again.

Bonolenov had been unable to contain his laughter as Shalnark stomped away declaring he’d never go near the omega again.

“Okay,” Franklin began stepping up to get the boy fed, it surprised no one since the man was obviously fond of the omega. “Machi will create a web of string so he can’t get out and I’ll quickly shove a plate in.” He seemed proud of himself as he collected the extra sandwich he had made to replace the ruined one on the floor.

Uvogin zoned out as the betas worked on a plan to get Kurapika fed, he was trying hard not to simply storm into the bathroom and mark Kurapika for his own. Only one thought seemed to still him, this might be Chrollo’s only chance.

It was no secret to the troupe that their leader had always dreamed of a large family of his own. For awhile the troupe themselves had filled that role, but they were no replacement for children and a true mate. An alpha like Chrollo couldn’t just have anyone unlike Phinks, Nobunaga and himself, he needed an omega. One that was smart and could talk to him on his level. Kurapika and Chrollo were perfect together, he just needed to figure out how to get Chrollo to realize this truth.

Machi caught his eye as she began spinning her web of string, she was one of the few that understood the situation for what it was. Her gaze spoke volumes. They needed a plan and quick before Chrollo sold Kurapika and they lost him forever.

Chrollo was content to let the betas deal with feeding Kurapika, still trying to calm down after Kurapika actually kissing him. The boy wasn’t in his right mind and Chrollo had to let him go soon. But as the minutes became hours, he found himself hating that his last days with the omega would be spent with them apart from each other.
This was insanity, why did his heart sink when he thought of the base without Kurapika? He needed to regain his control of himself!

Franklin passed Chrollo on his way back to the door, his sleeve brushing the man’s coat. He took a deep breath to steel himself once Machi had set up her web. This would work, he assured himself. The fact that danchou hadn’t commented on the plan boosted his confidence.

Franklin turned the bathroom doorknob quickly and was surprised when the omega didn’t immediately show up at the door. It was surprisingly quiet as well. Too quiet.

Franklin took another breath as everyone watched anxiously. He carefully stuck his hand and the folded paper plate through the slight crack in the doorway and suddenly began to scream.

Hot sweaty fingers gripped his hand, nails digging into his skin so deep he was already bleeding! With a force he didn’t know the omega was capable of, his arm was yanked further into the bathroom and his body slammed into the doorframe.

“OH MY GOD HE’S BITING ME!”

“Pull your arm out!”

“I’M FUCKING TRYING!”

Bonolenov suddenly boomed with laughter as the betas plus Phinks began to try and pull the man out of the doorway, Franklin screaming bloody murder. He couldn’t breath as the display played out. Feitan tried to help by reaching into the doorway to aid in yanking the man’s arm out only for a tiny fist to appear as quick as lightning and strike him in the face. The little beta stumbled back stunned, useless now to the situation.

“ENOUGH!” Chrollo yelled as he stomped forward. Bonolenov settled a bit, trying to catch his breath since he knew this would be good.

Chrollo pulled up his coat sleeve to keep it out of reach and stuck his arm in to detach the omega from his spider only for him to stumble back when a sharp pain was suddenly inflicted on his hand.
Everyone but the still screaming Franklin froze when they saw their danchou’s bloody hand. The omega had bit him!

Chrollo was stuck staring at his hand in wonder, the bloody teeth marks in his flesh shaking him to his core. Kurapika bit him, the omega bit him! IT FUCKING BIT HIM?!?

Bonolenov collapsed on the floor with laughter, gasping and gulping in huge breaths of air as he clutched his stomach desperately. He couldn’t help it, they were all just so clueless!

“BONO!! GOD DAMNIT HELP ME!” Franklin cried out and Bonolenov stood on shaking legs to help the beta. He grabbed Nobunaga by the back of the robe, dragging him to the bathroom. He ignored his struggling and yelling to let go. Once he had the rejected alpha at the door, he grabbed him by the arm and shoved it into the crack in the door.

Nobunaga winced like he was afraid he’d be attacked too but the opposite happened: Franklin was immediately released and a heavy thump could be heard like the omega had jumped into the wall to get away from the smell of the alpha.

Franklin stumbled away from the door, missing a sleeve, his arm covered in bite marks and scratches that would definitely leave a scar if the amount of blood was any indication and Bonolenov barricaded the door.

Everyone seemed stunned, Feitan was still processing the punch to the face as he stared at the door. Chrollo had an unguarded expression as he stared at his bleeding hand and most gave a general look of fear directed at the bathroom door. As the pleading and sobbing started up again, the fear of an omega was finally at the level Bonolenov was used to in his village.

“This is mild?” Phinks repeated.

“Yes, this is mild.”

“How did you even manage to mate one of those monsters?!”

“Respect and the appropriate level of fear for your life.”
Chrollo looked up at that and narrowed his eyes. Bonolenov had been holding out on them apparently. “Bonolenov, you are now in charge of caring for the omega.”

“Ah damnit!”

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“We can’t let him sell the boy!” Machi stated the second Uvogin entered their meeting spot in the unused upper floors of the warehouse turned base. “He’s never been this happy!”

“I agree, but what can we do short of releasing him so he can attack danchou?” Uvogin sat on the floor across from the women. He had known Machi for most of his life and he’d always liked how well machi could think through problems and find solutions. Although they had never been particularly close, never before had two original members plotted against danchou like this but dammit, Danchou needed this!

“I think we need help. I talked with Feitan, he doesn’t completely agree with us but he likes Kurapika enough to help should we need it.”

“I could talk to Shalnark, he might be able to dig up some information on the buyers. If they’re bad enough he might stop the sale?” Uvogin put forward, and Machi nodded. It hadn’t escaped her notice that Chrollo was becoming concerned for the omega’s general health and happiness.

Uvogin watched emotions flicker across the beta’s face as she processed what he had said. He was taken back when a familiar look was held there briefly. Heartbreak.

How did he never notice how pretty the girl was? The answer was obvious: he’d never seen an emotion like that from her before.

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Chrollo woke from yet another domestic dream starring the blonde omega with a groan. The small pitiful whimpers coming from the bathroom did not help his hard on.
He sighed as he rolled over onto his back to stare at the ceiling. This was just ridiculous at this point, he hadn’t had a decent night of sleep in days and knowing how soft Kurapika’s lips felt on his didn’t help the situation either.

Chrollo didn’t want to go back to sleep and continue dreaming of the boy until he soiled his pants, which were strained enough from the situation as it was but he supposed there was no harm in simply resting his eyes a bit.

Chrollo’s eyes snapped open again when Kurapikas whimpers went silent only for them to start up again from the other side of the room. The alpha sat up to look over to the omega’s nest, confused because he was sure they had dismantled it.

Red eyes were the only thing lighting the empty base, again he was sure the troupe had been here only a moment ago, and he was caught in that scarlet gaze.

“Chrollo. . .” Kurapika called like a siren, luring him in, his voice just barely restraining a moan.

“Kurapika, how did you get out of the bathroom?” Chrollo called as calmly as he could. Kurapika didn’t answer, at least not in the way he expected.

Kurapika sat up, stretching with the grace and seduction of a tigeresse, wearing ONLY his coat.

‘Strange, I thought I was wearing. . .’ His coat wasn’t on him anymore. The sweet scent of honey reached Chrollo and his eyes snapped up to see Kurapika begin to slowly, tantalizingly slip the coat from his shoulders. The little shiver in the red light made Chrollo’s loins ache.

Chrollo watched, his eyes glued to the boy’s every movement, his tongue licking his pouting lips, the slick sliding slutily down his thighs. All of it like a five course meal in front of a starving man.

“Chrollo. . . I need you,” Kurapika whimpered so softly it barely carried through the honey soaked air.

“Come here,” Chrollo called just as softly and he gulped as the omega began to crawl on all fours over to him. His little butt swaying in the air and hypnotizing Chrollo. Kurapika was panting and
his eyes hazy and bright, never leaving Chrollo.

Chrollo never wanted those eyes to leave him, they should only ever look at him this way.

Kurapika reached him agonizingly slow and finally Chrollo could reach forward and hold that angelic face in his hands. Kurapika eyelids lowered in pleasure, a purr leaving his lips as he moved forward and brushed those soft lips against his.

His eyes slipped closed and suddenly Kurapika was gone. His eyes snapped open and through the incredibly bleak and colorless darkness he could see his troupe sleeping and his chest hurt.

There was no scent.

There were no whimpers.

There was no Kurapika.

Chrollo’s eyes opened slowly, heavy, and he had to blink away liquid that he didn’t want to dwell on. He breathed a sigh of relief when he could still smell Kurapika and hear the precious sound of his sleeping whimpers. He checked his phone only to realize it had only been an hour since he last woke up.

Cursing softly to himself, he got up and straightened his clothes. Now was as good a time as any to go take a walk he decided bitterly.

Uvogin woke when Chrollo opened the base door and left. For some reason his eyes snapped to Machi without getting up. The woman was longingly staring at the empty space left in danchou’s bedroll with only the slightest glimmer of tears in her eyes. In the pale darkness of the base, her face was so open and beautiful. The pink of her hair lit up her face in a way he’d never noticed before and he wanted to hold her in their equal heartbreak.

Of course this affected her as much as it affected him, setting up the loves of their lives was bound to be difficult. She’d need a shoulder as much as he would.
“Most of the buyers seem to be mobsters. One is a prince but he’s probably the worst of the bunch, although he offered over twenty billion jenny if we simply sold to him without the auction.” Shalnark told Uvogin, Machi and Feitan the results of the background checks they forced him to do.

Sure danchou seemed to like the omega, but so did the other alphas! It’s so much money, why can’t they just leave it be? Although Machi had made an excellent point that danchou had been smiling more and there wasn’t really a price any one of them would put on their leader’s happiness.

“Why he worst?” Feitan asked as he pointed to the prince's name.

“Well, he is the benefactor of at least three mafia as far as I can tell, and there are reports of him slaughtering people. Almost every omega given to him is never seen again but there’s no evidence that he kills them. Bodyguards of his never quit, but they go missing pretty quickly when they hand in resignation forms. As far as the internet is concerned, he’s a bonafide psychopath.” Uvogin’s face paled as he listened. “Besides that, he’s very interested in the arts and literature so it makes since that he’d want an omega like Kurapika.”

“That man no good!” Feitan growled at the screen, the picture being of a blurry image of the prince covered in blood, a creepy smile on his face. Uvogin agreed wholeheartedly.

Machi nodded her head as well, concern for the omega clearly showing on her face. Uvogin knew that he wasn’t the only one that had grown attached to the omega, but it made him happy that both Feitan and Machi cared enough to want to stop the sale.

“He definitely isn’t my first choice,” everyone jumped when Pakunoda’s voice spoke up from behind the small group.

Pakunoda looked over the four with a raised brow, curious at what they were doing but she could already guess. She herself had also had some concerns about the potential buyers of the boy. Say what you will but when you can see someone’s entire life picture perfectly, it’s hard to write them off as just an object you’re going to sell.

“So what did you plan to do with this information?” Pakunoda asked, her eyes directed at Machi and Feitan since they were the two most likely to be in charge of the little pow-wow.
“We hadn’t decided yet. Perhaps show it to Chrollo but I feel he will try to write it off,” Machi spoke up first and Pakunoda’s other eyebrow rose. She trusted Machi’s intuition on this, the women was normally right.

“So we can’t just show it to Chrollo.” Pakunoda sat down with the others, signifying that she was also on board with keeping the omega.

“You’re all seriously on board to lose out on this much money?!” Shalnark squeaked a little desperately. The answer came from the steely expressions of the others looking back at him with determination.

The five troupe members began to talk in earnest on how they’d convince Chrollo to keep the boy, the plans ranging from pooling their money to buy him themselves as a gift to Chrollo all the way to shoving Chrollo into the bathroom and letting nature do its job.

After hours of delegation, they finally had an idea that they were sure would get Chrollo to be honest with his feelings.

It had taken a whole month but Gon and Killua had finally found Kurapika. They had tracked him to the city of the burgled sweet shop from the robbed museum and finally found themselves carefully hidden a good distance from the warehouse they were sure housed the Phantom Troupe.

“Waiting sucks,” Gon pouted as he watched the building carefully. Even from here he could smell the slight scent of heat and it was making him anxious and worried for his friend.

“We just have to wait for our chance Gon, we can’t risk getting captured again.” Killua didn’t want to even think about what would happen should they be taken captive once again. They’d kill Gon and he’d be sold to the highest bidder along with Kurapika.

“The second they take him out—“

“I’ll use godspeed and leave them in the dust!” Killua finished with a smile. They were so close,
they simply couldn’t fail.

______________________________________________________________

Three days had passed slowly. For everyone in the troupe, the tension of the upcoming auction was suffocating. Kurapika’s pounding and sobbing had eventually dwindled down to soft pleads and scratches at the door.

Bonolenov had been using Nobunaga’s ruined robe to give Kurapika food without being attacked and he could see through the crack enough to see that Kurapika had made an impromptu nest in the bathtub. He had used all of the towels he could find and ripped the shower curtain off.

He would peek his head up over the tub wall lazily every time he opened the door to deliver food and look at him with curiosity before he smelled the robe and huffed at him in disgust.

Chrollo had found he couldn’t focus on his book as Shalnark talked rather loudly about each of the buyers. He tried to ignore it but concern began to bubble in his stomach when he compared one buyer to Hisoka.

No one could hurt Kurapika, he’s too precious Chrollo tried to reason with himself. The only proof he needed was how fond his troupe seemed to be of the boy, everyone was always concerned over whether he had been fed or not. Several times now random members would ask Bonolenov to check on Kurapika when he hadn’t whined for awhile. No one could hurt Kurapika if he could get this group collectively on his side, well excluding Nobunaga who was still pissed about his sword.

Chrollo’s eyes caught on the faded bite mark on his hand and it was a heavy reminder that Kurapika wasn’t perfect and he didn’t always follow orders. It also served to remind him that a month from now, Kurapika would probably have his virginity taken by whatever alpha he was sold too.

“T-minus 5 hours until the auctions live!” Shalnark called happily and Chrollo found his stomach twisting painfully.

“Eh Danchou?” Chrollo looked up to see Uvogin had approached while he was lost in thought.

“Yes?” Chrollo sighed heavily, already in a bad mood for some reason.
“Could I talk to ya in private?” Uvogin asked and Chrollo agreed readily, happy to escape Shalnark’s constant yapping about every crime lord that was bidding for his angel.

Chrollo led the way outside despite Uvogin being the one to ask for a private talk.

Uvogin followed his leader out of the base and into the upper levels of the building. Uvogin understood Chrollo better than most thought he did, and what he knew without a doubt was sometimes Chrollo could think himself into a corner when it came to his own wants and needs. He had decided they were to sell Kurapika and that’s what he’d do no matter what unless he was shocked into seeing a different course of action. He could only hope he’d found the right shock.

“What did you need?” Chrollo asked shortly as the giant of a man fiddled with his hands nervously.

“Well, I’ve been thinking about Kurapika...”

Chrollo sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose but let the man finish.

“It’s just, he’s so beautiful, and he’s smart and cunning and he cares so much. Like have you noticed that he doesn’t give Shizuku onions because he saw she didn’t like em’?” Uvogin began to babble naming off all the things Kurapika did that made him love the omega. “When he talks about something he loves his eyes just light up and fightin’ with im’ is like watching someone write poetry with their body and. . . And. . . And...” Uvogin stuttered to a halt as a blush took over his face.

Chrollo’s eyebrows had risen into his hair lines because no, he hadn’t noticed that Kurapika did that for Shizuku, but it made his heart melt a bit.

“And?” Chrollo asked, a hope he didn’t know what was for gripping him as he waiting.

“Chrollo, I want to mate im’ and I would like your permission.”
Chrollo stared at the computer screen over Shalnark’s shoulder as the auction officially opened, doing his best to ignore it as Uvo moped behind him. The giant had looked crestfallen when Chrollo had denied his request to mate Kurapika. It wouldn’t be fair to the rest of the troupe…

Unbidden, images of Kurapika sitting with Uvo came to mind, the way the two wrestled as the large spider tried to get the small omega used to the touch of an alpha. He’d be good to Kurapika and he might be happy but…

“Wow! Prince Tserriednich just opened the bidding with 12 billion straight away!” Shalnark declared with a grin. “Guess those hotels he owns really do turn out a good profit! Speaking of him, I found more reports on him, posted by someone claiming to be a bodyguard. They’re warning people to not try to meet him privately because the prince is a sadist that enjoys skinning people alive!”

Nausea twisted in Chrollo’s stomach and he was almost relieved when a known mobster increased the bid seconds later. The auction had been live for a little over an hour now, and Shalnark had given horrifying details of each bidder. The mobster that had just increased the bid was a known abuser who beat his three omegas ruthlessly and wasn’t even good to his offspring.

The bid increased again, another mobster, this one was known for sterilizing most of his omegas and running several of the most high class brothels on the Azian continent.

Prince Tserriednich bid again.

“You know, he’s received about six omegas to date,” Shalnark continued his list of disturbing facts about each bidder. “All were high class, none seen since the day they were given to him. He doesn’t have any children either, bastards or trueborn. Kind of odd considering that he got his first omega 12 years ago.”

So the best case scenario: Kurapika was sequestered in a harem with six other omegas, never allowed to see another person other than Tserriednich and was either sterilized or his offspring not allowed to leave the harem… Chrollo’s right canine sank into his lip as he considered the alternative, especially if the prince’s gorier hobbies were true.

“Hey! Illumi just made a bid!”

Turning, Chrollo stomped towards the couch, not even willing to consider the horror of that particular scenario. These men wouldn’t spend so much money on Kurapika just to sterilize or tear him apart, would they? They wanted a smart omega after all, mate material.

At least that’s how Chrollo viewed him.

Shaking his head, the troupe leader decided he needed to clear his head a bit and shut his eyes to try to force his thoughts into order.

The sun was shining brightly and Chrollo smiled at it as a leaf fluttered down onto the book he was reading under a tree. Wind whispered through the trees and a wonderful scent tickled his nose as a weight against his side shifted.
Turning his head, he saw Kurapika gently settle his book on the ground before reaching into a basket where a bit of fussing was coming from and lifting a bundle gently into his arms. Chrollo could just make out a tuft of black hair and felt his lips twitch into a smile as his eyes fell on Kurapika’s neck, his mark standing out boldly on the porcelain skin.

“Daddy!” a voice shouted and Chrollo turned his head as two tiny, wiggling bodies jumped at him. Bright smiles and grey eyes greeted him, causing a Chrollo’s heart to beat faster.

“Daddy pway wiff us?” a tiny girl asked, she couldn’t have been older than two. Her older brother laughed brightly, maybe four years old.

Chrollo breathed in the scent of his children, arms wrapping around them tightly as he buried his face into their warm bodies, and then it was gone. The warmth, the laughter, even the scent. His family, where were they?!

A cry rang through the air, causing Chrollo’s head to turn. He was still outside, but the world was completely black now, except for a small square of light. Rising, another scream was issued, this one of terrible pain as Chrollo moved towards the window.

The room he saw was surgically clean and white. The floor, the walls, even the bed was white. The only color was red, Kurapika’s glowing eyes as a man with blonde hair thrust into the omega roughly. A knife was in the alpha’s hand and he twisted it slowly over the porcelain flesh beneath him, occasionally cutting a line, maring the white of the room with another red: blood.

Yet another slice was made and Kurapika shrieked in pain before the alpha’s face twisted into a hideous, sadistic grin as he reached down and took hold of the cut skin. He had made three cuts Chrollo could now see, one down either side of Kurapika’s back and another at the base of his spine. It was at the bottom cut that the alpha gripped and began to slowly pull, earning shrieks and cries from the boy he was raping as he slowly peeled away the skin from his back.

Chrollo heard every cry, every tear of the flesh as it was pulled away from its owner. He didn’t realize he was screaming too until he realized that Kurapika’s cries were getting weaker and weren’t as deep whereas his own were getting louder.

The prince continued to thrust into the body of the omega as he continued to peel the skin away, revealing muscle and bone underneath the flawless flesh. Blood ran freely and the alpha seemed to revel in it, licking his fingers every so often as little by little Kurapika’s spine and ribs were uncovered. And then Kurapika finally went still, his eyes bloody red, a terrible shade that Chrollo now recognized as being similar to the people he had tortured. How could he have ever found such eyes beautiful, especially now when he had seen Kurapika’s while he was lustful, kissing him?

The prince’s bloody finger trailed up then, sliding up the omega’s unmarked neck and lazily drew circles on the tear stained cheeks before digging into the eye that Chrollo could see. Kurapika gave once last heave before the breath left his body as the eye was dragged out of its socket.

Chrollo snapped awake, terror twisting his heart and causing a lump to settle in his stomach. Shalnark was still tapping away at his computer but he did glance back at his leader.

“Oh, awake?” the computer nerd asked before turning back to the screen. “The auction has been going smoothly. Ten more hours until closing bids and the price has gone up to 45 billion from Prince Tserriednich!”

Just the name and the sliver of the profile picture was enough to cause Chrollo to feel sick to his stomach. He was not Machi and he had never met the prince, but he was certain his dream had
given an accurate depiction of Kurapika’s fate… And an alternative.

Moving to the bathroom, Chrollo blinked at the chair before remembering this was the one he had locked Kurapika in… Once again, the image of children and torture played across his mind but this time he didn’t push it aside as he moved towards the other bathroom.

“50 billion by Prince Tserriednich!” Shalnark’s voice sang out and Chrollo finally couldn’t stand it anymore.

Uvo’s request played in his mind, but it wasn’t acceptable either. Especially since it told him what he wanted as well.

“Shut it down!” The order fell from Chrollo’s lips harshly as his stomach continued to twist and then it was as though everything went still. Around the base, the other members of the troupe glanced up at Chrollo, some looking surprised while others were wearing obvious poker faces. It didn’t escape Chrollo’s notice that Shal’s face seemed to be somewhere in between, almost disappointed yet also relieved.

“Danchou?” Pakunoda asked after a moment.

“Shut down the auction,” Chrollo finally clarified, the relief that flooded his being felt like cool water after a fire. “I’ll pay you all the difference… But I don’t want to sell Kurapika.”

“Why not?”

The dark alpha drew in a breath, still uncomfortable in his new realization. “I want to mate him.”

“Finally!” Uvo declared loudly as he settled back and gave Shalnark a look. The blonde beta shrugged before hitting a few keys of his computer, declaring the auction had been cancelled.

“Should we offer an excuse?” he asked after a moment as demands for an explanation were posted.

“Do they know who we are?” Chrollo snapped.

Shalnark laughed lightly. “Nope! Only saw pictures of Kurapika.”

“Then they don’t need to know. It doesn’t affect us.”

The group blinked at each other for a minute as most came to the realization of what all of this meant. Kurapika wasn’t going anywhere.

Franklin stood in that moment and lumbered heavily out of the base.

Kurapika had been woken from a troubled sleep in the bathtub by a shout of “50 billion!” It didn’t take a genius to realize what was happening, the troupe was following through with his sale.

Glancing at the sleeve that he had ripped off of Franklin’s arm during one of the moments when the troupe had tried to feed him, Kurapika nuzzled it despite knowing that he shouldn’t be enjoying it. He had recognized why he had been so intent to snatch the thing: at some point right before Kurapika had grabbed it, the sleeve had touched Chrollo.

Pain twisted in Kurapika’s stomach as he considered the implications and all that had happened while he had been lost in the haze of heat. He had removed his shirt, stolen Chrollo’s coat, fought to keep aforementioned coat, and then kissed the man.
It was a bitter pill to swallow, but Kurapika had to admit that the statements that had previously been made about waiting for his heat were quite accurate. He would have willingly gone much farther with Chrollo had the alpha not drawn a line and stood by it, even if he had seemed just as eager as the other alphas to get into his pants. And that was the worst part: admitting that the leader of the Phantom Troupe, the people who had killed his entire clan, had honor!

But at least this was all about to end. Whoever the troupe sold him to, as soon as the shackle was off, would be losing their investment. He didn’t feel sorry in anyway.

Snuggling into a towel, Kurapika resigned himself to wait. When the door opened and he was finally let out, he will have been sold and would likely be on his way out. He’d likely never see the troupe again, having lost his chance at revenge but he could still pursue the eyes of his kin.

Unconsciously, Kurapika grasped the sleeve in his hand tighter and drew it to his face, the twisting and squirming feeling his gut increasing as the feeling of slick on his thighs increased.

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It took Chrollo several hours to calm down after the auction was cancelled. He wasn’t certain where to start with everything, but he had quite a few plans that he’d have to make. The first thing was what would he do in regards to Kurapika right now?

He refused to just go in and mark the boy, even if his instincts screamed to do just that. Despite his ruthless reputation, he wanted Kurapika to agree to this mating so he’d be waiting until the heat was over which should be another two days or so.

Next was actually asking the boy. Chrollo had better taste than to ask in a bathroom and he honestly wanted some privacy, giving them a day alone when Kurapika agreed. That could be achieved by sending the rest of the troupe out, but he didn’t feel this was the right location.

Shutting his eyes, Chrollo tried to think of the ‘right’ location. A bookstore or museum wouldn’t afford any privacy, and though interesting, wasn’t what he aimed for. Somewhere peaceful then, somewhere private where he still had control. Somewhere that Kurapika wouldn’t have to clean.

Chrollo had always loved the balcony at base #6, it was the reason he had chosen to turn the place into a base. They had also recently been there, so it was clean. They could easily have a few days of privacy.

There was also the mating itself. Normally when betas or alphas mated, the pair would get matching rings. From what he knew about the traditions with omegas, the alpha had a ring and the omega wore a collar. He’d need to find a good set.

Finally, after mating. Chrollo felt this was the easy part: he already had a house for Kurapika to move into. It was private and well-hidden, not even Hisoka had been able to find it. It was a good place for Kurapika to settle down for a quiet life without worrying about someone hurting him or their eventual offspring.

Breathing deeply, the alpha felt he finally had an acceptable plan in place then glanced at the clock. It was late in the evening, far too late to try to head into town to start looking for a proper collar and ring set so he’d address that tomorrow.

The door of the base was thrown open a moment later and everyone turned to see Franklin’s return. Chrollo had been a bit concerned when the beta had left so suddenly hours before but trusted that Franklin wasn’t about to do something to cause them hardship. Now he narrowed his eyes at the
large sack that the man carried over his back which he set down gently in front of Chrollo.

Franklin’s large hand reached into the bag and when he withdrew it, there was a heavy set man in his grip who looked terrified.

“I got you a chef to teach Kurapika to cook,” the beta stated flatly.

Gon shifted impatiently and Killua kicked him for the umpteenth time as they watched the large, scarred beta return to the spiders’ base with a large bag on his back. There was someone in it, both boys could tell, but they could also tell that it wasn’t Kurapika. Whoever this was was bigger and heavier than their friend.

It was unfortunate, but they couldn’t help everyone, especially if they wanted to save their friend.

“So what was that?” Gon asked Killua since the other boy had been the one to follow the spider.

Killua looked just as confused. “He kidnapped a chef.”

Gon blinked, his innocent eyes blinking as smoke rose from his ears. “Do they want to have a celebratory dinner or cooking lessons?”

“I don’t know!” Killua snapped. “It’s not like I asked him!”

Gon pouted slightly before turning his eyes back to the base. “How much longer is this going to take?!” he finally exploded before Killua could manage to slap his hand over the idiot alpha’s mouth.

Lifting the other, Killua moved quickly but carefully. He had no idea whether anyone had heard Gon’s outburst, but it was better to be safe and change their stakeout location.

It was two more days before Bono said that it was now safe to let Kurapika out of the bathroom. During that time a number of things had shifted in the troupe. Machi had begun to work on some new clothes for Kurapika and Chrollo had helped with selecting many of the colors. Although he believed that Kurapika had been beyond adorable in pink, he had kept the color to a minimum since he had noticed that the boy hadn’t liked it.

Franklin and surprisingly Feitan had begun working with the chef that the large beta had collected, no one bothered to learn his name since they doubted that he’d be around very long. Franklin had promised to just let the man go when they left the city and Chrollo found he didn’t mind so long as the man was carried out of the base and left in a random part of the city in a bag so he couldn’t lead anyone back to the base.

Other members of the troupe were up to their own activities and seemed intent to keep Chrollo in the dark to them.

Chrollo on the other hand had a mission of his own: searching for the perfect collar and ring set. He visited a regular jewelry shop at first but they had only carried rings. When he explained that he was searching for a collar for an omega, the manager had stared at him for a long moment before directing him to four other shops in the city. All were high end and the only shops that supplied
mating collars for omegas.

The alpha had visited each shop in turn, staring at the few sets that each had but none felt right. He was even more certain of that when he watched Kurapika sluggishly exit the bathroom for the first time after five days. He looked tired and needed a shower and a change of clothes, something Machi took care of by handing him a fresh towel and a folded outfit then directing Kurapika to the spare bathroom as Kortopi and Shizuku moved into the bathroom and removed the towels and shower curtain.

Bono had given them all the heads up on the condition of the curtain, so they had already obtained a replacement and Shizuku set it up as Kortopi carried the towels to the laundry.

Shalnark was handing Chrollo a series of addresses for custom jewelry shops when Kurapika exited the bathroom, clean and awake and looking significantly happier than he ever had in the previous outfits he’d been given. This ensemble was similar in fashion to the clothes he’d been captured in minus the ridiculous blue skirt-like garment. The pants were plain white and showed off his shapely legs while the top was Azian in style, sleeveless and green with a yellow fastening at the neck. He was beautiful.

The chef had noticed the omega being allowed out of the barricaded bathroom and he openly stared at Kurapika, mouth gaping slightly. Luckily the man was a beta or else Chrollo would have been irritated.

“I’ll be back by dinner,” Chrollo stated as he collected his serving of breakfast risotto. “I trust that the base won’t be destroyed in that time?”

There was some laughter from the various members as they collected their servings of breakfast. Several of them had been working on individual projects that had created messes that seemed to take over the base recently.

Kurapika glanced at the line up in the kitchen area, uncertain of where he stood. Would he even get breakfast now that he’d been sold? He could survive a few days without food, it would also make him easier to transport. He got his answer when Chrollo pushed a bowl of the risotto into his hands and then guided him to the couch where they normally sat.

The troupe members spread out throughout the base with the exception of a portly man who ate his portion of breakfast in the kitchen before pulling out a notebook and making several notes as he evaluated the cabinets and fridge. When he was finished, he passed the notebook to Franklin who nodded slightly and brought it over to Chrollo.

“Danchou, with what we currently have, this is what he suggests for dinner.”

Kurapika felt his eyebrows rise in confusion as he glanced over Chrollo’s shoulder at the list of items on the page of the notebook. Lasagna was listed first and underneath that was chicken parmesan. The list continued with items that he didn’t recognize and Chrollo perused the list quickly before selecting something that Kurapika had no idea how to pronounce.

“Oh, and Kurapika,” Chrollo said suddenly, calling the omega’s attention away from the paper. “That man is a chef, you’ll be learning to cook with him for a few days.”

Kurapika was confused for a moment before realizing that this was probably some sort of request from his mysterious buyer. Well, if the man worked for his buyer then it was unlikely that he’d be forced to go hungry.
Chrollo left several minutes later after letting Kurapika select a book for the day since he wouldn’t be cleaning that day.

Chrollo examined the book that the manager of the jewelry shop had set before him and felt he’d finally found something. The ring was carved from black jade and had three black diamonds set in it. The store assured him that they could include a special engraving in the ring. The collar was black as well, made with soft leather and set with several pieces of black jade and three black diamonds in the front of the collar.

“I’m afraid that we don’t have those currently in the store, but we can can easily make them in just a few days,” the manager explained when he saw that Chrollo seemed intent on a particular page. “You can even select the diamonds and onyx pieces you would like us to use!”

Chrollo felt his mouth twitch slightly as he stood to follow the manager to an evaluating room before stopping short when his eyes caught on something.

“What about using those instead of the black diamonds?” Chrollo asked as he nodded towards a small case and the manager’s eyes bulged.

“Sir, those are red diamonds! They’re extremely rare and-”

“Would be perfect.” Chrollo stared at the stones that reminded him of Kurapika’s eyes when he’d kissed him.

“I-I see. There would be a significant increase in price-”

Chrollo cut the man off with a gesture and a wave of dominance from his pheromones. “It doesn’t matter.”

The manager stared at him wide eyed before bowing his head slightly. “This must be an exceptional omega.”

“He’s one of a kind,” Chrollo replied as he stared down at the small collection.

“Oh course! Now let’s select that onyx for the ring and collar!”

If possible, the manager became even more accommodating, especially when Chrollo paid for the ring and collar to be made, not even blinking at the price.

The chef, who introduced himself as Luca Moretti, was the no nonsense type in the kitchen. He had Franklin, Feitan, and Kurapika working in the kitchen regularly, first learning to make pasta then sauce.

Kurapika also learned the name of the dish that Chrollo had chosen: ravioli. He had also learned that it came in a variety of flavors ranging from vegetables, meat, cheese, or combinations of any of the three.

Having three people learning to cook seemed strange, but by dinner that night Kurapika knew that there had been far too many. Even if Luca had just been directing them, the sheer amount that the three of them had made was staggering and the chef had been quick to start directing to make different preparations of the dish.
Baked ravioli, boiled ravioli, fried ravioli. He’d even had them start folding the skins differently and called it tortellini. This could be served in just as many variations plus in soup, something the chef had insisted be called ‘brodo’. For the first time that Kurapika was aware of, there was definitely going to be leftovers.

The troupe in turn had seemed surprised by the sheer number of dishes, even the bizarrely cheerful Chrollo… No, bizarre probably wasn’t the right word. Kurapika had heard Shalnark whispering to Pakunoda that day, namely the price that had been offered for him. 50 billion jenny, it was really no wonder that the entire troupe seemed to be in a good mood.

Luca at least seemed to be in a good mood despite his rather dire situation and chatted amicably with Franklin as they ate that night. Kurapika had been considering the tortellini in brodo but had received a plate of the baked ravioli. It was good but not what he’d been hoping for. His preferences had never really been considered before then, so he was rather surprised when Chrollo handed him a bowl of the soup when he was halfway through with his plate.

As the alpha settled beside him on the couch, Kurapika dug into the soup, enjoying the feel of the warm liquid sliding down his throat. A chuckle drew his eyes to Luca.

“You’re not going to kill him, are you?” Kurapika asked Chrollo quietly a moment later.

The alpha followed his gaze then smiled. “He doesn’t know who we are and as long as he doesn’t cause trouble, I don’t see him being harmed. We’ll let him go in a few days when we leave.”

When they deliver him to the buyer Kurapika realized. He had thought of trying to help Luca get away, but he was still chained and powerless and the man was obviously not a nen user. It was better to tell him to behave and have the troupe release him.

The next several days were strange. Chrollo would disappear every so often, the troupe acted like they were hiding something, individually, and his lessons in cooking continued with Luca. Sometimes Franklin or Feitan would join.

What was most surprising was that Kurapika wasn’t forced to do all the chores anymore. With the exception of Chrollo, the troupe members seemed intent to do their own laundry currently and cleaned up most of their own messes.

Slowly a week slipped by. He still slept on the floor but Chrollo had finally broken down and offered him a blanket on the first night after his heat. At the end of that week, he was unsurprised when Chrollo handed him four water bottles and several different types of protein and nutrient bar.

He offered no protest as the Fun Fun Cloth wrapped around him, certain this would be the last time he’d see the troupe.

Chrollo lifted the small sack up and settled it into his pocket gently. The collar and ring were safely wrapped in his bag and he had plans to pick up some extra items on his way back to base #6. Shizuku had volunteered to stop by and give the base a once over, but Chrollo had rejected the idea.

“Remember,” he briefed as the troupe gathered outside of the base. “I intend to be at the base with Kurapika tomorrow. Unless I call you, don’t arrive sooner than two days after that.”

“Yes danchou!” a chorus of voices answered.

Settling his pack into the car, Chrollo drove away, not noticing the two boys that followed, one of them a familiar omega who was carrying a familiar dark-haired alpha.
Chrollo felt lighter than air as he made a quick stop to pick out a few ingredients for the special dinner he’d make for Kurapika tonight.

It felt good to embrace what he wanted, he couldn’t wipe the happy smile off his face if he tried right now. He picked out an excellent wine to pair with the steaks he had taken an exuberant amount of time picking out.

Chrollo wanted everything to be perfect, it had to be perfect and it would be he assured himself as he picked out a few bouquets of lovely deep red and pink roses. He briefly wondered if Kurapika liked roses but figured it would be fine, although he wished he had asked Kurapika what his favorite flowers were.

Chrollo caught himself listening to love songs in the car ride into the city and he couldn’t find it in himself to care.

Kurapika was the best thing to ever happen to him, he was everything he could ever ask for in a mate. So incredibly smart and beautiful, not only could he keep conversation with him, something his troupe could only accomplish for so long, but he would also teach their children to be just as brilliant. It only made it better that Kurapika knew nen, he would be able to train their children to be strong for the day they set out in whatever they wanted to do in life. Whether that be joining the troupe and taking over for him or becoming a Hunter or anything else.

For his children, nothing would be impossible. He’d make sure of it.

“What is he doing?” Gon asked as they tried to act natural in the coffee shop across from the grocery store Kurapika’s kidnapper had gone into. The man had returned to his car thirty minutes after entering the store, his arms full of shopping bags, a chocolate cake, and five bouquets of roses.

“I have literally no idea, I’d be worried they’d already sold him if I couldn’t smell him. This is getting weird,” Killua whispered back to the alpha he subconsciously wanted to be his mate one day.
“He wasn’t in the car, he must have him in that little bag again,” Gon growled, remembering the cursed cloth that sealed away their friend before he could say anything in a way of goodbye over a month ago. “How much longer do we have to wait?”

“As long as it takes.” Killua’s eyes narrowed in determination.

“I’m so relieved,” Franklin commented as he sat down after freeing the kidnapped chef in a random part of town. Taking pity on the man, he had left him some money to call a cab and made sure the neighborhood wasn’t too horrible. The man hadn’t seemed too upset about the entire thing once he’d taken in the full situation and realized they weren’t going to kill him, although his first call would definitely be to the police either way.

“You seriously want that hellion to be our danchou’s mate?!” Nobunaga growled, still peeved that everyone but him was on board for this sham. How could danchou want the little bitch? Sure they could talk books for hours, which was more than any of them could claim, and yeah he’s pretty as hell, but it’s a demon! Just wait, in a year it will take over our lives, have us doing prissy shit like freeing omegas and working for Hunters!

“You really think Kurapika is gonna be controlling danchou?” Shalnark laughed like it was the most ridiculous thing in the world.

Nobunaga blushed when he realized he had grumbled all his thoughts out loud. “Hey! Have you ever seen danchou back out of a sale?” he yelled. The blank look he received only proved his point.

“But have you ever seen im’ that happy?” Uvogin countered as he joined Franklin on the couch.

The silence spoke for itself as everyone relaxed into the new truth of their lives. Their boss, the man they all care the most about, was about to be mated and happy with everything he deserves.

Uvogin was happy for his friend and boss, but he couldn’t help the empty painful feeling in his chest. He knew Kurapika would be a better match for Chrollo, but he couldn’t help being a little jealous. He had almost hoped Chrollo would give his permission to mate the boy.
Uvogin sighed heavily but in the end tried for a smile because he at least knew Kurapika would never be mistreated, he’d always be cared for and protected. It’s all he could hope for now. The Enhancer looked up when Machi left the base silently, he didn’t like the fallen look on the woman’s face and decided to follow her. No one else seemed to notice as they continued on with their individual plans for the omega once they got to the base and Kurapika was mated. Uvogin grabbed the bottle of whiskey he’d picked up as he left.

Machi stumbled up the stairs to the upper levels of the building, obviously not in her right mind as she didn’t notice she was being followed.

The seamstress released a heart wrenching sob and fell against the far wall, sliding down until she was curled up on the dirty floor, just holding herself.

“Hey,” Uvogin called softly, the girl jumped and turned to him. She quickly schooled her face into an unreadable mask as she wiped at her wet cheeks.

“What do you want?” She snapped.

Uvogin pushed through the awkwardness and moved to settle beside her and handed over the bottle after taking a hefty swig of the stuff.

Machi stared at the bottle before grabbing it to gulp down three mouthfuls. They sat in comfortable silence, passing the bottle back and forth.

“Sometimes I can’t fathom you,” Machi suddenly spoke and Uvogin found himself laughing. Machi had never made him laugh before, although he admits that he’d never had a real conversation with her before.

“And why is that?”

“How you can be so strong?” she told him, peeking up at him through her bangs. “Even at moments like this, you can be strong just to fight for someone’s happiness. I’m not nearly that strong.”

“What the hell are ya talking about?” Uvogin snapped looking over at the women. “I barely held it together this month, but ya?” Uvogin scoffed. “Ya held onto a hope for years and still pushed for
his happiness instead of giving into selfishness.” Uvogin felt his chest tighten, he was almost that selfish.

Machi started to make small, smothered sniffling sounds that he pretended not to notice for her sake. Uvogin settled his arm around the girl and pulled her into his chest as she cried softly and he took another gulp of the strongest whiskey he could find.

“I never got to tell him!”

“I know”

“It hurts so much, he'll never look at me like that. I can feel it.”

“...” Uvogin didn’t know how to respond because he was also breaking over the fact that he’d never be looked at like that either.

“Thank you Uvo,” Machi whispered.

Uvogins only response was to hold her a little tighter.

Chrollo whistled as he finished up his preparations for dinner, laying out the plates as artfully as he could manage. The simply cooked steak, a bit of mashed potato and Parmesan grilled asparagus looked and smelled beautiful.

He’d taken the time to set up a small round table on the balcony, laying one of the bouquets out in the table top and used the petals from the others to decoration the table top and floor.

The sun was setting in the horizon as he placed a few candles around the edges of the balcony and one or two on the table as well.

Finally everything seemed perfect, Chrollo admitted to himself that he was incredibly nervous, but
he knew it would all turn out fine. It’s not like Kurapika would be anything other than happy, they
got along so well and he would no longer be given to some psychopath.

Taking a deep breath Chrollo collected the bag from the table and placed it on the floor. Chrollo
gave himself one last look over, finding he still looked good in his black slacks and white button
down, his hair for once styled and released the knot.

Kurapika stumbled out of the cloth, having been expecting it for sometime since he could feel that
they had stopped moving. He was surprised when a hand took his to steady him in a gentlemanly
fashion.

Kurapika looked around and felt his stomach drop, they were not where he expected them to be, in
fact the last base he had been kept at was incredibly far from where he thought he’d be moved to.
Where was his buyer? Why were there flower petals on the floor? Why the hell was he alone with
the troupe leader?

Quickly snatching back his hand when the dark alpha didn’t offer any kind of explanation and it
quickly became clear to Kurapika what exactly this was: the man was obviously trying to sleep
with him just once before he was brought to his buyer. This was some cliche ploy to lure him into
bed.

“Did you get any sleep?” Chrollo asked the shy boy conversationally as he looked around a tad
confused.

“Umm... yes?” Kurapika offered as he looked at the alpha suspiciously. Could he really think that
he’d give up his virginity to him?

Kurapika scoffed to himself, of course he did, they all thought he’d be with his buyer longer than
an hour after all.

“Come here,” the troupe leader grinned at him, taking his hand again and tried to lead him to the
balcony. Kurapika dragged his feet, confusion feeding his nerves in this unpredictable situation.
The troupe leader had proven not to be a rapist, hopefully if he simply stood his ground the alpha
would just hurry up and leave him alone forever.

Kurapika was excited to finally get out of this situation, he could refocus his life on finding his
clansmens’ eyes. Sure he’d have to give up on revenge and stop hunting the troupe, but maybe it
wasn’t worth it. Killing them isn’t going to make him feel better anyway.

Kurapika felt his eyes widen when he got his first glimpse on the romantic scene the alpha had put together.

“What the hell?”

“Do you like it?” Chrollo smiled at the omega, he felt rather proud of how speechless the boy was. He was impressing him, he was sure of it. “Let’s eat and then we can talk.”

Kurapika really wasn’t sure what they would have to talk about but he could guess. This has to be about that kiss, the troupe leader was going to try and convince him to give up more to him. Not gonna happen!

The alpha dramatically uncovered the food and kurapika had to admit he was a little impressed by the presentation of it all. Even if it was all a wasted effort on his part.

“Here,” Chrollo practically singsonged as he pulled out Kurapika’s chair and pushed it back in. Kurapika kept looking around the balcony with wide, impressed eyes and Chrollo felt a purr reverberate in his chest as he watched the boy. This was their first real date, the beginning of their mating and their family.

Kurapika gave the troupe leader one last suspicious look before picking up the silverware with narrowed eyes. It was best to just play along for now, soon he’ll be home free.

The food was good, well seasoned and not over cooked. It didn’t take long for Kurapika to be halfway through the meal in the awkward silence between them.

Chrollo enjoyed the comforting silence, only rising once to pour two glasses of wine for them to enjoy. Kurapika seemed to be enjoying the meal he’d made them and it made the primal parts of him happy to be providing for his future mate. He’d need to get Kurapika protein packs or something, he was much too skinny.

“What would you name a child?” Kurapika choked on his bite of steak at the question. It was out of nowhere and completely inappropriate for a genocidal maniac to ask one of the victims of his crimes!
“Excuse me?” Kurapika demanded as he tried to cough up the chunk of meat that was choking him. He grabbed for the wine, not really caring that he was underage because he was in desperate need for anything to clear his throat.

Chrollo stood up to rub at the boy’s back when he started coughing. Once Kurapika had calmed himself and managed to swallow his food, Chrollo moved back to his seat, Kurapika watching him with open confusion and animosity.

“It’s a simple question, what would you name a child?”

“Why do you even want to know?!” Kurapika sputtered. Was this some kind of test?

“Just curious.” Chrollo sipped at his wine his dark eyes never leaving Kurapika.

Kurapika felt uneasy under the troupe leader's eyes, the weight of them heavy on his skin.

Kurapika cautiously picked up his silverware again, trying to think his way out of the odd situation.

“You haven’t answered the question,” Chrollo commented, putting down his wine glass and fiddling with it.

Kurapika didn’t know how to proceed, it felt like he was entering dangerous territory. One step could set off a landmine.

“I guess I’d name a child after my parents,” Kurapika managed not to snarl, still looking at the man pointedly.

Chrollo nodded unaffected with what Kurapika had said. He began to eat once more and Kurapika followed. His muscles were pulled taunt, expected another landmine any second.

“Do you like the flowers? I got them just for you,” Chrollo looked up at Kurapika again. Kurapika
stalled, his eyes immediately looking at the bouquet placed on the table and around at the scattered petals on the balcony.

“Um. . . Yeah, sure?” Kurapika felt his head spinning from the small sip of wine and this confounding situation. It was so brutally awkward, he was considering throwing himself off the ledge.

“You’re going to love my house.” Kurapika's eyes snapped up to the troupe leader to see him a little lost in thought, a small smile on his face. “It’s on my own private island. It’s surround by woods and no one ever bother—“

“Wait, just stop!” Kurapika interrupted feeling even more confused than he was before, the alpha focused back in on him as he tried to put his thoughts into words. “What the hell are you talking about?!“

“Well my house of course, it’s beautiful there. You’re going to love it,” Chrollo mused with a smile again, but frowned when he thought of all there was to do there. “Of course we’ll have to baby proof the place, I’m afraid I’ve always been partial to sharp edges. And I’ll be away a lot with the troupe, but I promise you it will take you years to read through my personal library.

Kurapika felt the words going in one ear and out the other as the alpha began to babble. The unsettling feeling made him feel anxious and the anxiety was making him angry. Eventually Kurapika slammed his hand on the table with little control of himself, his eyes flashing red in the candle lit twilight.

“Will you just hand me over to the buyer already?!” Kurapika snarled as his wine toppled over, shattering on the ground.

Chrollo felt something uncoil in relief. Of course, Kurapika didn’t know he had cancelled the sale! He had thought Kurapika just didn’t want to be with him for a moment there, which was impossible. He must think this was some last ditch effort to take his virginity before dumping him on his buyer. Chrollo smiled, not minding the broken glass or the wine dripping off the balcony as he got up and approached Kurapika, still seated tensely in his chair.

“No Kurapika,” Chrollo whispered reaching to take his face in his hands only for Kurapika to pull away with wide, red tinged eyes. “I’m not selling you because I think we both know.” Chrollo grinned a little as he pulled out the velvet box Kurapika’s collar was tucked away in. “We belong together, be my mate Kurapika?”
Kurapika felt acid run up his throat, his stomach felt like lead and the world was no longer spinning. He couldn’t stop staring at the collar the alpha had just revealed. It was so incredibly black with red diamonds being tainted by the black of the leather, the front engraved with the twelve legged spider. Kurapika couldn’t breath, panic swirled in his stomach, erupting up into his mind like a blistering volcano.

Kurapika wanted to scream, laugh, anything. How did he even get here again?

The world started to black out at the edge of his vision as his chest began to shudder, trying to breath. Memories of his first weeks away from his village assaulted him. Memories of his first time seeing an omega wearing a collar, a chain connected to it as an alpha roughly dragged her to the car, the abuse, it was all he ever wanted to avoid.

Tears welled up in his eyes as the plan for his life was officially shattered. He was going to date, pretend to be a beta and then when he found someone he loved and trusted reveal his gender and be marked so no one could steal him away.

His mind cried desperately for him to run, but where would he run? No nen, no escape. He wasn’t strong enough to fight his way away from the troupe leader.

“Kurapika?”

Kurapika found the strength to pull himself from his panic attack to look back up at the entrapping eyes of the troupe leader. He realized he was crying.

“No.” He whispered, his breath coming back with a gasp. He stood, his chair thrown back and hitting the cement and clattering down into the ocean as he yelled “NO!”

Chrollo felt his stomach plummet sickly, his insides seizing as the omega tore away from him, his feet at the edge of the cliff in more ways than one.

The shock came delayed, he couldn’t understand it at all. Kurapika and him just made sense. How could he not want to be with him?
“What?” Chrollo asked a little dumbly as he stood back up as well.

“I said no!” Kurapika yelled at him again. His arms pulled tight to his chest, panic swirling in his eyes. Chrollo tilted his head to the side as he took in the situation.

He needed to think because this was not what he expected, Kurapika was far from throwing himself into his arms, happy and excited to be his mate.

Chrollo turned sharply to return inside to process what just happened but stopped short. He needed to make something clear. He turned back to Kurapika, stepping heavily towards him. Glass crunched under his weight as Kurapika backed up as far as he dared on the balcony edge.

Chrollo wrapped an arm around his waist, not minding his struggles and gripped his chin between his thumb and forefinger, delicate enough as not to harm him but hard enough to force his eyes on him.

“Kurapika, I will not give up,” Chrollo whispered his black eyes digging into scarlet pools of light. “You will either be my mate or be a slave to the troupe. This is your choice so choose wisely.”

With that Chrollo left the omega to think over his choices, hopefully to come to the same conclusion he did a week ago.

Kurapika watched the troupe leader go, anger and panic still controlling him. His fingers shook as he bent forward, hugging his own waist and screamed. Not fulfilling enough Kurapika grabbed the bouquet off the table and swung it desperately at the finery set up. Glass shattering from his strength.

Petals when flying off the balcony and fluttered off with the wind and his dying screams. Gripping the edge of the table he flipped it off the ledge with a night shattering shriek before finally the stress and pent up rage caught up to him and he crumbled into the floor and cried. A deep heaving sob filled the silence as he dug his fingernails into the side of the balcony, the edge cutting into his palms and leaving traces of blood.

He stared at the raging black ocean as he finally broke down right there, all because of the new reality. Chrollo Lucifer of the Phantom Troupe, the man that ordered his people to die, was never going to let him go.
Hours passed and Kurapika refused to go back into the base, the night was dark and cold as he sat with his back to the door, his feet dangling in the air.

He felt so hollow as he stared. So many times he had hoped Gon and Killua wouldn’t come and try to save him, but right now he’d do anything for someone to save him.

Kurapika didn’t know where Chrollo went, he wasn’t in the lounge. He had tried a few times to get Kurapika to come back into the base but he had refused. Kurapika assumed he had gone off to sulk in one of the back rooms.

For awhile Kurapika, considered trying to scale the cliffs edge but with the nen chain having a tracker in it he’d be found quickly if he didn’t fall off the cliff and die first. Kurapika definitely wasn’t suicidal.

Not for the first time, Kurapika wondered how he got here. The only real answer he could come up with was the Hero of a Thousand Faces. That’s when this all started: the trips to town that Chrollo insisted upon. Maybe if he’d never impressed the troupe leader that day then he would be free by now.

Kurapika sighed heavily and allowed his body to fall backwards and his back to hit heavily. He sighed as he looked up at the stars.

What was he supposed to do now?

Mate or slave . . . . Was there even a difference between the two?

Letting his eyes slipped closed as he sighed again, exhausted from thinking so much. Kurapika focused on the sound of the waves crashing against the rocks, the wind whistling across his cheeks, the sounds of someone scaling the cliff . . . . Wait.

Sitting up quick enough to snap his own neck, Kurapika turned to see a shock of white halfway down the cliff to him.
“Killua!” Kurapika gasped before he could really process what he was doing. He cursed himself when he heard a faint shuffling from inside the base, like the dark alpha was running for the door.

“Damnit!” Killua cursed softly as he jumped the rest of the way down to the balcony.

Killua looked over Kurapika quickly, evaluating that he wasn’t injured in anyway that would prevent him from carrying him out of here. He nodded, satisfied that he only looked a little thinner.

“No time!” Killua yelled, glancing into the base where he could see a flash of black barreling at them. “Hold onto me!” Killua yelled again as he took Kurapika up in his arms and basically threw him into his back.

Kurapika’s heart was beating like a drum as Killua jumped as high as he could back onto the cliff wall. His hands grabbed onto a dark rope he hadn’t noticed before just before the troupe leader managed to make it out.

A wave of dominance chased after them, coupled with a menacing growl. Kurapika kept his eyes on the troupe leader as he raced back into the base, disappearing from view.

“How did you guys find me?!” Kurapika yelled when he noticed Gon on the other side of the rope, pulling them up as Killua climbed.

“We’ve been trailing you for a while.” Killua shot back a mischievous smirk. “Finally they left you alone!” Kurapika felt a crazed laugh bubble up his throat, it was happening! He was getting out of this clown show!

“You have to get the shackle off of me as soon as we get up! It releases with nen and it blocks mine!” Kurapika shouted holding Killua closer as he hung off his back.

“Got it!” Gon yelled down at the omegas.

Kurapika couldn’t even begin to describe the feeling of relief he felt that the pair had shown up. He wanted to tell them what they’d just saved him from but now wasn’t the time, they could talk once they were safe. Kurapika mentally admitted that he’d have to go underground for a while, considering the troupe leader might chase after him. Not to mention the entire criminal underworld probably had his picture now. Looks like he couldn’t go back to being a bodyguard either.
Gon watched his friends ascend anxiously, they had planned for the troupe leader to chase after them but not this soon! They needed to go and quick.

Gon continued to pull at the rope, his friends almost up. He opened his mouth to tell them to climb faster when he felt a knife press against his throat.

“Don’t move,” a dark, angry voice hissed in his ear. Gon would normally turn to fight but he couldn’t while holding his friends’ lifeline. “Remain silent and continue to pull them up and no one gets hurt,” the voice directed smoothly.

Gon gulped, wanting so badly to yell for Killua to jump, to take Kurapika and get the hell away from this murderer but he didn’t. He’d probably never forgive himself for that. The look of utter defeat and fear on Kurapika’s face when him and Killua reached the cliff edge broke his heart.

They had failed him once again.
Triumphant. That was how Chrollo felt when he recognized the young alpha boy that was attempting to take Kurapika from him as well as the silver haired omega. This exact pair were the ones that Kurapika had surrendered himself in order to save. He had come willing to die to save them, then traded himself, revealing he was an omega in order to secure their release.

If Kurapika had been willing to face an uncertain future with a random, possibly abusive alpha to save these boys, he should be willing to mate him in return for their release.

But as Chrollo turned his dark eyes to Kurapika, ready to suggest this ultimatum, he saw something he didn’t like at all: fear. Hurt. Fine things to instill in an enemy, but the one he wished to mate?

Taking a deep breath, the troupe leader considered his thoughts on why Kurapika had rejected him with a new light: fear. Chrollo had been ready to sell him up until the moment he had ordered the auction to be cancelled, a cancellation that Kurapika hadn’t been aware of. He had been terrified that Chrollo had been trying to get into his pants the entire evening and given how shy the boy was… Mating meant sex.

He had unintentionally scared Kurapika with sex! Adding to the problem was his talk of babies and baby proofing his house, and babies were made through sex!

Perhaps it was too soon after a tense week for Kurapika to consider mating. He needed to learn that Chrollo wouldn’t hurt him, to get used to his presence and not feel threatened.

“It seems we have an impasse,” Chrollo stated quietly as he glanced at the pair of omegas by the cliff, careful to keep his poisoned knife against the throat of the young alpha but to not nick him.

“I’ll go with you if you let him go,” Kurapika offered but Chrollo shook his head slightly.

“Into the base. We’ll discuss the conditions of their release.”

The omegas hesitated for a long moment before Kurapika had touched the silver haired omega’s shoulder and directed him to move. They followed Chrollo’s directions to the entrance of the base and the troupe leader hadn’t bothered to lock the door, none of them would be staying long if he had any say in this.

Kurapika was a bit confused when he and Killua were directed to the training room, and then Chrollo ordered Killua into the room and shoved Gon in as well, pulling the doors shut before his book appeared and a seal of sorts appeared on the door.

“Don’t bother trying to open the door,” the troupe leader yelled in to the boys. “That seal will explode if it’s disturbed or broken.”

Kurapika stared at him with wide eyes as Chrollo shifted and nodded back to the lounge area of the base, both of them moving to the cold room quietly in the dark.

Several candles were placed in the room, still burning when Chrollo stopped and Kurapika turned to face him, the slight tremor in his limbs could either be from cold, fear, or both.

Kurapika had stared at the dark alpha for a moment, his dark eyes inscrutable. Licking his lips, he
decided to go ahead with this negotiation. “I said I’d go with you again if you would let them go.”

“You will be coming anyway, that was the previous condition for their release,” Chrollo replied shortly. “A new condition must be made for their release this time, especially since they were attempting to steal you away.”

Kurapika almost shivered as he tried to think of what he had that Chrollo could want. He had his earring already, it had never been returned. So what did he have to offer? Or rather, what could he accept… The image of that black collar entered his mind and Kurapika shivered.

“Luckily, I already have an idea,” Chrollo continued, shocking Kurapika from his thoughts, terrifying him with what he might be about to ask for. “Perhaps it is too soon to request to mate. Instead, I wish for you to sleep with me from now on.”

Kurapika took a step back, terrified and disbelieving that the man could ask for such a thing. He hadn’t raped Kurapika when he was in heat… Had he been wrong about the man having some sort of honor?!

Chrollo saw the terror and raised a hand to catch Kurapika’s arm before he could stumble. “It will not involve sex. This will simply be you sleeping beside me in my bedroll from now on.”

Kurapika stared at the alpha, his grey eyes searching for a lie of some sort, some form of deceit. Instead, the black eyes of the troupe leader seemed completely honest. “What will happen to the boys if I agree?”

“I will release the seal in a day, once we are well on our way to another base. The door will be left open so they can leave.”

Kurapika hunched his shoulders slightly as he thought. This wouldn’t change his circumstance very much, just require that he sleep beside the murderer of his clan. Technically, he’d been doing that since the day he’d been taken captive.

“Fine.”

The smile on the troupe leader’s face was bright in the dark as he moved past Kurapika toward the bedroom that the alphas had occupied during their last visit to the base. “I’ll grab my pack. I would suggest you use the bathroom since we won’t be stopping for a while.”

Kurapika moved silently, head slightly down as he headed for the bathroom since truth be told, he did in fact need to go.

Chrollo must not have unpacked since he was already waiting for him back in the lounge. His book was still out and Kurapika glanced automatically towards the hallway. The alpha noticed because he glanced in that direction as well.

“You may tell the boys to wait for the seal to fade, and goodbye,” Chrollo stated after a moment and Kurapika almost ran back to the door, careful to not touch it.

“Gon? Killua?” he called automatically and smiled faintly when he heard shuffling, an impact, and Gon yelling at Killua. “Don’t try to open the door, that man doesn’t bluff and you’ll likely get hurt or killed if you do.”

“I can tell,” Killua’s voice snapped. “Probably have to remind Gon of that every ten minutes.”

“The seal will disappear in about a day and you’ll be able to leave. Can you see it in there?”
“Yeah, it’s rather prominent.”

“Kurapika,” Gon’s voice called. “I’m sorry! I should have yelled for the two of you to run!”

“Even if we had you would have been killed, we would have been pursued, and Killua either captured or killed. Neither of us would be able to forgive ourselves if you were killed. Both of you take care of yourselves, do you hear me? And don’t do something dangerous like ask Hisoka for help!”

A snort was issued and nervous laughter rose on the other side of the door.

“Take care of yourselves, and Leorio,” Kurapika ordered.

“We will,” Gon promised, and Kurapika could almost hear the boy promising to try to save him again.

“Goodbye…” This last word was whispered as Kurapika turned and headed down the hall, surprised when he found that Chrollo wasn’t standing at the end of the hall or even in the lounge. Instead he had moved to near the exit, actually giving Kurapika some semblance of privacy.

The Kuruta was surprised when Chrollo didn’t attempt to wrap him into that dastardly sack cloth straight away and indicated towards the car, having him sit in the passenger seat.

It surprised him the moment that Chrollo started the car and the radio snapped on to a station that played love songs. Just how out of his mind was the troupe leader?! More importantly, the man didn’t change the station.

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Shalnark stared at his phone in mild surprise before glancing at the rest of the troupe who were packing up to leave. “Oi! Danchou just called and said that we won’t be meeting at the #6 base after all. We’re going to base #13!”

Pakunoda’s eyebrows rose as the rest of the troupe muttered, wondering what this could mean.

“Did he say why?” the mind reader asked, voicing the question they all had.

The blonde shook his head then shrugged. “He really didn’t say anything other than to not go to base #6.”

Shizuku looked thoughtful for a long moment. “It’s not messy, is it?”

Several of the group looked confused before a few snorts and laughs rose from some of the more crass members. The notable exception was Nobunaga whose stormy expression was darker than any other in the group.

Kortopi already had his pack together and approached Paku as she lifted her own. “What was the collar like?”

“Haven’t seen it… Is something wrong Bono?” the woman asked when she saw the man’s limbs go stiff.

“I doubt a collar would be pleasing to an omega that pretended to be a beta.”

Machi glanced over at Bono as she realized the truth to his words. Heaven knew, she’d be rather displeased if she were offered a collar, but Kurapika was an omega and should have expected such
The seamstress’s pack was lifted from the floor in that moment and she glanced up to see Uvo hefting it. It wasn’t heavy in her opinion, but the Enhancer barely seemed to notice the weight.

“Want to travel together?” he asked before offering her the pack.

The pink haired beta stared at the pack for a moment before shrugging and reaching to accept the pack. “Sure.”

The drive was a long one away from the coast and over the countryside. Kurapika watched the passing landscape with longing eyes, having missed simple things such as music or watching the changing landscape while traveling.

Chrollo was silent for most of the first few hours and at some point, Kurapika found himself nodding off. When he woke, he found that the car was still in motion and the dawn was breaking. The coast was far behind them now and before them rose a number of mountains.

The troupe leader must have stopped at some point shortly before Kurapika awoke because the tank indicated that it was full and there was hot coffee for both of them as well as bagels waiting.

Having not been allowed even coffee during his imprisonment thus far, Kurapika stared at the fragrant cups longingly before Chrollo handed him one of the foam cups.

“I didn’t know if you liked cream or sugar, so it’s just black right now. Cream and sugar are in the bag, as well as cream cheese for the bagels.”

Kurapika accepted the warm beverage gratefully then searched through the bag and added a bit of cream. He usually preferred milk but this was more than he had initially hoped for.

“So what is your favorite type of flower?”

Kurapika almost choked on his first sip of coffee.

“Or should I just bring random flowers until I figure it out?”

That brought an image of the troupe leader showering him in bouquets of random flowers to mind. Disturbing under normal circumstances, terrifying with the one Kurapika now faced.

“I don’t know,” he finally admitted after a moment of thought, deciding that not answering was worse. “Haven’t had much time to think of flowers.” This statement was a bit of a jab to remind the alpha for their history, but he seemed to shrug it off.

“I can’t say I have a favorite,” Chrollo admitted in turn. “Flowers are nice to give, colorful and pretty, but not much use.”

“They have plenty of use! They are used to give messages, to make medicines and teas! Flowers are what many fruits and vegetables start as!”

“Messages?” the thief asked as he glanced at Kurapika. “Can’t say I knew that, I mean that I knew about roses standing for ‘love’, but others do as well?”

“Yes, for instance a red carnation means love as well while a tansy is a statement of war.”
Chrollo issued a bark of laughter as he absorbed this information. Knowing things like this would give something as simple as a flower a new meaning and light.

“Perhaps I should send a bouquet of tansies to Hisoka for when we next meet!” he finally declared.

“Throw in some basil.”

Now Chrollo’s eyebrows drew together. “Does he not like basil?”

“It means ‘hate’. How come you don’t know this?”

Chrollo hummed for a moment as he considered how to answer. If he wanted to win Kurapika over as his mate, part of this was going to be understanding, and he wasn’t ashamed of his background.

“Meteor City doesn’t have flowers. If it wasn’t something that could be used to survive, then it was ignored.”

Kurapika huffed as he stared out at the rapidly approaching mountains. It was mid-October already and he could see snow near the peaks. It had to be chilly outside of the car. He honestly wasn’t surprised about the short description of the city of garbage. “Why would you want to have a child there?”

“I don’t.” The answer was short and to the point. “Even children are considered disposable there if they don’t work. The only opportunities for leaving lie through the mafia.”

Most of the drive was silent after that as Kurapika considered that bit of information. Unfortunately, it did make it easier to understand the troupe in part. They had no identities, no possibilities other than becoming criminals. It still didn’t excuse their actions, not by a long shot.

The drive into the mountains was beautiful and Kurapika had stared in awe of the peaks that rose around them as Chrollo followed a number of roads that he seemed to know from memory. They passed several small towns, the largest of which had a single supermarket and bookstore, before turning onto a road that didn’t seem to see much of any form of traffic.

Having only been in underground bases thus far, Kurapika almost felt hopeful when a large old building rose in front of them. It looked like it had once been grand and that someone, or a group of people, had partially fixed the place up. A number of windows had glass while others were boarded up. There was some obvious work on the the roof, but it looked like the person was skillful.

When the car stopped, Chrollo was quick to open the door and the blast of cold air from outside froze Kurapika.

“Stay in here. I’m going to check the building and get the generator started. It’ll be chilly, but we’ve got some firewood on the side.”

Kurapika just nodded as he rubbed his arms which felt frozen already. His few clothes were not meant for this cold weather.

Chrollo was gone for ten minutes, during which the car began to cool and Kurapika wished the man had left the engine running or that he knew how to hotwire a car. Of course the man was too smart to do the first thing and Kurapika hadn’t thought he’d ever need or want to do the second. When the alpha returned, he had grabbed the pack from the trunk of the car and been quick to pull out a blanket which he draped over Kurapika as he walked him to the door of the hideout.
The interior was better than Kurapika could have hoped for since it only had a light film of dust. The floor itself seemed clean and that continued to the bedroom that the troupe leader guided him to. Cold air pervaded the entire area and Kurapika stared at the fireplace where a few pieces of wood were already stacked and a bin sat beside it, already filled with more wood.

It took over an hour for the room to warm up but even then Kurapika didn’t put down the blanket, just grabbed his jacket and put it on under the blanket. Chrollo set out his bedroll and Kurapika glanced around, uncertain of what to do. He finally decided to just clean the dust and had moved through the room, lobby, and dining room, cleaning the dust from the few tables and surfaces that were present before entering the kitchen. This was the only room he had seen that didn’t have a fireplace and he was pleasantly surprised to find the place clean.

“Why all the fireplaces?” Kurapika asked when he returned to the room to find that Chrollo had pulled out a can of soup and was warming it in a collapsible pot from a mess kit.

“The generator doesn’t run the heat, it would draw too much power,” Chrollo replied. “This is a large base and even cooking occurs on fires most of the time.”

Kurapika groaned. He’d never cooked over a fire but he knew it would take a lot of time.

“Would you grab us some bowls from the kitchen?” Chrollo asked as he checked the soup and Kurapika left, eager to have something warm to eat. It was well into the evening now and dark outside and the only thing Kurapika had had all day was a few bites of a bagel and the coffee.

The soup tasted different to Kurapika even though he recognized the brand and type. It tasted old and too salty now… Chrollo laughed when he picked up the can and checked the date.

“You’ve gotten used to eating fresh food,” the man explained in response to the glare Kurapika shot at him. “I did the same thing the first time I ate from a can again after eating fresh the first time I left Meteor City.”

The dishes were done fast and then Kurapika was surprised when Chrollo gave him his choice of books to read for a few hours. He had hunted through the books until he found one that looked as though it hadn’t been opened in a while and sat in front of the fire for several comfortable hours, ignoring the way the troupe leader’s shoulder rubbed his own when he turned a page in his own book.

Too soon came the moment that Kurapika had dreaded: Chrollo set a bookmark in his book and handed one to Kurapika as well before taking the book from his hands. He then moved to where his bedroll had been set out and was waiting before glancing at Kurapika.

The blonde shook as he climbed to his feet as well and moved towards the mound of cushion and blankets while the alpha settled into the ‘bed’ and moved to make sure there was space for Kurapika.

The moment that Kurapika took his bare feet off the floor and he settled onto the bedroll beside the man was both a relief and the moment his stomach fell away. It was cold this far from the fire and the bedroll was cold as well. As he slipped under the blanket that Chrollo held up for him, Kurapika found himself unconsciously moving closer to the alpha.

Chrollo smiled faintly as the omega settled next to him and spread the blanket over both of them. He had chosen this base specifically because he knew it would be cold, giving him ample opportunity to be intimate without it being alarming.
It was several hours before dawn when Phinks and Feitan arrived at the base and entered in companionable silence. Their dynamic had shifted a bit before the omega’s heat, when Kurapika had drawn the alpha’s attention to the short beta.

Feitan had noticed the change right away as the man he’d watched and pined for silently shifted from just friendly to considering him. Kurapika and danchou mentioning it had been both horrifying and a godsend.

There was no sign of the pair currently and the torturer snuck silently to the door of the room their leader had claimed in this base. Turning the knob slowly, he glanced into the room that was only lit by the last embers of a fire.

The bedroll was farther away from the fire than was necessary and in the dim light, his eyes found the pair. The omega was snuggled into his boss’s chest, head tucked under his chin while the alpha… Was staring straight at him, of course.

Feitan offered a nod as he sensed a presence behind him, Phinks, before shutting the door. The blonde alpha had a lopsided grin on his face having apparently seen the pair. It seemed things had gone well.

“Want to get a few hours of sleep?” Phinks whispered quietly and Feitan considered it for a moment before shaking his head. They had a few hours to themselves at the moment and Feitan felt he had better things to do than sleep.

“Coffee,” the beta replied before heading down the hall to the lobby.

“Good idea,” the Enhancer admitted then checked the crate for wood. “I’ll go grab some wood. You can start making the preparations?”

“Preparations?”

“You know, if we make coffee then maybe we should make breakfast also. Give the new couple a nice breakfast as well as everyone else when they get here.”

Feitan shrugged but moved to the fireplace where he began setting up the iron hooks to hold the pots and the grill.

Phinks returned in two minutes with the first armful of wood which he set in the crate before heading back out into the cold to grab another load. He returned with a light dusting of snow on his shoulders.

“Get ready to hear some complaints when the others arrive!” the blonde stated quietly with a wolfish grin.

“Praised for coffee,” Feitan pointed out, causing Phinks to snort.

“They’ll probably just be happy to get out of the snow.”

The pair worked quietly and with a long familiarity as they set up the pots and set the wood for the fire. The fire itself was started by Feitan after Phinks gave him a firm yet playful flick to the forehead, bringing the logs to an almost instantaneous blaze that flooded the room with warmth.

An hour slipped by comfortably for the pair and they were sipping hot coffee when the door burst
open and a very white Nobunaga stumbled into the lobby. He was followed by Kortopi and Shizuku who quickly shut the door.

“Early snow,” she told them brightly before pulling off her glasses to clean the frozen water off of them.

Nobunaga on the other hand, zeroed in on the coffee and grabbed the pot and a mug noisily. “Lifesavers,” he admitted to his friends as he set the pot back on the hook then narrowed his eyes when the alpha-beta pair made shushing noises and motions. “What? Where’s danchou?”

“Probably still asleep. He and Kurapika were curled up on his bedroll when we arrived,” Phinks explained and was promptly elbowed by Feitan as the samurai groaned loudly.

The topknot alpha set down his mug roughly as Shizuku smiled brightly.

“Oh, did danchou take a mate?” she asked in an oblivious tone, apparently having forgotten about the omega at some point.

Given the way that Kortopi glanced at the girl, the first pair to arrive suspected that Nobunaga had been complaining loudly about Kurapika throughout the trip.

“Can’t believe he went through with it, especially with what we went through when that hellion was in heat!”

“Did something happen?” Shizuku asked and Feitan exchanged a look with Phinks.

“Must be nice to forget,” the black haired beta stated, earning nods from Kortopi and Phinks. “Loan danchou Nobunaga’s robe for next heat when he needs break.”

“Oh no he won’t!” Nobunaga yelled as he stomped down the hall towards the bedrooms. “Danchou did this to himself and he can deal… AUGH!”

All heads snapped around to find that Nobunaga had opened the wrong door and was staring into Chrollo’s room and had apparently gotten an eyeful of something he found upsetting.

In response, an ominous wave of irritated, dominant pheromones blasted through the air as the door opened to allow Bono and Shalnark to enter. Franklin and Pakunoda blinked in at them from behind the pair as Shalnark noticed exactly where Nobunaga was standing as an irritated Chrollo appeared in the door and slammed it shut again.

There was some movement and noise behind the door then the door opened and Chrollo stepped into the hall and brushed past Nobunaga towards the lobby.

Nobunaga continued to blink at the door looking dumbfounded as Pakunoda and Franklin finally entered the ‘base’ and the door was once again shut.

“Does anyone have a spare coat? I forgot that Kurapika doesn’t have one,” Chrollo asked as he moved to collect the coffee pot and poured a mug of the hot liquid which he passed to Paku then another, this one going to Franklin. The third he kept for himself since Shalnark grabbed the pot.

“I might,” Shalnark admitted then grinned brightly at Chrollo. “So how’d the marking and mating go? What’s the collar like?”

“It didn’t happen.”
The entire troupe that were present minus Nobunaga froze, surprised.

“It seems Kurapika isn’t ready and I wasn’t mindful of the situation. I completely forgot to tell him about cancelling the auction and he thought I was just trying to get into his pants at first. He’s also still quite shy and like a tactless fool, I blundered in my proposal by talking about children and sex. Kurapika was both shocked and terrified.”

Half of the people present were gaping in shock that their unflappable leader had managed to make such a blunder. He had always seemed so calm and composed…

“You two were just cuddling!” Nobunaga declared, finally unfreezing from his spot and stomping back to the lobby.

“We’re sleeping together, getting to know each other. I’ll propose again when he is ready.”

The shock continued for several minutes as Chrollo drank his coffee then filled a second mug and took it back to his room. He entered and returned a minute later as the troupe finally realized he was in fact quite serious. Chrollo and Kurapika weren’t mated, yet.

Pakunoda was the first to break the silence. “I believe we can help with getting him ready,” she stated. “There are some things that we each can work with him on. I actually want to go into advanced childcare with him.”

Franklin sat down heavily. “More cooking.”

“Going to kidnap another chef?” Shalnark asked brightly. “I’ll help you find one, just don’t cause another fiasco like that ravioli night, alright? We had homeless people showing up for days after Uvo and Phinks set out the leftovers.”

“We didn’t intend for that to happen!” Phinks argued.

“You set the food out on a table in the street with paper plates!”

“How else were we going to get rid of it? Throw it in the trash?”

Even Shalnark made a face. None of them felt right with throwing out anything that could be useful out, especially food.

“We can discuss this further later,” Chrollo stated, ending the conversation and the group began to move about the lobby, several of them moving towards their rooms. Shalnark carried his pack back to his room and returned several minutes later, a white coat in hand.

Chrollo accepted the garment and walked back to his room, Kurapika exiting with him as Feitan began cracking eggs into the cups of an iron muffin pan.
Kurapika felt odd not being made to immediately start up breakfast when he woke. It was even worse now that he knew the troupe didn’t plan on selling him anymore.

The last night Kurapika was pained to say that he had slept great, for the first time in a long time he had been warm and comfortable. Which made waking up to find his legs tangled with the troupe leader’s and his face buried in his chest all the more horrifying.

The small beta and blonde alpha seemed to be getting along great at least, he had even been offered a friendly nod from the smaller man when he’d entered the large lounge of the abandoned hotel.

Kurapika wasn’t made to sit by an alpha while the blonde beta woman and the troupe leader spoke quietly in the corner and he’d been able to simply dive into the book he had started the night before. A few times an odd member or two would try and start up a conversation with him but he’d been determined to ignore them.

Another change was the chain: the shackle was still on of course but the chain that normally dragged behind him hadn’t made a reappearance as of yet.

“Breakfast!” The small beta called as he pulled a few things from an oven that obviously hadn’t been there when they’d taken over the place.

Kurapika managed to briefly wonder where the she-demon and Uvogin were, it was early morning and the two of them still hadn’t arrived. Putting down his book, Kurapika watched the troupe begin to collect their share of breakfast. Again he wondered where exactly he stood in the troupe now, it was obvious that the troupe didn’t think highly of omegas. So was he at the back of the line? Or was he behind the troupe leader in the line for food?

If the troupe thought of him as their leader’s future mate there was a number of ways this could play out just basing his thoughts around the different stereotypes of his gender.

“Here you go!” Kurapika looked up a little embarrassed since he had gotten rather lost in thought to realize that the troupe leader was standing in front of him holding out an old and partially broken plate. On the plate seemed to be three strips of bacon, four egg muffin looking things, and two pieces of buttered toast. All in all, it was more than double what he normally got.
Kurapika tentatively accepted the food with a bland, “Thank you,” before digging in. He was almost halfway through the large meal when troupe members began to talk to him again.

“Did you get enough, Kurapika?” The scarred beta asked.

“There more leftover, eat more!” The small beta called from the fireplace in response to the scarred one’s question.

“You need to eat more after your heat, keep that in mind alright?” The mated alpha told him as he placed another egg muffin on his only half empty plate.

Kurapika looked around with wide eyes when the troupe went back to conversing with each other. What the hell is that all about?

Chrollo couldn’t help the happy purr as he settled by Kurapika again, seeing his spiders looking out for his future mate’s best interests made him practically float in happiness. A few of the troupe began discussing what they’d make for dinner and he felt pride swirl in his chest when they asked the omega what he’d like.

“Umm . . . I guess it’s kinda soup weather?” Kurapika offered up shyly. Shalnark and Phinks agreed while Nobunaga continued his pouting in the corner. “I actually know a recipe,” Kurapika finished and the room went silent.

Everyone was happy the boy was willing to cook, he’d actually gotten rather good at it, but you could practically taste the fear in the air. They all remembered Kurapika’s attempts when he worked without a recipe.

This could not turn out well.

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Machi had been convinced by Uvogin to get a train ticket instead of simply stealing a car or walking to the base.
Like herself, he didn’t seem in a hurry to get to the base and get his heart ripped out. She’d never admit it out loud but they’d actually been having fun. They’d secretly stolen the entire first class cabins’ things, hijacked more alcohol then what was probably necessary, and gotten very drunk in the private box car they had threatened someone out of.

They’d laughed through the night and excluding Chrollo, she now knew more about Uvogin than she did about any of the other troupe members. She’d always admired his strength of mind, how he could fight better when protecting someone and it made her smile a bit that she was on that short list of people he would protect to the death.

He’d never admit it but she could tell, it didn’t hurt that she enjoyed his easy charm and happy attitude, it made it easy to just be her own quiet self. Most probably wouldn’t notice how smart he was either, he always found the most roundabout ways around his problems. Like who thinks of screaming to kill an opponent?

Uvogin in turn had also been having a surprisingly good time with Machi. She didn’t talk a lot but when she had something to say, she didn’t hold back. Even compared to Chrollo, she was a genius but she never bragged. He liked how confidently she moved through life. She didn’t question her own decisions and she trusted her gut feelings which Uvogin felt was admirable. She had never let the world beat her down.

It was early morning when the train stopped at the last stop before the town they were aiming for. The train would be stopped for awhile.

“Want to go into town with me?” Machi asked suddenly. Unknown to her, she played a bit with her hair as she waited for his reply. “I realized Chrollo probably didn’t think to get Kurapika a coat, so I might as well make something for him,” she explained after a minute.

“Yeah, why not?” Uvogin grinned as he stood and brushed off his clothes. He automatically put out a hand to help the woman up and she took it without thinking.

“Then let’s find a fabric shop,” Machi had a small smile on her normally blank face.

“We have a few hours, we could also get somethin’ to eat?” Uvogin suggested feeling strangely content to just walk next to the other. She was also hurting and together they might just be fine. Friends, dare he say family, needs to do things like that for each other.
Machi and him walked through the town and found a small diner. Uvogin managed to make the seamstress laugh a total of four times! He was rather proud of it honestly, she was cute when she laughed. She got a little crinkle on her nose and her laugh was almost silent, but it was just a little breathtaking.

Following her through the fabric store was also incredibly fun.

Machi liked the giant following her through the store as well, everyone moved out of the way for her when they saw the man coming and he got the fabric on the top shelves for her.

They got a few bolts of white, gold, and a light blue and Machi mentally formed the jacket she’d craft for her boss and best friend’s mate. She grabbed one last bolt of grey fur that was only a little darker than the fur in Chrollo’s own coat.

“When does the train leave?” Machi asked with a mischievous look in her eyes.

“Bout’ ten minutes,” Uvogin confirmed as he looked up at the clock in the fabric store.

“I guess we’d better run!” She yelled a little playfully as she suddenly bolted for the door with half the fabric. Uvogin laughed loudly as he followed her out without paying.

“I’m telling you, you can’t put orange zest in the pot!”

“And I’m telling you to butt out of my family recipe! Now hand me the celery seed before I kick you!”

Uvogin received a raised brow from Machi when they heard whatever disaster was unfolding. He gave her a shrug and reached around her to open the door as he balanced the pack of clothes she had managed to make for Kurapika.
The scene they found was an angry Kuruta guarding a boiling pot of yellow liquid. Franklin looked to be nearing a panic attack as he watched the omega throw seemingly random ingredients in the pot along with a whole raw chicken.

Nobu looked up when the two arrived, it was only a few hours before dinner and he’d been getting a little worried when the giant still hadn’t shown up.

“Uvo! Where you been?” He shouted as a few of the terrified troupe turned to see his and Machi’s arrival. “You gotta hear this the omega rejected danchou!” A few of the spiders gave Nobunaga a withering look, including Chrollo who didn’t like the way Kurapika’s shoulders hunched at the comment.

Machi bristled a bit but didn’t seem too surprised as she stared at the back of the boy who tried to focus on whatever he was making that was scaring the troupe so badly.

Kurapika didn’t know what everyone’s problem was, the chicken soup was probably the only thing he could claim to know how to cook. His mom had made sure he could many times over. The only one that didn’t seem worried was the blond woman that he knew had snooped into his memories.

It might be weird, even a little twisted to make the soup for the people that killed his people, but he always made this soup when he didn’t know what else to do. He really needed a taste of home right now.

Kurapika turned to see that Uvogin and the she-demon had arrived, a little happy to see him as he was getting concerned since the others were as well.

Uvogin kicked the door shut, trying to process the information just blurted out. Kurapika had rejected Chrollo? That was . . . Not what he was expecting.

“You have to peel the potatoes!”

“Seriously, I don’t need your advice on this one!” Uvogin watched as Kurapika went about with determination to ignore the conversation. Aside from a small glance, he hadn’t said anything in the way of hello. His eyes took in the pale unmarked skin of his neck and just felt numb about it all.

“Youvogin, will you help me carry this to my room?” Machi offered through the awkward silence,
saving Uvogin from having to say anything.

“Ya. . . Yes,” he agreed as the woman moved past him, giving Chrollo a nod as she walked.

Chrollo watched his two late spiders move through the base thoughtfully. Something had changed between them but he didn’t have time to dwell on it because Franklin looked ready to fight for ownership of the large pot Kurapika was throwing random ingredients into.

“I need Worchester sauce,” Kurapika suddenly spoke up and Franklin grabbed his chest like he was about to have a heart attack.

“That isn’t how your mother made it,” Pakunoda commented as she moved to get the sauce, something the rest of the troupe wished she’d stop doing. She had been helping the omega get ingredients with a poker face no one could read.

Chrollo felt curious about the situation. Pakunoda didn’t do things like this without reason, so he had decided to wait and see what happened.

“It’s part of the tradition. When the recipe is passed down to you, you add something new. I just added random things until I found one I liked,” Kurapika explained without really thinking about it. Too focused on making the soup right so he could get what he so desperately needed.

Pakunoda nodded, she already knew that but unlike the rest of the troupe, she understood that the omega boy wasn’t going to offer up information about himself.

Chrollo absorbed the information with a hum, even if the soup ended up a disaster he’d eat every last drop if it really meant so much to Kurapika.

Shalnark, Phinks and Feitan looked ready to jump from their seats and run into town to get dinner but Chrollo pinned them down with a heavy look. They would not insult Kurapika by refusing his food!

Kurapika put a lid on the pot. “Someone set a timer for an hour.” He watched as Chrollo automatically took out his phone and set a timer. “Okay, now I just let it boil for an hour then add the vegetables and cook it for another hour.” Kurapika moved away from the pot with a whispered threat to Franklin to not mess with his soup.
“No one will touch it,” Chrollo ordered softly when the troupe continued to stare at the pot like it meant certain death.

Kurapika didn’t look back at him but he noticed the boy’s shoulders hunch a little higher, Chrollo assured himself Kurapika would become more comfortable around him in time. For now, Pakunoda had a wonderful idea and he was ready to let her institute it.

“Pakunoda, you may commence with your lesson.”

Kurapika turned to look at the troupe leader then, anxious on what this lesson could be. His eyes found the blond beta and he narrowed his eyes trying to pick apart what her ploy was. Like the rest of the troupe, she had been rather pleasant and helpful. These spiders were tricky things so he had to remember through the fake kindness exactly what they were.

“Thank you danchou,” Pakunoda gave a nod to Chrollo and looked to the boy. “Follow me.”

Kurapika had little choice but to follow the woman to her private room. The beta didn’t say what she was doing as she grabbed a large plastic bag with some obscure store name on the front. Kurapika didn’t get a good look at it, but he felt his world sway a bit when she revealed the contents of the bag.

“This will be your baby for as long as I deem.” Kurapika’s arms were suddenly full of plastic fake baby. Kurapika didn’t think it could get any worse.

And then it started screaming.

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“Shut that thing up!”

“Are you even trying?”
“Dear god, it's awful!”

The plastic baby was screaming its constant high pitched wail and Kurapika was trying to strip the chicken of its meat one handed. He felt his eye twitch as the troupe refused to even hold the thing while he tried to finish up dinner.

Kurapika felt a growl rise in his throat as he hoisted the thing higher on his shoulder and patted its back. The fake baby needed to be burped and it was considerably harder than a real baby, only a few minutes into it he had started striking it with all his strength.

That of course was stopped with a shake of the head from the blonde. Now he was trying to strip the chicken and pat the fake baby on the back as it cried right in his ear.

After a few too strong hits to the back it finally shut the hell up and the entire room breathed a sigh of relief.

Kurapika set the stupid thing on the counter, making sure its head didn’t fall back so it didn’t start crying again. Finally he could finish getting the chicken back into the pot!

The troupe stared at him with concern as he moved around the hot edge of the pot, melting the baby’s plastic legs a bit as he worked. What the hell is their problem anyway? He shut it up!

Uvogin watched the omega work a bit wide eyed, the omega had said he’d worked with children before, right? From the looks of it, if they don’t do something then danchou and Kurapika’s kids were either going to be killed or kidnapped before they turn one! Obviously Kurapika was going to have to protect his young more often with Chrollo Lucifer as his mate: any child of his is going to be a target!

Uvogin needed to talk to danchou about some intense child protection training, and it wouldn’t be too soon he decided as everyone winced when Kurapika accidentally splashed some of the hot liquid onto the baby doll.

Chrollo was pleasantly surprised at the smell of the soup so far, it definitely wasn’t bad but he felt a growing concern for Kurapika’s lack of care about the plastic baby Pakunoda had bought for him.
Uvogin gave him a look like he had a plan and Chrollo nodded in confirmation, they would talk after dinner.

Kurapika finished up shredding the chicken and grabbed a spoon to take a sip and he nodded. It had always eluded him how to get his soup to taste like his mother’s and now that he knew how important salt was it was closer than he’d ever come before.

As soon as he had the pot back over the fire, vegetables and chicken simmering, Kurapika turned to grab up the fake baby and stomped his way over to the troupe leader.

“Set another timer for an hour and then we can eat it.” Kurapika sighed as he took his place by the troupe leader, the fake baby cradled in his arm. He picked up his book one handed and settled back with a sigh.

And of course the baby began to cry again.

“Oh damn!” Kurapika cursed as he dropped his book and tried to figure out what was wrong with the stupid thing now. The bespectacled beta looked at him curiously as he looked around for the cheap care bag the baby had come with.

She seemed to understand what he wanted and grabbed up the pink bag to hand to him.

“What’s her name?” she suddenly asked and Kurapika looked at her curiously. What? “She doesn’t look like danchou, but she’s cute.” The girl nodded to herself before walking away. Kurapika felt his jaw drop a little, she seriously forgot that it was fake?

“Oh...?” Kurapika muttered as the rest of the troupe seemed to ignore it like it was normal. He tried the bottle first but the fake baby wasn’t hungry. Since it had already been burped just recently, he grabbed up the second diaper it came with by the sensor and just passed it by the sensor on the back of the baby doll. The stupid thing quieted down again and he finally settled back, pleased.

A few troupe members looked between themselves with a worried look as the general consensus was that danchou was in trouble in the future.

Kurapika settled in to wait for his soup to be done and got lost in his book for awhile. It was cold so he tried not to think about curling close to the troupe leader for warmth.
It didn’t mean anything.

Kurapika couldn’t help the tight ball of anxiety in his chest, he hated his omega instincts as his whole body felt tight from the realistic wails of the fake baby reverberating in his ears.

The time clicked by and the mood seemed to lighten as the all of the soup’s components began to fully come together and the troupe took notice. Franklin still looked at the pot with the same foreboding he had when Kurapika had started the project. Still they looked at the pot with suspicion, despite the nice smell.

Kurapika was incredibly excited for the soup to be done, so much so that when the alarm went off he leaped from the couch. He borderline tossed the baby doll onto a small bundle of blankets, wincing a bit but sighing in relief when it didn’t start wailing. The blonde then slipped on some oven mitts and quickly carried over the pot to the counter.

The lid was off soon after, steam wafting out and the comforting scent of spiced chicken, cooked carrots, and celery filled the room with its brothy, buttery magic. Kurapika breathed it in deeply, feeling his chest loosen a bit as he breathed out.

“Soup’s done.” Kurapika actually smiled at the thought of sipping at that broth, he looked into it a little absently, watching the herbs he now knew the names of float at the top. Rosemary, thyme, and sage. When he took in the soup’s full body smell he could almost remember his family's faces clearly again.

Chrollo got up immediately, the soup smelled divine but he could understand everyone’s hesitance to get in line for dinner. No one had forgotten the dreaded morning of sweetened eggs or the hellfire that was stuffed peppers.

Kurapika jumped a bit when he bumped his shoulder and silently offered the boy a bowl. Chrollo appraised the bowls, they were a bit cracked and old. Most probably everyone would use their own mess kits tonight to avoid the old glass bowls, maybe he should get Kurapika his own mess kit?

“Oh thanks,” Kurapika basically spat out the words and took the bowl. The troupe watched with dread as Kurapika took the ladle and poured Chrollo a generous helping of the soup. Strips of chicken fell over the sides of the bowl a bit.
“He isn’t really going to, right?” Nobunaga whispered, horrified as Chrollo grabbed a spoon and moved back to his spot with determination to enjoy his omega’s family recipe.

Franklin watched his danchou but still refused to get up, there was no way that soup was edible, meaning the omega had wasted a perfectly good chicken. No he wouldn’t eat the soup, not until Machi deemed it safe, and he didn’t think his danchou would eithe-

Chrollo brought the spoon to his mouth as everyone’s jaws dropped as he slipped the steaming utensil into his mouth and chewed the chicken and vegetables with vigor.

Chrollo eyes slipped closed as the flavor hit him fully, the chicken wasn’t overbearing despite the chicken broth he had used. The unpeeled potatoes brought a soft texture that made the flavorful flesh of the vegetables pop in a way he hadn’t experienced before, carrots and celery accompanied it all perfectly. Wrapping up the taste into the full package. You couldn’t even taste the orange!

“Mmhmm,” Chrollo hummed and took another bite. “Kurapika this is delicious!” he called to the boy as he sat back down with his own bowl.

The troupe looked between each other cautiously. Surely their danchou wasn’t so far behind rose-colored glasses that his taste buds didn’t work anymore, right? A few took their cues and began to move to the pot to grab a bowl. Franklin did not, he didn’t trust Chrollo's judgement concerning Kurapika at the moment.

Machi watched the room and eyed the soup for a moment, taking in the way everyone seemed to timidly walk to it like the pot would bite them. She shrugged, it smelled fine.

Without much thought, Machi grabbed her collapsible bowl and dished out a serving for herself. She took a bite and smiled.

“This is good.” She gave Kurapika a nod and grabbed a second bowl to bring up to Uvogin, still waiting up in her room.

Franklin gulped, he now had no excuse to not eat the soup. After Machi’s approval, the troupe began filling their bowls and eating the suspicious soup.

The troupe was collectively surprised by the taste, everyone went wide eyed and thanked
Kurapika, giving their compliments. Pakunoda smiled as she watched the troupe enjoy the soup, she knew they would. In fact she had been hoping the boy would make it, she couldn’t exactly taste it in the boy’s memories but it had sounded amazing.

Shalnark sat next to Nobunaga and leaned over quietly to whisper, “You might be onto something, he was definitely trying to kill us before.” Then he took another delicious bite of soup.
Everyone dealt with their own dishes that night, though Kurapika was the one who dealt with Chrollo’s bowl while the last bits of the soup were set in the refrigerator by Franklin. As strange as it seemed considering how cold it was, the generator was only meant to keep the lights on, water running, and the refrigerator cold.

The Emitter noted the way Kurapika drew the large borrowed coat tightly around his shoulders and shivered in the kitchen. “One would think that we wouldn’t need a fridge here, wouldn’t they?” he half joked as the boy set the clean bowls on a rack to dry.

Kurapika’s response was chattering teeth as they moved quickly back to the lobby. The screams from the fake baby reached the omega’s ears and he automatically moved to pick up the thrice damned doll and began to rock it as he picked through the pink bag yet again. As the most recent item he grabbed, the diaper was the first thing he grabbed. It was followed by the bottle, then the pacifier and the cries finally stopped.

Shifting back, the blonde reached for his book and frowned when he found that it wasn’t where he had left it. Glancing around, he couldn’t find the book on the floor, the side table, or anywhere in the vicinity.

“Danchou took the books back to your room,” the blonde female, Pakunoda, told him. “I believe he’s getting the fire set up.”

Kurapika felt his eyebrow twitch as he settled back on the couch and curled his feet up beneath him. With their new arrangement, not to mention the prospect of a very cold room, Kurapika felt no rush to move back to that room, even if it meant not having the book he’d been enjoying.

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Chrollo stacked the firewood in the fireplace of his room as Uvo stood behind him, a medium chunk of flaming wood from the lobby in his grasp which he settled into the logs to help start the evening fire in the room.

The leader of the Phantom Troupe turned to assess his room in that moment. This was one of the few bases that had more than just a few rooms, the only one where everyone had their own room, and he enjoyed the privacy. The frosty and snow covered window had a wonderful view of the mountains normally, it was a beautiful location.

“What did you wish to talk about?” he finally asked Uvo as he focused once more on the giant as the large man shifted the logs in the fireplace to help the fire grow strong.

Uvogin straightened up automatically. “The way that Kurapika has been handling that doll is worrying.”

The dark alpha sighed. Uvo didn’t cut corners, especially when he was concerned, but Chrollo did understand the concern this time. Kurapika had looked ready to pitch the doll into the fire more than once.

“It’s just that your kids will be targets, either for kidnapping or murder,” Uvo explained. “Kurapika will probably defend your actual kids well, but he’s not showing interest or instinct to protect with
Chrollo stared at the man as his hand came up and pressed to the underside of his chin. Uvogin had a point: Kurapika was caring for the ‘baby’s’ needs when it cried, but otherwise his care was neglectful. It would be very easy to remove the doll from his care.

“Give him a few days to get used to caring for the doll,” Chrollo decided after a moment. “Kurapika was only given the doll today and was trying to care for it while cooking. He might just need to practice.”

“I still think we should give him some child defense lessons,” Uvo pressed but stopped when Chrollo raised his hand.

“We’ll give him a few days and then discuss this again,” Chrollo promised and Uvo sighed when he realized he’d been dismissed.

Both alphas walked back to the lobby where Kurapika sat with the doll by his side, the pink care bag had the supplies shoved into it haphazardly. Phinks was stationed in front of the fire, using his jacket to obscure most of the light and was in the midst of telling a scary story. He looked more like he was scaring himself rather than anyone else, Kortopi actually yawned as the man tried to imitate some sort of large monster.

The Enhancer gave up when Shizuku tipped back and then stared at him in surprise. “Phinks, why’re you roasting your behind?”

Half the troupe blinked and then saw a thin trail of smoke rising from Phinks’s jacket and the alpha raced out of the door and into the snow, dousing the room in cold air and allowing some of the blowing snow into the room where it settled on the floor, furniture, and even on the fire, partially extinguishing it.

“And I believe we’ll adjourn for the night,” Chrollo called out when Kurapika shivered a bit. “I’ve got a fire in our room and our books.”

Kurapika rose automatically at the promise of a warm fire, especially with the couch now wet with snow, but he did send a worried look towards the door where Phinks was just reappearing, Feitan beside him.

Chrollo once again was pleased by the concerned gesture but found himself more interested in getting Kurapika into the warmer room.

“Kurapika!”

Paku’s voice stopped the omega before he had even taken three steps towards Chrollo and their room. She lifted the baby doll and care bag from the couch where he had left them. “Your baby needs to stay with you,” the woman chided as she handed the doll to Kurapika again as well as the care bag.

The Kuruta had stared dumbly at the doll for a moment, and then it began to cry again. The agitation that immediately rose in the room over the noise was only overshadowed by Kurapika’s agitation and he stomped past Chrollo with the screaming doll to their room so he could try to make it shut up yet again. It needed yet another “new” diaper, which Kurapika achieved by once again just passing the sensor of the spare diaper over the sensor on the “baby’s” bum.

Finally the thing was silent and Kurapika set it aside fast in favor of grabbing his book as he positioned himself in front of the fire, Chrollo sitting beside him with his own book in hand. The
next hour was one of comfortable silence for both of them as they read their books, then Chrollo peaked over at Kurapika.

“What is that book about?”

For a moment Kurapika didn’t respond before he placed the bookmark and shifted. “It’s about the rise and fall of the Shogunate in Jappon and the rise of the ninja villages in the tumult that followed.”

Chrollo felt his lips pull into a smile again. History and mythology, two subjects he loved and Kurapika seemed to share that passion. He wouldn’t mind if one of their children shared that passion and used it to become an Archaeological Hunter. In fact, he’d be quite proud.

“I remember that book, supposedly the initial formation of the villages was in response to warring clans and warlords ignoring the rise of bandit groups. The ninjas originally rose to deal with them and when they proved to be good at what they did, were hired for their abilities in stealth and assassination.”

Kurapika snorted as he remembered Hanzo. That man might have been an excellent fighter, but stealth didn’t describe him at all! He had all the stealth of Gon or Leorio on a regular day!

“Something funny?”

Chrollo’s dark eyes were authentically curious as he stared at Kurapika.

No point in denying this. “I know a ninja, I could even say that we’re friends. Everyone in the Hunter Exam knew he was a ninja on a ‘secret mission’ within five minutes of meeting him.”

The alpha’s eyes widened automatically, his bangs framing his face in a manner that was almost handsome. “That doesn’t sound like a master of stealth.”

“No one doubted his skills once he wasn’t running at the mouth, leading up to that point was when he was doubted the most.”

Chrollo hummed in thought. “Then maybe that’s the reason for those masks that cover their faces? Rather than to cover their identities, they’re meant to make the loudmouths be quiet?”

“You should get one for Nobunaga,” Kurapika replied as he fought a small, amused smile as well.

The snort he received in response was of pure amusement. “He’d complain loudly about that and Machi might try to sew it onto his face.”

Now Kurapika did smile a bit as he imagined the she-demon looming over the topknot-alpha-pervert, looking particularly evil with a needle in hand. The image was cut off before he could fully enjoy it when his book was taken from his hands and Chrollo stood to head for the bedroll.

It was just sleeping Kurapika reminded himself as he stood as well and headed towards the bedroll as the troupe leader removed his boots and settled under the blanket. He wasn’t wearing his coat but it was in the bedroll, right at the man’s back to keep it warm.

Shrugging off his jacket caused goosebumps to jump up Kurapika’s arms almost immediately as he settled into the bedroll also, hearing the alpha gasp slightly when Kurapika’s cold, bare feet encountered the man’s warm, sock covered ones.

The blanket was settled over them a moment later and Kurapika found himself once again edging
closer to the alpha, pressing against his warm side in the chilly ‘bed’.

Everything was silent for a few minutes and Chrollo began to move his arm, intent to settle it over Kurapika’s waist when the doll began to scream again.

Both sat up as Kurapika crawled from the bed with a muttered curse to grab the doll, trying random bits of ‘equipment’ before the thing was silent again. He brought the thing back to the bedroll and set it near the side of the blanket as he crawled back into the warming space.

Chrollo woke several times that night, five times to be exact. Four of those times was involved the infernal doll screaming, the last was when Kurapika turned over and buried his face into the alpha’s chest, just as he had done the night before. The troupe leader smiled at the cuddling omega, certain that the boy was comfort with him at a subconscious level.

His arm slid over the thin form, mentally purring at holding Kurapika like this even as his smile dropped when the boy’s feet encountered his yet again. Despite being under the blanket, his feet were still cold.

The baby cried a moment later and Chrollo mentally promised that if Kurapika didn’t destroy that thing, then he would! A small spot of light was that as the blonde wiggled out of his embrace to deal with the screaming toy, he didn’t yell or cringe as he had the day before when he woke in the same position.

The “baby” supplies had all been dug out of the care bag during the night and were scattered around the thing on the floor and Kurapika groped at the items before finally shoving the sensor for the bottle into its mouth. Glancing at his phone, Chrollo decided to get up and moved towards his pack automatically as Kurapika tried to crawl back into the bedroll. He whined faintly at finding his heat source gone.

It was an adorable sight but it was time that they get up and get breakfast started. Shuffling through his pack, Chrollo finally found what he wanted and moved back to the bedroll, gently shaking Kurapika awake.

Grey eyes stared up at him sleepily and Chrollo longed for a good morning kiss in that moment as he pulled back the blanket. Kurapika groaned in response to the cold air and groped for his coat quickly as he sat up, pulling the borrowed garment on. Before he could stand, Chrollo passed him his what had been his favorite cold weather socks.

The socks were thick, fluffy, and very warm. Chrollo wouldn’t be caught dead wearing them when he wasn’t alone, so it seemed natural to give them to Kurapika, especially since he didn’t have anything to keep his feet warm.

Kurapika stared at the socks for a long moment before glancing up at Chrollo, but the alpha had already moved towards the door.

“I’m going to get the fire started in the lobby. We should get breakfast started,” the dark man stated before exiting the room.

There was no water to wash his feet, but Kurapika did scrub at them to try to remove as much dirt as he could before slipping the socks over his feet. He felt… Good today, if a little sleep deprived. The socks felt a bit odd to wear since they were big on his feet, but they made the floor far more tolerable to walk on.

The day that followed almost felt normal with Kurapika feeling pretty good as he and Chrollo
worked together to make breakfast. They ran out of wood by mid morning and Nobunaga tried to force Kurapika out to chop some more. That idea was very firmly stopped when Machi asked who would watch the doll and loan Kurapika shoes, pants and gloves.

Phinks ended up taking over the task along with Feitan, the pair disappearing for a few hours before both came back with enough wood to completely fill the wood bin on the side of the base. Instead, Kurapika found himself exploring the unsettled portions of the hotel. He was mostly allowed to wander alone so long as he had the doll with him.

Most of the doors were boarded up or were rooms that belonged to the individual members, but Kurapika did find an old laundry room tucked into the back of the first hall and what seemed to be a meeting room situated in the second hall. It was ice cold in the room but Kurapika settled there, glad to have a few minutes to himself as he stared out of the large bay windows. They were mostly caked in snow and ice, but he could just make out some mountains.

The sight was beautiful, something Kurapika would never have seen if he’d stayed in the Kuruta village… The images of his mother, father, Pairo, the elder, and all the people who had made up his world back then filled his head, fresh after the taste of home he had had just the previous night. Many of them had never seen snow or mountains or-

The scream of the doll yanked Kurapika’s thoughts away from the ghosts of his people and he focused on the doll, angrily running sensor after sensor from the ‘care products’ in the bag over the doll before finally realizing it needed to be burped. Holding the infuriating thing to his shoulder, he pounded on the “baby’s” back with all his strength since no one was there to witness the act. He wanted nothing more than to smash the thing!

The thing finally shut up right as the door opened and the Kuruta glanced up to find that Chrollo had entered the room, two steaming mugs in hand.

“Forgot we had this room here,” the alpha admitted as he offered one of the mugs to Kurapika who gratefully accepted the hot cup.

The mug felt good in his cold hands. Kurapika took a sip and almost choked. He had been expecting coffee with some cream because Chrollo had seen him drink that, instead what was contained in the mug was hot chocolate. It was extremely unexpected. He normally didn’t care for sweets, but the hot beverage was more than acceptable currently.

Chrollo had been settling next to Kurapika and glanced at him when Kurapika gave a half cough. “Marshmallows?” he offered after a moment as he held up a small tube of them.

Kurapika shook his head automatically. “It’s sweet enough.”

The alpha shrugged and sprinkled a some of the confection into his hot chocolate. “I chose this base because of the wonderful views it has,” the man stated in a conversational tone. “Mountains amazed me the first time I saw them, it was all desert where I came from. I think I also intended to learn to snow ski at some point.”

Kurapika had tried to learn to ski once after leaving his village, it was the only way to cross some of the large, snowy expanses. He had fallen alot. The thought of Chrollo falling on skis in the snow brought a small smile to his face.

“Do you know how to ski?” Chrollo asked as he watched Kurapika’s face, noting the small smile.

Kurapika shook his head. “Only cross-country skiing.”
“What’s it like?”

“Tiring. Your legs hurt a lot at first.”

“The soup was quite good last night.”

Kurapika wasn’t sure how to respond but found he didn’t have to as his book was offered to him by Chrollo.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in the cold room as outside the snow finally stopped, both reading until the light finally failed and cold drove them to return to the lobby where Franklin looked immensely pleased to not be out of control of the dinner pot. The meal that night was a thick beef stew, savory with plenty of herbs for flavor.

Kurapika found an odd sort of peace as the troupe members ate then entertained each other, though Phinks didn’t attempt to tell another story. That night it was Kortopi that stood in front of the fire as it burned low and told a thrilling tale that chilled Kurapika far more than the cold ever could of a dark creature that sought for the heat of a warm body on cold nights. Everyone jumped, Franklin even going so far as screaming when the doll chose the perfect moment to scream, sounding like the monster Kortopi had scared the lot of them with.

Chrollo decided to call it a night as everyone began to calm down, a few of the members even giving nervous laughs as they realized that the cry was from the doll that Kurapika was attempting to quiet. He did note that quite surprisingly, Machi was gripping Uvo’s arm in a rather tight grip, their legs touching.

The fire that Chrollo built in his room that night was small and neither he nor Kurapika read in the limited light, instead both curled up in the bedroll.

Cries from the doll awakened Chrollo and Kurapika five times that night, but by the time Chrollo decided it was time to get up, Kurapika was curling into him automatically when he lay down after “caring” for the doll.

The troupe leader smiled faintly at the boy as he got up yet again and moved to his pack, pulling out the jewel case containing the collar once again. Kurapika had had time to get comfortable with him, had to know by now that Chrollo wouldn’t hurt him!

Thus several minutes later when Kurapika sat up when Chrollo drew the blanket off of him, he had offered the collar again.

“How would you be my mate?” Chrollo asked, certain that he knew the answer this time.

The blank look in the other’s grey eyes was his first tip that he was wrong in his assumption, and then Kurapika backed away from him, tired eyes angry.

For Kurapika, waking from a dream of the last time he’d seen his clan to find their murderer offering the black collar yet again was enough to drive whatever residual good mood he’d had the day before far away. He hadn’t even had to voice his answer before the collar was tucked away once more, Chrollo staring at him in confusion for a long moment before leaving the room.

Kurapika sat in the cold room, ignoring the sounds and smells of breakfast being cooked, ignoring the plate that Chrollo eventually brought him, even ignoring the doll as it began to cry again. He glared at the window, demanding the universe tell him yet again why this had had to happen. Why
of all the alphas in existence did Chrollo Lucifer have to fancy him? Why couldn’t the infuriating man accept his refusal?!

Outside of the room, Chrollo stared at the collar, wondering what it was that he was doing wrong. He was so engrossed in his thoughts that he didn’t touch his book for most of the day as he considered his times with Kurapika since they had taken the boy captive. He didn’t think he’d been particularly bad at first, even if they forgot to feed the boy for the first couple of days and worked him until he collapsed. Chrollo had corrected that as soon as he realized what had happened.

“Is that the collar?” Shalnark asked as he shifted to get a better look as did most of the room. The beta whistled at the sight of it. “Don’t see how Kurapika could say no when offered that thing! Red diamonds are rare and expensive!”

“He did, again.” Chrollo felt his chest tighten as he made the admission. He had fallen for Kurapika so quickly, so why did the boy seem to dislike his requests to mate? Was there something crucial he was missing?

His eyes glanced around the room, but every member of the troupe was either a beta or an alpha. With the exception of Bono, none of them had ever… Wait, Bonolenov seemed to know what Kurapika was doing, even when he seemed to be acting erratically to the rest of them! He also had a mate that was an omega.

“How do you woo an omega?” Chrollo finally asked as he stared straight at Bono, who quirked an eyebrow at the collar Chrollo was holding.

“First thing I can tell you is that that collar would be insulting to an omega that hasn’t been beaten into accepting the stereotypes most of society has been tricked into believing. You’re presenting him with a nightmare where he would be allowing you to drag him around on a leash.”

Chrollo’s eyebrows hit his hairline instantly as the realization struck him, as well as an image of Kurapika wearing the collar and a leash. Maybe during foreplay or in bed, but Chrollo could now see that that would be horrifying to someone as proud as Kurapika, even if he thought the image was comely and arousing.

The jewelry box was snapped shut as Chrollo mentally vowed not to offer the collar again.

“That was very different from what Chrollo had always heard and he noted that a number of the troupe members were paying attention to Bono’s explanation. Most also gave Nobunaga a sidelong glance and Chrollo finally realized why Kurapika had come to dislike him so fast: Nobunaga had tried to act like an alpha stereotype. In turn, Uvo had been respectful of the boy’s strength and wishes. He had been who Kurapika had initially gone to until Nobunaga had returned and Uvo had sat beside his friend.

“There’s also the point that an interested alpha will offer gifts to the omega, meaningful ones. Not just flowers or candy. Things meant to show an intent to care for the omega, that the alpha can provide for them and knows them and their likes. I should also mention that alphas become sure about an omega they would like to mate long before the omega considers them.”

That caused Chrollo’s head to snap towards the man. Was he a mindreader too?!
Bono offered him a grin, missing teeth apparent even through the bandages. “That is nature. Alphas always outnumber omegas, so they compete for their attention. They need to determine if a particular omega is a good match for them quickly so they can try to get the attention of that omega first. Omegas are meant to be as slower in their decision to ensure it’s the right one.”

“How could choosing danchou be wrong?” Phinks demanded. “He’s smart, strong, and a good leader! An alpha who is of the highest order of alphas!”

Kortopi was nodding enthusiastically.

“Honorable to omega,” Feitan threw in.

“Argue later,” Franklin groused. “Nature will run its course. Until then, could someone get Kurapika? He hasn’t eaten all day.” The large man was stirring a pot of vegetable soup and seemed to have determined that it was done.

The troupe members glanced among themselves as Chrollo rose to go fetch Kurapika, but Machi stood as well and fixed Chrollo with a hard look.

“I’ll go get him, and turn off that doll. I think you both could do with some uninterrupted sleep tonight.”

Chrollo stared at her for a long moment but relented and sat back down, even as Shalnark began to whisper assurances. Kurapika’s next heat would be coming in just two weeks. He would have accepted Chrollo during his first heat, he wouldn’t refuse him come the next one.

The pink haired woman entered the room where the doll was still screaming and had been on and off for hours now. Reaching down, she snagged the doll and inserted a small tab to cut off the power of the doll, stopping the cries before turning her eyes towards the boy.

Kurapika had changed into his thin old clothes at some point, but they were too thin, evidenced by the fact that he had also pulled on the cast off clothes from the troupe to try to stay warm. He really didn’t have anything she realized.

“Come on, it’s dinner time,” Machi told the boy who seemed to have just realized that the doll had been shut off.

“Not hungry.”

“Don’t lie.” Machi gave the boy a very stern look. “You are, and you’re cold. You can either come into the lobby for dinner willingly, or I can carry you. I believe you would find that to be far worse.”

Kurapika shot her a glare before rising to his feet to trek towards the door. Machi watched him, her plan already in place. Chrollo needed to realize what he was committing to, that history didn’t start the moment he personally met someone.

Kurapika stepped into the hall and headed towards the lobby, pulling slightly at the too large socks that covered his feet. He looked cute, even Machi could admit that when he pouted slightly. Young. Vulnerable.

Machi made it a point to measure her steps so that she was beside Kurapika when they reached the end of the hall and entered the lobby where Franklin was already passing out bowls of hot soup.

“Why do you reject Chrollo?”
Machi asked her question as Chrollo stood to grab a second bowl from Franklin for Kurapika. The effect of the question was obvious as the room went silent and Kurapika tensed, the anger in his face instant and apparent. Silence reigned for a long moment, every member of the troupe listening for whatever answer Kurapika gave.

The anger was still there when the boy finally turned his eyes towards Chrollo, brilliant scarlet. They also held a deep sadness.

“Did you feel anything?” the boy asked, his voice barely more than a whisper. “Anything at all when you killed my parents, my friends, the people who were my entire world? How long did you torture them before killing over 100 people for their eyes?! Did you feel anything at all when you sold the eyes of everyone I held precious to the underground market?!?” Kurapika’s voice had grown in volume until he was yelling, red stained tears building in his eyes as he stared hard at Chrollo. Feeling the burn of his tears, Kurapika turned sharply and rushed down the hall, past the room he shared with Chrollo, into the next hall and then into the meeting room from the previous day.

In the lobby, Chrollo stared after Kurapika for a long moment, his mind finally catching up. He’d been having such a good time with Kurapika, enjoying having someone around who shared his passions so thoroughly, that he had forgotten that bit of history. He would have sought revenge if someone had killed any member of his troupe, his family. He had killed Kurapika’s.

Paku caught his arm when he attempted to follow Kurapika even though he wasn’t sure what he would say or do. He couldn’t say that he had regretted it until that moment, when he saw how hurt Kurapika was by it. How alone he’d been.

“Let him grieve, he needed this outlet,” the blonde woman told him as she took the second bowl of soup from him. “He’s been keeping this bottled up for a long time, I could see it each time I touched him this last month.”

Chrollo stared at the woman but had to admit she was probably right. Even if every instinct screamed at him to follow the omega he wished to mate, to comfort him, protect him, he likely wouldn’t be good company for the boy. Turning his head to inspect the various troupe members, mentally Chrollo groaned. All of them had been involved in the massacre of the Kuruta and none of them had ever voiced any regrets. They had helped in the grisly task of torturing every man, woman, and child to death then extracting the eyes of those who had possessed the rare Scarlet eyes. Except Shizuku.

“Take this to Kurapika,” he ordered the bespectacled beta as he pushed a chipped bowl and spoon into her hands. “If he’s upset, emphasize that you weren’t part of the troupe when the Kuruta were killed.”

Shizuku blinked at him but stood and walked down the hall, hopefully to deliver the soup as Chrollo moved to sink into the couch. This was a large hurdle in his path, Kurapika’s rejections made too much sense now. But he wasn’t willing to give up. His alpha instincts howled and screamed at the thought, plus what could they do if he did give up on Kurapika? Kill him? Just the thought caused a horrible tightness to squeeze in Chrollo’s chest.

“It’s also true that alphas don’t easily give up on an omega they are interested in,” Bono stated, causing half the heads in the room to jerk in his direction. “Compatible matches are hard to come by, and it’s unlikely you’ll find another omega like him. Most in this world are beaten, raped, denied education, and sold for mating as soon as they are of age. Some are even killed outright by parents in cultures that view it as shameful to have an omega child.”
“I’m not moving on,” Chrollo growled sharply. “I want him for my mate and I’ll find a way!”

“I know of one way to start,” Pakunoda stated as she stared at Chrollo before her eyes shifted to Bonolenov. “Bono mentioned giving meaningful gifts.”

“And what could that be?” Chrollo demanded.

“Currently things he needs and doesn’t have,” Bono supplied, but Paku’s eyes indicated she had a better idea.

“He wanted to find the eyes of his people.”
Kurapika sniffled into his sleeve. He didn’t mind his shaking fingers, he didn’t care if they were shaking from cold or just sobbing panic. He couldn’t believe he’d let the Phantom Troupe see him cry red tainted tears as he’d screamed at the man who ruined his life.

“I’m such an idiot...” Kurapika felt his lip wobble again, flashes of seeing his family laid out, eyes void and empty. Staring at him in endless horror, forever stuck in sightless hell.

Kurapika swiped angrily at his own scarlet eyes, still weeping stained tears.

The door creaked and Kurapika tensed but knew there was no avoiding the troupe leader after his outburst, not that it wasn’t justified.

“Please just leave me alone for one god forsaken second!” Kurapika growled as he turned around with an angry snap only to find a rather confused bespectacled girl.

“I have soup.” she looked down at the bowl with a frustrated pitch of her brows. “Why do I have soup...?”

Kurapika didn’t know how to respond to that. He’d expected someone to confront him with some kind of bullshit about none of them having good lives, how he should just get over it. Like psychopaths do. Not have to explain that the soup was probably sent for him.

Kurapika wordlessly took the soup from her hands and turned back around, numbly sitting down with his back to the dusty sheet covered couch.

The girl didn’t leave like he had thought she would, having completed her task. Instead she wandered over to the window and watched the snow. Kurapika felt his lip wobble again as he stared down at the soup. Biting the offensive flesh between his teeth to hopefully stop the swell of tears before the girl saw them.

“Why are you crying?”
Kurapika looked up, a bit startled that she didn't just ignore him.

“Why would you care? You already made me an orphan, what more do you want?!”

“I didn’t do that,” she stated plainly. Kurapika stared at her again as her brows furrowed like she was trying to figure something out and then she seemed to remember. “Oh, danchou wanted me to tell you that I joined the troupe after . . . “ she trailed off and then shrugged. “I lost it.”

“After the troupe brutally murdered my family and clan?” Kurapika offered up with a bitter tone, swirling around the soup harshly.

“Yeah that!” The girl gasped as she sat down as well, Kurapika couldn’t take it and began to sob in earnest again.

Shizuku frowned as she watched the vaguely familiar omega begin to cry into his soup, was he danchou’s mate? She didn’t really know what to do in this type of situation, she could get danchou but he looked like he needed someone now. Tentatively Shizuku put a hand on his shoulder. “If it makes you feel better, I don’t remember where I even came from.”

Shizuku’s eyes widened further when the boy began to laugh a bit. Not at her, he seemed to be laughing at the world in general.

Kurapika couldn’t believe he was sitting here, freezing as he cried about the hole in his heart as a Phantom Troupe member tried to make him feel better.

Looking over at the girl as she looked at the snow falling, trying to remember her life before but failing.

“It must be nice to forget,” Kurapika mumbled.

“Maybe, I wouldn’t know. It’s not really my choice.”
Silence reigned for a time between them as Kurapika began to eat and the beta stared wistfully out the window.

“Hey, what’s your name?”

“Okay,” Chrollo called as his troupe minus Shizuku gathered around as he began to fully process the plan to woo Kurapika. “Shalnark, I want you to get me a list of where the scarlet eyes are now.”

“Aye aye!” Shalnark saluted.

“In the meantime . . .” Chrollo felt a little at a loss. How should he go about getting the boy he murdered the family of to fall for him?

“You could start by taking him to get clothes, clothes he actually likes,” Machi put forward and a few looked at her oddly. No one expected her to be the one to suggest Kurapika getting clothes she didn’t make. She always made the clothes for the troupe members. “He obviously doesn’t like the clothes I make, this will show him you take his opinions into account at least.”

“What about the baby doll? He hates that thing,” Franklin put forward.

“No.” Chrollo shook his head, Kurapika would be his eventually, so he needs to keep up with his training. “Kurapika needs those childcare lessons for when he’s mine.”

“What if he never accepts?” Pakunoda raised a brow.

Chrollo looked them all over, his improvised family and the words from only days ago ran through his head. The words he’d told Kurapika after his first refusal, Chrollo refused to back down from them even now.

“Then he’ll just continue to be a slave. He’ll either be mine or he’ll never be free. Whatever he chooses, I won’t be losing him,” Chrollo determined with dark resolve. It was either that or they
killed him and he wasn’t about to harm kurapika in anyway.

Bonolenov felt a slight concern build in his chest, Danchou wasn’t going to have an easy time at this. An omega not broken by this world’s society, not to mention their shared history, wasn’t going to respond well to having almost no choice in this. The others continued on with ideas to soften up the omega and Bonolenov shook his head, danchou would learn eventually.

Days passed, Kurapika eventually came back to the main lobby but he refused to talk to anyone. Sometimes he’d say something to Shizuku, but the rest he answered only in one word replies or gestures. Shalnark has taken Nobunaga to a base with internet connection leaving the awkward tension of the building behind.

He took care of the baby doll and ignored everything else. At night Kurapika turned away from Chrollo, trying to create an illusion of space between them.

It was the morning of their fifth day in the abandoned hotel that Chrollo decided it was time to put in some effort to get Kurapika talking again.

“Machi, would you get some shoes for Kurapika?” Chrollo called and the boy’s eyes snapped to him, suspicious and slightly red.

“Yes danchou.”

“Kurapika, we’re going out,” Chrollo stated as he took the baby doll from his hands and handed it to Pakunoda to turn off.

Kurapika glared at the troupe leader as the she-demon came back with a pair of white boots with red and gold accents. It was far and away from dainty sandals and pretty heels, unlike those these looked to be made to last.

Kurapika growled lowly in his throat when he noticed the similarities to the troupe leader’s signature boots, but he couldn’t really refuse shoes if the alpha was going to take him out into the snow.

The pink haired beta also brought him a thick pair of brown pants and a simple white sweater.
“I didn’t have time to finish the embroidery but it will keep you warm,” she stared blankly, not minding when he just took the clothes without a word of thanks.

Heading to the bedroom wordlessly, Kurapika climbed into the shower connected to the bedroom. Angrily scrubbing off the grime and sweat, the shower was shorter than any he had taken before as he refused to touch the troupe leader’s soaps, even if it meant not being entirely clean.

Stepping out into the chilly air, Kurapika found the towel someone had left for him and he quickly dried off before he froze and pulled the fluffy white sweater over his wet hair.

The brown pants were thick and lined with white fur on the inside, they were incredibly comfortable. Kurapika hated it, hated that the clothes are comfortable and warm, hated that he loved them.

Kurapika slipped the too large socks back over his feet before slipping on the boots. Like all the shoes Machi had made for him, they were the perfect size. He wanted to lament over that as well but instead just left the bathroom to meet the troupe leader.

The dark alpha looked him over quickly when he returned to the lobby, he nodded his head with a small frown noticing the lack of his own scent on the boy.

Chrollo ignored the fact that the boy had deliberately stayed away from his scent, it was only a momentary thing. Soon Kurapika would forgive him as best he could and they’d be happy. Besides, Chrollo thought, he could give Kurapika a new family.

“Let’s go,” he called lightly, leading the brooding omega to the car.

Kurapika crossed his arms as he settled into the car, uncaring where the alpha took him. He was determined not to respond or talk to him.

Killua has been grouchy since emerging from the underground hideaway a few days ago. As Kurapika had promised, the seal decorating the door and walls had disappeared after about a day
and of course Kurapika was long gone by then.

Gon and Killua has wasted a day angrily hitting random walls and destroying the place. It didn’t make them feel better, next time they’d save him for sure. Until then he was stuck with the troupe.

Although one thought froze them both to the core: why hadn’t the troupe sold Kurapika yet?

Killua had a disturbing theory but he wasn’t willing to dwell on that horrible thought, but it was a possibility. Killua hadn’t thought about it before but now that he had, he had to wonder: why wouldn’t the troupe leader take a mate?

Killua felt an icy shiver run up his spine at the horrible idea, if someone could keep Kurapika captive for so long, find a way to chain him down, then maybe he should focus on hiding his own scent better? Killua hated that for a moment just a month ago he had felt a fear he had never known before. Like any other omega not taken by the facilities, it was his worst nightmare for an alpha to simply take away his choice.

Looking over to Gon, Killua felt a little hope for himself, Gon would never take away his choices or try to control him but that didn’t help Kurapika.

“What do we do now?” Gon asked with a frustrated pout, kicking a piece of debris over the cliff side.

“We call Hisoka, find out where they’re going or any information he might have!”

“But Kurapika said no-“

“Kurapika doesn’t get a say in how he’s rescued!” Killua snapped. He didn’t mean to yell but the fear of an alpha, the instinctive fear of the choice being taken away began to eat on him. If it could happen to Kurapika then it could happen to him, especially with how his family is! He would be surprised if they didn’t already have an alpha picked out for him they hadn’t told him about.

“Okay Killua,” Gon looked to Killua, feeling his insides twist at the cold, sad look in the omega’s eyes. He knew the situation wasn’t easy for Killua, he had always avoided thinking about the state of his fellow omegas, but he couldn’t avoid it now. “We’ll call Hisoka. . .”
Kurapika had ignored Chrollo the entire way to the outlet mall, giving only the barest of shrugs when he told the boy that they wouldn’t be going back to that base but moving to a town about a half a days drive south. Chrollo wanted to tell him about the hunt for the scarlet eyes, promise that he’d find every single one and return them to him but knew it would only start a fight, so he kept silent about it.

Chrollo pulled the car into the mall parking lot and he quickly got out to open the door for Kurapika. The ground was icy, Chrollo would hate for the omega to fall. Taking Kurapika’s arm to help him out of the car was pointless though, the boy only ripped his arm away with an angry grunt.

“Don’t touch me, I already have more of that than I’d like!”

“And what would you like?”

“To strangle you to death and leave your body to the crows”

Chrollo gave a small chuckle. Kurapika was a sassy thing and at least he was talking a little more.

“Come, we’re going to get you some clothes.” Chrollo gestured for Kurapika to follow him to the entrance. Kurapika only gave an annoyed grumble as he followed behind slowly. “Now now, at least this time you’ll have a choice on your clothes.”

Kurapika huffed, kicking up snow slightly. “It’s not a choice if you can’t say no.”

Chrollo decided to not reply to that.

Kurapika felt sick when they stepped into the warmed air of the shopping outfit, every alpha turned to him with interest. Kurapika had never hated alphas in general before but after being forced into the role of obedient little play thing for so long he was starting to.
Kurapika didn’t fight when the troupe leader led him to one of the large stores on the end of the mall, just watched the floor beneath his feet.

“This way.” Chrollo led Kurapika to the male omega area of the store and began to look through the racks of clothing. There was already quite a few options as far as Chrollo could see, lots of clothes that would compliment the boy’s body. Kurapika looked best in neutral colors and the season was perfect for it.

“How about this?” Chrollo held of a white loosely knitted sweater, the holes between the yarn were big enough that he’d need one of those under half shirts again to wear it.

“God no!” Kurapika looked over the revealing sweater in horror.

Chrollo looked back down at the sweater but really couldn’t see the problem, shrugging he placed the sweater back on the rack.

“Alright how about you pick some things out then?” The troupe leader suggested after a moment of Kurapika just continuing to pout.

“If it will get us out of here faster,” Kurapika grumbled as he picked a rack and started to shuffle through the clothing. He had always hated places like this: it was loud, stuffy, and full of people. It was definitely not the kind of place he’d go willingly. Kurapika had a few thick, long sleeved shirts picked out in no time, going for a basic plain look.

“You should try on this dress,” the troupe leader came out of the woodwork to offer a beautiful black silk dress with silver studs on the sleeves.

Kurapika’s face went red with embarrassment and Chrollo tilted his head slightly. He hadn’t thought about it before, but the Kuruta people dressed rather conservatively. Maybe Kurapika’s problem with the clothes had less to do with not liking them and more to do with not being comfortable in them?

“Go to the dressing room and try on the dress first, okay?” Chrollo pushed Kurapika gently toward the fitting room. Kurapika grumbled again and didn’t notice as he grabbed a larger size of the dress he’d picked for Kurapika.
The Kuruta moved into one of the curtained rooms and threw the clothes onto the floor haphazardly. Glaring at the stupid thin dress that would show way too more skin than what he would like, Kurapika wanted to scream at the lack of consideration or care for his opinions.

Kurapika pulled the dress over his head and zipped up the back without care to the dainty fabric.

“Kurapika, let me see you!” the troupe leader called from outside with a light knock. Rolling his eyes, Kurapika pulled back the curtain and stomped out of the dressing room.

“I put on the stupid dres-“ Kurapika's eyes widened as he stalled completely and almost fell over. “Oh my god!” There, posing like a drag queen was the Phantom Troupe leader wearing a black silk dress with silver studs stretched over his chest.

“How’s it look?” Chrollo asked with a straight face.

“What are you doing?!” Kurapika looked around to see betas and alphas looking over and laughing at the man, not that he seemed to mind at all. One man was even videotaping the embarrassment.

“Showing you how to properly rock this outfit, although I think it fits you better.” Chrollo actually swung his hips as he approached to look over Kurapika in the dress.

“Yeah, because it actually fits me, why-“

Chrollo didn’t let Kurapika finish as he took the boy’s hand and began to pull him towards the shoe area.

“The outfit isn’t complete without shoes!”

Kurapika felt his head spin a bit as he watched the troupe leader's skirt flutter.

Chrollo pushed Kurapika unto the couch and looked through the shoes to find the most ridiculous pair in the bunch.
“Chrollo, my things are still over there... What are you doing?!” Chrollo smiled at the boy as he slipped on a pair of shimmering black high heels. He wobbled a little bit as he suddenly grew a foot from the ground.

“Now these are stunning, but I think these are more your style.” Chrollo held up a pair of kitten heels, they were tiny heels. He handed them to the shell shocked boy and he took them for the first time without an angry grumble.

Kurapika looked over the picture of the troupe leader waddling with bent knees in six inch heels and a silk dress and began to giggle.

Chrollo grinned when the heavenly bells of Kurapika’s laugh began to fill his ears, the light came back to the world as the boy smiled just slightly.

“Let’s continue shopping okay?”

“Okay.”

The car was full of bags from the mall, Kurapika had even been allowed to pick out a bag to carry his things now. The troupe leader and him had settled into a comfortable silence over the long drive, Kurapika mostly just reading his book.

“We’re almost there,” Chrollo spoke over the soft sounds of violins coming from the radio.

“Okay.” Kurapika shrugged as he readied his bookmark.

The building they pulled up to wasn't really a building. Like most of the places the troupe had taken him too, it was dilapidated and rundown.

“So another hostile dwelling then?” Kurapika snapped a bit, but it was subdued and almost teasing.
“You’ll like this one, it’s new!” Chrollo opened the door and grabbed out Kurapika’s things for him.

“If you say so. I don’t like anywhere you take me,” Kurapika mumbled as he grabbed up his empty travel bag and hoisted it over his shoulder.

Chrollo led the way into a barely standing building and into the basement, surprising Kurapika when he walked them into a tunnel that looked like a dry cement sewer.

Kurapika expected the nen enhanced door deep in the depths of the tunnel though.

“Get ready,” the troupe leader called as he opened the door with a flourish.

Kurapika gasped when he saw the catacombs laid out before him. The troupe members had obviously gotten there before them and fixed the place up. Franklin and Uvogin were finishing up installing a kitchen area and Shizuku, Mach,i and Pakunoda were tidying up a sitting area.

“Follow me.” Chrollo grinned a little excited, he had a surprise he knew Kurapika would like.

Kurapika looked around with a bit of wonder. Unlike other bases, this one seemed to have been mostly left alone. The brick was old and the tunnels from the main room seemed dark and almost whimsical.

“Most of the tunnels have collapsed, and they all loop back to the center room but some you could walk for hours before getting back to the center,” the troupe leader explained while he walked to the lantern lit tunnels. “And I’ve already picked out our room,” he explained as he came to the largest of the inlets to show off one of his proudest finds. The forgotten library filled with dusty old books, most were considered lost by society. Chrollo was glad in that moment that he hadn’t had the time to move the valuable books back to his private home.

“This is . . .” Kurapika trailed off as he looked over the slightly dirty room, a small wood furnace in the corner. The ground was covered in a light, soft sand in the tunnels but the library was lavished with hardwood.
“Beautiful right? I found it a few years ago, never had time to move the books. But I’m sure while you’re here you’ll appreciate that I didn’t.”

Kurapika couldn’t even begin to speak as he spotted titles he never thought he’d ever get the opportunity to read.

“Dinner should be ready and then Uvogin needs you for your lessons.” Kurapika’s face fell at the reminder of why exactly he was here.

“Fine.” Kurapika turned quickly to head back into the center room of the tunnels where Franklin seemed to be just finishing up, pulling tin foil out of a bonfire in the center of the room. The smoke rose up, disappearing up a chimney-like tunnel.

The troupe leader followed Kurapika into the room and sighed, they were making progress he just had to keep at it.

“There you two are! I made hobo dinners so everyone needs to grab their mess kits!”

Chrollo quickly moved to his bag and grabbed out the first of many presents he’d give to Kurapika. The light blue mess kit had little pale flowers decorating the handles.

“Kurapika, I have something for you.” Chrollo turned Kurapika around to present to small kit, complete with a knife, fork, spoon, plate, collapsible bowl and cup, all tucked into a sky colored carrying bag. “This is for you, since you’ll be traveling with us from now on.”

Kurapika looked at the bag skeptically and looked in with caution. He couldn’t deny that he needed this but he didn’t really want to take anything from the troupe.

“Um. . . Thanks I guess.”

Chrollo smiled at the boy. “Now go eat.” He was getting somewhere, he could just feel it.

Franklin handed them both one of the tin foil dinners and they sat on the brick wall circling the bonfire pit.
The foil contained a small simmering steak, four pieces of lovely smelling shrimp, roasted onions and red peppers. It all smelled divine.

“Kurapika! Yer with me after dinner are ya excited!?” Uvogin grinned as he dug into his food with no fork.

“Not really,” Kurapika shrugged as he grabbed out his new fork and began to eat himself.

The food was as good as it smelled and it was gone too soon. The second Uvogin saw his food was gone he was up and grabbing something from Pakunoda.

Kurapika tried to reason with himself it couldn’t be that bad could it? This was Uvogin! Of course it wouldn’t be too bad!

Kurapika heart stopped when he saw the reappearance of the demonic plastic baby.

Uvogin turned the blasted thing on and dropped it into his arms.

“From this moment on, I’m going to try to take and destroy yer baby. Yer job is to protect it, okay?”

Kurapika nodded his head slowly before reaching out and dropping the plastic baby back into Uvo’s arms.

“Can I watch?”

The entire room froze, an odd horror running through them, everyone afraid for the future of Chrollo’s children.

Uvogin didn’t anticipate Kurapika straight ignoring the rules of the lesson. Looking over to his danchou, the man seemed equally perplexed. He asked silently with his eyes what to do and he got his answer the same way.
“Okay then how ‘bout this? If I so much as touch the baby ya have to remove an article of clothing.” Kurapika immediately grabbed up the baby and backed up a few feet.

That’s more like it! Uvogin grinned, leaning down, he smiled wider. “And if I manage to destroy it, Chrollo gets to mate ya!”

“You can’t do that!” Kurapika yelled.

“I accept this.” Chrollo shrugged, it’s not how he wanted, but if it gets Kurapika to participate then fine.

There was a light shuffling and everyone looked back to Kurapika only to see an empty space where he once was.

“Well I guess we’re starting!” Uvogin grinned before taking off down the tunnel he thought he went.

This was going to be fun.
No one saw Kurapika for the rest of the night, not even Uvo who returned to the main room after almost two hours of charging through tunnels at top speed and blinked at them in confusion before confirming based on the limited footprints in the sand that Kurapika hadn’t returned to the room.

When Kurapika didn’t appear by midnight, Chrollo felt worry scratching at the corner of his brain. It didn’t help that he had Kurapika’s present book with him and had just finished his own.

Uvo’s eyes had watched him as he had walked towards one of the tunnels, the large man standing and attempting to sneak behind him as he walked down the tunnel. Chrollo walked down tunnel after tunnel, Uvo eventually giving up shortly before dawn and Chrollo headed towards his room. Wherever Kurapika had hidden himself, it was apparent he knew how to evade enemies since he could escape the troupe in their own base.

Something was off, Chrollo knew it the moment he entered his room. There was something wrong in the space… Uvo better not have snuck in here hoping to find Kurapika! Chrollo wondered if he should set some sort of limitation to this strange game/training. Make it so that Uvo couldn’t enter this room or chase Kurapika during certain hours.

It finally occurred to Chrollo what was wrong as he stopped by his bedroll: the blanket was gone. Pausing for a long moment, even holding his breath, Chrollo heard a faint, smothered noise and glanced towards one of the bookshelves, eyes traveling up their length. He determined that the noise was coming from a bookshelf on the right wall and he moved to it, carefully climbing the old but still surprisingly solid shelves. Perhaps he should consider removing these as well, fixing them up for use when he eventually expanded his library?

There was a thin space between the top of the bookshelf and the ceiling and Chrollo found Kurapika, the plastic baby, and the blanket tucked into that space. The blonde was using the blanket to cover up the cries of the doll and was covering his own mouth when Chrollo glanced into the space.

“Don’t…” Kurapika’s eyes glanced behind Chrollo before he whispered, “Uvo isn’t here, is he?”

“No. You should probably get the supply bag, Uvo is the epitome of the Enhancer class and will hear that doll screaming.”

“Can’t you-?”

“He’s already suspecting me of helping you and began following me when I was looking for you earlier to go to bed.”

“Then you’re useless!” Kurapika snarled. “Probably want this!”

“Actually, I want to win you over, not have you forced into my arms by the troupe. As for me not being able to bring the bag to you, I can offer another solution.”

“Which would be?”

“Alerting you when Uvo is around.”
Kurapika rolled his eyes. “Won’t he know when you tell me that it’s clear if he’s that great of an Enhancer?”

Chrollo felt his lips curve into a smile as his mind thought of another game, one he imagined would be most enjoyable for them both as well as help Kurapika learn to trust him. “Uvo isn’t the most well read person. In fact, I doubt he has read anything more than street signs or building names for years. If I were to quote lines from a book, he wouldn’t know if they’re wrong.” Now Chrollo quirked his lips. “In turn, I doubt he’d care to hear actual lines.”

Kurapika stared at him with tired and bloodshot eyes, but the gears in his head were definitely turning. “So when the quotes are wrong, he’s around. When they’re right, he’s not.”

The boy’s face split into a loud yawn and Chrollo fought the urge to pull Kurapika out of his hiding spot and carry him to bed. At this hour Kurapika should have been tucked under the warm blanket, sound asleep or grumpily dealing with the “baby” before curling back under the blanket.

Shuffling outside of the door caused Chrollo to jump down from the bookcase while Kurapika curled tight her into his hiding place, tucking the blanket more firmly around the doll, further muffling the noise.

“Danchou! Franklin just started breakfast!” a feminine voice called through the door. “Also, Uvo is prowling around and says he’s looking for someone. Do you know anything about that?”

“He’s looking for Kurapika so he can try to destroy his baby,” Chrollo called back as he looked through his pack for his extra blanket and spread that over his bedroll to disguise that Kurapika had stolen his normal one. It was thin, worn, and too small for the bedroll, but smelled thoroughly of Chrollo and should throw Uvo off.

It occurred to Chrollo a few minutes later that he might have said something upsetting. He was proven right two minutes later when he entered the main room to find Shizuku angrily chasing Uvo, Blinky in hand. The giant looked bewildered.

“What happened?” Chrollo asked Machi, attempting to look innocent and knowing that her instincts had already tipped her off.

“Shizuku entered the room, asked who Kurapika was, and started chasing Uvo when he said that he was your mate-to-be. Care to explain why she found that upsetting?”

“She may have asked who Uvo was looking for and I might have told her about Kurapika and the ‘baby’, meaning she misunderstood.”

Machi groaned and rolled her eyes while Uvo dashed down the far hall, Shizuku still on his tail. It would take them at least 10 minutes to get back.

“In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.”

The seamstress glanced at him but then Kurapika came barreling out of the tunnel that led to their bedroom. The omega’s eyes were slightly wild and bloodshot as he snatched up the care bag for the baby then passed a plate to Franklin to fill. Less than a minute after appearing, the boy had disappeared back into the tunnel, covering his tracks as he went.

The brief shock wore off fast as Chrollo filled his mug with coffee, noticed Kurapika’s mug, but found he couldn’t even hope to take it to him as seconds later, Uvo was barreling back into the room, Shizuku still on his tail.
The Enhancer moved fast, collecting some breakfast for himself then noticed Kurapika’s mug before Chrollo could grab it. The man’s face split into a grin as Shizuku’s attention finally left him and she sat down in front of Franklin for breakfast.

“Oi! Where’d he go?” Uvo demanded but didn’t wait for a response before he was tearing down another hallway.

“I think the only way those two will get any rest is if I enforce a stop time,” Chrollo observed.

Machi shrugged. “Uvo should be fine for days.”

“Kurapika doesn’t have his nen.”

The reminder drew a small groan from Machi as they both dug into their breakfast. After the meal, Chrollo went back to his room and was surprised to find the door ajar and the bookshelf alcove empty. Kurapika either decided to move or Uvo had found him.

Chrollo didn’t see or hear Kurapika for the rest of the day, not even when lunch was served. During the afternoon, Shalnark arrived with Nobunaga but left soon after. They delivered the location of six of the scarlet eyes as well as blueprints for the homes they were held in and the details of the security systems.

Machi and Uvo had joined him in studying the map for the nearest pair that were within an hour drive of the base, in the mansion of a rock star who had some rather perverse tastes.

The place should be lightly staffed in two days, so Chrollo planned to make the raid then and move on to the next base. Luckily, the next one would have three sets of the eyes in close proximity and they should be able to collect them before heading to Ryuuseigai.

Chrollo wanted to get Kurapika there in time for his next heat. The base the troupe had there was their main base and it was by far the most comfortable with plenty of room for all of them. He spent the most time at this base when he wasn’t in his home.

By dinner, Chrollo was worried for Kurapika. The omega had completely disappeared and in desperation, he called Shalnark to activate the tracker on Kurapika’s cuff.

The beta had laughed at the situation before doing as Chrollo requested and activated the tracker. The signal for the tracker was weak, but Chrollo managed to follow it back into a tunnel until he was standing exactly where the dot indicated, Uvo behind him.

“We’re going to be suspending this training for the night,” Chrollo stated evenly to Uvo who shrugged slightly but his grin gained a softer edge to it. Kurapika didn’t appear and both began to search the area for the omega.

It was confounding how thoroughly Kurapika could erase his presence, neither of the alphas found a footprint or a scrape in the sand as they investigated the tunnel, checking for small fissures before Uvo looked up.

The ceiling seemed smooth, but Chrollo noticed the small indent when he looked up as well. Clever boy.

Kurapika’s eyes were bloodshot and he glared at Chrollo as he jumped up to the tiny hiding spot. He needed a shower, a meal, and sleep.
“No!” Kurapika objected in angry desperation as Chrollo scooped him up, eyes widening in horror as the doll began to cry again.

The care bag was settled into Kurapika’s arms and he was quick to grab supplies to try to treat the doll as Chrollo jumped down to the tunnel floor. The boy still squirmed, trying to escape Chrollo’s hold, but he was held firmly as the alpha carried him bridal style back to the main room.

Kurapika finally noticed Uvo when they were halfway back and almost jumped, but Chrollo was quick to repeat himself. “The training exercise is suspended. He won’t try to touch the doll and even if he does, there will be no consequences.” Kurapika still gave Uvo a wary glare and the alpha seemed to deflate a bit.

Chrollo finally set Kurapika down right before the final turn into the main room then took the blanket that Kurapika had kept with him and his mess kit. The blanket was tossed into their room, the mess kit taken to Franklin. Chrollo wasn’t sure how Kurapika managed to clean it while hiding from Uvo, but it was clean.

Dinner that night was spaghetti and meat sauce, and after the doll had been shut off by Paku, Kurapika had been quick to dig into the meal, cleaning his plate fast. When Uvo settled down, the boy was quick to grab the doll again, eyeing the giant suspiciously.

Chrollo didn’t even get halfway through his own meal when Kurapika yawned widely again. “There’s a bathroom with a shower in our room,” he informed the blonde. “Uvo won’t enter our room tonight, so you can shower and go to bed in peace.”

Kurapika blinked at Chrollo for a long moment then stood and headed towards one of the tunnels. Chrollo was quick to jump up when he saw that the exhausted omega was going in the wrong direction and walked Kurapika to their door, directing him in before returning to the main room to finish his dinner.

“He’s really out of it,” Paku observed then glanced at Uvo. “Did you sleep at all in the last two days?”

“No,” the giant alpha admitted. “Wasn’t planning to be that intense, but when I couldn’t find him at all…”

Chrollo glanced at the man and shook his head. He was definitely going to be putting some permanent restrictions in place.

After dinner, Chrollo cleaned both his and Kurapika’s mess kits before heading back to his room. Kurapika was already in the bedroll, blanket wrapped around him securely and he saw that the boy had the doll wrapped into the blanket with him. Creeping as silently as he could, Chrollo moved to the bathroom to shower himself, smiling when he smelled his shampoo and soap in the residual steam.

Once finished, the troupe leader changed into a simple pair of pants before moving to join Kurapika in the bed. His scent on the omega caused him to grin again and for a moment he imagined Kurapika curled up in their bed, their baby tucked into his chest.

It was a bit of a struggle to pull a portion of the blanket away from Kurapika and the boy partially woke up, but he just blinked sleepily at Chrollo before curling back up to sleep, his head once again tucked under Chrollo’s chin, face into his chest.

The return of the comfortable position was beyond welcome for Chrollo as he tucked the blanket
around them and attempted to work the doll out of Kurapika’s arms. The blonde clung to it as though it were his lifeline and Chrollo relented after a minute. The thing was off right now, so it wasn’t going to start screaming and wake them up.

It was raining outside, not unusual on the island where Chrollo’s home was. He was sitting on the couch, a book in his hand and a toddler on his lap. Bright grey eyes looked up at him expectantly and Chrollo smiled as his eyes took in the picture book they were apparently reading then glanced towards the dining room table.

Kurapika sat with a slightly older child, they seemed to be working on a book as well, the child reading aloud. A buzzer in the kitchen caused Kurapika to look up and the toddler squirmed out of Chrollo’s lap and ran to his mother.

Kurapika smiled at the child as Chrollo set the book aside then shooed both children to go wash up for dinner. Chrollo watched before following Kurapika into the kitchen. There was a slight shift in the air and as Chrollo turned the corner to enter the kitchen, he found the omega smirking at him, a bowl of whipped cream and chocolate chips in hand and no clothes on his thin body.

“Really Chrollo, couldn’t wait a few minutes for dessert?”

The alpha’s eyes flew open as he cursed all of existence when the devil-spawn alarm went off. Kurapika woke up also but was moving slowly and as he shut off the alarm, Chrollo felt something cup his ‘little problem’ between his legs.

The man’s breath froze at the feeling and the slight shifting that occured. Kurapika had shown no interest in being physical except during his heat, surely this couldn’t be…?

Reaching slowly under the blanket, Chrollo prayed but he wasn’t sure for what as Kurapika shifted a bit more, causing whatever was on Chrollo’s manhood to shift. The answer was both disappointing and very worrying: the doll. Kurapika must have dropped it at some point because it had migrated south between their bodies.

At least he hadn’t potentially freaked Kurapika out was Chrollo’s thought as he fished the doll out, turning away from the blonde as he did, and set it beside their bedroll before rising to head for the bathroom, taking care to keep his back towards Kurapika.

Despite having had a shower the night before, Chrollo turned it on again and stood under the cold, punishing spray, but his problem didn’t fade as it usually did most mornings. Instead, his mind brought back images he’d previously dreamed of involving the blonde. Kurapika calling to him in need while wearing only his coat. Approaching his while wearing only an apron. The image he’d just dreamed involving the boy offering dessert in the nude… Chrollo’s cock pulsed with each image and he realized what was happening after a minute.

He was in rut!

Chrollo was always pleased that his ruts were infrequent and not particularly intense, he could usually get through them fairly easily but currently he was burning! His instincts yelled for him to go back into the room and take the omega that he fancied and that smelled like him. To pump in and out of the boy until they both found release, until the he begged to be marked…

Grabbing his cock, Chrollo pumped himself quickly even as his mind tried to figure out what was happening. His last rut had been almost three months ago and it normally didn’t bother him for at least a year at a time, so why now?!
The answer came to him along with his release: Kurapika.

Though he’d never spent any amount of time around an omega before, Chrollo knew enough about mating to know that the cycles of alphas and omegas that mated usually lined up. His body and mind had already accepted Kurapika as his mate so his ruts were going to start coming regularly, lining up with Kurapika’s heats.

Chrollo had sworn to himself that he wouldn’t mark Kurapika until the boy agreed, but this could prove daunting. Especially if their cycles lined up before Kurapika agreed.

It. Was. HELL!

Due to the delay of him taking a morning shower and Kurapika’s exhaustion from the day before, neither of them made it to the main room to start breakfast and Machi took over the task that morning. She wasn’t a bad cook, but she did have some unusual ideas for food.

This particular morning she stewed some apples and prunes together and served those with a handful of granola on top, declaring it to be a ‘breakfast crumble’. It had tasted alright, but Chrollo was unnaturally distracted by Kurapika eating. Had he always looked so delicious?!

Chrollo’s mouth dried when he watched the boy put a bite into his mouth then watered when his little pink tongue appeared and licked a stray piece of granola from his spoon.

“Danchou? Danchou!” Franklin’s voice called through the haze that had settled in Chrollo’s mind and he slowly turned his head to face the beta. He didn’t smell anywhere near as intoxicating as the omega next to him.

“I was thinking that Kurapika and I should practice making pasta again today. It would mean that Uvo’s ‘training’ will have to stop by midafternoon,” the beta stated. “Is that alright?”

Kurapika turned his head hopefully at Franklin’s suggestion, he much preferred cooking with the beta to Uvo’s ‘child defense’ training. He wasn’t going to beg, but he did hope that the alpha would allow it.

It occurred to him that Chrollo’s eyes looked strange, glazed, but the man looked at him then nodded. Kurapika felt a slow grin pull at his lips as he finished his breakfast and then moved to the water pipe to clean his mess kit.

Machi and Uvo both noticed the sweat that built on Chrollo’s forehead as he watched the omega walk to the dish cleaning area, they both also saw how Chrollo practically doubled over as Kurapika bent to turn on the water.

“I have to… find something!” Chrollo declared, forcefully ripping his attention from Kurapika’s hindquarters lest he give in to his impulses and ruin any progress he’d made thus far with the boy.

Several minutes later when the doll was switched on, Chrollo was secretly glad he was in the bathroom when Kurapika came tearing into their room to grab the blanket and care bag again, hiding behind the door to the room until Uvo passed while wrapping the doll in the blanket, and then running to find a new hiding spot.

The boy didn’t see that Chrollo was clutching one of his shirts.

Unlike Kurapika with his heat, Chrollo was quite experienced in dealing with his rut. When he was alone at least. He’d make a few extra stops in the bathroom to relieve himself, but he didn’t go out of his mind. With the sweet scent of an omega nearby, one that was covered in his scent, Chrollo
practically confined himself to the bathroom. Every time he wandered out into the bedroom, Kurapika’s scent would cause his head to reel.

Going out into the hall made things easier, but around noon while he was attempting to distract himself with a book, the boy went racing through the area when he had read a quote out loud to Machi. It occurred to Chrollo that he’d just used their code, but luckily Uvo wasn’t in the vicinity.

Kurapika had filled his cup from the mess kit with some water and taken a quick drink before grabbing a book that had been next to Chrollo, bending next to the alpha as he did so.

Chrollo was on his feet so fast that his head spun as Kurapika’s sweet scent reached his nose. Every muscle in his body screamed to take the omega over his shoulder and find some a place where they wouldn’t be disturbed.

Uvo’s appearance caused a territorial growl to rip from Chrollo’s throat, especially when he saw the Enhancer move towards Kurapika. The smell of fear caused him to lash out, instincts howling for him to protect and impress his omega.

The giant got three large steps into the room before Chrollo tackled him, surprising Uvo enough to knock him off balance while Kurapika ran for it.

“Danchou?!” the giant yelped when he saw the normally well-controlled man’s expression. “It’s just training!”

Chrollo growled lowly before standing and moving to grab his book again and head towards his room again.


“I’m going to the restroom. Don’t bother me,” Chrollo replied sharply, even as he gave Uvo another sharp look. For some reason, he REALLY didn’t want another alpha anywhere near Kurapika. Just the thought of it made his skin crawl!

It was as he moved into the bathroom that Chrollo realized he had a massive problem that night: how was he supposed to sleep next to Kurapika like this?! Just smelling the boy made him have to excuse himself! Should he make Kurapika sleep in the main room tonight? Where another alpha could touch him?

The dark alpha shook his head. This was an easy problem to address, he’d just move up the heist to tonight, take Uvo and Machi with him and leave Kurapika here with Franklin, Paku, and Shizuku. After obtaining the eyes, he could send Uvo ahead so he wouldn’t be at the base, and then tomorrow night he’d move himself and Kurapika to the next base. No sleeping together and most importantly, no other alphas nearby.
Chrollo could taste his venom marinating on his tongue with its spicy taste, lingering on his taste buds obsessively. He had to gulp constantly and each time he could feel his stomach turn, his gums pulsed as the residue of Kurapika’s scent in the bathroom taunted him relentlessly.

“. . . Kurapika. . .” Chrollo groaned deep in his throat as he pumped his own member. Images of Kurapika from his dreams made his legs weak and his knees wobble a bit. Kurapika in a tiny white apron, Kurapika licking whipped cream from his fingers, Kurapika with his eyes glowing from passion and pleasure against the velvet black of his sheets. . . Kurapika with his mark proudly displayed on his shoulder. He came with a gruff groan all over his hands.

Chrollo sneered at the white glob spread over his hands and the fact that he was still hard. He had to get out of here before he did something he’d regret. If he attacked Kurapika and marked him forcefully, he’d not only make himself out to be a liar, he’d also prove to Kurapika that he was nothing but a monster. He wasn’t sure they would be able to come back from that; Kurapika would be unhappy and he’d wouldn’t be able to be too happy either with Kurapika so miserable. As he said, he needed to get out while his rut raged through him.

“Chrollo?” Machi’s call was accompanied by a knock to the door. “Are you okay?” She asked with a level of care that was unlike her.

Forcing back the growl that tried to escape his chest, Chrollo shoved himself uncomfortably back into his pants and washed his hands off in the sink.

Opening the door, Chrollo felt his insides twist. Kurapika had walked by recently, he felt like a dog getting all hot and bothered by just a whiff of the omega.

“We’re heading out tonight, I want you and Uvogin with me for this heist.”

“That’s probably a good idea if you’re still set on having Kurapika willingly.”

Of course she would have guessed his rather compromising situation.
“I am. I’m also sending Phinks and Bonolenov ahead to the next base to scout out the next set of eyes. I want Kurapika in Ryuuseigai before his next heat arrives.”

Machi stared at him, one brow raised before she huffed. “You know none of the alphas would dare to think about touching Kurapika, but I’ll give you a pass since your brain is soaked in hormones right now.”

Chrollo decided not to dignify that with a response and stomped past the woman and into his and Kurapika’s room to pack up his things. He immediately regretted the decision as the heady scent of the boy attacked him the moment he stepped into the room.

Chrollo’s hand flew to his face as he bit back another growl, his fingers digging into his cheek and he almost doubled over and he could feel the growing wet spot on his pants. Great, now he’ll have to wash cum from his pants.

“Go wait outside or something, I’ll gather everyone and pack your things,” Machi called out in exasperation. Chrollo could only nod mutely before turning quickly to stumble out of the room and into the halls. Unfortunately Kurapika was also heading back to the room at that moment.

Chrollo felt a vicious snarl rise up in his throat as their eyes locked. Kurapika is so beautiful, dust in his hair and bits of sand stuck to his skin. His eyes seemed to widen and Chrollo realized he was already closing in on the boy.

His vision wavered and he felt light headed from all the blood vacating his head and rushing into his groin.

“Chrollo. . .?” Kurapika’s voice, like in his dream from so long ago, sounded like a siren call to his murky senses.

Chrollo was suddenly shoved into the wall as a pink blur rushed passed him and yanked Kurapika away from him. He snarled at Machi as she pushed Kurapika up against the opposite wall, her arms up, guarding him.

“Go wait outside!” Machi yelled at him, the others looking down the hall curiously. It wasn’t like her to yell.
Chrollo couldn’t think straight, not with the object of every fantasy running through his head pinned against a wall by some filthy beta looking at him with those beautiful red eyes. He stepped forward, his pheromones basically attacking Machi, he could see her begin to tremble under the full pressure of his power.

“Chrollo! If you want to rape him—” Kurapika’s eyes flared and he yelped as he pushed further back on the wall in fear. “—go ahead, but you’re the one that has to deal with the consequences come morning!”

Chrollo felt his head clear just a little bit as he witnessed the fear that enveloped the omega. Taking a step back, Chrollo ended up punching a wall, something he wouldn’t normally do even in rut, and stormed away with a shout, going so far as too slam the door on his way out.

Kurapika felt a chill through his entire body after the encounter, he could tell something was wrong with the man when he’d stumbled out of their room. He thought the man might be sick but had stopped in his approach when he smelled the scent of cum on him. Then he’d suddenly been shoved up against a wall by machi and she started talking about rape and even letting him do it. Kurapika was obviously shaken.

“I wouldn’t have let him actually do it, not like he would have.”

“Didn’t look that way to me,” Kurapika growled back at the woman.

“Believe it or not, Chrollo isn’t the type to force himself on anyone.”

She turned away with a snap and marched down the hall like a drill sergeant off to fight an army. She began barking orders at the others, apparently Uvogin, her and the troupe leader were heading out on a heist and Bonolenov, Koltopi, and Phinks would be heading out ahead of the rest.

Kurapika felt almost relieved to be left in the care of the kind pakunoda, the friendly Franklin, and the almost sweetly oblivious Shizuku.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” Chrollo sighed when Machi and Uvogin joined him outside the entrance to their newest base. The giant had tried to ask what was up with him attacking the man
earlier, but Chrollo found he just wanted to forget it even happened.

“Your rut ain’t anything to be ashamed of danchou,” Uvogin muttered back and Chrollo groaned as he let his head fall into his hands. He’d never let the troupe see him so out of his wits before.

“If it’s any consolation, I’m very sorry about tackling you.”

“It’s no worries danchou!” The giant grinned with a hard slap to the dark alpha’s back.

“If you both are done, we should get going.”

“Yes, let's get moving,” Chrollo sighed. It didn’t take the trio long to hot wire the first inconspicuous car they came across but it was still a rather awkward hour long drive towards the mansion of some pop artist.

Shalnark’s notes had been detailed, giving him the complete blueprints and in-depth analysis of the security. The eyes were located in a safe in the basement, luckily he had three pairs so Chrollo felt a little more accomplished.

Machi felt a slight tingle in her brain as she read over the files Shalnark had sent to her phone. She felt like she was forgetting something and that feeling never dwelled well with her. Unfortunately she didn’t have time to think on it more as Uvogin pulled up a few streets away from the eccentric yet unimaginative mansion of the ridiculous pop star.

There should only be a few guards around the place, the artist was on tour so they’d be able to sneak in relatively unnoticed and leave with the eyes before anyone was the wiser. Yet for some reason, Machi felt that this wouldn’t end so easily.

“Machi, Uvo, infiltrate through the balcony.” Chrollo pointed to a balcony at least three floors up. “Look for anything of value while I head to the basement.” Chrollo waited for both Spiders to give their approval before adding, “Try to move without alerting the guards,” and headed off through the gardens to the back door.

Chrollo scoffed when no security system went off when he broke the lock. Just pitiful! Did he think his house was safe just because he wasn’t in it? Chrollo would be surprised it he didn’t find squatters at this point.
Machi watched the man go before Uvogin began to move towards the balcony so she began to follow. While Machi used her strings to repel up the side of the building, Uvogin jumped the three stories, not even needing much of a running start. Machi took a moment to appreciate the strong wire-like muscles in his arms before shaking herself loose from those thoughts and focused on the pestering feeling that she was missing something.

She kept thinking on what it could possibly be when Uvogin joined her to walk into the room the balcony led to and they both froze.

“Well shit,” Machi whispered as it finally hit her what she had forgotten.

“Danchou ‘ill not like this,” Uvogin agreed.

Chrollo moves silently, his skill hunter out as he simply walked through walls. He was quick, probably making it down to the basement before Machi and Uvogin were even inside the house. He dodged a few guards, blending in with the shadows.

The basement had three guards playing cards in front of an obnoxiously large safe door. God this man was eccentric, Chrollo found himself hating him.

He hid in the shadows for a moment, watching the guards laugh and chat with each other like a lion stalking its prey. Quietly, he removed three pins from his jacket and aimed one at the furthest man’s forehead. He was dead before the others could even register the dull thud of the pin borrowing into his head.

The next two pins were equally as deadly, not one of the men could even scream.

Chrollo stepped over the bloodied floor and moved to the safe and phased through it effortlessly. That was when his phone began to ring.

“Yes Machi?” He hummed, his rut already feeling more controlled now that he was away from Kurapika and he felt sickly satisfied to have rid the world of two alphas that would try to take his
prize.

“Danchou do you have the eyes yet?”

“I’m grabbing them right now.” Chrollo grinned as he pulled the fun fun cloth out and wrapped the entire contents of the safe into it, including the three pairs of eyes.

“Good, you’re going to want to see this. . . Third floor overlooking the garden, the balcony room.”

Chrollo hummed in curiosity as Machi hung up. He wondered idly what would be so important as he snuck out of the safe again and up the stairs, continuing to dodge guards and blending into the darkness.

It wasn’t hard to locate the room Machi and Uvogin had deemed important enough to forgo his orders. It was huge, taking up most of the third floor and only having one entry, the door was inside another room, almost like what you’d expect for a private bathroom.

The room was covered in the smell of lavender and sugar, it was overbearing so Chrollo had to cover his nose as he opened the door and took in the room.

It was large, not as big as the main room but it was definitely lavish. The room was circular with a bed in the center of the room inset into the floor with steps leading out and up to a curtained bath. The bath looked to be stylized like a Japanese hot spring. On the opposite side of the room was the balcony that would overlook the peaceful gardens and between them sat a small area that looked to have been built for a baby.

Chrollo couldn’t pinpoint what was so important about the room until he spotted an area that looked like someone had had a fit, painting and building materials were strewn about and in the center of it all was a picture.

Machi watched Chrollo pick up the picture of Kurapika that they had sent out during the auction, he ran his fingers over it as a deadly aura overtook the room. Chrollo was beginning to understand what Machi had figured out for herself just minutes ago. This pop star had been bidding for Kurapika. In fact, many holders of the eyes probably bid on the boy and many probably hadn’t given up. Like this man hadn’t.
“Machi,” Chrollo called as he turned, hand clutching a white jeweled collar in a death grip. Machi felt a chill run down her spine at the look in his eyes. “Close every door.”

Uvogin worked quickly to check every door and window from the outside, cringing every time they heard a loud crash or angry snarling. As soon as every exit was firmly shut, Machi and Uvogin watched through a window as their dark leader summoned his indoor fish and saw how they reacted to their master’s fury and began to tear into the guards, leaving them pinned to the walls and floor, large chunks of meat and flesh missing.

Chrollo took a minute to appreciate the sounds of agony from the men who would dare plan to keep his omega before using bookmarks to phase through the walls to leave the building and then remarked the indoor fish. They’d all stay alive though unfeeling until their alpha returned. When he opened the door they’d all die in front of him.

“Let’s go.”
Kurapika had been terrified of Chrollo when the alpha had left, terrified in a way he had never been before. When the alpha had approached him, looking ready to jump and mark him, he’d felt both terror and… Excitement?

Machi moving between them and yelling about how she would allow his rape had broken that momentary spell and all Kurapika had felt was terror.

And to think that earlier that day, he’d thought that maybe he could trust Chrollo after he had tackled Uvo so he could get away.

Now Kurapika was back in their room, sitting at the top of a bookcase as he read a book. He didn’t know why he was in the room, his brain insisted that he should get out and hide somewhere like he’d done the other night, avoid being alone with Chrollo at all costs.

A knock on the door drew his attention and he looked up as the door was pushed open by Shizuku. The bespectacled girl glanced in, obviously looking for him, her eyebrows furrowing in confusion as she glanced around the room.

“Franklin, I don’t see the person you said would be in here!” the girl called down the hall and Kurapika suppressed a snort of laughter. Then a horrifying item was tossed to Shizuku. "If he doesn’t come out, threaten to turn that thing on!” was the yelled response, and Kurapika was dragging himself from his hiding place immediately when Shizuku began to study the devilish doll.

“You could have just said dinner was ready!” Kurapika yelled as he grabbed the doll from Shizuku and tossed it into a corner.

Franklin glanced towards them from the pot as Kurapika and Shizuku moved down the hall. “Well it’s not and that was more fun. And it got that doll out of here!”

Kurapika felt a slight twitching in his lips as he realized he wasn’t the only one annoyed by the doll.

The large man turned his attention back to his pot and Kurapika glanced to his side as someone pulled at his hand. Kortopi. The beta had always been silent around Kurapika and it was rather surprising that he seemed to be interested in interacting now.

Kurapika allowed himself to be led by the short beta to a small table that had been set up sometime in the last couple of days and was a bit surprised to find a battered chess board and pieces already set up for a game. Kortopi sat behind the black side and gestured for Kurapika to sit on the white side.

“Do you know how to play?” the beta asked and Kurapika shrugged.

“I know the rules, but I can’t say that I’ve ever played.”

“Practice then,” was the short response. “White goes first.”
Kurapika truly hadn’t played chess before, only read the rules so he knew the possible moves available for each piece. He stared at the board for a long moment, trying to remember all of those rules before he grasped one of the pawns and moved it forward a single space.

“First moves with pawns can be two spaces,” Kortopi pointed out.

Kurapika narrowed his eyes slightly in thought as he studied the board then shook his head to signal he was fine with his first move.

Kortopi shrugged, a gesture barely discernible through his hair, before grasping one of his own pawns and moving it forward two spaces.

Three moves later, Kurapika had his first hiccup when he confused the rules of checkers and tried to jump two pawns that Kortopi had lined up with his bishop only to have it explained that he couldn’t take them like that and Kurapika took back the move altogether, recognizing the simple trap that had been set up.

The game had been slow after that, taking several hours as both Conjurers attempted to strategize around the other. Despite how new he was, Kurapika was decent as setting up his plays and put Kortopi on the defensive at least twice. He still lost.

Kurapika stared at the board for a minute after Kortopi had declared “Checkmate,” before finally seeing what the other had done. His response was to grab his captured pieces and setting up the board again.

The next game lasted through dinner and Kurapika couldn’t have said what was served due to how intent he was on the game. This one ended in yet another loss for him and he set the board yet again. This time Kurapika managed to hold on long enough to force a draw out of Kortopi, but when he moved to setup the board again, his hand was caught and the pieces removed.

“Bed,” Kortopi ordered.

Kurapika opened his mouth to argue but Franklin, who had been watching this last game, was already on his feet and grabbed Kurapika’s shoulders, hauling him to his feet and marching him towards the hall.

“Ah!” Shizuku suddenly exclaimed, causing both Kurapika and Franklin to pause before they reached the hall. “Danchou is in rut! That’s why he’s been acting so weird!”

“WHAT?!” Kurapika yelped as the hair on his arms stood on end.

Franklin groaned and rolled his eyes then grabbed Kurapika’s shoulders and pushed him towards the room he shared with Chrollo. The omega fought desperately despite not having nen currently.

“You can’t possibly expect me to sleep in there with him! He almost-”

“That’s why he went out!” Franklin barked as he pushed open the door to the room. “He’s trying to minimize his time alone with you right now so he doesn’t do something you don’t agree to! Now I suggest you get some sleep because it’s likely Chrollo is going to be staying out all night with the intent of sleeping tomorrow while you’re awake.”

The door was yanked shut and Kurapika fought the urge to pound on the door, demanding to be let out. His eyes traveled over the room, landed on the bedroll and he shivered. If Chrollo did come in and wasn’t in his right mind then… But that could happen anyway no matter where he went in this base. If the alpha wanted him, he doubted any member of the troupe would actually oppose him.
Taking a deep breath, Kurapika admitted that he didn’t have much of a choice. If Chrollo was authentically planning to stay out all night, then staying awake would be the wrong choice because he would be tired tomorrow and unable to dodge Uvo.

His feet were a bit sandy from the hall and Kurapika rinsed them off in the bathroom before crawling into the bedroll. It was… strange. He hadn’t slept alone in the bedroll at any point and he was oddly comfortable having the alpha next to him.

More than once Kurapika shifted, attempting to get comfortable but something seemed to be missing. He wasn’t cold, but he kept curling into the second blanket that had been added to the bedroll, digging his face into the soft folds of the thing.

Unlike any other morning thus far, there was no alarm to wake Kurapika the next morning, he just slowly returned to consciousness. As his brain slowly woke, he snuggled into the warm blankets and breathed deeply the scent that clung to the blanket he was hugging. It was several minutes later before Kurapika blinked as he opened his eyes and glanced around the room, the realization hitting that he was in fact alone. Chrollo had stayed out the entire night.

Climbing to his feet, Kurapika took a minute to select a book from the shelves before leaving the room and finding that Kortopi had beat him out to the main room. The little man had a small pot of cinnamon apple oatmeal cooking and glanced up as Kurapika entered. He seemed amused when Kurapika’s eyes glanced around the empty room.

“Danchou probably won’t be back for several hours,” the Conjurer stated as he tasted the oatmeal and sprinkled some brown sugar into the pot. “We can play some more chess after breakfast.”

The offer to play was oddly pleasing to the Kuruta and he smiled slightly as he settled down to read his book. “Thanks.”

“Danchou likes chess too, taught me. I’m good, he’s better.”

That revelation didn’t surprise Kurapika at all. But it did cause Kurapika to wonder what it would be like to play the alpha. See if he could manage to beat him.

Kurapika only got a few pages into the book before Kortopi made a noise and signaled for him to hand over the bowl from his mess kit. The blonde was accepting the filled bowl back when Shizuku entered the room, Franklin close behind her.

“Hm? Who’s the omega?” the bespectacled girl asked as she approached with her mess bowl ready. “Is he someone’s mate?”

“I’ll explain later, Shizuku,” Franklin promised as he sat down heavily, careful for Kurapika’s book. The large man glanced at Kurapika then seemed to think for a moment as Kortopi filled his bowl. “Kurapika, we’re going to be looking through some recipes for a late lunch today.”

A slight bolt of confusion touched the Kuruta as he spooned a bite of oatmeal into his mouth. “Why lunch?” The troupe normally just tossed something, usually leftovers or something like that together for lunch. Kurapika had figured that out quickly, also realizing he wasn’t going to get anything during those early days. That had changed rather notably since Chrollo had declared his intent to pursue Kurapika as his mate, the troupe seemed determined to ensure Kurapika was well fed after that.

The scarred beta took a bite of his own breakfast before responding. “Danchou wants to change bases tonight, he announced that plan yesterday. A late lunch will give those of us here a meal
before we head out and get rid of the last of the perishable food items.”

Move… Tonight? Alone with Chrollo?

Kurapika swallowed his spit which suddenly felt very thick on his tongue.

He wasn’t sure how or when his bowl was emptied, either by eating or washing, but less than half an hour later, Kurapika was attempting to focus as he began to play Kortopi at chess again. His distraction caused him to be creamed horribly in the first game, but by the second one he was focused and intent again. The second game ended in a tie as did the third round. They were halfway through a fourth round when Chrollo stumbled into the base, alone.

The normally well-put-together alpha looked tired and ragged, like he had run two double marathons without nen. But he straightened instantly after entering, eyes turning to Kurapika. Despite the man’s exhaustion, he managed a “Good morning” before walking in a straight and proud manner towards their room. No one missed the sound of the alpha stumbling as soon as he was out of sight.

Kurapika stared after Chrollo for a long moment, fighting a strange urge to go after him and make sure that he made it their room without breaking his neck. He was halfway to his feet before he knew it, the three present members of the troupe watching him intently.

Finally Kurapika pushed himself up fully to follow. It wasn’t that he was concerned, he just wanted to make sure he was there to see it if Chrollo wiped out.

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After finishing the job and sending Machi and Uvo ahead with the scarlet eyes so that Kurapika wouldn’t become aware of them too quickly, Chrollo had gone for a walk. A VERY long walk. One that had taken the rest of the night and most of the morning as he cut through gardens, libraries, a museum, two parks, five apartments, and seven mansions.

He hadn’t really stolen anything aside from a few flowers and some rare First Edition books, it was just something to kill time and take his mind off of his rut. And his rage at that eccentric alpha.

Kurapika did look very good in white, very pure and innocent. Perhaps he should add a sitting room to his house, specifically for Kurapika. A place for him to enjoy that was just his with plenty of blankets and pillows…

Chrollo had thought of the collar he’d had made for Kurapika then considered the white one the eccentric pop star had readied. Neither of them understood that Kurapika was a stubborn little spitfire, not at first at least. Chrollo could admit that now, even if the thought of Kurapika wearing the black collar gave him problems.

When he’d finally returned to the base, he was tired due to the long walk and the thinking he had done, but the moment Kurapika’s scent had reached him, his pride had forced him to straighten up and appear strong. When he had looked at the boy, the urge to wrap him into a hug and carry him to bed was still there, but his body was tired enough that it only urged him to cuddle the other. It was a welcome reprieve.

As soon as he was out of sight while heading to their room, his posture sagged again and his shoulder hit a wall before he reached their door, which he opened by falling into. The resulting meeting he had with the floor got him a little over halfway to the bedroll and he began to tug off his boots, intent to be ready to sleep the moment he made it to the blankets.
“Hey?”

The sweet, angelic voice and scent gave Chrollo a surge of energy and he was on his feet again instantly. “Is something wrong, Kurapika?” he asked, turning to examine the boy who was staring in at him from the doorframe. For a moment his brain coughed up the image of the boy wearing only a little apron since he couldn’t see the rest of his body, but he was pleased when aside from a warm feeling, his other body reactions were far more muted.

Kurapika examined him for a minute before sighing. “We’ll be making late lunch in a few hours, what me to wake you then?”

“Yes, thank you,” the dark alpha replied before setting his attention on his boots again. One of the books he’d collected slid out of his pocket and landed on the floor when he bent to deal with them. “That’s for you,” he offered to the blonde in explanation when he realized that Kurapika was examining the book. “It’s a First Edition of a remake of ‘The Prince’ by Machiavelli.”

“The supposed antichrist and theorist who preached of fear being better than love?” Kurapika asked as he moved into the room to collect the book.

“I believed you would enjoy a debate on why he was wrong,” Chrollo replied with a faint smile before pulling a small flower from a button hole and tucking it behind Kurapika’s ear as he knelt to pick up the book. “I can’t say I follow many of his teachings, but I doubt you’d want to play devil’s advocate.”

Kurapika meanwhile had grabbed the flower and was examining it. “A daisy?”


“In ancient times, it was believed that burning the leaves of these warded off evil serpents,” Kurapika stated as he set the flower on his pack. “Sleep well.”

Chrollo watched the boy leave, taking the book with him before glancing at where the flower now sat on Kurapika’s small bag of meager belongings. He hadn’t thrown it away at least and he smiled as he lay down. Asters also meant love and patience.

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Kurapika played another game of chess with Kortopi, feeling oddly relaxed and finally managed to beat the other before Franklin called him over to check the supplies they currently had. The large beta was unconcerned for the potatoes and carrots they had.

“These are hardy, they’ll keep well and we can take them with us to the next base,” the beta explained before gesturing to the chicken legs. “These on the other hand-”

“Won’t keep, and we should use the tomatoes,” Kurapika concluded as he poked at the slightly wrinkled skin of the fruit. “What about some sort of salad and grilled chicken?”

“No lettuce,” Franklin pointed out. “But we could try making a grilled chicken leg with a rub and use the tomatoes and some other vegetables to make gazpacho.”

“What’s gazpacho?”

The slight smile that pulled at Franklin’s lips was amused. “What should have been the first soup I ever had you make now that I’m thinking of it. You wouldn’t have had to use the stove!”
Franklin was right, the gazpacho was an easy recipe to follow and was very forgiving in regards to time. Kurapika was about to taste it easily and season it with the salt, pepper, and balsamic vinegar. The rub for the chicken legs was also interesting since the mixing of the spices was very mathematical and easily done.

The afternoon was half over and Kurapika had made decent headway into the new book Chrollo had given him when Franklin urged him to go wake the alpha for lunch. Setting a bookmark, Kurapika rose to head towards the hall to the room the two of them shared. He knocked on the door before entering, hoping it would wake Chrollo.

Unfortunately, the alpha was still sleeping when he opened the door and Kurapika mentally groaned as he headed to the bedroll.

“Hey, Chrollo?” he called out softly, praying that the normally light-sleeper would wake and that Kurapika wouldn’t be required to touch him. “Chrollo?”

There was a grunt and the alpha turned towards him, nostrils flaring but not waking.

Taking a deep breath, Kurapika reached out to lay his hand on the man’s shoulder and attempted to shake it gently. It happened so fast, one moment he was staring down at Chrollo, the next he had been captured in the sleeping alpha’s arms, and he was nuzzling Kurapika’s neck, exactly where Chrollo would have to mark to claim Kurapika as his mate.

The shriek that tore from Kurapika’s throat would have woken the dead, so it also did the trick with the snuggling alpha who blinked at Kurapika for a long moment before tightening his grip and pulling the other firmly against him.

“Stop!” Kurapika ordered when he felt a light nip on his scent glands, terror bringing tears to his eyes. The response was automatic as the alpha froze then released his hold on the omega.

Kurapika didn’t wait for an explanation or apology, he simply tore out of the room as quickly as his currently non-nen enhanced body would allow.
‘I am an idiot.’ Chrollo sighed as he laid his head against the steering wheel. He’d just finished packing the car with his and Kurapika’s bags and gotten in to wait for Kurapika to finish explaining to Shizuku who exactly he was. It was becoming less frequent, Shizuku was starting to remember him little by little.

Kurapika was finally starting to warm up to him and He blew it! He’d ruined so much progress with one dumb moment of hormonal instinct. The lingering effects of kuroros rut was an asshole and he’d never wished so strongly for a punch in the gut.

Kuroro sighed again, playing with the idea of inviting Shizuku to ride along with kurapika and him just so he could be sure Kurapika felt safe and comfortable around him again but he just couldn’t let go of the chance for alone time with kurapika.

He let Kurapika linger with Shizuku longer than strictly necessary and before too long, Kurapika wandered to the car. He paused outside the door as if he was trying to calm himself and chrollo tried not to stare so he didn’t scare him off.

After a prolonged moment, Kurapika finally opened the door and slid into the car. The air hung awkwardly between them as Kurapika buckled up before clicking on the radio. Well, obviously he didn’t want to talk.

Shaking his head, Chrollo put the car in drive and began the long journey to the next base. They sat silently for the first hour, Kurapika scrunched up against the door, just staring at the passing scenery. As Chrollo had to keep his window down since Kurapika scent was still addling his senses.

“So,” Chrollo drummed his fingers on the steering wheel anxiously before clearing his throat and turning down the light classical music. “How are you liking the book?” He tried for conversation since it always got Kurapika to open up to him.

“It’s good,” Kurapika mumbled without looking at the alpha. He didn’t know what was coming over him: feeling excitement? Caring about the murderer of his people? If his people could see him now they would be sick with him!
“Did you get to the part-“

“I don’t really feel like talking,” Kurapika interrupted him, and it was true he didn’t want to talk. Not when he could still feel the man’s lips on his scent gland and the shiver of arousal ghosting over his senses, disgusting him on the deepest levels.

“Look, Kurapika, I am really sorry about . . . The event this morning it was unfavorable.” Chrollo sighed as he looked at the boy’s back with pleading eyes.

“Unfavorable?” Kurapika finally turned to him, his eyes glowing a dull red. “You’d call that unfavorable?!“

“Yes, upon a few things,“

“Well I’d call it shameful! Disgusting! Absolutely horrifying!” Kurapika screamed at him.

“Kurapika-“

“Don’t you get it?! I hate you, and I’ll always hate you! Nothing you ever do is going to change that and every moment you spend trying to force me to mate with you is only making it worse!” Kurapika was panting when he finished his speech.

Chrollo sat in the heavy silence in the wake of Kurapika’s words, a million thoughts running through his head but he knew anything he’d say would only make the situation worse. So in the end Kurapika resumed his spot of staring out at the countryside and Chrollo turned the music back up then focused on driving.

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“So you came back to me, your most trusted friend to help you find the poor imprisoned Kurapika?” Hisoka droned as he bent back in his seat in ecstasy.

Gon and Killua cringed, they had only just sat down and explained the situation they had found themselves in and already the man was being creepy and insufferable. Like anytime the two boys
met the clown in public, everyone around turned with disturbed concern for the alpha/omega pair.

“Yeah, sure Hisoka,” Killua spoke slowly through clenched teeth. “Would you just tell us where they are heading?” He demanded, ignoring how other customers glared at him for raising his voice.

“Hm,” Hisoka hummed as he took a long sip from his overly complicated and sweet frappe. “They’ve had him for over a month now right?” he asked calculating what this could mean. The troupe never kept treasures for longer than a few weeks and then there was the unsettling fact that the troupe had stopped the auction for the boy. If he knew Chrollo as well as he believed, then there were only two possibilities: either he had realized what he had and bitten into that pretty neck immediately so no one could steal from him, or he was now trying to woo the boy.

The second option was better for Hisoka since there was no way he’d ever get that angry little spitfire’s consent. It meant he still had time, time to rely on the children sitting in front of him to provide him with the chance to whisk the omega away so him and Illumi could claim him as theirs, and they wouldn’t be dumb enough give other alphas the chance to take what is rightfully theirs.

“Tell me, has he been marked yet?”

Both boys stood at attention at that, further convincing Hisoka that his theory had been correct, the boys hadn’t connected the dots yet.

“Of course he hasn’t been marked! Why would that criminal want to- oh god, Gon, Kurapika’s in trouble!” Killua suddenly realized. Of course that’s why they ended up not selling Kurapika, the behavior of both parties made so much sense in context!

Killua thought it was odd that Kurapika would yell out and give away their plot when they tried to save him, but if he had just been told that Chrollo wished to mate him. . . Yeah, he’d definitely cry out in excitement when he saw his chance of escape.

“Where are they taking him?” Gon slammed a hand down, through with the games of the clown and thoroughly disturbed by the realization himself.

“If Chrollo wants the best chances of mating Kurapika during his next heat, he’ll probably move them to Ryuuseigai.” Hisoka grinned at the boys, his eyes undressing the distressed children.
“Then I guess we’re going to Ryuuseigai!” Gon decided and Killua could help but agree.

“By the way, where’s the medical student? I’m starting to miss his brash behavior.” Hisoka smirked thinking of the surprisingly charming beta. It was days like this he was thankful Illumi didn’t care for monotony. “He’s rather cute when he gets all upset!”

Both children glared at the man but sighed as they realized they’d have to navigate even more chilling conversation with the man if they wanted directions to Ryuuseigai. But they’d do it for Kurapika.

“I need to get these diamonds removed and put into a bonding ring,” Chrollo told to jeweler without any other kind of introduction, basically throwing the black leather collar onto the glass table. He was already a little upset by the cold shoulder Kurapika had given him the entire car ride into the city and the moment they had gotten to the base he had gone of the play chess with Kortopi. He didn’t even know Kurapika knew chess! Playing chess with Kurapika sounded fun.

That’s when a brilliant idea had stuck Chrollo: if Kurapika didn’t like the collar, then he could fix that and that was the reason he barged into a jewelry shop with an irritated aura.

The shop worked looked at him and then to the pristine black collar and back again.

“I guess you realized an omega isn’t much in the ways of conversation? You look like the academic sort, so I’m sure you can find a beta to suit your needs. Omegas are overrated anyway!” The man laughed and Chrollo felt his left eye twitch. “Or did it get taken by a stronger alpha? That happens sometimes considering how few of the things there are, but you should think of yourself as lucky. Omegas are good sex toys but they’re just not meant for companionship.”

Chrollo did not like this beta. Assuming he, a prime alpha, could have an omega snatched away from him. Chrollo had also found that the stereotyping of omegas was becoming more and more irritating the better he got to know Kurapika. Kurapika was an omega and he wasn’t stupid or weak, he didn’t belong in that generalization and he was sick of people talking like they knew his omega.

Chrollo had to hold himself back from just killing the man. He assured himself that if he was still upset when he finished making Kurapika’s ring, he could kill him then.
“I’d just like you to fashion a ring with these gems to match this ring. I’m not interested in conversation,” he told the annoying man with narrowed eyes, holding out the ring he had gotten for himself.

“Well you certainly seem to have a lot of extra funds!” The man laughed and looked over the ring with a discerning eye. “I could make a nice engagement ring with this, maybe in this style.” He pushed forward a design that was rather feminine, making the gems look like a flower in their arrangement.

Chrollo thought on it, going over his memories of times they had dressed Kurapika more feminine and cringed. Kurapika seemed to detest having girly things forced on him.

“No, that won’t do.” Chrollo shook his head and pointed to a more masculine style that wouldn’t be too heavy on the finger. “Something more like this.”

“. . . Are you sure? Most girls like this style.”

“Just make the ring, I’ll be back tomorrow for it.” Chrollo ended the annoying conversation since he was already late to meet up with Nobunaga and Phinks for the next mission for the scarlet eyes.

“That will cost extra!”

“Do I look like I care?!”

The shopkeeper gulped and nodded his head hysterically as he was stared down by the blackest eyes he’d ever seen.

Kurapika grumbled over the board game Go, he was finding it more difficult than chess. Every move changed the entire landscape of the board and he was having a hard time understanding the rules.
In the third game of the night, Kurapika hadn’t even come close to tying because Kortopi kept switching around the way he played. Sometimes he aggressively took spaces and changed his spaces to black, other times he slowly took control of the board and took the entire game with one move at the end.

“This game is so ridiculous!” Kurapika groaned and let his head hit the old dining room table inside the newest of the constantly changing bases the troupe moved him to.

This base seemed pretty normal, it was an actual house. A nice one as well, Chrollo had set them both up in an actual bed in the master bedroom. For the last day Kurapika had been haunted by the jokes about him being the ‘mommy’ of the troupe since the members were sleeping in what would be rooms for children.

“Where is everybody anyway?” Kurapika finally sighed once Kortopi had stopped giggling at him.

“They went out for a heist, so it’s just me, you, and Shizuku.” Koltopi smiled underneath his hair, fairly happy to be here teaching Kurapika some games rather than on a heist.

“You all have been going on a lot of heists lately,” Kurapika remarked just to keep the conversation. He hated to admit it but he missed talking with Chrollo and he was feeling a bit lonely.

“There is something Chrollo wants, it has a lot of parts to collect,” Kortopi told Kurapika as he switched the boards to go back to chess seeing as Kurapika couldn’t seem to get the hang of Go.

“Of course, there’s always something he wants,” Kurapika grumbled. He had never met someone so selfish in his life! When Chrollo decided that he wanted something he just took it and declared it his, he himself was a prime example of that.

“Don’t worry, you’re still his priority,” Koltopi assured him and Kurapika felt a blush rise on his cheeks. It’s not like he wants Chrollo’s attention!

“I don’t even want th-AGH!” Kurapika had tried for dignity but unfortunately Phinks and Franklin walked in at that moment and he had thought it was Chrollo so he ended up yelping and moving to run only to trip over the chair.
“Kurapika!” Phinks and Franklin both ran forward to help him, fighting smiles and laughter at his graceless moment.

“I’m fine, I’m fine.” Kurapika waved them away, his face burning worse than before.

“You still all flustered because Chrollo gave you a hickey?” Phinks laughed at him as they helped him up, setting down the large bowl, probably filled with whatever they were suppose to steal. Kurapika felt his eyes turn red from intense embarrassment.

“He did not leave a mark!”

Franklin and Phinks began to laugh harder, Kortopi’s little giggles becoming audible. “Well at least you’re both even now! He sucked on your neck in rut and you forced a kiss in heat! You’re perfect for each other!”

Kurapika felt himself almost faint, flushing deeply before paling in a strobe light fashion.

“I’m going to my room!” Kurapika squeaked and turned sharply to run up the stairs away from the jovial group of murderers. Was he getting too close to them?

“Oh mommy, are we grounded now?” Phinks yelled after him as the room exploded into laughter again.

“Shut up!” Kurapika slammed the door, and like always, not looking forward to dinner that night.
Chrollo’s mood had barely improved by the time he returned to the base. The nerve of that jeweler, talking down about omegas in general when he’d never even met Kurapika! The more time that he spent around the pretty blonde, the more he understood why he’d pretended to be a beta, especially since he’d lost the safety of his village.

Somehow, just the sight of the base put him in a better mood. This base had been purchased for the sake of blending in during a job several months ago and was Shizuku’s favorite. It was surprising, but the normally forgetful girl almost always returned to this base once the group was dismissed. She’d furnished the base, planted a garden, and kept it clean. It looked like a normal house for a family.

Unbidden, his mind cooked up the image of Kurapika chasing a toddler through the garden and Chrollo’s mood finally lifted. He was still smiling when he opened the door and saw Kurapika and Kortopi in the living room, finishing a spirited game of chess. Kortopi was apparently white, meaning they had either started with this game or he’d lost the last round. He was losing this round as well, but both players were riveted to the board. The intensity was incredible as both studied the board before Kortopi’s hand clutched his remaining knight and took Kurapika’s queen.

“Check!” the Conjurer declared before his visible eye went wide as Kurapika’s rook took the piece.

“Checkmate!” Kurapika countered, a triumphant grin on his face and Chrollo glanced at the board.

Kortopi didn’t have any pieces to take the rook and moving his king in any direction put it in range of either a knight or a bishop.

Kortopi made an exaggerated sigh of defeat before tipping over his king and throwing his hands up in despair.

“Two games in a row!” the Conjurer declared melodramatically with feigned despair. “How quick you were to best me!”

“Mind if I try a round?” Chrollo asked, surprising the pair who had apparently been so engaged that they hadn’t noticed him.

“Danchou! Of course!” Kortopi declared as he bounced up and Chrollo took the seat gracefully, flashing Kurapika a grin as he began to set up the board. Normally he insisted on being black first, but he found he didn’t mind with Kurapika.

The game started out slowly, both of them feeling the other out and Chrollo could admit that Kurapika seemed to be fairly good, but also unfamiliar with chess. He had an excellent mind for strategy, he just needed to practice and exercise it a bit more.

“How long have you been playing?” Chrollo asked as he made his tenth move.

“A few days,” Kurapika admitted after a moment, the majority of his concentration on the board. “Kortopi taught me the day your… Hormones caused you to run out.”

Only since his rut? And he was this good already? Chrollo fought a smirk, an excellent mind. He’d definitely be expanding out, see what other games Kurapika knew or could learn. “Has he taught
“Go. That game is bizarre!” Kurapika declared as he took Chrollo’s bishop. “There doesn’t seem to be a single strategy to that game…”

Chrollo could practically hear the pieces fall into place in Kurapika’s head. “That’s true, there isn’t. Go is a game that allows flexibility, though I guess I should say that it makes it a necessity. You can’t play in a single pattern there. The pieces allow so many different strategies, hundreds if not thousands. As you see your opponent building their attack, you have to figure out the best way to counter it and then to counter the counter.”

“You can have multiple strategies going at the same time,” Kurapika added.

“But you have to ensure they overlap enough to not be easily seen while not so much as to hold back an attack or stunt a defense.” Chrollo smirked as he pushed his pawn into place. “Check.”

Kurapika stared at the board, retracing the moves that had been made until that point then gave Chrollo a flat look. “You used the pawn to block the path of the bishop, making it look unimportant.”

“Chess is normally very straight forward,” Chrollo admitted. “Moves aren’t as easily hidden, so you need to be mindful.”

“Yeah, I’ve realized that,” Kurapika replied as he made his own move.

Chrollo’s fingers swept in and moved his own piece. “Check.”

Kurapika growled as he made his last move, pushing his king into the empty space once occupied by his queen.

“Checkmate,” Chrollo announced as he pushed his knight into position. “Care for another round?”

Kurapika was glaring at the board, determination shining in his grey-blue eyes. Truly beautiful. “Definitely.”

“Very well then!”

Lunch was brought to them by Kortopi half an hour later, the small figure watching the pair play in fascination as they traded moves. Chrollo won game after game, but Kurapika’s determination never wavered, and his strategy began to evolve right in front of Chrollo’s eyes.

It was fascinating: Chrollo had attempted to teach all of the Spiders chess for years with only Kortopi showing interest or talent. It had taken months for him to get to the level of ability he currently possessed, but Kurapika had apparently overtaken the other in days! It was truly impressive.

Hours slipped by as they continued to play, Chrollo fully enjoying their small exchanging and quips cut with short conversation as they made their plays. Kurapika never won, never tied, but he was beginning to get close.

As they were resetting the board for their seventh game, Phinks entered the room and in that moment, Kurapika felt some strange energy/tension. He wasn’t alone as both Kortopi and Chrollo glanced at the alpha as he stumbled and grabbed the wall.

A sudden suspicion filled Kurapika, and fear. He moved unconsciously, slipping behind Chrollo
who immediately slipped into a defensive position, making Kurapika feel safer though he wasn’t sure why.

Phinks didn’t like that very much, evidenced when he glared at his boss and took a step forward with a faint growl. Chrollo didn’t back down, instead growling back as a wave of dominant pheromones were unleashed, reminding the lower alpha which of them was of higher rank. The blonde reacted automatically, taking a step back though he still wore a snarl.

Kurapika stared at the normally almost-decent-for-a-Spider alpha over Chrollo’s shoulder, finally understanding what was happening. Rut. Phinks was in rut much like Chrollo had been mere days ago! Unlike with Chrollo though, there was a higher ranking alpha who could force Phinks to comply.

A knock at the door got everyone’s attention and then the door was shoved open by Shalnark and Feitan, both carrying bags of groceries.

“Sorry we’re late!” Shal called as he shut the door. “The old lady down the street seems to think I look exactly like her grandchild and wouldn’t take ‘no’ for an answer when she offered cookies. I hope ever-

Even Shalnark’s normal smile dropped when he took in the scene before him while Feitan stared in shock. Phinks on the other hand wheeled around and stared at the pair.

The growl that was let loose wasn’t threatening, but it was territorial. Phinks leaped at the pair then scooped Feitan up and slung the very startled man over his shoulder before charging toward the stairs.

“Hey! At least let us have the groceries!” Shalnark yelled after the alpha. “And the cookies for that matter!”

The groceries and a plastic bag of cookies were tossed down the stairs in response.

Breathing was much easier for Kurapika after that as the tension slowly left the room. Chrollo stared at the stairs for two long minutes as Kortopi and Shalnark grabbed the groceries and headed to the kitchen.

“How about we switch to Go for now?” Chrollo suggested as he finally turned away from the stairs.

Dinner that night was not attended by Phinks or Feitan, and there was some snarling that happened when Franklin took food up to them.

“That didn’t sound good,” Kurapika stated when the beta returned downstairs afterwards.

“You were worse,” the man replied flatly. “If you’d had nen, I don’t doubt you would have taken my arm off.”

Shalnark laughed nervously. “Your arm or my head when he attempted to climb over me!”

Kurapika blushed now before focusing on the book Chrollo had given him on Gungi strategies. The other believed he’d understand this game far better if he started by reading about it first. It wasn’t too long of a read, but it was quite insightful and he was eager to learn since Chrollo had stated that he wanted to try it tomorrow.

The time for bed came too soon. Kurapika could admit he was eager for a bed to sleep in, but he
wasn’t thrilled about what was happening in the next room over. And as he followed Chrollo up the stairs, the sounds of groans and mattress springs caused him to freeze.

Chrollo didn’t look too thrilled either by the noises, but he still caught Kurapika’s arm and gently guided him past the door.

“Think we should tell the kids to keep it down?” Kurapika asked suddenly.

Chrollo’s brows furrowed. “Kids?”

“From some teasing earlier, Phinks and some of the other members were calling me the ‘mommy’ of the troupe. He even asked if they were grounded.”

Chrollo hummed in response as they finally entered their room, heading towards one side of the bed where he turned down the sheets and covers after setting his book on the nightstand. Kurapika similarly moved to his side and took off his jacket and socks before crawling under the covers.

“Phinks… HARDER!” the moan/scream that cut through the air caused Kurapika to jump and he blinked at the door in surprise and disbelief. Chrollo had left the thing ajar and he was now heading towards it, intent to shut the door obvious.

“Chrollo, please lock it,” Kurapika pleaded as a yelp floated through the air and the alpha didn’t ask any questions. The sound of the clicking lock gave Kurapika some small measure of security and he welcomed it.

As Chrollo returned to the bed, the muffled noises continued to come through the walls and Kurapika squeezed his eyes shut automatically at the feeling of the far side of the bed dipping as the alpha settled under the sheets. Chrollo made no move to hold him, so for the first time in a long time, Kurapika wasn’t firmly pressed into the side of the alpha. His hand still sought out a handful of the other’s shirt, finding some odd comfort in that bit of contact as he shut his eyes.

Less than an hour later, Chrollo woke to a loud noise and glared at the wall, wondering if he’d get any results or reaction if he demanded the pair either shut up or move to the basement. He stopped at the feeling of breath on his chest.

Like many nights recently, Kurapika was curled into him, head tucked under his chin. Tonight though, his arms also clung to Chrollo, fingers digging into the cloth of his shirt. Seeking safety and comfort.

The realization pulled a smile from Chrollo as he settled back onto the bed and took a deep breath, savoring Kurapika sweet scent…

SWEET SCENT?! Chrollo’s eyes popped open as he recognized the shift in scent. Preheat. Kurapika’s heat was a mere week away! It would take days to reach Ryuuseigai from here, and they’d need to set up a proper heat room for Kurapika in their main base!

Forcing himself to take another breath of the sweet scent, Chrollo centered himself. If he left tomorrow, then he’d have six days at best to get Kurapika settled in Ryuuseigai.

He’d have Franklin pick up the bonding ring tomorrow and Shalnark could take temporary command of capturing the scarlet eyes near this base. Phinks and Feitan might be out of commission now, but he’d have Kortopi to help him and Nobunaga was likely not far...

A groan and cuddle from the sleeping omega brought Chrollo back to the present and he laid back, content to enjoy these brief moments he currently had with Kurapika.
Franklin felt groggy as he marched himself down the bright street. Of course Phinks had taken the beta room instead of the alpha room to finally get with Feitan, he had displaced everyone sleeping in that room and Franklin found his back sore from sleeping on the couch. Honestly, he admits to himself, he should have just slept on the floor than the tiny couch Shizuku had gotten for the house she had sorta adopted as her own.

Franklin bounced the manila folder filled with the payment for Kurapika’s bonding ring, Chrollo had just handed it to him and told him to get the ring when the shop called then left. Shalnark has whistled at the heaping amount in the folder and he had to agree that Chrollo really was throwing everything he had at getting Kurapika to be his mate.

Now he walked through the sunny streets heading to the jewelry store that his boss seemed delighted that he wouldn’t have to return too.

Franklin found the high end store easily and in a rush to get the task done, he hurried to the desk to get the beta’s attention.

“Excuse me! I’m here to pick up a ring for a Mr. Lucilfer,” Franklin tapped his fingers on the glass table as the man looked him up and down curiously.

“You look nothing like him. Are you the intended beta’s brother or something...? Oh my, if he looks anything like you then he has very bad taste!” Franklin suddenly understood why Chrollo did not want to return to this shop.

“Damn grunt work,” Franklin hissed under his breath before glaring at the really rude beta jeweler. “No, Mr. Lucilfer is my employer and he is proposing to a beautiful and smart omega in a few short days, so if you’d just give me the ring, I’ll pay you and I can happily leave.”

The man looked surprised, blinking a few times as if trying to clear a hallucination from his vision. “Excuse me but he’ll be giving this ring to an omega?” The man laughed, finding the entire idea ridiculous. “I’m sorry but you don’t give rings to omegas and they aren’t bright. Are you sure you all aren’t just mistaken? Someone is trying to sell you a lie sir!”

Franklin felt a rare anger rise up in him, he liked kurapika. He was smart! The boy couldn’t tell a
soup from a sauce when they had met and in only a few weeks he was more than adequate! You had to have brain to learn as fast as he does! He had learned chess in days and he basically devoured every book given to him, how dare this man! But before Franklin could try to correct the man, he scoffed and continued.

“I’d even bet you the fee for this ring that whoever is selling you this ‘smart’ omega is even lying about its so called beauty!” The beta laughed as he presented the black velvet box that held Kurapika’s ring.

“Fine, you want evidence?!” Franklin dug into his jacket and pulled a picture he had taken back when they were planning on selling Kurapika. The picture showed Kurapika with his feet perched up on Uvogin’s lap, a large book on some secret society he himself didn’t understand in his hands, a small smile on his face as the light reflected off his pale skin and blond locks beautifully. “I took this picture myself! And just because you mocked his intelligence, I’ll have you know he learned to play chess in just a few days!”

The beta’s eyes grew large as he took in the picture of the beautiful blond omega, he began to sputter and flap his fat mouth up and down.

“This doesn’t prove- I’m sure you understand I can’t just give you- I’ll just have you pay for the ring now,” he finally decided on a sentence and Franklin narrowed his eyes at the beta as he backed out of his own bet.

“I believe you made a bet, so I’ll take this ring and leave unless you’d like to make a very dangerous enemy?” Franklin growled a thinly veiled threat. It was days like this that Franklin was thankful was his scary appearance because the man was immediately shaking.

Franklin gave him a shark-like smile and the man yelped and basically threw the little velvet box at him. He caught the box and tucked the money into his jacket with a happy tut and hum as he left without spending a dime. He wondered briefly if Chrollo would want the money back.

Franklin took a moment outside the shop to open the velvet box to have a look at the now free ring. He was amazed by the sight of the jeweled piece of crafted metal, there’s no way Kurapika will say no to this!
“Checkmate.” Chrollo grinned at the end of yet another invigorating game with Kurapika, he was getting closer to tying the game. It was quite incredible honestly how fast he picked up the game, so he had picked up a magnetic traveling board for them to play while they drove and the game had continued into the road side breakfast nook he had known to serve the best pancakes.

“Damn,” Kurapika cursed as he took another bite of his syrup soaked cake, he had poured on more than he normally would but Chrollo realized the boy still hadn’t recognized the signs of his own preheat.

“You are getting better every game, winning wasn’t easy this time.” He began to set up the board again immediately but Kurapika held up his hand to stop him.

“We’ve been playing for hours, I think I’ll pick up my book and give the game a rest for a bit.” Chrollo felt a bit disappointed but brightened up at the prospect of conversation with the boy, he was finally opening back up a bit again.

“Well since your book is in the car, I’ve been wondering what do you think of happy endings?” Chrollo sat back as he finished up his own plate of breakfast.

“Happy endings? Well they don’t really exist.” Kurapika shrugged, his expression showing that his interest had been peaked.

“Why do you say that?” Chrollo smiled as he and Kurapika began to fall into yet another easy conversation.

“In a writing standpoint they exist, but after the story people’s lives continue. Someone could get sick, one of the characters may die and then the others are left grieving. There are truly no happy endings.” Kurapika punctuated his argument by shoving the last of his pancake into his mouth.

“Then I guess the only happy ending would be the death of the protagonists finished with the words ‘and they had a happy life’ but that too is a rather tragic ending,” Chrollo put forward and Kurapika frowned and shook his head.

“No, happy endings are overrated. A story doesn’t need a happy ending to be a good story and the knowledge that the story will continue with more victories and losses, tragedies and conquests yet to come is perhaps the best part of a story.”
“Very well put, you’re right that a story with a truly happy ending would be rather dull,” Chrollo commented as he paid the bill. They exited the small diner the conversation continued into the car, Chrollo managing to distract the boy enough that he forgot about his book entirely.

“If you think about it, stories of tragedy while saddening serve a purpose to the world that I’ve always felt was greater than its counterpart of more comedic stories.”

“I don’t know, when reading fiction I find I like comedies.”

“Maybe that says more on your childhood than what you’d like it to.” Kurapika cut in quickly and Chrollo had to stop and think about it for a moment before smiling.

“Go on then”

“Well people experience the most growth in hardship, but those mean nothing if you don’t have moments of light and good in there. Moments to reflect on the hard won lessons are important, so if you grew up in hard circumstances. . .” Kurapika trailed off to let him finish.

“Then a comedy would be more impactful to my life, but that doesn’t explain why you’d like tragedies. . . Maybe the lesson isn’t learned yet?”

“Maybe, but I’m only 17”

“Are you really?”

“Yes, How is this new to you? You still have my wallet.” Kurapika chuckled a bit since the alpha was normally so detailed oriented. “How old are you?”

“26.”

“So you're almost a decade older than me?” Kurapika nodded to himself as he thought on what this meant: Chrollo Lucifer was a dirty old man that was lusting after a minor.
Chrollo cleared his throat. “Maybe now’s a good time to pick up your book,”

“Alright then,” Kurapika pulled his book into his lap, smirking to himself at the small victory. “Pedofile.” he whispered under his breath, but his voice was almost teasing instead of accusing.

“He was picking up a bonding ring?” Killua asked the frightened shopkeeper about being robbed three days previous. The man was bulbous and talked as if the entire troupe had come in a taken everything but it was only one and he had only taken a bonding ring that had been a custom ordered by a man that perfectly matched the description of one Chrollo Lucifer.

Gon felt a small frustration that the man wasn’t even trying to hide, he hadn’t even used a fake name! What the hell?

“So he was a large, scarred beta with really long earlobes and dark short hair? That’s one of them, definitely!”

“If you find them, they owe me more than a couple grand!” the man spoke directly to Gon, completely ignoring Killua. His eyes kept darting to Killua and he’d open his mouth to say something but then would decide not to.

“Did he happen to mention why Lucilfer didn’t come for his ring himself?” Killua asked. If the troupe was finally splitting up they’d be harder to track back to the mysterious city of Ryuuseigai.

The man remained quiet, like Killua hadn’t said anything and Gon cleared his throat, trying to get the annoying man to answer Killua.

“I don’t mean to be rude young man, but I have to ask,” the man snapped his eyes to Gon. “Why do you let it speak out of turn?” Gon’s eyes widened and Killua let glared at him, use to this behavior by this point in his life.

“Excuse me mister?!” Gon growled at the man, shifting his body to a more protective stance in front of Killua.
“Well I’m sorry, but it is against all kinds of etiquette to let your omega say whatever it wants, you need to train the thing better! It’s not like they have anything smart to say anyway.”

Gon’s eyes became even more intense and the anger rolled off him in waves. Killua stepped forward and took Gon’s hand to pull him back.

“Come on, let’s go,” he whispered to Gon, not wanting to start anything, this was just how things were. Gon kept his eyes on the shop keeper for a moment longer before scoffing and turning away.

“He deserved to be robbed!”

“Everyone like him does, maybe when we get Kurapika back we should all just burn places like this to the ground,” Killua suggested with a teasing smile, meaning the words to be a joke but for Gon he was finally developing a real hatred for how his friends were treated. He had never noticed it all before, but after their run in with the troupe and every other stop along the way it was hard to ignore. It wasn’t fair, it wasn’t right and Gon was rightfully filled with rage! He was over his friends being treated like high grade pets.

This was a world wear biscuit has to disguise her scent out of fear of being kidnapped or mistreated, where kurapika didn’t feel comfortable being himself with his closest friends and so lied to them and where Killua is continually treated like a misbehaving animal because he speaks his mind. It isn’t fair.

“Maybe we should!”

______________________________________________________

“What are you doing?” Machi asked Uvogin, who had taken a break from setting up a heat room in the main base to work on a carving he had started when they had gotten to the city. She tried not to admire the thick muscles of his bare back as he worked under the hot sun, she was feeling a little hot herself.

“I’m making a mating gift for Kurapika, it’s a hand carved crib. I hope he likes it!” He smiled, thinking of the small boy receiving his gift. His thoughts of the boy had slowly changed from mating material to almost like a younger brother.
“Mating gift, huh? I’ll have to think on what I’ll get them as well,” Machi commented lightly but
realized she already had something for Chrollo and Kurapika. The clothes she had been making for
them, a few of the outfits matching.

“I’m happy for them. Kurapika’s stubborn, but even when angry he can never stay mad at
Chrollo.” Uvogin laughed as he put down his carving tools and turned back to look at Machi and
he smiled automatically at the sight of her.

“Yes, but I’m still concerned,” Machi told him softly. Kurapika was stubborn and he’d latch onto
anything to use to say ‘no’ to Chrollo.

“Why?”

“Because he’s still technically a prisoner, he’ll use that until he isn’t.”

“Chrollo will find a way to make it better! He always does!” Uvogin happily put away his tools so
they could get back to their job of setting up a heat room.

“Yeah he always does, he is already getting Kurapika to like him one day at a time.” She smiled up
at the sky, she liked the idea of Kurapika permanently with the troupe. She liked having him
around, now they only needed to fill the empty spot Hisoka had left behind.

It was another day of work when the commotion at the city entrance brought them out to see that
Chrollo and Kurapika had arrived.

Kurapika had always imagined the city as just a massive mountain of garbage, he never thought to
include building and ruins of some kind of temple. When people noticed Chrollo, they yelled out as
if they had seen a celebrity.

“Chrollo's back! Chrollo's back!” Children ran forward and adults cheered for him, the entire place
was teeming with life. When Kurapika stepped out of the car the entire place silenced, people’s
eyes went wide and everyone just stared. That’s when Chrollo began to pull him through the crowd
and the whispers began.

“Chrollo found a mate!”
“It’s so pretty!”

“Chrollo is finally going to start a family, it will make beautiful children!”

Chrollo tightened his grip on Kurapika’s hand, he’ll have to do something about Ryuuseigai’s perception of omegas, they were better than that.

Children inched forward to brush their hands over Kurapika’s arm and he couldn’t help but notice how dirty they were, how their clothes were worn and torn.

Kurapika didn’t find he liked the sight of half starved kids and crumbling buildings. This entire place needed an army of help but he doubted anyone here would ask for it.

“It smells sweet!” one child whispered to another and Kurapika noticed the distinct lack of omegas in the area, which wasn’t as normal since usually there would be one or two, especially children under breeding age. Normally they were safe for a small amount of time, so where were they? He’d have to ask Chrollo later.

“You finally get to see the first base,” Chrollo called a little excited to show Kurapika where it all began. He conveniently didn’t think about how Kurapika would see this as the first step to murdering his entire family.

Luckily for Chrollo though, that wasn’t Kurapika’s first thought at the sight of the large sandstone building. In fact it was: this building looks like it's falling apart.

“This is the Phantom Troupe base number one!” Chrollo announced with a sweep of his hand, showing off the two story building.

Kurapika took it in stride, taking in every aspect of the building. Someone have carved the spider crookedly on a stray slab of stone just in front of the main door. Graffiti covered every wall, it looked as if a few walls had been patched up at some point. This was probably why they were all so good at renovating buildings.

All in all, its placement in the city and general look made it seem like a city police station.
“Kurapika!” Uvogin yelled in greeting as he pushed open the boarded up door, Machi not far behind him.

“Hi uvo!” Kurapika yelled back, trying to ignore the growing crowd of people watching his every move. Alphas in the area didn’t look at him the same though. Normally when alphas saw him with Chrollo, they lusted after him and envied Chrollo but here they still envied him yet none of them dared show interest in who they saw as Chrollo's mate. Gross, Kurapika didn’t want to be Chrollo's mate, but that never mattered to an alpha.

“Come on in, we got a room for you all set up!” Uvogin called again and Chrollo automatically moved them forward, waving to the crowds in a way that suggested he’d come back out later to see them all.

Kurapika was grateful to no longer be under the scrutiny of the townspeople.

The inside of the building looked recently cleaned, the main room had a large table that had obviously been fixed up a few times and twelve chairs. Chrollo pulled him past a small kitchen area and up the stairs, bypassing a long hallway that probably had rooms for several of the troupe members.

The stairs led to a long and dark hallway holding several more rooms. As he passed them, Kurapika could mentally pick out which room belonged to who. He counted Machi, Uvogin, and Pakunoda. Only Pakunoda’s looked like it was used regularly.

Chrollo pulled him into the second to last room down the hall, and he briefly wondered why the last door was sealed off.

The room was large and faintly dusty, the bed frame carved from what looked like the wreckage of an old building, matching the bedside table and dresser. It didn’t look bad, it was rather artistic and nice for what they probably had. It looked like someone had used charcoal to draw pictures of a forest straight out of a book onto the walls. It was kinda beautiful, you could almost forget you were in a rotting city.

“Okay so this is our main bedroom, and through here I have a surprise.” Chrollo took his hand again, grinning when he didn’t flinch away from him. The only other door in the room was opened and Kurapika stopped short.
“What the hell?” He whispered when he looked into the large room that must have been on the other side of the sealed door. Why was he being shown what looked like a renovated padded cell?!

The walls were basically made of pillows. The floor was padded as well in a cushy material that would be comfortable to lay on but impossible to bunch up. Nothing hard was in the room, and glow stars had been put on the ceiling. Other than that, the room was rather bare.

A small room in the corner looked to have been added recently and it was no doubt a bathroom.

“This is a heat room for you, we wouldn’t want to trap you in a bathroom again,” Chrollo joked and Kurapika felt his head spin. What did he expect? Alphas don’t care if you want them or not, they just do whatever they want.

Chrollo looked down at him and seemed to read what he was thinking.

“Kurapika, please don’t start thinking that this is to force you to do anything.” Chrollo took Kurapika’s hands into his and rubbed his thumbs over Kurapika’s palms. “No one will enter this room, not even me, unless you want me to.”

“So you’re really not going to use my heat to make me mate with you?” Kurapika demanded with suspicion. There was no way he’d be that honorable.

“Well I didn’t say that,” Chrollo grinned like a shark. “But once your heat starts, I will not enter unless you say so. I will not force you, Kurapika.”

Kurapika let his eyes narrow, determination filled him to not let himself go out of his mind this time around. He’d have to beat Chrollo this time around, he’d have to do it while in heat.

“Fine Chrollo, but don’t expect me to give in without a fight,” Kurapika hissed.

“I wouldn’t dream of it!” And a new game had officially begun.
Knowing that they would be in Ryuuseigai for about a week caused Chrollo to consider all that needed to be addressed and he was quick to unpack their luggage, stacking items that he wished to have washed in a small neat pile on the bed. Kurapika was seated on the bed as he did that, glaring darkly at the door to his heat room.

It might seem insulting, but Chrollo believed it was a good solution. Kurapika would be comfortable and wouldn’t do something he’d regret. Chrollo would have a locked door between them so even if he went into rut, he would hopefully avoid ruining their progress or worse, marking Kurapika without his permission. It wasn’t that the door could stop him, but he liked to think it would help him keep his head.

“Do you have anything you want washed?” the alpha asked lightly as he zipped his bag shut after a quick analysis led him to conclude that he had removed all items that were dirty or had been touching things that weren’t clean. He normally wasn’t so picky, but he preferred for his clothes to be completely clean. Perhaps he should use this opportunity to wash his bag as well?

Kurapika on the other hand was silent as he opened his small pack and considered the mess kit at the top of the bag. He wanted that to be washed for certain and set it on the bed. Two sweaters and shirts were removed as well as several changes of underwear and socks.

Chrollo glanced at the items, noting the absence of the socks he’d first given to Kurapika until his eyes slid to the blonde’s feet. A small smile pulled at his lips when he saw them there.

In turn, Kurapika was staring at Chrollo’s pile of laundry as a thought hit him: Chrollo had changed his cologne again. He’d been smelling it for several days now, but because the man was almost constantly beside him, Kurapika hadn’t noticed at first.

When Chrollo had touched his hands before, Kurapika had felt his stomach drop, especially when the alpha made his promise that he wouldn’t enter the padded cell during his heat unless Kurapika gave permission. He’d even shown Kurapika how to engage the locks on both doors. And then he’d shown him the slot, explaining that this way, Kurapika wouldn’t have to open the door. It was insulting, made the room seem even more like a cell, yet Kurapika did understand the intent. Chrollo was giving him full control of the door while also ensuring that he wouldn’t starve himself to avoid Chrollo.

It was… Sweet when one thought of it from that point of view. But there was still the point that the alpha had made about still trying to win him over while in heat.

Kurapika wasn’t sure how the man would do that nor was he eager to find out.

His laundry being picked up caught Kurapika’s attention and he stared as Chrollo settled his things on top of his much darker clothes before turning towards the door. Standing automatically, Kurapika followed the man out of the door and down the hall to what turned out to be a laundry room, but the machine was already in use.

Chrollo checked the cycle then offered Kurapika a sheepish grin and a shrug. “Perhaps we should get dinner instead?”

Kurapika felt his lips quirk faintly as he turned to leave the laundry room. “Alright, where’s the
"Go get your shoes on, I’ll take you out and show you some of Ryuuseigai."

Now Kurapika paused as he turned slightly to stare at Chrollo. "There are restaurants here?"

"No." Chrollo shook his head as a look of distant fondness crossed his face. "Not in the sense that you’re used to. It’s more like groups of people will come together each night and put together a pot of something. There’s not much, but you can usually trade something for a bowl of whatever has been made. It’s usually how children get some food."

“That almost sounds like holiday potlucks we had in my village,” Kurapika admitted as his throat went dry. “Everyone would bring a vegetable, noodles, herbs, or meat to put in a pot…”

Chrollo settled their pile of laundry back on the bed as Kurapika slipped his shoes on. He was handed a jacket by the alpha and accepted it automatically, well aware that it got cold in the desert fast when the sun set.

“I’ll grab something from the kitchen to add to the pot for whatever group we join,” Chrollo volunteered as he left the room.

Feeling more than a little lost, Kurapika watched him leave as he finished tying his shoes then pulled on the jacket, this one a simple white and blue jacket. The hand-me-down he’d received had been taken back by the original owner after he’d been bought this one. For some reason, despite this coat actually fitting him, Kurapika longed for the old jacket with its much looser fit.

His eyes moved back to the pile of laundry and his nose twitched as his hand automatically dove into the pile and pulled out a shirt that belonged to Chrollo. Whatever cologne the man had switched to using was even better than the one he had used the month before. Coffee, vanilla, leather, sandalwood… It was intoxicating and Kurapika buried his nose into the shirt and breathed in deeply!

The urge to keep the shirt, to hoard it, struck hard and Kurapika clutched it firmly to his chest.

“Kurapika?” a voice called and the blonde jumped, forcing himself to put the shirt down despite his fingers feeling as though they were protesting his commands. “I found some chicken in the fridge. It’ll be a good contribution—"

Chrollo paused in the door as Kurapika jumped up, his face red. It didn’t take more than a glance and remembering what had happened the month before to realize what had been interrupted. It was best to not dwell on it.

“There should be enough for about ten people, so we can have them distribute the extras to any children in the area.” Chrollo had noticed how Kurapika had stared at the thin children of Ryuuseigai and knew how he felt. It was one of the reasons he had originally become a thief, to get the mafia to deliver more supplies. They never had delivered extra, so he’d taken it on himself to bring as much back as he could.

Kurapika nodded, face still red as he stood and walked towards the door.

“Kurapika?” Chrollo asked as he gazed at the blonde who looked more than a little dazed. He looked almost like he had right before his previous heat, when that filthy alpha had tried to take him. He’d need to be very attentive tonight.

Keeping the bag of chicken in hand, Chrollo laced one of Kurapika’s arms over his other arm to
offer him guidance and support and they headed for the door, hoping there would be a group not far from the base.

Chrollo got his wish, spotting a group with a fire barrel and a large soup pot almost as soon as he had opened the main door of the base. Kurapika surprised him by clutching his arm hard in that moment.

Kurapika in turn stared at the group that was already turning to look hopefully in their direction. He remembered the whispers earlier that day and suddenly found he didn’t want to face such a thing right now. He wanted that shirt and some chocolate, not to be stared at and spoken of as though he didn’t understand basic human speech!

“-pika? Hey!” Chrollo’s hand felt his forehead and Kurapika snapped back to reality as the alpha’s dark eyes filled his vision. “Do you want to lie down?”

“...Yes...” Kurapika gasped after a minute as his fingers tightened around Chrollo’s arm, feeling the well-defined muscle under the fabric.

“Alright, I’ll get you back to our room then bring back dinner,” the alpha stated as he turned them both around and practically carried the blonde back to their room. Kurapika’s head felt like it was spinning as Chrollo’s concern for him affected his scent, making the scent even more heady if that was possible.

“I’ll deliver the chicken and come back in a few minutes,” Chrollo stated as he settled Kurapika on the bed then helped him remove his shoes. “You might want to take a warm bath to help clear your head.”

Kurapika groaned but nodded as he lay back, head hitting a pillow and arm wrapping around the other squishy comfort object, bunching it tightly against him even as his clothes began to feel tight… Wrong…

Chrollo was gone when Kurapika opened his eyes, but the shirt was still there and Kurapika grabbed it, feeling like a man who had just found an oasis in the desert as the scent washed over him again.

Climbing to his feet, Kurapika stumbled towards the one bathroom he knew of, stumbling slightly as the hard floor was replaced by the padding of the heat room and falling into the material. Kurapika almost purred in pleasure at the feel of the deep, soft, warm material. How could he have thought so poorly of this room?! The only downside was that he couldn’t bunch up the material and hug it!

Blinking, Kurapika crawled back to the door to the bedroom then walked like a man possessed to the bed, grabbing the two pillows from the bed before his nose directed him back to the laundry pile. His things didn’t matter and he tossed them aside quickly to grab the other items.

Arms loaded with his treasures, Kurapika returned to the heat room and crawled around, looking for a cozy place before settling with the laundry and pillows. His coat was peeled off several minutes later, followed by his shirt and pants. He tossed them into a corner, glad to be free of the confining clothes before grabbing the first shirt he’d carried in. Pressing it to his face again, Kurapika slipped on the garment, not bothering to button up the dress shirt, happy with the soft, loose material and the wonderful smell.

Chrollo stayed by the pot and fire longer than he intended. The group were a number of people he had interacted with the most in Ryuuseigai as well as a few of the elders. They had been more than
welcoming when he’d approached, even before seeing the chicken.

“Thought that you would bring your mate!” one of the elders declared when he saw Chrollo approach them alone. “It looked like you were going to bring it, could have sworn it was with you in the door.”

“Kurapika isn’t feeling well right now and had a fever. I noticed right when we were trying to come out,” Chrollo replied, accepting a single beaten mug that someone had poured a few ounces of watered down beer into. He made sure no one noticed as he poured out the mug into the fire.

“Kurapika? Is that its name? Should have known you’d go for something exotic! So, alpha to alpha, what’s it like being with an omega?”

Several of the other individuals laughed as the man wiggled his eyebrows suggestively, Chrollo felt a tight smirk spread on his own face.

“Let’s see: he keeps trying to beat me, has a sharp tongue, and has yet to admit that I looked better in that dress I wore when I took him clothes shopping.”

The shock that rolled off of the small crowd was broken by some laughter by the elder.

“Ah! I get it! It was pouting over not getting a particular dress and you showed it that it wasn’t a good dress for it!”

“No, I put on the dress to make him smile. Kurapika was having a rough couple of days and needed a laugh. He hated the dress, but I think the heels were the worst part!”

Conversation continued on for a while as the soup cooked and the people asked questions about his recent heists, places he’d been, but most of the questions were about Kurapika. They were disbelieving when Chrollo told them about Kurapika rejecting him so he was now attempting to woo him. Telling them about how he had technically stolen Kurapika had them laughing and the adorable outfits that he’d been made to wear at first had him pulling out some pictures.

When he finally received two bowls of the soup, Chrollo felt well caught up with the group and politely excused himself even as his instincts raged about leaving Kurapika alone for so long when his heat was close.

A few alphas sniffed at the building, envy evident on their faces and they scattered the moment that Chrollo approached.

“Kurapika?” Chrollo called as he entered his room several minutes later then froze upon seeing the empty bed. Surely the boy hadn’t tried to run off with his heat so close! Without his bag Chrollo noticed after a moment before his eyes took in the scene for a second time. Why would Kurapika leave and take his dirty laundry and pillows while leaving his shoes?

Moving towards the heat room, a small smile crossed Chrollo’s face when he found Kurapika curled up on the padding, a small ‘nest’ having been made using the two pillows and his laundry. Kurapika had even shed his own clothes in favor of one of his shirts which hung off his thin frame and showed a large amount of creamy, smooth skin.

Slipping off his shoes, Chrollo padded over the soft surface to where the omega lay, smiling when hazy eyes glanced up at him.

“I brought you some dinner,” the alpha stated as he settled one of the bowls near Kurapika.
Kurapika blinked but sat up after a long moment and reached for the bowl, giving Chrollo a heart-stopping look at his lovely body. Dusky nipples peaked out at him from behind the fabric of the shirt, begging for his attention as smooth, velvety skin beckoned his eyes.

Suddenly very aware of a now familiar ‘problem’ forming, Chrollo automatically grabbed one of his pillows and settled it on his lap, earning a yelp from Kurapika who abandoned his bowl in favor of trying to grab the pillow back.

“I need at least one for myself!” Chrollo declared as he attempted to beat away the hands that clutched at the pillow, far too close for comfort! Kurapika’s response was to groan and clutch at the pillow tightly as he attempted to twist it out of Chrollo’s grasp only for arm to brush against the alpha’s coat. The effect was instantaneous as Kurapika released the pillow only to all but crawl into Chrollo’s lap, attempting to pull the coat off of him.

Feeling his ‘problem’ continuing to grow, Chrollo did the only thing he could think of: he summoned his Skill Hunter and used the teleportation skill to tear himself away from Kurapika before he reached the point of no return. Landing on the other side of the still open door, pillow still in hand to cover his groin, Chrollo kicked the door shut automatically as Kurapika finally seemed to regain his senses to certain extent inside the room.

Taking a deep breath, Chrollo tried to center himself as he considered what had almost happened in the room. Another few seconds and he wouldn’t have cared about consent, he’d have been trying to get out of his pants with only one thing in mind.

The door to the heat room creaked open a moment later and Chrollo almost jumped even as he stared at the door hopefully. If Kurapika was coming out…

A hand settled a bowl outside of the door before the thing was pulled shut again and Chrollo realized after a moment that it was his dinner. Kurapika had returned his dinner?

The locks slid into place at that moment and Chrollo breathed a sigh of relief. The next time the door opened, Kurapika would either be welcoming him in or would be past his heat.

Chrollo ate his dinner alone that night, staring at the now locked door, aching for Kurapika. He thought of everything he could offer to get him to finally accept Chrollo as he finished his food, longing to be in the room with Kurapika right then. He missed his presence already.

The alpha took a long shower that night before going to bed, having to bunch up a blanket to simulate being able to cuddle with Kurapika. He’d gotten so used to sleeping with him that even a single night of separation felt unnatural. How was he going to deal with it when Kurapika did relent and mate him? Chrollo didn’t imagine that he’d be able to keep Kurapika with him on all of his jobs, especially once he was pregnant. The troupe bases wouldn’t be a good place for a pregnant person, much less a little baby!

The night slipped by slowly, Chrollo becoming more and more aware of the scent of Kurapika’s heat. Finally, he made himself rise in the morning and take a cold shower. The alpha felt like his blood was boiling inside his veins as he moved towards the kitchen.

Omegas in heat typically had a very notable sweet tooth. Chrollo recalled this bit of information as he considered what to make for breakfast and almost decided to make crepes when he was reminded of his semi-evil plan. He made bacon and eggs instead with black coffee. No sugar on anything. Carrying these back to the hall-side of the door to the heat room, Chrollo knocked as he slid the food through the slot.
There was a groan and he heard Kurapika crawling over the padding, the scent of heat growing stronger.

“How did you sleep last night?” Chrollo asked despite not expecting an answer. “Can’t say I slept very well.”

There was no answer, just as Chrollo anticipated.

“After your heat ends, I was thinking that we could visit Sarip. You’re already aware, but there are a large number of beautiful museums there for things like art and history. The food is also spectacular as are the gardens. I think you’d enjoy seeing Monet’s country home, it’s where he painted his most famous work.”

There were also several pairs of scarlet eyes near the city, not th-

Chrollo yelped as he jumped, blinking owlishly as his yell brought Uvo and Machi barreling into the hallway, from the same room. He had other things to worry about than Machi trying to straighten her shirt as his eyes saw the pale hand slide back into the heat room through the food slot before the coffee mug, still full, was shoved back out.

Kurapika had just pinched his butt!
It was hot, like his stomach had been turned into a bubbling cauldron and was overflowing, burning his insides. The dizzy feeling in his head made him feel sick, the white walls continuously spinning as his skin continued to crawl.

Kurapika kept trying to run his fingers over his own skin but it wasn’t enough, he needed more. Needed to be touched.

A knock on the door made Kurapika jump and he tried to focus his fuzzy vision on the food slot.

“Kurapika? I have something for you.” Chrollo’s voice danced around him, making him shiver in pleasure, slick running down his thigh at the sound.

Kurapika almost purred at the scent of the man coming through the food slot and before he even knew what he was doing, he was lunging forward to shove his arm through the slot and hopefully grab the man. He didn’t really know what he’d do if he got him.

Chrollo had to jump back when Kurapika’s arm shot out and he chuckled at the reaction.

“I brought you cookies, here have a taste!” Chrollo broke off a small piece of one of the cookies and dropped it into Kurapika’s palm. Immediately Kurapika pulled his hand back into the safety of his room and he could hear the sounds of the blonde eating the cookie chunk and licking his palm.

“Is it good? You can have more if you just open the door.” Kurapika paused in the act of licking at the chocolate left on his palm and let his vision clear for a moment. He wanted those sweets, but if he opened the door he didn’t know if he’d be able to hold himself back. Kurapika glared at the door and kicked it because he didn’t know if he could talk without moaning.

Chrollo couldn’t help the laugh when Kurapika kicked the door, it was cute how violent he got.

“Okay, but these cookies sure are good! You’re missing out!” Chrollo grinned when he heard Kurapika whimper from the other side of the door. “I’ll let you get some sleep, I’ll see you in a few hours.” Chrollo left the cookies just out of reach and headed to deal with some business.
“Ah paperwork, the council sure likes to torment me whenever I come home.” Although the words were harsh, Chrollo’s tone was almost fond.

Kurapika pushed himself deeper into the clothes of his nest, trying to ignore the sweet scent of cookies. His head felt too heavy and he kept rubbing at his ears since it felt like he had cotton plugging them up and he could hear the blood rushing in his head. Not to mention the pain in his much too hard member.

At times he’d forget where he even was, and why he couldn’t let Chrollo in. His foggy mind kept reaching for the reason on why he didn’t want Chrollo to come in here and ravish him, just the thought of it had him reaching for the door knob. Then the reason would come to him in pulsing, strobing, moments of clarity: Chrollo is a murderer and was keeping him prisoner in order to mate him.

Time passed slowly with nothing to think about except how much he wanted to be touched. Sleep came in scattered stents and everytime he woke, he hadn’t realized he had even fallen asleep. Blinking his eyes increased the chance of just passing out the moment his eyes closed.

“Kurapika.” Kurapika blinked opened his tired eyes to realize he had fallen asleep again and Chrollo was sitting outside the door once again. Chrollo’s scent was already teasing Kurapika through the door, he whimpered pathetically in response and kicked the door again in some non-verbal way of saying ‘go away!’

Chrollo’s deep chuckle did something to Kurapika and he felt his stomach churn and flutter at the same time. “Kurapika, I understand what you want.” He could tell Chrollo was smirking without even looking at him.

Kurapika kicked at the door again because Chrollo’s voice was making it incredibly difficult to remember why he wasn’t inviting the alpha into his nest this freaking instant.

“I could make you feel so much better, Kurapika,” Chrollo whispered, his voice dropping into a husky tone. “If you let me in I’d satiate you. I’d lick and suck at your neck before properly loving those sexy pink lips of yours.”

Kurapika groaned, trying to cover his ears as he rolled over onto his chest and rubbed his face into the soft flooring. He ended up on his knees with his face in Chrollo’s clothes as slick ran down his thighs.
“I’d rub and bite at your nipples and because you are such a treat, I’ll run my fingernails down your sides. I’ll take your dripping member in my hands so I can lick up the underside, I bet you taste delicious Kurapika,” Chrollo’s voice and words were beginning to make him pant. Before he could even think about what he was doing, he was grabbing himself.

Kurapika had never masturbated before his first heat, so his hand movements were sloppy at best as he started to pump himself.

“I’d take you into my mouth, lapping my tongue over your tip and swirling it over your heated skin, I’d lay you down and and probe at your slick, dripping hole until I had you screaming in ecstasy.” Kurapika moaned breathily but still couldn’t cum, his hand and Chrollo’s words weren’t enough. He needed more, more, MORE!

Kurapika let go of himself, the pain of too much pressure forgotten for a moment as he blinked up at the door with only one goal in mind: pleasure, climax, whatever end he knew he needed.

Shakily he stumbled to the door and reached for the handle with no thoughts of the consequences to come if he opened that door.

The air around him sparked with tension until his hand touched the knob and a heavy knock rang through the room. Kurapika immediately came half way back to his senses and stumbled back into his nest, what the hell did he almost do?

It seemed he would need a constant reminder to himself on why he didn’t want an alpha that was keeping him prisoner as his mate!

Outside Chrollo cursed angrily at the interruption of his newest seduction technique, he could have sworn he had heard Kurapika about to unlock the door! Not to mention he had been just as affected by his words as he hoped Kurapika was!

Stomping over to the door, Chrollo glared at Machi who was patiently waiting in the hallway. She gave Chrollo an up-and-down look and raised a brow at his obvious arousal.

“What do you need?” Chrollo sighed bitterly. Why the hell did he come to the one place his presence was actually demanded? Chrollo couldn’t remember the actual thought process in the decision at the moment.
“The council would like to speak with you,” Machi told him as she stepped back to let him out of the room, making it obvious that she meant right then and there.

“Fine.” Chrollo decided to just get it over with since he couldn’t just blow off the council.

The residual anger at the thought that he was so close only to be stopped by his responsibilities hung off him as he heavily stomped his way to the base floor of the building, expecting an envoy for the council to be waiting but no! No! They didn’t send one; they expected him to walk all the way to their building when he had a beautiful, sexy, horny, mate-to-be in heat up in his room and they knew that!

The anger only increased as he made his way through the city to the council building. Most avoided him as he walked, smelling the pheromones of rage and irritation long before they see him.

By the time Chrollo made it to the building, he had calmed down just a bit, assuring himself that this had to be important since the Phantom Troupe was Ryuuseigai’s only defence at the moment.

Taking a calming breath, Chrollo reasoned with himself that the sooner he got this done the sooner he could get back to his masterly seduction of probably the best omega in the world.

The council building hadn’t changed since he was a child, the large round room just the same down to every crack and dusty surface with six elderly men sitting at a table as they debated useless topics and never did anything about anything.

“Oh good Chrollo, you’ve arrived!” One of the oldest of the elders greeted him. He remembered this man from his childhood as being the youngest at around fifty years old. Unfortunately, Ryuuseigai didn’t have the longest life expectancy so here he was, the oldest at a little over sixty.

“What do you need?” Chrollo left no room for small talk, he wanted to be home so he wanted to get this finished as quickly as possible.

“I’m afraid we are changing hands with our main mob family again. They wanted some contracts signed from the Spiders so you don’t rob them blind like what happened in Yorknew,” the old man explained as Chrollo felt the growing disappointment. Whenever the family funding Ryuuseigai changed, the amount of paperwork and contracts took hours.
He wouldn’t be back to the base for awhile yet.

“You know Kurapika, after we are mated you can travel with me for a while,” Chrollo spoke to the door of Kurapika’s heat room. It had taken a few hours but finally he was back to charming his mate, well future-mate, but it’s not like that mattered.

“We’ll visit the most grand of places: museums, national monuments, worldly wonders! We’ll find new favorite books together. And once our first child is on the way, you’ll retire to my island home; like I told you before, you’ll love it there. Or you could settle down here if you’d like, nothing would be withheld from you. I’d steal the moon if it made you smile Kurapika.”

Kurapika listened with his heart racing from heat and something else, something he didn’t want to admit to, making his head spin.

Chrollo scent attracted him softly and he found himself dragging his weary body closer to the door and looked out at the alpha through the food slot. The dark alpha smiled at him and Kurapika decided to reach out, not really knowing what for.

Chrollo lost his ability to breath when Kurapika’s small shaking hand reached out to him, slowly, lacking the usual desperation. Was he craving some human interaction? Maybe he just wanted Chrollo’s touch and that made his heart skip a beat.

Chrollo reached to take Kurapika’s hand only for the little trickster to latch onto his coat instead and pull. He had been unprepared for the sudden tug, he was almost pulled into the slot! Taken by complete surprise, he still managed to pull back just in time to not hit the door but his arm still slipped out of his sleeve and that part of his coat was dragged into the slot.

Chrollo growled and pulled back on his jacket. “No! Kurapika, let go!” After a full minute of struggling on both sides, a ripping sound filled the room. Chrollo fell backwards as the sleeve gave way and he was left with his signature coat missing a sleeve! He watched almost shocked as the ripped sleeve was pulled into the heat room with an animalistic growl.

The happy yips and snarls grew louder and he didn’t have to wonder what Kurapika wanted the
coat for. Chrollo glared at the door as he thought of all the times Kurapika had gone after his coat. Then a smirk formed on his lips.

“Kurapika, don’t you want the rest of it?” The noises stopped and Kurapika crawled back over to door and blinked at him through the food slot. Got him.

“I mean, I would give you the rest of the coat but it won’t fit through the slot, if you open the door I’ll give it to you.” Chrollo took the rest of the ruined coat off and held it in front of the food slot, just out of reach. “I could give you more than that too. I could give you something that both of us desperately long for: a family.”

Kurapika’s hand reached out again but Chrollo knew better this time than to get too close.

“I will take care of you, I’ll give you everything you desire. You want sweets? I’d buy you a chocolate factory! Anything Kurapika, I’ll give you all the love in the world. Kurapika, unlock the door and accept me, this is fate.” Chrollo waited with baited breath as Kurapika’s eyes left the food slot and he just knew that in a moment he’d hear that lock click.

The knob shook like Kurapika was grabbing onto it and Chrollo was already up and ready to rush in to fulfill his promise of ravishing Kurapika. It was about time they got their family started!

Then a knock on the door came and Chrollo could almost scream in frustration as the doorknob stopped shaking and the knocking continued!

“What? What in God’s name could you want?!?” Chrollo yelled at the door as he made his way over to yank it open in fury.

Pakunoda was standing there with a blank face and a raised eyebrow.

“You should calm yourself, the council is calling us again. Raiders or something,” she told him quickly. Chrollo pinched his brow and breathed deeply for a moment to calm himself.

“Tell Phinks he’s on guard duty,” was his only response as he grabbed a random shirt and made his way out of the base to kill some very unlucky raiders.
The interruptions continued on constantly, well into Kurapika’s fourth day of heat. It always seemed to happen when he was so close too!

This time Chrollo had a plate of custard flan and he could almost hear that beautiful click of that doorknob when Machi was knocking on the door again. He could have cried out of sheer madness at this point! He ripped the door and glared at the pink haired girl.

“Where are they?” His tone had dropped into something deep and threatening, Kurapika whimpered in response and this only made Chrollo more upset. So close damnit!

“They’re in the courtyard this time.” Machi didn’t have to finish before Chrollo was pushing past her with a wave of anger. Her eyes drifted to the desperate whimpering coming from the second door in the room, a hand was reaching out towards a sweet treat that had been set just out of Kurapika’s reach.

Machi looked over for Chrollo but he was gone, so she walked over to the door and gently pushed the sweet confection closer to the door until Kurapika’s hand snatched the plate and immediately disappeared into the room with a happy meow.

The beta smiled and with her job done, she began to leave the room.

“Machi?” A small voice called. From his voice, obviously he was in a rare moment of clarity and Machi paused. “Thank you.” It wasn’t clear if he meant the flan or the interruption, so Machi just smiled and left. Not forgetting to shut the door as she went.

Chrollo marched his way to the city courtyard where the majority of the council was standing around, arguing. Pathetic. Chrollo was on a warpath as he made his way to them, his face dark with what some would call bloodlust oozing from his every pore.

The council turned as one to greet him and immediately all of their faces dropped in horror at the fire breathing alpha that was now baring down on them.

Before anyone could say anything, Chrollo was snapping at them in the middle of the busy
“WHAT? SIMPLY WHAT? Do you all even understand how much of an annoyance your constant
summons have been?” Chrollo screamed out at them, losing control of himself as the last month of
sexual frustration finally caught up to him. “You intolerable fools have been dragging me around
for the last four days! FOUR DAYS! I should be shafted deeply in my chosen mate, well on our
way to making a new generation of pups by now! But you utter imbeciles have cock blocked me an
immeasurable number of times!” The courtyard was quiet as Chrollo turned and began to stomp
away, but not before throwing one last order over his shoulder. “Unless the city is literally burning
to the ground, DON’T BOTHER ME AGAIN!”

Chrollo only felt a tinge of embarrassment from his outburst as he made his way back. The moment
he entered the base again, he felt a wave of unease wash over him. He rushed past his troupe that
were congregating on the ground floor, and up the stairs. He knew what was wrong immediately:
the scent of heat had dwindled. He had missed his window of opportunity!

The embarrassment was forgotten as his entire aura began to cloud the room and probably the base
as well. If this had been an animation, thunder clouds would be gathering hauntingly over his head.

“PAKUNODA!” Chrollo called in a furious roar. The blond women was found just down the hall,
looking up at him with just a bit of fear, more so since she had never heard his alpha voice like this
before.

“Ye-yes sir?” Pakunoda regretfully stumbled on her words.

“Send a message to the council,” he growled, the effect of his voice freezing her to the spot. Her
every instinct screaming to run away from her enraged alpha.

“Yes!” She choked out a response when the man’s eyes narrowed when she didn’t answer right
away. Shivers racked down her spine and she desperately wanted this, whatever this is, to be over.

“You have cost me the chance to lay with my mate this week.” Everything suddenly made way too
much sense now. Pakunoda knew this was not good, his next rut will be a handful! “Should this
ever happen again, you will not have to bother yourselves with running this city anymore. Not that
you could run the city from the bellies of my Indoor Fish.”

The moment Chrollo had finished his threat, Pakunoda nodded a bit shakily and ran with her tail
between her legs to deliver the message.

Machi watched Pakunoda curiously when she ran through and could only say one thing in explanation.

“The council needs to learn not to poke a bear!” Not wishing to gain Chrollo’s ire at the moment, she hurried out the door.
Kurapika had wolfed down the pudding that Machi had given him hungrily, going so far as to lick the plate to get every last drop of the sugary goodness that he would normally cringe over. Somewhat pleased after, he had curled up in his pseudo-nest, still longing for pillows and blankets and… Something else that he refused to admit.

Chrollo didn’t return to tempt him with more sweets and promises so Kurapika’s sleep that night was mostly uninterrupted. When the morning came, punctuated by a breakfast tray being slid through the food slot, Kurapika knew that this heat was almost finished. The slick that had been almost continuously sliding down his thighs for days had finally lessened.

After consuming the protein and fruit laden breakfast he’d been provided, Kurapika took a well-needed and very long bath in the bathroom. His muscles relaxed in the hot water, causing him to sigh in pleasure.

Chrollo passed by the door some time near lunch, making a soft, pleading sound that caused Kurapika to jump. He fought a strange urge to open the door to check on Chrollo, but the other left too quickly for him to have to make a decision.

The padding of the room proved to still be absurdly comfortable and warm for Kurapika and after Chrollo left, he had rolled in it a bit, hugging his pillow, before snuggling back into his nest and sleeping again. Lunch came in the form of a sandwich, apple, and a cookie. Dinner was a bowl of soup.

Chrollo’s absence drew concern from Kurapika even as his heat died down and the next morning he unlocked the door and peeked into Chrollo’s bedroom. It was empty. The bed was made and the room showed no sign that the alpha had been there recently.

Gathering the laundry and pillow he’d used as a nest, Kurapika hobbled to the bed and settled the things on the blanket before grabbing his small travel bag and pulling out a pair of slacks and a sweater to change into.

After changing, he turned back to the pile he had made and began to pick it apart, throwing the pillow back into its place at the head of the bed and folding the laundry, intent to carry it to the laundry room. As he was doing this, he pulled out the sleeve of a particular coat.

A wave of embarrassment and regret filled Kurapika as he stared at the sleeve, remembering how he’d gotten it. He’d been reaching out of the food slot, needing something and Chrollo had attempted to hold his hand. Kurapika had felt the coat and had clamped onto that instead and…

The omega didn’t know why he viewed the thing as so important while in heat, but at the time he would have traded his nest for that coat! Now he’d ripped it… And however important Kurapika found the coat, he knew it was even more important to Chrollo.

The rest of the coat was folded over a chair near the door of his heat room, cold and abandoned. Kurapika’s eyes traced over the torn seam as his hand gripped the sleeve. Chrollo was a monster, a murderer, and a thief… But he’d kept his promise. He’d used a number of tactics that seemed dastardly at the time to try to get Kurapika to open the door, to accept mating, but he hadn’t forced himself on the other.
Somehow, leaving that coat in this condition didn’t sit well with him.

Kurapika hadn’t had time to search the room when they had arrived, but now he went through the cabinets and dresser, searching for the materials he’d need to repair the coat. He found a single needle and a spool of red thread and was in the midst of judging whether this would be acceptable for the job when Machi entered the room.

The seamstress was holding a breakfast tray that had a simple breakfast of toast, sausage, and canned fruit with coffee. Kurapika’s stomach grumbled hungrily as he studied it.

“Out and about?” Machi asked as she set the tray on the bed, her eyes glinting in amusement as she took in the sight of Kurapika sitting on the bed with Chrollo’s coat in his lap. It was obvious what he intended since she could clearly see the thread in his hand while the omega was frozen with a ‘deer-in-headlights’ expression as he tried to check how to make the repair.

“I could easily do that,” the seamstress offered as she held out her hand to take the coat, but Kurapika pulled back slightly, surprising her when he wouldn’t let her touch the coat.

It had to be residual hormones Kurapika decided as possessiveness gripped him, causing him to cling to the coat rather than hand it over. “I wanted to fix it,” he explained, mentally cursing when the pink-haired beta’s expression flickered momentarily to a pleased expression.

“I have thread and needles better suited for that,” she offered and Kurapika considered for a long moment before nodding.

Standing, Kurapika kept a firm hold of the coat and sleeve as he followed Machi into the hall. “Where’s Chrollo?” he asked as she opened a door at the end of the hallway.

“Rut.”

Kurapika’s eyebrows rose though he should admit that he shouldn’t have been surprised.

“He felt that he wouldn’t be able to stop himself if he remained here around midday yesterday and went out. Luckily there was a nearby group of raiders that were attempting to attack one of the supply lines for the city.” Machi pulled out a sewing kit as she spoke and perused the supplies, pulling out a new needle and some strong black thread after a few seconds of consideration.

Kurapika accepted the supplies and found that the thread was a perfect match for the black of the coat. The needle in turn was sharp to the point where it could slip through the tough material of the coat as though it were thin cotton. Machi rounded off the supplies with a pair of sewing scissors.

Nodding slightly to the beta, Kurapika turned to return to the room he shared with Chrollo but was surprised when Machi followed him.

“Are you sure you know what you’re doing?” Machi pressed. “I can definitely fix this in just a few minutes.”

The blonde shook his head. “I can do this,” he assured the woman as he settled on the bed, shifting the coat and sleeve into position on his lap and checked how they should fit together. He threaded the needle with a practiced hand and began to make the stitches in the exact manner his mother had taught him to reinforce and repair seams. He’d had to do this for himself countless times since leaving the village since there were no places where one could buy Kuruta tribal clothes.

Machi watched his practiced movements for a minute, shifting to observe the needlework at a different angle then nodded before turning to leave. “I’ll collect the supplies later,” she called as
she left.

Kurapika finished the repair within the hour and checked to ensure that it would hold well. Turning the coat right-side out, he nodded at his own work, it didn’t even look like it had been torn!

Finally turning his attention to the breakfast tray, Kurapika ate the cold sausage and chewed on the toast. The coffee was long cold and lacked any cream or milk, but he still sipped at it. He finished in just a few minutes then stood and collected the tray, carrying it to the kitchen where he found that someone had set out a fresh pot of coffee. There was creamer in the fridge and Kurapika made himself a fresh cup after pouring out his cold one.

The rest of the day went by slowly with Kurapika doing his laundry the exploring the base. He didn’t set foot outside, not eager to see the city of trash and thieves. Or the starving children. Machi checked on the coat after lunch and collected her supplies after complimenting his handiwork.

Pakunoda played Go and Kurapika spent most of the afternoon and evening playing her. Unlike Chrollo who believed in letting Kurapika make his mistakes and learn from them after an initial explanation of the rules, Paku had walked him through a number of strategies for the game and their weaknesses. That proved to be her downfall as Kurapika finally got a handle on the game and pulverized the beta shortly after dinner.

Exhaustion from his heat caught up to him as night fell and Kurapika returned to the room he shared with Chrollo, curling up on the strange bed. Despite having spent the last several days without the alpha, Kurapika felt strange sleeping in a bed without him. It was similar to how he felt during Chrollo’s previous rut except more notable.

Grabbing the other’s coat, he draped it over his body and breathed in the now familiar scent. It must have been residual hormones, but Kurapika could almost imagine Chrollo’s arms around him.

Strong arms encircled him, their mere presence making his sensitive skin tingle as lips pressed lightly, playfully against his own. It wasn’t what he wanted and Kurapika groaned as he wrapped his arms around the other’s neck, drawing him in closer and deepening the kiss. The action drew a small chuckle and Kurapika’s vision cleared as the other pulled away.

“Longing for it today?” Chrollo teased as his dark eyes sparkled with mischief.

“Wh-hat?” Kurapika demanded, attempting to extract himself from the other’s arms only for the alpha to press his lips to Kurapika’s neck, causing him to freeze and buck his hips against the other as a deep hunger rose in him. “Ch-chrollo…”

There was a pleased noise from the other as the thief kissed down the length of his neck and circled one of his nipples with his tongue. Nimble fingers delved into his private place, circling his entrance as Chrollo’s mouth continued south to just above his straining member.

Kurapika moaned as the other licked his member, unable to demand that this stop, not wanting it to. At the same moment those devilish fingers penetrated him as that sinful tongue distracted him, quickly stretching his dripping entrance before moving deeper and-

The moan that tore from Kurapika’s throat was one of carnal pleasure as those burning fingers continued to stretch him and Chrollo’s head moved back up his body, kissing and licking until he reached Kurapika’s neck again.

Instinct took over as Chrollo’s fingers left him and Kurapika’s legs moved automatically, circling the hips of the well-toned man. He felt it at that moment, the head of the other’s member pressed
against his entrance. His entrance was ready, his burning insides begging to finally be filled completely.

“Ready?” The question was a breathless whisper as Chrollo adjusted them slightly and his hands came to rest on Kurapika’s hips.

Kurapika woke with a gasp, clutching the coat against himself from an unseen force that attempted to extract it. He almost let out a shriek when he felt a hand grasp his shoulder, but his assailant only drew the coat away from his head, uncovering his eyes.

Never had seeing Chrollo’s concerned eyes ever been more welcome while also being terrifying. Especially considering the dream he’d just had.

“Are you alright?” Chrollo demanded as his hand dropped, letting Kurapika keep the coat in that moment.

Kurapika’s face felt hot as he nodded in response. “Fine.”

Both were silent for a moment, not sure of what to say. Kurapika was particularly uncomfortable considering his dream and he decided it was best to end the silence.

“Here,” he stated as he handed the coat over to Chrollo who accepted the garment. “Sorry about the sleeve. I-”

Chrollo waved away his attempts to apologize or explain. “It’s alright, I’ll have Machi fix this in the morning.”

“I already did.”

Chrollo’s dark eyes widened as he turned his attention to the coat to study it, pulling out the sleeves and studying the seams. “She did an excellent job as usual.”

“No, I mean I fixed it.”

Chrollo’s eyes and grasp on the coat changed, shifted into something that seemed more reverent before he drew the coat to his chest, almost as though he were hugging it. “Thank you.”

The statement was so honest, so heartfelt, that Kurapika blushed automatically.

“It’s still 3AM and I think we should get some sleep. I did promise to take you to Sarip after your heat,” Chrollo continued as he stood and walked to a nearby chair where he gently draped his repaired coat.

Kurapika shifted as he sat up and pulled the sheets and blankets of the bed back, not feeling quite ready to go back to sleep but eager to ensure Chrollo didn’t see a little problem he had previously missed.

It happened as Chrollo turned to return to the bed when Kurapika was adjusting his own position and shoved his travel bag off of the bed. Chrollo was tired enough that the sudden addition of a small obstacle managed to trip him and he stumbled forward, on top of Kurapika as he turned to see what was wrong. Their lips met in that moment as they fell back on the bed.
Boners and blackmail

Chapter by Boozombie

There was a moment of charged silence that passed between the alpha and omega, both completely awake now. The confusion didn’t last long, the moment Kurapika put the pieces together and processed the quick brush of their lips, he began to scream.

He didn’t exactly know why he was screaming, maybe he was screaming at himself? Or possibly the dramatic action was to somehow stop himself from leaning back in for another kiss?

Chrollo was frozen, starstruck on the bed as Kurapika scrambled away. He fell off the bed with a pained yip then continued all the way to the wall.

“What the hell was that?!” Kurapika screamed at the alpha who was touching his lips with a certain amount of reverence that Kurapika did not appreciate.

Both of them didn’t say anything until the sound of racing feet reached them. Kurapika barely had time to yelp as the door was thrown open and four spiders barged into the room, ready to do battle. Chrollo finally seemed to wake from his stupor and he turned to see Nobunaga, Machi, Uvogin, and Phinks all brandishing weapons.

Kurapika's eyes widened because he still had a rather pressing issue down south and the four spiders were now zeroing in on it with a wide range of expressions. Machi just gave him a raised eyebrow but Nobunaga seemed to light up in devilish delight.

“Oh my god, he has a- ARCH!” Nobunaga screamed in fright when Kurapika hurled a lamp at his head.

“Shut up!” Kurapika yelled as he ripped the blanket off the bed and stomped into the heat room. “It's leftover hormones! THAT'S ALL IT IS!” With that he slammed the door.

Machi could almost laugh but instead turned to Chrollo, her eyebrow still raised. The man was uncharacteristically silent through the entire exchange, Nobunaga still yapping like a fish out of water from the glass of the lamp cutting his face.
“We kissed,” Chrollo whispered with a sappy grin as he looked up at Machi, a small blush dusting his cheeks.

Uvogin and Phinks began to laugh while Machi rolled her eyes at the situation.

“Come on Uvo, no ones in danger here.”

“Speak for yourselves! He threw a lamp at me!” Nobunaga screamed, making Uvogin and Phinks break into desperate guffle-like laughs, gasping for air.

“You deserved it, I’m charging double for patch ups on you.” Machi grabbed Uvo by the shirt he had hastily put on and began to drag him back to her room, and hopefully to get all their clothes off this time.

“Oh, come on Machi!” Nobunaga held his bleeding face and tried to follow her into her room only to get the door slammed in his face.

“Our second kiss,” Chollo collapsed into the bed happily once everyone was gone, not at all able to process that Kurapika had gone to sleep in the heat room and everyone had seen the embarrassing situation.

Kurapika nervously played with the doorknob, the embarrassment of the troupe rushing in to see his shame and of course, the surprise kiss, was keeping him stalled inside the heat room. It didn’t help that his dreams decided once again to fuck him over, quite literally. He didn’t think he would be able to look at Chrollo today without blushing!

Sighing a frustrated breath at his own indecision, Kurapika gripped the doorknob again only to pause. Damn it, he didn’t want to go out there!

In the end his stomach was what finally pushed him from the confines of the room to peek nervously into the area beyond.
Chrollo wasn’t around thankfully, so Kurapika moved to the bed to grab his bag. He dressed quickly in a simply white tunic with blue skinny jeans, pulling on his shoes as he moved to the door. Luckily there was no one in the hall either so he could walk down it at a leisurely pace as he brushed his fingers through his ratted hair, at least trying to impose some order after a night of tossing and turning.

His luck ran out as he began to descend the stairs: it seemed every member of the troupe was in the main room eating breakfast.

Kurapika tried to slip into the kitchen undetected but Nobunaga spotted him anyway.

“Oh hey Kurapika! Did you have fun dry humping the floor all night?” The man crudely shouted out at him. Kurapika winced and blushed because he almost did do that.

“Oh don’t make me beat you with a lamp again Nobunaga!” he snapped at the man before making the final push into the kitchen as the alpha squawked loudly and the others chuckled.

Chrollo sighed, of course Nobunaga’s first move would be to antagonize Kurapika. They had made progress and he simply didn’t need the man to bring them back ten steps every time they met.

“We’ll be heading out to Sarip as soon as Kurapika is fed,” Chrollo announced as he pulled himself up, gathering his dishes to bring to the kitchen. “You may all go about your missions until I call you again, you all know your marks.”

No one argued his decision to split up the troupe for awhile, they all knew he’d want some alone time with the omega after this latest disappointment.

“How did you sleep?” Chrollo asked the boy who was scooping up eggs into his bowl with a miserable look on his face.

“Fine.”

“Tell me why you’re upset,” Chrollo immediately fired back, he was obviously upset about something.
“I’m not upset,” he growled as he threw down the scoop into the dish with the eggs. “Does a little omega even get to feel upset? Or are we only allowed that when alphas like you want us to?” Kurapika turned on his heel and stomped out of the room, leaving the bewildered alpha behind.

What the hell was that about?

“I can’t believe the council would interrupt an alpha while their chosen mate is in heat!” One citizen murmured to another as they spied the omega’s still clean neck. It was the latest gossip around the square. The council had gotten in the way of their great hero’s mating, everyone felt for Chrollo.

Kurapika wanted to gag, the city was just as bad as every other city in the world. Talking about him like he was an object to be stamped, marked and controlled.

“I just can’t believe that Chrollo is so old fashioned,” a woman whispered back. “If I had an omega like that, I’d just bite his neck and be done with it!” Kurapika flinched, thanking whatever god that still liked him that Chrollo had some honor and wouldn’t mark him against his will.

Although Kurapika knew that Chrollo’s patience was running out, for a bit he had thought that if he could just hold out eventually the man would get bored and he could either escape or he’d be set free. Now he finally understood that Chrollo wasn’t going to take “no” for an answer for long.

Chrollo clenched his teeth as Kurapika flinched next to him, he really had to do something about Ryuuseigai’s opinions on omegas if he wanted this to ever be a home to Kurapika! For now he’d get Kurapika to Sarip and show him a good time, continue to bond with him until he was ready to accept fate.

“Shall we go?” Chrollo gave Kurapika his best smile as he opened the door for him. Kurapika only glared at him and slid into the car before grabbing the door and slamming it shut, knocking Chrollo off balance for a second.

“Rude little thing isn’t he?”

“Chrollo will train him up, nothing he can’t tame!”
This would not be easy, teaching five million people to treat his future mate like a human being. Like the incredible smart and strong human being he is. He wouldn’t be planning to mate him if he was like other omegas.

Killua and Gon couldn’t say that they weren’t lucky, plenty of times their luck had saved them from a gruesome death, but it was today that they really thanked their lucky stars.

They had arrived in Sarip and were planning to buy supplies to get them to Ryuuseigai only for Killua to spot Kurapika through a passing car window with the troupe leader! The boys immediately rushed forward, chasing after the car but trying to keep a distance so the dark alpha didn’t sense them.

The car stopped in a cheap side of the city at a cemetery, Killua and Gon could barely believe it when the troupe leader led Kurapika to an unmarked grave and pulled the stone marker up to reveal an entrance. Of which he motioned for Kurapika to head down into and then followed, closing the door behind him to return the area to its previous state of undisturbed normalcy.

Killua looked over to Gon with wide eyes, it was unbelievable to them both that after constant searching and researching they had just stumbled upon the pair!

“You think the rest of the troupe is down there?” Gon asked as they settled in to wait.

“I don’t sense them, but they could still be down there,” Killua told him and they fell silent.

About an hour passed before the grave reopened and the troupe leader was helping Kurapika out. They both had changed, Killua took the opportunity to look over Kurapika’s neck and he sighed in relief when he couldn’t see a mating mark.

Maybe they had assumed wrong. If the troupe leader wanted to mate Kurapika, then why hadn’t he been marked yet? He couldn’t understand it and the only answer he could come up with was that they didn’t know something.
Gon moved to follow the pair but Killua stopped him, a better plan coming to him.

“Let’s get into the base, we’ll steal Kurapika tonight.” Gon nodded and they headed down from the building they were perched on to the area they saw the door open. Gon tried to pull up the stone but it wouldn’t even budge! They tried to apply nen to see if it would open, but that didn’t work either.

Killua walked around a bit, trying to see if maybe they had the wrong headstone. Gon joined him when Killua got to the back of the cemetery, in the shadow of a large tree.

“The headstone won’t move, should I punch through it?”

“No, that would give us away.” Killua sighed. “Kurapika will just get moved again.”

“This sucks!” Gon jumped up and sat heavily on the ground. Both boys felt their eyes widen when a crack filled the air.

“Sometimes I hate you,” Killua sighed before the ground gave way and both fell into an area below. The boys groaned as the dust cleared.

“It’s not so bad, we can jump out of here, right?” Gon tried to be positive only for the large tree above to give a loud creaking sound and tumble down into the hole, blocking their exit.

“Seriously, just don’t talk Gon,” Killua growled as he got up to look around the catacombs they had found themselves in.

“Okay Killua,” Gon pouted. They walked forward a bit to realize they were most certainly lost down here.

Kurapika had been pouting the entire car ride into town, so he’d just read his book the whole way. He hadn’t been too impressed with the cemetery base, the catacombs beneath it weren’t as impressive as the other base Chrollo had to admit. Yet it was a large structure, bigger than many
other bases. The troupe had sealed off most of it but it was still falling apart, if even one wall collapsed it could all go.

But it was the only base he had for the city of Sarip so it was where he took the pouting omega. Maybe the next city he’d bring them to a hotel, some place nice to show off a little.

Grocery shopping hadn’t exactly been stimulating as Kurapika barely spoke a word to him. He was so lost in thought that when they returned to the cemetery that he barely registered the fallen tree at the backside of the property.

Kurapika proceeded Chrollo into the dark hole, stomping down the rudimentary stairs only to stop short and his eyes widened. Gon and Killua stopped whatever fight they were having to look at him pitifully.

They looked like they had been wandering around for awhile, they seemed hungry and a bit ragged.

“Hi, Kurapika…” Gon awkwardly tried even as Killua punched him in the arm.

“This is all your fault! This was a golden opportunity to save Kurapika!” Killua yelled and the boys began to fight each other once again. Both boys froze again when the stone door slammed and a locking mechanism could be heard.

“Hello again boys,” Chrollo hissed as he finally made his way down the stairs. “I see you’re still hopelessly trying to steal from me.” Kurapika and the boys felt a shiver run down their spines at the dark look on the alpha’s face. He summoned his book and prepared to toss his fun fun cloth over the pair only for Kurapika to step in the way.

“No! Not this time!” Kurapika glared at the man. Chrollo raised a brow and tilted his head at the omega. “I haven’t seen my friends in months, I’ve had no human contact besides you and the spiders and I’m sick of it!”

Chrollo put away the book and gestured for Kurapika to continue since this was the most he had spoken in awhile, finally he was telling him why he was upset.

“At the very least before you go demanding I let you- let you,” his teeth clenched and fear jumped
into his eyes. Still after everything he was still afraid to be with Chrollo and it killed him to know that. “-let me make them something to eat, let me be with my friends dammit!”

“Kurapika-“

“Chrollo! They're like my children to me, please!” Gon and Killua looked between the two in confusion. This was not how a captive spoke to their captor, it was more like a married couple.

Chrollo sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. “Fine! But you will agree to whatever I say when we move and I’m calling the troupe to meet us.” He began to walk off, knowing for certain that there was no escape from the underground hold. “And there was so many things I wanted to show him here,” he grumbled.

Kurapika breathed a sigh of relief before turning to pull the boys into his arms for a hug.

“Okay, good job Kurapika! Now I’ll bust us out of here!” Gon pulled himself out of the hug to start charging his nen punch only for Kurapika and Killua to knock him down.

“Gon! These tunnels are very unstable, you can’t just plow through the walls!” Kurapika yelled at him as Killua knocked him in the head.

“Yeah you idiot!” Chrollo came back from his phone call to see the dog pile on the floor.

“Kurapika, make sure you aren’t giving out any information or I will end this now,” Chrollo reminded the boy. The blonde frowned but in the end nodded.

Chrollo followed behind them as he led them to the kitchen and began to cook dinner for everyone.

Chrollo was preoccupied with deciding what he would do next, he couldn’t tell Kurapika that he had to mate with him. It would definitely be forced as they were now, they needed to bond more. How could he get Kurapika to bond with him?

Chrollo thought on it a bit more before an idea came to him, it would be perfect considering where they were headed to next! With a plan in place for how he’d handle the two children, he moved to
place himself at the head of the table, listening to the conversation closely to make sure the boys didn’t learn anything they shouldn’t.

“So no ones hurting you, right?” The white hair boy asked with a side glare to him. Chrollo glared back, upset that he’d dare insinuate that he’d hurt Kurapika.

“No, they actually treat me pretty well.” Kurapika stirred the pot he had out that held a simple marinara sauce. “Except Nobunaga, I don’t like him.”

“He’s the alpha with the ponytail right?” Gon asked but Chrollo cleared his throat to stop the conversation.

“No talking about any members of the troupe.” Gon pouted and Killua wanted to punch the man. Surprisingly Kurapika didn’t even seem phased by the order.

“Okay, how’s Leorio doing?” Kurapika moved the conversation along.

“He’s worried, he wants in on rescuing you but he has classes,” Killua ground out, his electric eyes not breaking from the stare down he was having with the troupe leader.

“I hope he’s doing well, I bet med school is hell,” Kurapika tried to joke.

“Your friend should stay in his classes, there will be no rescue,” Chrollo put in and the incredibly awkward situation froze once again.

Killua finally snapped and slammed a fist down on the rickety table. “Let’s cut to the chase! What’s it gonna take for you to release Kurapika?!?” Gon sat up and nervously looked between the two. Kurapika also paused.

Chrollo didn’t say anything for a moment, his sharp eyes pinning the two boys to their chairs. “Not happening,” he dismissed the question entirely. The two boys gasped angrily but Kurapika just let his shoulders slump, he should have expected that.

“Chrollo,” Kurapika called in a hushed tone, still focused on his cooking. Chrollo turned to him,
giving him his full attention. “What’s it going to take this time to make you let the boys go?”

Chrollo took his the slight shake of Kurapika’s hands sadly and spoke in the a gentle tone. “I won’t force you to take my mark Kurapika.” The relief in the omega was immense and Chrollo frowned but continued. “Yet. But I can’t let them go for nothing.” Gon and Killua exchanged a look at the wording of that sentence, would he force kurapika soon? He really was going to mate their friend!

“Stop blackmailing him, dammit!” Killua yelled as Gon tried to hold him back from attacking the man, he wouldn’t win.

“Killua! Shush, you two have put me in enough trouble already,” Kurapika reprimanded the boys, reminding them that their habit of running around with no plan got him captured in the first place!

“From now on. . .” Everyone gulped, Kurapika was afraid to hear what he’d have to do from now on and the boys were interested to hear what Chrollo normally forced their friend to do.
Baths and Coffee

Chapter by Serenechaos

“We will be bathing together.”

The statement caused Kurapika to feel almost as though the floor had fallen out from beneath him, but at the same time he could admit that this wasn’t the worst thing Chrollo could demand. It wasn’t mating at least but…

The memory of just the day before, the brief moment when he almost kissed Chrollo in response to the accidental kiss came to mind and he blushed brightly.

Gon stared at the Troupe leader, his innocent mind not quite making the connection. Bathe together? He and Killua did that all the time, especially when there was a nice big tub!

Killua on the other hand was far less innocent. He stared/glared at the dark alpha, understanding better than Gon what this was. The troupe leader definitely fancied Kurapika, definitely wanted to mate him. He was trying to develop intimacy and make Kurapika comfortable with him!

Chrollo in turn didn’t bother to hide a small smile in response to the glare he was receiving from one of the boys, the young omega at that. Kurapika at least wasn’t objecting and that’s what mattered. The next destination he had in mind would be far better if Kurapika was willing to bathe with him, even if it wasn’t as interesting in his mind as the activities he’d planned for them in Sarip.

They could return here once they were mated and follow through with his planned trip. He’d even get them a nice hotel room for the occasion.

“You’re going to force Kurapika to be naked in front of you?” Killua demanded hotly, and Gon finally made the connection. The boy’s eyes went wide as both focused on Chrollo while Kurapika set a pot of water to boil.

“But… But…” Gon’s brain seemed to have left him. “You’re going to force Kurapika to…?”

“We’ll mate when he’s ready,” Chrollo stated plainly before his eyes turned towards Kurapika, namely on the blonde’s shaking hands as he began to tear up some basil to add to the pot of marinara.

Chrollo tuned out the sputtering and arguments that the boys began to issue as Kurapika continued to cook, rising at one point to grab two cans of soda that he passed to the mutinous looking boys before focusing on a small bottle of red wine. Kurapika was considering it and seeing as they were going to be moving anyway, Chrollo opened the bottle and passed it to Kurapika who poured a small amount of it into the saucepan before passing it back to him. Grabbing two cups, he poured the rest of the wine into the cups and offered one to Kurapika.

Kurapika stared at the offered wine then glanced at Killua and Gon, both wearing fish expressions currently, and decided that he might actually need the alcohol to get through this meal.

“Thanks,” he stated blandly as he accepted the wine.

“Need any help?” the troupe leader asked and Kurapika shook his head automatically. The food was almost done anyway.
The pasta was divided between four plates and Chrollo carried these to the table while Kurapika brought over the pot of sauce, setting it on a pot holder. Chrollo took the first serving of sauce from the pot then attempted to hand the ladle to one of the boys, neither of which were drinking the sodas he provided. Both glared at the ladle suspiciously, so he handed it to Kurapika instead.

The first bite was one he savored, enjoying the simple marinara with the basil and red wine. Glancing at Kurapika, Chrollo saw that he was pretty much ordering the boys to eat and not waste food.

Both boys seemed ready to argue before the omega grunted and began to eat. For several minutes there was silence in the room, broken only by the scrape of utensils. It was like a family dinner in the first few minutes when everyone began eating and in a few minutes he would start a conversation about chess or something mundane but enjoyable-

“Have you two been training?” Kurapika asked the boys, breaking the illusion that Chrollo had slowly been building about this being the family he and Kurapika were building with their first two children.

“Yeah,” the alpha declared. “We started by going to Greed Island with H-!”

“Biscuit-sensei,” the omega cut in after elbowing the boy beside him. “We’ve been working with her on-and-off.”

Chrollo stared at the alpha as the boy gained a look that just screamed ‘Oh yeah,’ and sat up, nodding emphatically. “So who is H-?”

Both boys froze as Kurapika glanced at Chrollo with a slightly exasperated expression before focusing on the boys again. Obviously it was someone the boys knew Kurapika wouldn’t approve of and both looked… The alpha looked guilty and the omega looked defiant!

For a long moment Chrollo felt amused as Kurapika gave both boys the look of a parent who was disappointed and exasperated.

“Hisoka, right?”

The slumping in the shoulders of the boys was answer enough and Chrollo found he almost felt like a parent himself as concern rose. Hisoka was bad news, especially around impressionable children. Was he giving them the idea to keep trying to free Kurapika?

There was no need for Chrollo to open his mouth again during the next half hour as they ate, Kurapika thoroughly chewing out the boys for going anywhere near Hisoka. He could definitely see why he felt like a parent to the two now, it seemed they lacked contact with responsible adults. In turn, though irritated, Kurapika seemed quite happy to have the two near.

Perhaps once they were mated, it would do Kurapika good to have the boys around? Not permanently, but once pregnant he could definitely use some extra help and if it kept two promising youths away from Hisoka…

Just as he had done the previous time he had caught the pair, once dinner was finished Chrollo marched the pair into a room that he sealed with the technique from his book. Knowing it would ease Kurapika’s mind, he made sure it was a bathroom near the exit, even pointing out the stairs and promising the ‘door’ would be left cracked open for them.

Kurapika followed him silently out into the cool night air and watched as Chrollo mostly shut the top of the tomb, not locking the entrance just as he promised the boys.
“I’m going to be bathing fully dressed,” he stated bluntly as he followed Chrollo to the car.

The man seemed to be in some sort of cross between a good mood and disappointed. “I expected as such, I’m not going to force you. But I will be nude.”

Kurapika blushed automatically as he stomped the rest of the way to the car and slid into the front seat. “Where are we going now?”

Chrollo smirked slightly at him and Kurapika mentally groaned even as he admitted that the alpha was especially handsome when he smiled. “I had such plans for us here, such as tomorrow I intended for us to go to the National Archives, then I know of this wonderful cafe to go to for dinner since we would both likely be reading through lunch-”

“Another job?” Kurapika snapped.

“No, this was just an enjoyable trip for the two of us.”

So they really had been alone here.

“Unfortunately our time alone must be cut short, so we’ll be rejoining some of the members of the troupe. Kortopi seemed eager to try playing you at Go again, and Bono’s mate’s heat just ended so he’ll be joining us along with Paku.”

Kurapika settled back into his seat as Chrollo started the car, his eyes travelling back to the grave that served as the entrance to the base. The alpha noticed.

“They definitely care for you,” Chrollo admitted as he shifted the car to drive and began to pull away. Kurapika’s hands fisted automatically in response. “Once we’re mated and they understand that there will be no separation, perhaps they would be good visitors?”

Now Kurapika rubbed his neck, terrified of what may come the next time Gon and Killua attempted to save him. He’d need to be ready to run immediately. And they couldn’t make such a terrible blunder again.

Chrollo tried to start conversation several times during the next few hours as they drove, even suggesting that Kurapika pull out the magnetic chess board, but the blonde ignored him. He realized he was too close to the troupe leader, too comfortable.

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Killua glared at the door as he paced back and forth before finally sitting down next to Gon with a huff.

“Well, we have our answer,” Gon pointed out as he glumly stared at the sealed door. He’d gotten close, thinking it would be worth trying to break down the door but had been stopped by Killua when the air had become charged. “That guy definitely wants to mate Kurapika… But why did he only want him to bathe with him?”

Killua fought the urge to slap Gon upside the head for only a second before relenting. “Would you take a bath with Hisoka?”

“Didn’t we see him bathing on Greed Island?” Gon pointed out and Killua erupted into shivers.

“Would you have gotten into the water with him?!”
“No,” Gon admitted. “But we bathe together all the time!”

“We’re comfortable together! Imagine having to shower with someone who killed your aunt!”

Now Gon’s eyes blazed in barely suppressed rage. “Then why would he have Kurapika do that?!"

Killua sat back hard. He would have been willing to believe that the troupe leader would have bitten whoever he desired, regardless of whether they agreed or not. That didn’t seem to be the case here: he moved around Kurapika, watched him like a man in love! Bathing together was a comforting activity where you trusted the person you were with… So he hadn’t raped Kurapika yet but he was definitely getting impatient and wanted more contact!

The former assassin gulped as he realized what this likely meant would be soon to come; if he and Gon failed once more, Kurapika would probably be paying for their release with his body!

“We might have one more chance to save Kurapika, two at most before he’s marked,” Killua finally decided. “I’ll… Call Hisoka.”

Gon stared at his friend in confusion. “Why?”

“Because that guy isn’t likely to separate from the rest of the troupe again until he gets what he wants. We won’t stand a chance at getting Kurapika and getting away on our own, and Hisoka is the only one crazy enough or strong enough to defy the troupe.”

Kurapika slept most of the night, waking briefly when Chrollo pulled into a gas station and entered the convenience store with him to procure some coffee. Surprisingly, Chrollo managed to draw him into a light conversation about when he had attempted to learn to make his own coffee.

“So you broke into a mansion and actually stole a bag of coffee beans as an afterthought?” Kurapika demanded after they had bought the steaming cups of caffeine and were headed back to the car.

“I was 16! It became more of a priority later on!” Chrollo defended with a grin as his shoulder bumped Kurapika’s. “Are you sure you wouldn’t like a danish?”

“Quite. So you stole a bag of coffee beans; did you even know how to use them?”

“I had a running idea…” Now the alpha looked to be blushing slightly.

“I’ll take that as a ‘no’, and it turned out worse than my early cooking attempts.”

“At least you knew how to make coffee, but I knew how to boil an egg!”

Kurapika was blushing now as they both entered the car, neither noticing the alarmed cashier or other patron of the store were staring at them as the car pulled away. “So you’ve seen my… Shortcomings, what of your own?”

The look on Chrollo’s face was a cross between amusement and disgust. “I boiled the beans whole.”

Kurapika set his cup down, certain that this was going to be good.

“I’d… Seen the coffee grounds in the pot and thought that the beans were supposed to look like that when it was done. I must have boiled those things for an hour! There was barely a cup of
liquid left when I finally got impatient and decided to try it.”

The blonde could feel a smile tugging at his own lips and almost glared at Chrollo when he paused in his story to take a drink of his coffee.

“It was as thick as syrup at that point, so I watered it down with cream since I had convinced myself that it was one of the eccentricities of the rich… I can’t remember much of the next week other than knowing that I didn’t sleep at all. Paku said that I was climbing every surface and seemed to be like a sugar-high child, that I had behaved better during my first rut.”

Kurapika was chuckling as he listened Chrollo tell his coffee story. This man just seemed so… Goofy! He made honest mistakes and then got into such situations! He seemed so… Normal right now.

It stung to think of that, to admit that had Chrollo been anything else other than a murderous bandit who had killed his clan, Kurapika might have…

Shaking his head to toss out such thoughts, the blonde turned his attention to his book for a short minute before reaching for his coffee. Chrollo must have also set his down because his hand came in contact with the warm hand of the other before he snagged one of the cups with a jerk and brought it to his mouth.

The coffee tasted… Sweet. Too sweet.

Gagging slightly, Kurapika swallowed the mouthful automatically then glanced towards the cup holder as Chrollo looked to see if he was ok. He’d grabbed the wrong coffee cup!

Trading the cup for his own, neither spoke of that moment for the rest of the drive though Kurapika noticed that Chrollo definitely still drank his coffee.

It was about November now, evidenced by the leaves in the trees now being red and orange. They seemed to glow in the early morning light and as the sun climbed higher, Chrollo drove them into a hilly region where the road curved around mountains, showcasing breathtaking landscapes as their journey continued. Kurapika was hard pressed to not ask for them to pull over several times as he watched the beautiful landscape slip by. He longed to smell the aroma of the autumn leaves in that moment.

He was surprised when Chrollo turned the car onto a smaller road, one that indicated it led to a small town. This seemed unusual, almost like when he had been taken to that small ice-hole hotel right after Chrollo made it apparent that he wanted to mate Kurapika.

“Where are we?”

Chrollo seemed to consider his question for a long minute before answering. “Some place that you shouldn’t talk about since you know how the rest of the world feels about small, private cultures.”

That sounded strange coming from the troupe leader. “Why? Do the people here have eyes that glow green when they’re enraged?”

“No, but people do try to kill them with the intent of preserving and displaying their corpses.”

Kurapika froze at the response and bit his lip. If Chrollo tried anything-

“I’m sure you’re aware that the Gyudondon were driven from their lands by modern developers while flesh collectors tried to kill them? They relocated here, with some assistance.”
So, that’s what this was about. Bonolenov’s village.

“Guess it makes a difference to you if people are trying to kill people who matter to your troupe members, doesn’t it?” Kurapika snarled, foul mood setting in automatically. He paused when Chrollo actually winced.

He didn’t apologize, but Chrollo actually looked as though he was thinking of it. It simultaneously confused and infuriated the Kuruta further. If he was sorry, why wouldn’t he just say it? Why did it only matter now?!

The silence continued as the car entered a small, quaint village. Children played in small courts, there were some small crop fields, and a number of small businesses. The people looked to be a bit behind in their manner of dress, but it added to the quaintness of the town.

The pair finally came to a stop at a building on the far edge of town, more than a few of the residents watching them as they got out of the car. Chrollo was instantly recognized and warmly greeted by a number of the townspeople. As Kurapika climbed out of the car as well, he was surprised when several omegas almost instantly surrounded him.

“Wow! So you must be Chrollo’s mate! Wonderful to meet you!” one of the males declared as he grasped Kurapika’s hand and shook it.

Kurapika was stunned as the other omegas greeted him brightly and warmly, but their smiles soon turned into concern when he didn’t speak.

“He isn’t one of those omegas who got…?” one murmured and was elbowed by a female.

“Regardless of if he is, I doubt Chrollo would hurt him. He just needs a bit of time,” another snapped as Chrollo grabbed his hand, causing Kurapika to jump slightly. This was like being back in his village! All around him, he saw the ghosts of his people as omegas, alphas, and betas moved about, no one sneering at or making rude or presumptive remarks about omegas.

It lightened his mood while also making him feel profoundly homesick as Chrollo guided him to the entrance of the place that they seemed to be staying at. Then his eyes saw the sign.

Onsen. Chrollo had brought him to a hot-spring resort!
A walk and talk
Chapter by Boozombie

The thump of homesickness continued on into the onsen. He saw his village in every corner of the traditional building, the small omega girl pushing an alpha child and not one adult made cutting remarks about her being a bad omega. The group giggling and talking in one of the main rooms where no one was left out because of their secondary gender. It made a sad smile stretch over Kurapika’s face.

Chrollo seemed to know his way around and led him into a large room in the depths of the building. There was nothing exceptional about the room, it looked like any other room you could rent at an onsen. Chrollo put down their bags, the silence between them felt thick and Kurapika didn’t really know what to say. The protection of the village was a good thing, yes, but this was the perfect example of Chrollo’s hypocrisy!

He cares about the Gyudondond tribe because he cares for Bonolenov but if he had never met the man, he’d be the first one to be hunting down these people! Sometimes Kurapika wondered if his family would still be alive if he had met Chrollo before the massacre although he would have only been 12 at most.

“I have to brief the troupe on a few missions, will you be alright alone? Are you hungry at all? I could call for some lunch for you.” Chrollo broke the silence, his voice soft like he was walking on eggshells.

“No I’m fine, I’ll wait for you to come back,” Kurapika whispered back, trying not to break down at him at the moment. It wasn’t the place to break down crying and screaming right now.

The door opened with a heavy smack and a woman stepped forward with all the confidence of someone that had actually been invited in. She gave Kurapika a brilliant white toothed smile before turning to Chrollo with a respectful nod to him.

“It’s always nice to see you Chrollo, it’s been awhile since you last came by!” The woman greeted him warmly.

“And it’s always a pleasure to see you Fanaka-bennu,” Chrollo replied, seemingly used to the woman’s rather loud personality.
“I wanted to see if your guest wanted to take a walk and see the village since you’ll probably be using the main room for a troupe meeting.” Kurapika jumped in surprise when the woman was looking at him and not Chrollo. She was actually asking him if he wanted to go for a walk, not Chrollo! It had been a long time since anyone had deferred to him as a person when they knew him as an omega, not since his own village.

The woman’s striking brown eyes stayed focused upon him while he fidgeted a bit, not sure if he could go out with her. Chrollo might not want him wandering around without any of the troupe to watch over him.

“You can go Kurapika,” Chrollo told him gently. The woman laughed through her nose, turning to Chrollo.

“Like he needs your permission! Come on, honey let’s go have fun!” The woman took his arm and dragged him from the room aggressively. She kept up a one way conversation that Kurapika couldn’t quite catch as she spoke rather fast throughout the entire building until they got outside again.

“Oh wait! You need to grab a jacket!” She suddenly realized and turned to drag him back. The back and forth made Kurapika’s head spin, the woman pulled him back through the interior of the building and to the door of the his room again. “Go grab something warm and I’ll take you out.”

She pushed him at the door and Kurapika didn’t really know how to deal with someone like her and so he just did as he was told. He opened the door with a weary sigh and stepped in, closing the door with a snap behind him.

“Oh, did you forget something?” Chrollo called.

“Yeah, I need a-EEK!” Kurapika looked up to see Chrollo was in the middle of buckling up his pants, no shirt on and his jacket hung up for when he was ready to put it on. The alpha’s chiseled abs and taut muscles instantly made his face go red as he jerked his hands up to cover his eyes.

Chrollo chuckled at the shy boy and finished buckling his pants up, watching as Kurapika got even redder at the sound of his voice.

“You needed?” Chrollo smirked, rolling his words a little suggestively if only just to see Kurapika fluster a bit more.
Kurapika must have been in some sort of hell because all he could think about was Chrollo coming over, wrapping an arm around his waist, and bending him back with a deep, slow kiss. The worst part was he kept having to remind himself that he definitely wouldn’t like that!

“My coat! I needed my coat!” Kurapika firmly planted his hands by his side and fast walked to his bag. Trying not to look at Chrollo as he rolled his shoulder and gave him a sultry grin as he pulled on his own signature coat in a way that suggested he’d be more than happy to take it off again.

Grabbing up the first jacket he came across, Kurapika ran from the room as fast as possible, cursing his imagination the whole way.

“That was quick.” The energetic woman surprised Kurapika enough that he almost fell over in his fumbling. “Hey, are you alright?” Her voice lowered for the first time since she had barged into the room, her eyes shining with concern.

Kurapika couldn’t think of what to say quick enough, his tongue felt thick and the knowing look her eyes morphed into made Kurapika’s face burn.

“He’s attractive huh? The definition of man candy that one is!” She laughed wholeheartedly as she linked their arms together and began to walk him back out of the building at a much more manageable pace.

“So time for introductions, I’m Fanaka-bennu and as you might have noticed that I am Bonolenov’s much better half and not just because I’m an omega.” She gave Kurapika a little wink. Kurapika felt his eyes widen and took a deep sniff of the woman and realized her scent did have a twist of Bonolenov. He knew he’d meet her here but he didn’t realize she’d be so . . . Pushy. “You can call me Fana if you like, most people from outside the tribe have a hard time pronouncing it.”

“I grew up in a small tribe myself, Fanaka-bennu, I can relate to people not knowing how to pronounce your name,” Kurapika spoke for the first time to her.

“Oh my! I always knew Chollo had great taste! What tribe are you from?” She basically bounced in excitement and Kurapika felt almost bad that he had to deflate her happy grin.

“Kuruta.” His voice was basically a knife.
“Oh.”

“Yeah.”

“So you aren’t a facility omega like everybody was theorizing,” she murmured. The two were quiet as they stepped out of the building, the village was going about their happy lives, free from the fear that someone could come and just erase them from the earth. “Tell me how did you end up traveling with the troupe? I can’t imagine it was by your own choice.”

“It’s a long story,” Kurapika tried to brush her off.

“This can be a long walk,” she answered as she bumped her shoulder with Kurapika’s comfortingly.

“Well, it’s pretty simple honestly. I traded myself for my friends after they got captured trying to hunt the troupe. They planned to sell me at first and I totally would have escaped any stupid alpha they would have sold me to!” Kurapika growled, angry just remembering the start of this twisted story.

“Yes, totally,” Fanaka-bennu agreed with him.

“But then suddenly Chrollo was offering me a collar! A collar Fanaka!” Fanaka-bennu gasped.

“He didn’t!”

“He did! And he’s harping on about children and how I’m going to love his hideaway house! I mean I’m seventeen and why would I ever want to have HIS children! Much less spend the rest of my life on some island?!” Kurapika finished with a frustrated grunt.

Fanaka-bennu frowned, not liking the sound of what had been happening the last couple of months. Frankly she couldn’t believe her mate would allow it but then she also knew that the troupe did many things she herself found unsavory.
“What do you think triggered this change?”

“What do you mean?” Kurapika asked with a pinched expression.

“Going from selling you to wanting to mate with you I mean,” she explained pointedly.

“Definitely Hero With A Thousand Faces!” Fanaka-bennu raised an eyebrow, a giggle escaping her mouth as they walked.

“What?” She asked

“It’s a book. In the beginning Chrollo was trying to teach me to cook so he had me do the grocery shopping. He made a stop at a bookstore and I may have criticized the book he bought and then we just started talking and... I guess we just kept talking.”

“And I’m guessing he got gentler as time passed and you kept talking?” Kurapika didn’t appreciate the coy smile being poorly repressed on her face.

“Well yeah, and the whole time they all sexually harassed me!” Kurapika shouted causing a few passersby to turn and stare at them in confusion. Lowering his voice he continued. “Not like Chrollo would ever allow rape to happen under his watch, he’s actually a very honorable man and I can’t stand that!”

Fanaka-bennu began to laugh, a restrained tittering sound escaping her mouth as she turned them down a road that seemed to be a main market street of the village. Venders were everywhere, calling out their wares and haggling. Kurapika turned to the woman, a little affected that she could laugh.

“I don’t mean to offend, honey. It’s just it doesn’t seem Chrollo’s mind has been the only one to change how he thinks.” She giggles into her hand again, acting like he was telling her the beginning of his own love story.

“Excuse me? I have not changed how I think of him!” Kurapika was aghast that she’d even suggest it.
“Oh yeah?” She raised a challenging eyebrow. “Tell me exactly how you’d describe Chrollo Lucifer.”

Kurapika bristled and bit his cheek, not liking the challenge but no one ever said he knew when to back down. “Well he’s a narcissistic, possessive, intolerant man that has no regard for anyone or anything outside of his circle of family! If he doesn’t care about you, then you’re less than dirt in his eyes or worse, he cares about something and he just tramples over everything else to take it for himself!” A flush rose to his cheeks as he got angrier with each word. “So what if he is incredibly intelligent?! As far as I care, if you believe in stupid stereotypes then you’re an idiot! And I guess he can be really kind and even considerate at times but that just loops around to him only caring about those he considers of value!”

Fanaka-bennu nodded her head and let the coy smile take full form.

“And I bet three months ago you would have only had three words to rub together about him, Kurapika.” He smiled brighter at his flushed expression. “Tell me honey, do you think you could hunt down the troupe now?”

“What?” Kurapika almost skidded to a stop right there but the Gyudondon was strong and just pulled him over to a vendor selling jewelry to look over it unconcerned.

“It’s a simple question. If I got rid of that nen restraint on you, could you go kill the Phantom Troupe?” Kurapika opened his mouth to argue that he wouldn’t stand a chance but Fanaka-bennu raised a hand to stop him. “Let’s just say you’d succeed, could you do it?”

Kurapika glared a bit, feeling his eyes flash red, startling quite a number of people. He wanted to shout that of course he would and definitely could, but the falling feeling in his stomach stopped him. Nice memories of troupe members invaded his mind and for a moment he wanted to bang his head on the ground. Franklin teaching him to cook, Chrollo telling him about his first batch of coffee or even just lounging, saying nothing while they read. Then of course there was Uvogin, could he even describe how lost he’d feel if Uvo was suddenly gone?

“I know that look, it’s the look I had when I realized I had fallen for the village rebel.” Fanaka-bennu sighed a little dreamily. Kurapika growled in his throat and shuffled his feet a bit and looked over the jewelry sullenly. “You know, despite everything I don’t think you want to leave.”

Kurapika gasped, looking back at the woman in horror.
“I’m being serious,” she laughed as she traded a few silver coins for a necklace Kurapika didn’t get a chance to look at. “I think you like them, I think you like being with them at least when you aren’t feeling the pressures of captivity.”

“That just proves how wrong it is!” Kurapika yelled at her, hating that she was saying these things that somehow made sense to him.

“Yes, it’s very, very wrong but I think we both know that they like you too. The troupe has something fundamentally wrong with them, I know that,” she sighed as they began to walk again. “They don’t care about most things, they feel nothing when killing but when they do care, you are probably the most loved human on the planet.”

Kurapika grunted, already knowing that but that’s what the problem is!

“That doesn’t bring my people back, my family!” Kurapika argued.

“I know and trust me, now that they know you they are ashamed for what they have done, even if they don’t say it out loud,” She paused for a moment, just enjoying the chilly air before looking back to him. “It’s important to know they can grow and adapt.”

“So what? It still isn’t fair!” Kurapika finally just ripped his arm from hers, stomping once to plant his feet. His eyes burned red, his frustration fueling them. “They should all be dead! I should have been able to kill them to grant my kinsman vengeance, why are they alive? Robbing, murdering thieves are alive while my peaceful people rot! WHY? It’s not fair!”

Fanaka-bennu looked around the street at the gathering crowd of jabbering onlookers. With a furrowed brow she grabbed his arm and pulled him away from the crowd and down the street, hiding his tears all the way. Once the crowd lessened, she stopped and turned back to the smaller omega, wiping his eye with a gentle tsk.

“Life isn’t fair, sorry about that,” she whispered, sounding genuinely upset for him. “Sometimes we lose things in life, things are ripped away and it hurts. Oh yeah, it hurts like hell but if you live your life in hate and vengeance you’ll miss out on things the world is trying to give you.” Kurapika frowned, more tears sliding down his face as he hiccuped.

“How could- it would be. . . . How could I ever forgive him?”
“It’s very simple honey, you can’t. There is no forgiveness for something like this,” she paused, her eyes digging into Kurapika’s. “But before you dismiss Chrollo, I want you to ask yourself something. Not if you could love him but can you be happy with him? Do you think you could forge a life out of this situation?”

He didn’t speak, how could he? She had essentially dropped a bomb on his brain.

“Think about it, feel it out and if you decide you can’t, well we both know you aren’t defenseless honey, so stop acting like it.” She stood up straight, retaking his arm with a satisfied smile. “Oh! Before I forget, I got you this!” She held up a necklace that was similar in style to Chrollo’s earrings but a deep red.

“Thanks,” was all Kurapika could manage.

“It matches your eyes,” she turned them to continue down the road. “Alright let’s get back, the troupe meeting should be wrapping up.”

Kurapika paced in the dressing room of the onsen, nerves dancing in his stomach. Fanaka-bennu’s words were still swirling around in his head, unfortunately the impromptu speech had made a dent on his armor.

“Kurapika? Are you alright in there?” Chrollo called from outside where he had recently been kicked out so the omega could change.

“Yeah! I’m fine!” he called out, a bit panicked.

Despite his best efforts, he was considering what Fanaka-bennu had said and what he had come up with was: he didn’t have enough information. So at the moment he was taking a step to see if he could be happy with this being his life.

Tightening his grip on his towel, Kurapika took a few deep breaths before making his way out of the dressing room and marched past the waiting alpha with a determined expression.
Chrollo chuckled and walked behind the omega, relaxed as he held his towel low on his hips. The boy had put off bathing to the last possible moment, but he was fine with that. It meant that they would get the open air bath to themselves. Kurapika got to the edge of the pool, fiddling with the towel wrapped completely around his chest and then quick as lightning, he threw it off and jumped into the water, the faint glance of blue underwear almost blinding to Chrollo.

A smirk found its way to his lips as he slipped off his own towel, no underwear in sight, and slowly dipped into the steaming pool. His eyes never left the flushed omega covering his chest protectively.

“I thought you said you’d be fully clothed?” Chrollo asked a little smugly, unable to resist flexing a bit when Kurapika's eyes flickered over to him.

“Just shut up,” Kurapika hissed and placed himself as far away as he could. Chrollo followed him, leaving just enough room to let Kurapika have some semblance of comfort. It wouldn’t be good to force himself on the boy too fast.

“Did you enjoy your walk with Fanaka?” Chrollo asked conversationally. “You seemed a bit off when you came back.”

“It was fun, she bought me a necklace,” Kurapika answered as he hugged his knees, trying not to stare at Chrollo's built chest. Even the man’s tattoo didn't seem as offensive on his rippling bicep, and the one on his forehead could even be described as attractive under his deep ebony hair.

“It looked like you had been crying,” Chrollo turned to the huddled boy, wanting to know his troubles. Wanting him to know he could share his troubles, they could talk. Chrollo wanted to listen to him.

“It was nothing, I don’t want to talk about it.” Kurapika dismissed as he shook away the thoughts in his head. It had to be the effect of his last heat! Some kind of lingering hormones brought on by Chrollo's dirty talk! No way he finds Chrollo attractive.

“Okay.” Chrollo frowned, a little disappointed as the boy dunked his head under the water. He came back up and pushed his blond locks back, looking unmeaningly seductively.

“Let’s just wash up and go back to bed, I think I’ve done enough talking today.” Kurapika stated with finality, his first test to see if he Chrollo wouldn’t push him if he wasn’t yelling or crying. He
shouldn’t have to talk if he didn’t want to right?

― Alright, you’ve had a long day.‖ Kurapika almost smiled but he thought better of it.
Chrollo opened his eyes, a soft smile on his face due to having yet another lovely dream of Kurapika. In this one, they were seated on a blanket by a river just outside of Sarip, the petite blonde in his lap as they read a book together.

A comfortable dream, not overly sexual but something he hoped to make true one day soon.

Light mewling drew his attention down to Kurapika who was snuggled firmly into his side and Chrollo realized that at some point his hand had begun to massage the boy’s back. A purr echoed in the throat of the person who held his affection before said person snuggled into him, rubbing his face into Chrollo’s well built chest as their legs tangled together.

A regular problem made itself known in that moment and Chrollo mentally cursed over having to get up. Kurapika was still so shy and he didn’t want to spook the boy with-

The alpha’s thoughts froze as Kurapika’s hips rolled against his own and he felt something that he’d only seen/felt once before. Something that had horrified the boy to the point where he’d screamed the last time he’d had one!

Grabbing several of the pillows that Fana had provided for Kurapika, Chrollo slowly began to wedge them between them as Kurapika’s hips continued to roll against his. His instincts were screaming that Kurapika was ready, his head insisted he wasn’t! There was only enough blood in his body for one of those to win and he refused to let it be the one that was more likely to cause him to lose ground!

Finally freeing himself, Chrollo slid from the bed as Kurapika tightly hugged the pillows he’d used to displace himself then made sure the blanket covered the blonde well. If asked, he’d say that he’d gotten up early and hadn’t seen anything!

Padding lightly into the hall, the thief breathed a small sigh of relief as the chilly air helped his head to clear. He needed a cold shower. Luckily, the washroom where you were supposed to bathe before entering the onsen was empty so he was undisturbed as he cooled his overly warm body.

Moving to the kitchen, Chrollo began to dig through the cabinets, praying there was coffee when a small cough drew his attention. Fana stood behind him, a bag of coffee grounds in hand and a coffee maker already set up on the kitchen table.

“Most in the village don’t care for this beverage,” she stated as she handed Chrollo the bag.

“It’s highly popular with most of the rest of the world,” he pointed out as he glanced at the brand and felt a small smile pull at his lips. Bono must have picked this up at some point. “Do you have any milk?”

“Yes, would you like some?”

Chrollo considered it for a moment. “I prefer creamer, Kurapika enjoys milk in his coffee.”

The smile that crossed Fana’s face was brilliant. “Good to see you’re thinking of him… Tell me, was it really a book that made you change your mind about selling him?”
Chrollo set down the bag of coffee as he moved to check the refrigerator. “It was several things… He’s smart, determined… Despite being a captive, he tried his best and even noticed our little quirks such as things we liked and didn’t. Before meeting him, it was odd for me to meet someone so well read who shared so many of my interests. We talked for hours…” Finding no creamer, Chrollo grabbed the milk before turning back to set up the coffee maker.

Now a smile crossed Chrollo’s face. “He looked adorable, even when pouting when we made him dress up. But he’s most beautiful when he smiles or laughs. I wore a dress just to see it when he was upset and I still feel that his laugh and smile were worth it.”

Fana seemed delighted by his response, her eyes shining. “You’ll be happy to know that he’s starting to see you in a better light, even wondering if he could be happy with you.”

It was music to Chrollo’s ears. “So he’ll probably be ready by his next heat?”

Fana’s smile faded instantly. “You’d try to mark him in heat?!”

It hadn’t seemed like a bad idea previously, but Fana’s reaction clued Chrollo in that it was in fact a VERY bad idea. “I’m going to guess that that isn’t a good idea?”

Fana sighed. “I keep forgetting that the rest of the world has deluded themselves into thinking that omegas want to be marked and mated by an alpha and lack all thought or opinion on the matter. Chrollo, heat is like being drugged. You feel a burning need and it’s easy for alphas to take advantage of it, but that’s exactly what it is: taking advantage.”

Chrollo’s eyebrows furrowed as he realized that Fana was right: it would be taking advantage. “Kurapika would hate being mated like that,” he admitted.

“Any self-respecting omega would,” Fana pointed out. “Omegas prefer to be courted, we want to know our opinions matter and that is the greatest sign of respect to us. Being marked during heat is highly disappointing. However, being cared for during heat by the alpha who is interested in us, especially if we’re interested in them, and not having that alpha try to take advantage, is highly desired.”

Chrollo had simultaneously failed and succeeded in this. He’d given Kurapika the choice, but he’d been attempting to bargain with him the entire time. Rather than just giving Kurapika the cookies and other sweets the way his instincts had insisted on, he’d tried to use those as a means of getting Kurapika to mate… He’d have to keep this advice in mind.

Kurapika gasped as Chrollo’s arm circled him, burning lips pressed against his neck while sinful fingers angled his hips, directing them to roll against the alpha’s. The action stimulated Kurapika’s member and woke the hunger in him, the burning desire.

“Ch-chrollo…” the omega gasped as he rolled his hips against the other’s again.

Lips met his to silence him, dark eyes smoldering. “Let me take care of you.”

A hand circled his cock, stroking him-

A gasp pulled Kurapika from sleep and he sat up automatically, pulling away from the warmth beside him, terrified of what it was. Rather than Chrollo, there was a pile of pillows and Kurapika heaved a sigh of relief.
Light filtered through the window, meaning it was morning, and Kurapika thanked whatever deity was responsible for making Chrollo such an early riser.

Standing unsteadily, Kurapika glanced out of the window and it occurred to him as the sun rose that the winter was well on its way. Soon the year would end and the next Hunter exam would begin. Would Killua take this one? Kurapika hoped he would, he was certain the boy would pass if he tried again.

All things considered, Kurapika could almost call his own pass a fluke. He’d likely have failed without his alliance with Gon, Killua, and Leorio. And then there was the final exam. Honestly, who knowingly put a 17-year-old boy without nen up against a monster like Hisoka…

Kurapika’s brain sputtered to a momentary stop as he realized something he had forgotten: his birthday this year. He’d turned 18 in April while training in nen! He’d completely forgotten about that! It wasn’t like it mattered, it was just embarrassing that he forgot.

Turning, the omega walked to the communal bathroom and made use of the facilities. Luckily he’d discovered something important that morning: thinking of Hisoka was an effective, if disgusting, way of getting rid of an erection!

Phinks was in the hall when he exited the bathroom, heading towards the kitchen. “Morning!” the alpha greeted brightly when he saw Kurapika. “Everyone’s in the kitchen for breakfast. Might want to hurry if we want to get any!”

“Everyone is here?” Kurapika confirmed as they walked down the hall.

“Only for today, then it’ll be you and Chrollo with two or three of the other members. Did those kids actually fall into the Sarip base and get lost?”

Kurapika bit his lip slightly. Said like that, Gon and Killua’s failed attempt to rescue him sounded more humorous than disappointing. “I needed the wine that night.”

Phinks’s laugh was loud as he moved ahead towards the kitchen. “Trying to get a minor drunk, danchou?”

“He’s a very mature 17-year-old!” was the amused response.

“I’m 18,” Kurapika corrected as he finally entered the kitchen.

The members of the troupe plus Fana all looked up immediately, several of them looking about to ask something but Chrollo cleared his throat. “We’ll be going out for the several hours today. I hope you don’t mind staying here Kurapika? I’m certain that Fanaka-bennu could show you around, possibly introduce you to other omegas in the village?”

“Of course!” the woman declared brightly. “There’s a beautiful waterfall near here where omegas like to gather in the afternoon! Flowers grow there year round due to the waterfall being from a hot spring! And we can have a great lunch before going there!”

“What about breakfast?” Franklin called out. “Anything in particular you’d like?”

“I’m fine, I only want some coffee right now,” Kurapika replied as he moved through the crowded room, eyes catching on the coffee maker, more importantly on the mug that Chrollo had just produced and was currently filling. There was even milk for the coffee, not that overly sweet creamer Chrollo seemed to prefer!
The coffee was fragrant and hot, a wonderful combination on a cool day and Chrollo bumped his shoulder affectionately when he sat down.

“Would you like a swimsuit for our next bath?” the alpha asked, his face serious. “They’d be out of season, but I’m sure I could find one.”

“Thanks,” Kurapika replied automatically. He didn’t have many pairs of underwear so a swimsuit would be nice.

“So, should the Speedo be pink or red?”

Everyone laughed when Nobunaga, who was sitting across from the pair, received a face full of sprayed coffee.

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“Oi, danchou!” Uvo yelled once the troupe was a fair distance from the Gyudondon village. “It’s not going to take everyone to get those eyes so if you want to stay and celebrate Kurapika’s birthday with him, no one will mind.”

Chrollo glanced back at Uvo, a small smile on his face. “I’m aware, but I believe giving him a day away from us for the first time in months is something he’d enjoy. We can use this time constructively. Nobunaga and Shizuku, the two of you focus on getting the eyes. Paku, you’re with Machi, the two of you will get the cake. The rest of you may join either team or do as you like, just make sure to give Kurapika and the village some space today.”

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It had been strange when the troupe left and Kurapika found himself without one of his normal ‘babysitters’. There were no chores for him to do since Fanaka-bennu apparently hired other villagers to help with keeping the onsen clean and had chased him out of the laundry room.

Lucky, his most recent book was mixed among his things and Kurapika was able to find a warm area near one of the springs where he finished his book that morning. Not knowing where he could find another book, he stood to head inside and found Fanaka-bennu had finished with her various tasks and had been looking for him.

“Finally!” she declared when she spotted Kurapika as he stepped into the hallway which held the room that he and Chrollo shared. “I was looking for you so that we could have lunch then head to the waterfall! How do feel about having a banana split for lunch?” she asked as she all but dragged him down the hall towards the kitchen. “I think my favorite thing about leaving the isolationist habits of our old village is ice cream! Heat and air conditioning are nice, but ice cream is the best! Kortopi was the one that showed us what a banana split is and I’ve been hooked ever since!”

Kurapika felt his brain whirling as he was tugged into the kitchen before freezing when Fanaka-bennu grabbed a banana. “Not that!”

Fanaka’s happy ramblings ceased almost instantly as she turned to Kurapika. “Not what?”

“Not a banana, please,” Kurapika almost begged.

The other omega’s eyes narrowed slightly. “You’re not trying to do something like waste food, are you? Or have some horrible misconception and believe you need to lose weight?”

“No! Nothing like that! It’s just… When the troupe initially were thinking of selling me, they
decided I needed… Training.”

Fanaka’s expression indicated she didn’t understand how this correlated with the banana in her hand. But her expression was also rather dark at the word ‘training’.

“Most of it wasn’t bad! It was mostly things like how to cook because I honestly didn’t know how! Franklin was really a good teacher for that!”

“But there was a disaster involving bananas?” Fanaka asked, her voice disbelieving.

“Not in the kitchen… Shalnark decided that I needed to learn to please an alpha in a more… Intimate way and made me practice… With a banana….” Kurapika felt his face heating up as he made the admission and Fanaka-bennu stared at him, mouth agape.

“He made you… Do things… WITH A BANANA?!”

“It was just things like how to give a blowjob!” Kurapika explained when he saw how outraged the woman was, but thankfully the banana was gone. Unfortunately, that didn’t seem to placate Fanaka-bennu at all.

“Chrollo never allowed it to go further than that! And it stopped immediately when he became interested in mating me!”

“I should hope it did!” the other omega all but raged before taking a deep breath. The sweet smile she wore a moment later was still disturbing. “I’m sorry, I suddenly find that I’m not feeling up for anything with bananas in it today. I hope you don’t mind Kurapika?”

“Not at all,” the blonde replied faintly. Fanaka’s rage had been yet another reminder of his home village, namely on how the alphas would high-tail it out to the forest whenever an omega became angry.

They had made a simple lunch instead that consisted of some vegetables Kurapika was unfamiliar with and a pastry that Fanaka enjoyed called cream puffs. Kurapika wasn’t too fond of them but they weren’t too sweet so he tolerated them.

After lunch, both retrieved their coats before leaving the house/onsen and walking down a side street towards the forest on a well traveled path. What surprised Kurapika was that he definitely saw other omegas were on the path as well, ranging in age from quite old to a newborn being carried in his mother’s arms. There were no betas or alphas present, every one of the people were omegas!

“Is this restricted to just omegas?” Kurapika asked Fanaka-bennu as she greeted several of the omegas that were beginning to match their pace.

“Yes actually. We claimed it as a spot for just omegas when the tribe moved here,” Fanaka explained brightly as she waved towards the young man who was carrying his new son. “We use this as a means of having a head count. We can socialize and check on each other. If someone is missing, we notice very quickly. It’s sad but there have been several traffickers who’ve come through and attempted to grab omegas, several were so brazen that they grabbed them in the middle of the road in front of their parents and other people of the village!”

“Did you turn them in to…”

The look Fanaka-bennu gave him indicated that there had probably been too many pieces to effectively hand the would-be kidnappers over to anyone other than a mortician. Maybe too many
even for that.

Flowers began to appear around the same time that Kurapika began to hear the waterfall, and then the temperature began to rise as did the humidity. By the time they reached the pool by the waterfall, he was tugging off his jacket and many of the other omegas were doing the same. Some even jumped into the bright blue steaming water with laughs of joy!

Kurapika’s head turned slightly as he counted the number of omegas present, a staggering 26! After being in a world where omegas were so often sequestered and not seen out of the house after a young age, this felt like a strange, enormous crowd.

Several small children chased each other or picked flowers. Some stood with good friends to talk. Others were setting out cups and making what appeared to be an herbal tea using some of the hot water.

“Hello?” a voice asked Kurapika as he studied the way one of the omegas was mixing whatever it was that she was making. The speaker was the new mother who Fanaka had greeted. His newborn was napping in his arms, an omega as well. “I heard you came in with the troupe. Are you a new member?”

“No!” Kurapika immediately tried to clarify as he stepped back. “I’m-”

“He’s Chrollo’s mate-to-be!” a woman with dark blue hair declared as she stepped up to join them, offering both steaming cups of whatever herbal tea was being brewed. “Honestly Cyan, I know you gave birth just three days ago but we’ve all been talking since he arrived yesterday!”

The woman nudged Kurapika with her elbow then, a large grin on her face. “I’m Cureiya by the way, but you can call me Rei! I prefer it actually!”

Kurapika felt his eyebrows rise before turning his attention to the teacup, the brew smelled divine!

“What is this?” he asked after a moment.

“Clan secret!” Rei piped cheerfully as she drained her cup.

Cyan glanced around at the gathered omegas. “Where’s Fori?”

“Heat, finally had her first one! Naturally Gosimber went bonkers and tried to get into her heat room… I think it took the medics an hour to straighten out his broken limbs after knocking him out.”

“Serves him right! Trying to break into an omega heat room without permission!” Cyan laughed before his smile turned brittle as he glanced at Kurapika, whose eyebrows were at his hairline. “I’m going to talk to Jimmeecha.”

The man turned away from them and briskly walked away, his baby on his shoulder.

“Don’t worry about him,” Rei whispered to Kurapika. “He tried to get Chrollo’s attention for years after he helped us move here.”

Kurapika wasn’t certain if he was relieved or disappointed at the news as he finally took a sip of the tea he’d been provided.
Fanaka-bennu grabbed Kurapika’s arm to guide him back almost two hours later, right as he was contemplating dipping his feet into the warm water the way he saw several other omegas doing.

“Come on! I want to start getting dinner ready!” she declared with a smile as she tugged him along.

A mere couple of steps away from the clearing for the waterfall and pool had Kurapika scrambling to get his jacket back on as the temperature dipped notably. His breath was fogging before they even left the forest and Kurapika could tell that the day had gotten much cooler while they’d been at the omega pool.

Fanaka looped her arm through his as they approached the town. “I’m not familiar with any of the dishes your people used to make, but I think I make a wonderful coxinha and feijoada! Those would be good to make since we’re having so many people!”

“What are they?”

“Coxinha are these little balls of fried dough filled with chicken and vegetables and feijoada is a bean and pork stew.”

“I don’t know how to make either but—”

“You’ll be reading your book! I can easily take care of this!”

“I really—”

“It’s a tradition of the Gyudondon,” Fanaka-bennu stated firmly as she looked Kurapika in the eye. “The hostess is supposed to cook, aided by their mate. If a guest helps, it’s actually quite insulting and insinuates that the mated pair can’t cook.”

Kurapika stared at the woman then sighed slightly. He wasn’t sure if she was being honest since there weren’t many books on the Gyudondon, but he had a feeling she wouldn’t accept any other answer. “Alright, I’ll see if Chrollo left any other books out.”

The alpha hadn’t, but his bag sat not too far from Kurapika and he stared at it for a long moment, wondering if he would find a book if he checked. Moving to the bag, he felt a strange thrill as he gently tugged on the zipper for the bag.

He was in luck, the book that he knew Chrollo was currently reading was right at the top and Kurapika grasped it with a grin. That grin fell into shock when he saw what lay beneath the book: Hero with a Thousand Faces. There were also several photos, all of them featuring Kurapika. One was when they’d made him wear that Bohemian dress, another was of him and Chrollo playing chess together, yet another was from some recent time when Kurapika was being tortured by that horrific doll and he’d apparently gotten so tired that he’d allowed Chrollo to carry him bridal style.

The concern in the man’s eyes…

Tearing his eyes from the picture, Kurapika headed out to one of the large front rooms that was well lit and heated by a fire, enjoying the heat as he began reading the book.

Bonolenov was the first member of the troupe to return and Kurapika took that as his cue to close the book and place it back on Chrollo’s bag. Kortopi and Shizuku arrived right as he returned to the front room, a large board game in hand that they insisted he had to play with them.

Half an hour later, Kurapika stared at the dice that had just given him a disastrous number. He had just landed on Boardwalk and Shizuku had placed a hotel on the space! Who would have guessed that the forgetful girl was a master of Monopoly? She owned roughly three-quarters of the board at
Ano… If you can’t pay then I’ll take Reading Railroad?” Shizuku offered and Kurapika tossed the card to the girl before glancing at Kortopi.

Kortopi seemed to be even worse off than Kurapika, down to a mere four jenny and his nest roll had his one eye rolling before he tossed his last property to Shizuku without being asked. Out of the game.

“Let’s just end this,” Kurapika declared as he tossed his property cards back into the game box. “Shizuku wins.”

“Agreed,” Kortopi stated flatly.

“Okay… Shizuku wins…” Shizuku stated as she studied her cards before blinking at the words clicked. “Oh. Was that too fast?”

“Was what too fast?” Kurapika asked as Kortopi jumped up, arms waving.

“Danchou said to distract Kurapika… Oh, that’s you!”

“Distract me from what?” Kurapika demanded as Fanaka-bennu and Bono entered the room with a large platter and a steaming pot. Behind them came the troupe with large grins on most of their faces. “Did they help with dinner?” But if Fanaka-bennu hadn’t been lying earlier, that couldn’t be right!

“Happy birthday to you!” a chorus began and Kurapika almost fell over as Paku and Franklin stepped through the door with a cake held between them. “Happy birthday to-”

“Wait wait! What?!” Kurapika demanded, hardly believing that he had just witnessed the Phantom Troupe singing the birthday song! “It’s not my birthday!”

“Well it must have recently been, you were 17 not even a month ago!” Chrollo reminded him.

“Because I forgot about it! It was before we met!”

Several of the troupe blinked, then a few snickered and the rest joined in. They all knew Kurapika was incredibly intelligent, so the thought that he’d forget something like his own birthday was more than a bit amusing.

“So we ran out to grab a cake and presents for nothing?” Nobunaga complained and was promptly elbowed by Uvo as everyone entered the room and settled in for the meal as Phinks settled plates on a long table that Bono and Fana had set their platter and pot on.

“I’ll put the cake in the kitchen for now,” Fanaka stated as Bono took the serving utensils and began to serve the food. “We’ll have a nice dessert later. Oh, and Shalnark…”

It felt like the room had suddenly dropped twenty degrees in temperature as Fanaka-bennu’s tone turned dark, her beautiful face going blank. Bonolenov reacted instantly, abandoning his serving utensils in favor of backing away from his mate slowly. Most of the troupe, Shalnark included, took the hint and began to back away slowly towards the far door. Fana’s hand shot out, capturing the blonde technology-geek’s shirt as her face twisted into a rather malevolent mask that Kurapika recognized as one that would cause many of the alpha’s in his village to sprint for the hills.

“A banana Shal? Really?”
Shalnark’s knees were shaking and he actually fell when Fanaka suddenly released him, her face morphing back to her normal, beautiful features.

Kurapika heard most of the room breathe a rather notable sigh of relief and he realized in that moment that Chrollo’s arms were around him protectively and that he was leaning into the other man’s chest. Most of the troupe members were shaking in terror, even Uvo who now stood protectively before Machi was shivering.

“You guys are completely whipped by a couple of defective omegas!”

The hair on Kurapika’s neck stood on end as Chrollo’s arms practically lifted him off the ground as the atmosphere turned tense again, Fanaka’s beauty once again melting away. Bonolenov yelped and broke into a run, fleeing the room immediately. He was followed by Feitan who was carrying Phinks, Paku, and Chrollo carrying Kurapika as Fanaka-bennu turned to stare at Nobunaga. The rest of the troupe were behind them, Shalnark being dragged by Shizuku and Franklin since he couldn’t seem to make his legs work.

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“Should we help him?” Kurapika asked an hour later as he glanced back at the house where a cross between a squeal and a scream could be heard.

“Nobunaga is one of the guards for the troupe. He swore that if need be, he would die defending the rest of us,” Chrollo explained as he ducked out of the changing room for the onsen and held out a bag to Kurapika. “Your swimsuit.”

Kurapika accepted the bag and stepped into the changing room, stripping quickly then pulling out the promised swimsuit. Surprisingly it wasn’t a Speedo but an actual pair of swim trunks. They were black with red piping and a bit big on him, but he found them to be more than acceptable.

Chrollo was waiting for him outside, a piece of cake in hand and Kurapika rolled his eyes.

They’d had dinner, Fanaka taking a short break to order Bono to come back and collect the food then ensure everyone ate. He’d obeyed without question.

“Just have to have your dessert, don’t you?” Kurapika teased as he rapidly approached the hot spring and entered the water which felt even better than it had the day before.

“Hey, I have a lot to celebrate!” Chrollo called to him as he walked to the side of the spring and sat down, dipping his feet into the water. “This means I’m not a cradle-robbing pedophile if you were actually 18 before I started pursuing you!”

“You’re still almost ten years older, so you’re still a cradle-robber!” Kurapika shot back.

Dark eyes locked on him with amusement, a sly smirk crossing the man’s face and Kurapika found he couldn’t look away as the man set his cake aside and stood. His towel slid off and Kurapika’s mouth dropped.

“I decided on the pink Speedo!” Chrollo declared proudly as he struck a flamboyant pose. “So, how do you like it?”

The laughter that poured from Kurapika’s mouth made the man beam.
Hot breath on his neck, a chuckle against his overstimulated skin. Kurapika moaned a high pitched whining sound. The man always teased him.

“Be patient,” Chrollo’s deep baritone voice laughed in a husky whisper, peppering kisses and light nips down the side of his neck.

Kurapika didn’t want to be patient, he wanted more! He thrust his hips up to meet Chrollo’s, grinding their hard cocks together, demanding for the man to go faster, harder, to give him more.

A hand entangled into his hair, pulling his head up to meet the alpha’s in a deep and intense kiss. Their tongues clashed, trying to dominate the other. Finger tips electrified Kurapika as Chrollo slowed the kiss, deepening it but keeping the intensity of it all.

He kept trying to capture Chrollo's tongue, speed up the kiss so he could reach climax faster but it was clear Chrollo was in control here as the alpha laughed against his lips.

With a pinch to his nipples Kurapika gasped, moaning around Chrollo’s tongue. Throwing his arms around the alpha’s head, he laced his fingers through that ebony hair, trying to plaster his body to the others in an pleading arch.

“Kurapika. . .” The kiss broke and he froze as those heady grey eyes looked at him like he was everything in the world. “I love you.”

Kurapika woke up gasping, clutching the quilt over his chest and an aching erection.

“Mother of god,” he hissed as he swiped at his sweaty forehead. He couldn’t wait for all these weird hormones to go away. Thankfully Chrollo has once again gotten up before seeing his shame, that in itself was a gift. Grumbling, Kurapika left the warm futon, trying to think of anything to deal with his current problem.

Nobunaga’s breath the second time he ever tried to force himself on the omega ended up being the perfect solution to the problem.
Giggling a little at that, Kurapika moved to the showers and went through a morning routine but unfortunately his dream kept popping back up in his mind. He kept trying to force it away but it just came back like a disease. By the time he was getting dressed he was still half hard and blushing.

He considered just skipping breakfast but his stomach reared up and growled in revolt at just the thought of it.

With a heavy sigh Kurapika tried not to think about Chrollo's hips rolling against his but it only made the dream push back furiously. He moved from the room and watched the floor trying to distracted himself.

He wasn’t paying attention when he bumped roughly into someone else. Looking up He realized He had knocked Pakunoda off balance, he quickly reached out a hand, for a beautiful moment his mind was clear from his dream. His hand remained in her bare arm as he sighed in relief before smiling a bit embarrassed.

“Good morning Pakunoda,” the omega greeted her, pakunoda smiled back. The boy was obviously flustered at the moment, his thoughts a crazed jumble running into her mind.

“Good morn-OH!” Pakunoda had to rip her arm away, stumbling back a few steps as her face erupted into a flaming blush. Her back hit the walk as Kurapika stared at her oddly, so she gave him a shaky smile still a little off kilter since she just saw something she had never wanted to see: Chrollo's dick. Ew, just ew. “Morning Kurapika, let’s go have breakfast.”

Pakunoda turned on a dime, for the first time in awhile she longed for the days she saw blood and misery when the omega brushed past her. Honestly that was less off putting than what she just saw.

“Yeah breakfast, I could eat!” Kurapika was happy to get out of how awkward the entire situation had become somehow.

Pakunoda nodded and kept moving since she didn’t want to touch him again. God she wished she could scrub her brain! “I wish I could say the same,” she grumbled to herself.

Kurapika was curious as to the woman’s stiffened shoulders and flushed face, wondering what was
bothering her. They reached the large room Fanaka was letting them use for group meals and pakunoda immediately moved into the furthest corner from Kurapika.

“Morn’in Kurapika!” Uvogin boomed out the moment his mouth wasn’t full of food.

“Morning, what’s for breakfast?” He asked as he looked over the offerings. It looked like that fluffy cake Chrollo had made for him a few months ago, he had really liked that weird breakfast cake.

“It’s yer favorite!” Uvogin smiled before diving back into his plate. A large smile graced Kurapika’s face and he leaped for a plate, Fanaka laughed.

“You’ve had these before?” She questioned as she came in to set down another tray of the delight.

“Yes, Chrollo made them before. They were delicious.” He smiled thinking of the surprise breakfast the alpha had made him that morning.

“Well who do you think taught him?” She grinned, happy her recipe was already so well liked by the other omega already. She liked Kurapika, he was sweet and smart. Chrollo made an amazing choice.

“Thank you for that, I really enjoy this meal.” Kurapika used the spatula to serve himself a large piece of the breakfast.

Machi finished when Kurapika was about half way done. She collected her plate and bent over to kiss Uvogin’s cheek. His eyes widened because this was something he hadn’t noticed before, the happy little smile that danced across Uvogin’s face made his day though. He was happy for them.

Machi passed Shalnark, walking with a happy skip to her step she didn’t normally have. Shalnark’s large almost creepy smile moved from looking to Machi over to center on Kurapika.

“When you’re done I have something for you!” He announced. Kurapika gulped a little, nervous since him and Shalnark didn’t typically go well together. The last time the man had anything for him it was blowjob lessons.
Sighing since he couldn’t really put it off, he quickly finished his food and stood to leave, not noticing Pakunoda flinch when Uvogin touched her arm, her face blushing harder.

“Seriously Uvo, I don’t want to see Machi without her clothes!” Pakunoda growled at the man as soon as the omega was out of earshot.

“You’d be the only one in the room.” He smirked while wiggling his eyebrows, the room empty besides the two of them.

“Now I really can’t eat!” She declared as she rolled her eyes, heading out to get ready for the day.

Kurapika nervously found the blond beta man in his room at the end of the hall. Shalnark was fiddling with some kind of electronic device when he came in.

Clearing his throat to get the blonde’s attention, the man immediately hopped up and started shuffling through his things. “Oh good! I’m glad you came so quick. I got this for you when Danchou first decided he wanted you but I didn’t have a chance to give it to you.”

“What is it?” Kurapika couldn’t help the suspicious tone he adopted.

“Oh don’t be so uptight. It’s nothing bad!” The man seemed to find it as he turned back around, hiding whatever it was behind his back. “Happy... Uhh... Courtship!” He grinned as he presented a brand new phone, it was the latest model!

“Wait You’re giving me a phone?!” Kurapika’s mind immediately started making a list of everyone he needed to call. Leorio was first, he needed to know Kurapika was alright. Then Gon and Killua of course and maybe one of his co-workers, Melody had been very nice and he’d like her to know he wasn’t dead.

“It’s not fully functional, it can only call the numbers I’ve programmed in for you. So basically, just the troupe and I added Fanaka-bennu since you two hit it off.”

“Oh,” Kurapika deflated a bit, this was just another way to track him.
“And now that you have this I can take the tracker out of this!” Shalnark didn’t waste any time, dropping to his knees and taking up Kurapika’s leg, throwing the other off balance for a moment.

Kurapika hadn’t even thought of the shackle on his ankle in such a long time, he had almost forgotten it was there. The lack of nen coursing through his body had become normal.

“Wait you won’t be tracking me anymore?” Kurapika asked skeptically.

“Well I can track literally every phone ever built so it’s a tradeoff!” The other blonde grinned as he apparently finished taking out the tracker in the shackle. “It was about time anyway. I’m sure as soon as you’re mated Danchou will probably remove the shackle.”

“So this is...” Oh god no, “a mating gift?” So it’s finally happening, the odd anomaly where an alpha’s pack feels the need to give gifts to an omega their alpha has decided to mate. He hoped the troupe would be above this kind of behavior or something.

“Ya that was the intention.” Shalnark stated plainly as he got up, making it clear that he was done talking.

Kurapika backed out of the room soberly, the phone was... Great he guessed, although what was the point of a phone if he couldn’t call his friends and just talk? It’s not like he’d do anything bad, just let them know he’s alright and find out what everyone was up to, make sure Gon and Killua didn’t go to Hisoka again.

Kurapika’s steps were heavy while he walked back to his room, ready to just forget the event with a good book.

“Kurapika?” He stopped to look at Chrollo who had popped his head out of a doorway down the hall, probably summoned by the just the sound of him.

“Yes?”

“Do you have any plans for the day?” It was an odd question considering he was Chrollo’s captive, even if it didn’t feel like that anymore.
“No, I was going to read until dinner.” Kurapika pointed a thumb at the door of their room.

“Well if you wouldn’t mind forgoing that,” Chrollo started as he moved forward to stand in front of the omega with a light dust of a blush on his cheeks. “Would you like to go out with me?”

“Sure, what were you thinking?” Kurapika could almost laugh, Why was he so nervous? It not like they haven’t hung out before.

“I was thinking like a date,” Kurapika paused, his eyes going wide. “Like a proper date.”

“Oh,” Kurapika took a step back, Chrollo had never asked him before. He was actually asking if he wanted to go out and Kurapika didn’t know how to feel about it. “Um, okay. Sure I guess, that would be okay.”

Chrollo grinned and looked to hold back jumping in victory, the amount of happiness on his face gave away how nervous he had been. “Wonderful! Okay I’ll come get you in let’s say two hours?”

“Okay.”

The troupe had their things packed up and began to leave, Machi and Uvogin waved them off briefly.

Nobunaga was complaining constantly about how Chrollo was being too soft and he hated visiting the ‘village of broken omegas’ as he dubbed it, Bonolenov glaring at him from behind.

“I agree that it is taking a really long time,” Franklin put forward, everyone nodding their heads to that.

“How much longer do you think it’s going to be?” Shalnark groaned, looking back at the building with an exasperated expression.
“Not much longer!” Pakunoda spoke up a little snuggly causing the rest of the group to turn to her excitedly. She held back a grin since she had information that everyone else wanted. If she was more like Chrollo, she’d make them pay for it.

“What do you know? What did you see?!"

“Kurapika has started to have rather explicit thoughts about Chrollo, it was startling to be frank.” Pakunoda smiled slightly as everyone breathed a sigh of relief and shouted out their happiness for their leader.

“By the way who is that blond omega?” Shizuku suddenly asked making everyone pause suddenly and then begin to laugh. Shizuku looked confused but in the end forgot that she was confused as well and so let it go.

Kurapika was pulling outfits from his bag, showing them off to Fana. He didn’t know why Fana insisted on helping him choose an outfit for his ‘date’ with Chrollo, but it wasn’t boring. Fana sat on the floor and booed outfits she didn’t like, adding comments that made him crack up. She made him try on ones she liked and a half an hour into it he was wearing mismatched clothing and a large grin.

“Oh yeah wear those!” Fana breathed when he held a pair of fleece tights, they were stripped in various shades of blue and white with patterns of snowflakes within the stripes.

Kurapika thought they were nice and very warm looking but he didn’t have anything to wear over them, he couldn’t understand why Chrollo had bought them. He told her this.

Fanaka laughed at him. “You aren’t supposed to wear anything over them, you wear them like pants.”

“What?! That’s obscene!” Kurapika argued, glaring at the clothing. People would be able to see everything with these tight things wrapped around his legs.

“It’s not obscene it’s fashion Kurapika, but we can pair it with a long sweater if that makes you more comfortable.” Fanaka moved to the large pile of clothes to pull out a white fuzzy sweater that
would hang to his mid thighs.

“I can deal with that.” Kurapika nodded and moved to undress, comfortable with the other omega to completely disrobe. He slipped the soft cloth over his legs, almost purring at the sensation over his skin, the sweater was equally as soft.

“Oh you look so adorable!” Fanaka fawned over him. “Now let’s do something about that hair!”

Another half an hour passed with laughter as Fana worked his yellow gold locks into an intricate braid, bits of his bangs curling around his pale face.

“I knew this would look great on you! It’s called a Dutch braid and it really shows off your pretty face.” She smiled playing with this thin pieces of hair, trying to place it just right.

“I don’t understand why we’re putting in so much effort into this, I’ve been on dates with Chrollo before,” Kurapika tried to laugh it off but he couldn’t help the butterflies fluttering around in his stomach. So what if you could call his emotions giddy?! Doesn’t mean a thing!

“But this is the first time he’s asked, right?” Fanaka waggled her eyebrows and Kurapika blushed a bit, biting at his lip.

“That’s right, I guess this is the first time he’s asked.” Kurapika fought down his shy little smile, hating himself for even having to in the first place!

“Then we should make sure you’re presentable for this first official date!” She continued to tie a blue ribbon at the end of the braid that laid against his neck.

“If we have too,”

“Yes, we have too.” She clipped his red gem necklace around his neck with a click.

Time passed in comfortable silence until a knock sounded on the door.
“Oh, I think that would be the alpha of the hour!” Fanaka grinned as she stepped back to allow Kurapika to get the door, she stood in the corner and bounced like an excited fangirl.

Kurapika rolled his eyes at the woman as he walked to open the door, everyone was making way too big of a deal about this. Even Chrollo was showing a flare for the dramatics today, the man was standing at the door with a bouquet of primrose and jasmine.

“Oh,” Kurapika took the flowers steadily, primrose and jasmine meant new and growing love. “Flower language, I can’t believe you still remember that.”

“I remember everything you talk about,” Chrollo smiled at him, he was dressed in casual jeans and a comfortable button up. He wasn’t wearing his regular coat but instead just a regular warm looking black one. His hair was down and the bandanna wrapped around his head, damn it he looks nice. He looked over Kurapika and felt his heart pick up the pace. “You look beautiful, you always do.”

“Thank you,” Kurapika muttered trying to take this as serious as everyone else was.

“Shall we go?” Chrollo stuck out an elbow for the breathtaking boy to take hold of. He had the day all planned out. He would take Kurapika out for a relaxing nature walk then they’d have a nice dinner Fanaka was preparing for them over the onsen. She had promised to set up candle light and a whole romantic scene under the moon. Then finally he'd reveal his secret present he’d had the troupe collecting over the last two months. Now with the troupe mostly gone and Machi and Uvogin were going to be out on a date of their own.

“Sure let’s go. . . Where are we going?” Kurapika asked as he took the alpha’s arm and walked with him towards the front of the building.

“First on the agenda is a nature walk.” Chrollo grinned, excited to show how amazing their relationship could be.

“That sounds, well nice.” Kurapika was happy it was going to be something so simple.

The two made light conversation as they passed through the village, people stopped to talk to them. Omegas from the hot spring asked if Kurapika would be joining them again, although the boy Cyan looked uncomfortable when he spotted the two of them.
“Fana got you breakfast yes?” Chrollo asked as they passed a small ramen stand.

“Yes I got breakfast and lunch, I am perfectly fed.” Kurapika had noticed that Chrollo was always very concerned if he had been fed, maybe it was because of that first two weeks that he had been captured by the troupe.

“Good, wouldn’t want you passing out” Chrollo mumbled, his eyes focusing on the omega’s hand. Would it be too forward to try and intertwine their fingers? Why was he so nervous?! It’s not like they hadn’t been out with each other before.

“Yes that would be unpleasant,” Kurapika answered back as they began to head into the forest.

Chrollo nodded along but his eyes were stuck on Kurapika’s hand, he really wanted to hold that boy’s hand.

Screw it! Chrollo slowly took Kurapika’s hand slowly, powering through his initial hesitation when their flesh touched. He could almost breathe a sigh of relief when the boy didn’t pull away, and he ended up with his fingers interlocked with Kurapika’s.

Kurapika felt a blush rear up when Chrollo’s thumb rubbed over the back of his hand, his dream coming back to him.

They walked in comfortable silence for a while, both lost in thought as Chrollo led them on a trail. If Kurapika has been paying attention, he would have noticed that Chrollo definitely didn’t know how to navigate through an unknown forest.

Chrollo asked about the book they had been sharing, and they devolved into a conversation about nordic culture that somehow got them into myths and legends. Then it moved to just mythology, funny since that was the subject that originally got them talking to each other.

The time passed quickly as they began to laugh. But then they realized how dark the forest was, and how they didn’t recognize where they were.

“When did we get off the path?” Kurapika asked as he looked around a little confused, where did the time go?
“I do not know.”

“Are we lost?” Kurapika asked as he turned around looking for any markers on the trees or maybe the stars to see which way they could go.

“Yes, yes I believe we are,”

Just great.
It took two minutes after the realization that they were lost for Kurapika to start to snicker as Chrollo turned back and forth, obviously searching for the path, after admitting they were lost. He couldn’t help it!

Here was the infamous leader of the Phantom Troupe, a class A criminal mastermind that Hisoka wanted to fight, and he was lost in the woods with no apparent idea of what to do! To make matters worse, the guy actually had the audacity to blush when he realized that Kurapika was giggling!

“Ok… I know that we headed north when we left the village and the moss is growing-”

“That’s an old wives tale,” Kurapika cut in as the moved to point out the moss growing on different patches on the tree. “Moss will grow best where it can avoid sunlight and in a thick forest like this, that could be anywhere on the tree.”

Chrollo’s eyes widened before his hand touched his chin, showing that he was thinking. “I asked Shal to remove the tracker already… Do you have your phone?” he asked after a long moment and Kurapika shook his head. “What about our tracks?”

“We’ve been on very solid ground for the most part,” Kurapika reminded the man who slouched. “You could climb a tree.”

Now Chrollo paused. “Will I be able to see the village?”

“Probably not, but there are plenty of lights and you’ll likely see those lightening the sky.” That had been a trick that the Kuruta had used to help anyone who wandered off to find their way back to the village. You were supposed to wait until dark, climb a tree, and look for the small light from the village. They hadn’t had electricity, but the village would build a bonfire to help the lost person get back… Kurapika had to be guided back by those means far more than once.

Chrollo’s arms surprised Kurapika as the alpha swept him up bridal style and then made a nen enhanced leap. The yell that he’d been preparing turned into a yelp as butterflies fluttered in Kurapika’s stomach and his arms automatically circled Chrollo’s neck and shoulders.

Within seconds they were perched on a high branch, Kurapika still in Chrollo’s arms as he scanned the horizon.

“I don’t see-”

“There!” Kurapika declared as he pointed at the hazy light that faintly brightened the sky several miles away.

Chrollo’s eyebrows rose but he nodded and began to make his way carefully back to the ground.

“You could have left me on the ground, I’d have been fine!”

“I didn’t know what to look for and you apparently did,” the thief pointed out as he offered Kurapika a small smile. “My hero.”
Somehow, the walk back to the village was still filled with easy banter as the two made their way through the forest, quickly finding the path once more. This time, the focus of their conversation was navigating in a forest with Kurapika describing a number of techniques that could be used to mark a path and Chrollo bringing up several bits of information he’d learned through the years, many of which Kurapika explained the origins of the myth surrounding the beliefs.

Moss growing on the north side of trees mostly came from northern regions where the sun wouldn’t ever directly shine on the north side of the tree. You could play dead when a grizzly or foxbear approached, but any other kind of bear would attempt to eat your “corpse”, uncaring if you were actually alive. You couldn’t trust that whatever you saw animals eating in a forest was safe for human consumption.

The cold crept in fast with the darkness and Kurapika finally couldn’t hold back his shivers. A warm coat found its way onto his shoulders and the blonde glanced towards to alpha who gave him a small, lopsided smile as they continued their trek.

Finally the edge of the forest came into view and Chrollo gave a small laugh, determining that the sight of the Gyudondon village was in fact quite beautiful in that moment. Though it was now quite dark, a few of the residents still moved along the streets and were quick to greet the pair as they passed. A group that Kurapika recognized from the omega spring even fell in step with them, headed towards the onsen for a soak!

Chrollo’s hand had snuck into Kurapika’s at some point, their fingers laced together and several of the omegas giggled at the sight. Kurapika blushed but didn’t take his hand back from Chrollo.

“There you two are!” Fanaka-bennu clucked when they entered the building as the group of omegas headed towards the scrub-up area before heading to the hot spring. “I expected you back over an hour ago! Luckily I have a fire built in a private dining room so you can warm up and enjoy some tea while I get the meal together.”

Chrollo guided Kurapika to the dining room that Fanaka had indicated then to the table set up near the fireplace. A pot hung near the fire, a small stream of steam rising from it. Chrollo was quick to grab the pot and pour the water into a waiting teapot to allow the tea to steep.

“Winter holidays will be arriving soon,” Chrollo stated after a long moment as he set the pot between Kurapika and himself on the table. “Would you be interested in going somewhere, just the two of us?”

“Such as?”

“Begerotti comes to mind, it’ll be warm there… But I’ll admit that I have a love of snow covered Christmas trees. They’re fragrant. I also wanted to learn how to ski, so possibly Nepas?”

“Wouldn’t that be quite advanced?” Kurapika asked with a grin.

“Probably, but no better way to learn than to approach something expecting you’ll fall!”

“Sounds like ice skating.”

“I’ll have you know that I’m a decent ice skater!”

Kurapika raised an eyebrow at the claim.

“I mean I don’t fall the moment I step out onto the ice.”
“Then you can teach me!” Kurapika replied as he checked the tea then poured some into both of their mugs while Chrollo sat back, a lovely image of helping Kurapika across an ice skating rink as it lightly snowed playing in his mind. Maybe Kurapika would find it romantic enough to kiss him back if he were to kiss him.

Fanaka-bennu entered the room several minutes later as they discussed snow angels and events such as their first encounters with snow. Kurapika was laughing as Chrollo described the snowball fight that had erupted when Nobunaga had shoved a handful of snow down the back of Phinks’s shirt. She set bowls of soup in front of both of them before immediately leaving.

“This smells good,” Chrollo noted as he dipped his spoon into the steaming bowl and was raising the spoon to his mouth when a number of yells rang out and the pair heard the familiar noise of Fanaka growling.

“GOSIMBER! I’VE TOLD YOU BEFORE, YOU CAN’T PEEK INTO THE OMEGA BATHS!”

“Alright, alright!” a lazy voice called in response. “Just came for some tea anyway! One would think you’d love the company with how much your mate has been away recently.”

Kurapika’s eyes narrowed at the suggestive tone the voice had and across from him, Chrollo looked less than pleased as well.

“Excuse me, I’m going to check on Fanaka,” Chrollo stated as he stood, thoroughly intent to chase whoever this pervert was out of the establishment run by the mate of one of his troupe members.

A loud crash caused both of them to jump.

“I think you’d be saving that pervert’s life.” Kurapika’s words caused Chrollo to pause for a moment before he nodded and sat back down.

“She can deal with Nobunaga, so I doubt Fanaka needs any help.”

“Chrollo!” Fanaka-bennu’s voice called, her tone mostly normal. “Would you come to the kitchen and grab the plates for the main course for you and Kurapika? I have an insect I’m trying to crush.”

“I’ll be right back,” the alpha promised as he stood to go retrieve the plates. Kurapika stood as well.

“I’ll help,” he stated in a tone that left no room for argument as he collected their soup bowls.

Exiting the room, both turned to follow the hall towards the kitchen. Chrollo tried once to take the soup bowls from Kurapika but received a sharp look.

“Perhaps you’d consider visiting Jappon as well,” Kurapika continued. “I’ve read that they have a large number of traditional celebrations in the winter, especially around New Years.”

Chrollo laughed. “I’ve been there, was dragged there by Nobunaga and Machi one year. They’re both fascinated by some of the culture on that island.”

“I’ve noticed, Machi dresses like a ninja and top-knot like a samurai.”

“You should have heard the arguments they used to have!”

As the pair turned into the kitchen, Kurapika was plowed into by a form that came tearing out of the room. The form of an alpha that smelled absolutely horrible!
Kurapika yelped as Chrollo caught him, unintentionally sandwiching the omega between himself and the alpha.

The alpha was not attractive. His dark hair was thin and greasy, his skin looked like it boasted the most absurd fake tan from a bottle ever created, and he seemed to wear far too much jewelry. The holes that indicated a warrior of the Gyudondon were small and few in number, as though this person couldn’t stand the pain of the procedure and abandoned it less than halfway through.

Wide green eyes, the only feature that the other possessed that Chrollo would call attractive, immediately locked on Kurapika’s face then slid to his unmarked neck.

“Hello there! Name’s Gosimber, rhymes with simmer,” the alpha stated as his eyes traveled up and down what small portion of Kurapika’s form he could see without backing up. It was evident that he was attempting to sound sexual but Kurapika only shivered in disgust as he pressed back into Chrollo’s form. “Quiet one? That’s alright, I’m quite friendly, never had a complaint yet!”

“I imagine that fantasies don’t complain,” Chrollo growled angrily, finally drawing the attention of the other alpha. He shifted his arms then, attempting to push Kurapika out from between them and away from the reeking alpha.

“That’s right, fantasies don’t complain! And I’m definitely a giver of fantasy!”

Kurapika stared at the alpha in dumb silence. This guy was worse than Nobunaga! With the topknot, there was the excuse that he’d never been around a mature omega, but this guy had been all of his life and seemed to think he was God’s gift to them!

“Oh come on! You’re obviously not marking him and passing him around the troupe, let a guy have a shot!” the pervert declared as he reached forward, obviously intending to run his filthy fingers over Kurapika’s cheek. “Institute omegas are known for being-

Two growls echoed in the hall, but the snarl Chrollo unleashed as he caught the offending alpha’s hand even alarmed Fanaka-bennu as she entered the hall.

“No one has touched Kurapika, not without his permission. I’m also waiting for his permission to mark him. It’s the reason I’ve put so much effort into finding the eyes of his clan!”

Kurapika’s eyes went wide at Chrollo’s admission while Gosimber’s remained unmoved. He was a high-ranked alpha, so his instincts weren’t serving him well in that moment, namely in telling him it was time to back down. Gosimber didn’t realize the danger that stood in front of him, but the roar from the small omega beside them had him backing away rapidly.

“WHAT THE HELL?!” Kurapika demanded as he turned sharply on Chrollo, causing the alpha to release the other who immediately took off, running from the building as fast as his unfit body could manage. “The eyes of my clan?! That was my goal! I was going to do that myself!”

“Kura-”

“Don’t Kurapika me! It was my job to find them, to take them home so they could finally rest! I gave up on killing you and the troupe, so why did you take this too?!?” Kurapika demanded, tears beginning to appear in his vibrant scarlet eyes.

“You sti-”

“IT ISN’T THE SAME!” Kurapika yelled, his anger overriding any grief in that moment as the bowls slid from his arms and smashed on the ground. He didn’t notice as he stepped on them when
he took a step towards Chrollo. “It’s because of you that they’re dead! They’re all dead! I have to bring them home and I don’t want you or your troupe killing people to do it! I had a plan!!”

Chrollo’s eyes were beginning to narrow as well, anger developing at Kurapika’s response. Fanaka could smell that the fight was about to escalate and grabbed Kurapika, pulling him into a hug as she released a comforting scent, trying to calm the boy.

For Kurapika, the sudden change was unexpected and jarring, but not unpleasant. Red stained tears rolled from his eyes as Fanaka took a step back, distancing the pair as her hormones washed through the hall.

“He’s getting the eyes for you, attempting to please you,” Fanaka stated gently once Kurapika had calmed down some and Chrollo didn’t look like he was about to fly off the handle from seeing the omega so upset. “Why is that so wrong?”

Both Kurapika and Chrollo recognized what she was trying to do: dig up the root of the problem rather than allow the fight to continue.

Taking a deep breath, Kurapika considered why he found this so upsetting. “He and the troupe killed them.”

“And he’s trying to give back what little he can,” Fanaka pressed.

Kurapika shook his head. “But I swore I would do it, avenge my clan and bring their eyes back. I gave up on revenge, but I thought I would still get to bring their eyes home. I was working a job I hated to try to achieve that.”

“Then I’m glad I’m getting them for you!” Chrollo declared sharply. “A job you hate to try to reclaim something I took? I’m glad to just give them to you! Your chains weren’t just about revenge, were they? You were chaining yourself to a destiny you didn’t want!”

Silence hung in the hall as the pair stared at each other for a long moment.

“I’m not going to apologize or give up this hunt, so you’ll need to find something else to do with your life.”

The alpha walked away after making this statement and Kurapika watched him go, uncertain about how he felt about all of this. When Fanaka released him a moment later, he stayed frozen in place as she knelt to pick up the pieces of the bowls though he quickly joined her, helping her clean up the mess.

He could do something else?

That question rang in his head as he bathed alone that night then returned to the room that he and Chrollo shared. The alpha wasn’t present and Kurapika slept alone that night, feeling cold and confused. Something else?

Chrollo was back the next morning and he was quick to pack them both into the car after a light breakfast. Fanaka-bennu had waved goodbye to them as well as a fair portion of the village. Kurapika still felt hazy and confused as Chrollo drove the car out of the village and to the main road. He stopped there.

Several books and pamphlets were set in Kurapika’s lap and he stared at them for a second before beginning to poke through the stack.
“You aren’t meant to be a Blacklist Hunter,” Chrollo stated as he stared out of the windshield. “So I want you to consider what it is you really want. You could be an Archaeological Hunter, a Book Hunter, go to college, open an antique shop, anything you want. Find something that will make you happy. And know I’ll support whatever you choose.”

Chrollo’s dark eyes turned to him in that moment and Kurapika froze as he felt a blush rise in his cheeks.

They stayed in a motel that night with two beds, Chrollo deciding that Kurapika still needed a bit of space.

For Kurapika, his dreams that night were of an exhibit in a museum, one he had set up himself with discoveries he had made himself. He couldn’t say what the display consisted of though, because he was staring at Chrollo who was smiling at him with a proud look. There was a bundle being cradled in the man’s arms.

“I love you, Kurapika.”
The car ride through the county was quiet, Kurapika’s mind whirling with thoughts and ideas he could barely keep up with. He already had his Hunter license, so the hard part was taken care of. Now he had the opportunity to do something he actually wanted.

He was reminded of the day he first met Leorio, when they argued about what being a Hunter was about. It had been a betrayal to himself to admit that he aimed to be a Blacklist Hunter after being high and mighty about how it was all about honor.

Now he could actually think about more, he could be a Knowledge Hunter! Track down lost bits of history. Traveling and making fractured cultures of old complete, that sounded like a dream considering he thought he’d be tracking down his family’s eyes for the rest of his life. Following around the mob and witnessing their atrocities forever, or at least until every chance he could have had is gone. Now he could-

“What are you thinking about?” Chrollo asked, pulling him like a whiplash from his thoughts.

Of course he realized with a small frown, he couldn’t really do anything! Chrollo wants to be mated with him as soon as possible, that was obvious and even more so was the fact that the man wanted children. If there was no way out of this, it meant he couldn’t do anything. Chrollo probably wouldn’t be happy with putting his life on hold to follow him around the country, especially if Chrollo got him pregnant. So far he seemed the type to enforce house arrest for a sprained ankle.

“Nothing really, just thinking.” Kurapika looked out at the open road thoughtfully. He could . . . Be an Archaeology Hunter but that had the same problem: travel. Either trying to pull Chrollo around the country or being forever restricted by the movements of the troupe. He could open a bookstore, that didn’t sound bad, actually that sounded nice. He could be in charge of the knowledge that passed through that space. There would be no books about how omegas were less than human but even then he’d like to search and find rare books to include in his store.

Truthfully he was only assuming Chrollo wouldn’t allow that, maybe he should just ask?

“Hey Chrollo?” Kurapika gulped a bit, nervous for some reason to ask something so progressive to what Chrollo wanted.
“Yes?” Chrollo hummed, still trying to walk on eggshells around Kurapika after the almost fight they had. He didn’t regret making the choice to get the scarlet eyes back, but he guessed he could understand why it had upset him.

“If I wanted to be a Knowledge Hunter, would I be allowed to travel?” Chrollo almost jumped in surprise at the question. This was the first time he’d heard Kurapika entertain the idea of them being together as a couple so it was exciting but also terrifying, this was a test. He needed to answer this right or he’d lose all progress he had made.

“Of course you would be allowed to travel! I want you as my mate, not my prisoner despite our present situation.” Chrollo tried to pour every ounce of honesty he could into the statement but when he glanced over to the boy he didn’t seem convinced.

“Really? You’d let me go off on my own, or even let me drag you around the planet?” He bit out sarcastically.

“Who says you’d be dragging me?” Chrollo grinned and chuckled a bit. “Believe it or not, I like being around you Kurapika and I love the search for knowledge. The troupe doesn’t get together as frequently as we have these last couple of months. We’d have plenty of time to tour different countries and do anything you wished.”

“And if I wanted to go alone?” He asked as he nodded, feeling silly at the notion that Chrollo wouldn’t like going on a cross country tour to track down knowledge.

Chrollo gave the question more thought than the first. He wouldn’t like Kurapika being alone, but if it made him unhappy to always be chained to his side he’d have to condone it. Even if he really, really didn’t like the idea. “If it made you happy…” He trailed off, his hands tightening on the steering wheel.

Of course Kurapika didn’t miss the way the man tensed, the way he forced out the words but it made his heart thump a little faster that the alpha obviously didn’t want to say these words. The weird thing was that he believed the alpha. The man didn’t lie, he kept his word.

“Want to play chess?” Kurapika asked after a moment of silence.

“Yes, very much.”
The shop wasn’t busy like in the morning, so Kurapika lightly dusted the maze like bookshelves, tugging a light cart around with books that had been left out in the small lounge area and returned for the day. He returned the priceless books to their shelves.

He never worried about losing one, Shalnark had been more than happy to place trackers in each one for him and the books too precious to sell or loan out were stored in the back where only the most trusted could venture.

Kurapika was proud of his store, he had a priceless collection of knowledge and the world knew it. Many times acclaimed scholars came to ask to read his books, even more tried to lure the books away from him with the promise of riches and fame but no, he wouldn’t allow anyone to take the precious bound paper and ink.

As he moved with the familiar air of his home, stepping over a few well worn children’s toys as he went, smiling faintly at them. he began to notice books he didn’t remember selling or loaning out missing. A book on a secret society dating back to the origins of a northern country, the in-depth look on myths of dragons, and much, much more as he went.

“What the hell?” No one could steal under his watchful eyes, so he began to look around for the missing books but he couldn’t find even one! He returned to the book shelf and gasped. Every single book was gone! The entire shelf he had just filled was now missing every single book! “How in the . . . ?”

Looking around in confusion, Kurapika checked for any other missing books and then found the evidence that damned his top suspect: the missing book from the poetry section.

Kurapika growled as he stomped behind the counter and up the stairs to the apartment above the shop. He quickly found the source of his missing books.

“You little thief, when did you get home?” The dark haired alpha chuckled as he looked up to grin at the blonde, his black eyes sparkling with happiness and love. A small blond child with dark eyes bounced in his lap, reading along to the book in the alpha’s hands. Instead of answering Kurapika’s question he asked his own.
“What gave me away?” He placed the book down, much to the dismay of the child in his lap and stood.

“Well, only you would steal poetry.” Kurapika finally cracked a smile at the man, incredibly happy that he was home. He walked over and plucked the small child up in his arms as he moved over to his husband. Chrollo bent down and gave him a peck on the lips as they sat down together with the giggling child. “Read me something Chrollo.” Kurapika whispered as he cuddled into the alpha.

Chrollo didn’t waste a moment before picking up the book and reading something out of it in his deep soothing voice.

“This one makes me think of you,” he whispered before he began.

“I never wanted to
fall for him, & so,
in my usual fashion,
I
D
I
D”

Kurapika relaxed as he listened, running his finger tips over the child’s bare arm as he shut his eyes in comfort, listening to the sound of Chrollo reading poetry aloud.

“Mm,” Kurapika mumbled happily. “I’m happy you’re home.”

“I am too, I love you.”

Kurapika slowly came back to consciousness, for a moment content and comfortable until everything came back to him. He was in a bed and he had just dreamt of being married to Chrollo! His kidnapper, his captor, the man that ruined his childhood! What the hell is wrong with him?
The blush that dusted over his cheeks was fierce and he was incredibly happy that Chrollo wasn’t around, he wasn’t sure how he’d react to the alpha at the moment.

“Shit,” he whispered realizing the horrible truth of his situation: he was falling for the murderer of his people. How does something like that happen?

“So you failed again?” Hisoka’s eyes glinted in disappointment for the two children. He had been sure that the boys could manage getting the lovely Kurapika away from the troupe leader long enough for him to swoop in and take his bounty but the boys had failed over and over again.

Gon and Killua both slumped their shoulders, sick with themselves especially because they had made things worse for Kurapika with each unsuccessful rescue attempt.

“Alright, alright.” Hisoka laughed a little crazed and smiled at the two unripened fruits. It wasn’t their fault, considering they were trying to steal from a master thief. “Looks like we’re going to have to take drastic measures. I’ll come with you!”

“WHAT?”

“Oh god no!” Gon and Killua screamed at the same time, the thought of working with Hisoka a chilling one.

Hisoka laughed, loving the way they protested, it gave him ideas of other things they would protest to.

“Oh so you think you can do it alone this time? Maybe this time Chrollo will just bite him right there in front of you went you fail!” Hisoka taunted the boys, he had to be apart of this since Illumi was beginning to become impatient. The man wanted an omega now and a family not far behind.

Gon growled at the clown but he had to admit that they weren’t doing well in the rescue department, should they fail again Kurapika will be lost to them forever. They didn’t even know if Chrollo marked Kurapika if he would allow them to ever see him again.
“Fine.” Killua determined with a scowl, they’d have to keep a close eye on the man. He didn’t trust that he was helping them just out of the goodness of his heart.

“Checkmate.” Chrollo called, breaking Kurapika out of his thoughts. The two had been playing for hours but Kurapika mind was still stuck on his dream. It couldn’t be true could it?

“Oh.” He breathed looking over the board, he had lost in a record thirty minutes this time.

“Are you alright Kurapika?” Chrollo asked without resetting the board.

“Yes I’m fine.” Kurapika muttered before deciding he was done with the game. “I’m just a bit distracted,” he tried to assure the alpha.

“Penny for your thoughts?” Chrollo asked a little hopefully, he’d like to be the boy’s confidant. His rock, someone he can talk to.

Kurapika considered the man thoughtfully. He couldn’t exactly tell him that he’d been having dreams about a weirdly picturesque life with him, including children and incredible happiness could he? The alpha would be overjoyed and probably miss his whole point about how he was FREAKING OUT!

How can anyone fall for a murderer? It shouldn’t matter that his childhood was like a training ground for psychopaths and when you explain feelings to him, he can actually be rather sweet when he tries. And it all brought him to one train of thought: does he think he could be happy?

It had been establish about a week ago that Chrollo would allow him to travel so that wouldn’t be a huge problem, and he had been nice about his friends staying for dinner a bit ago so he knew Chrollo wouldn’t bar him from his friends.

He did have a good time with Chrollo, they could sit in comfortable silence for hours. Talk just as long too about anything, having a multitude of things in common with each other. He hated to admit that they were a good match just based on personality but they were. The most surprising of his thoughts was he didn’t even mind most of the man’s thievery because most of the people he stole from were also corrupt. If he could just get him to stop robbing museums blind . . .
Then there was children which he did want someday, now that he no longer had to spend the rest of his life tracking down his people’s eyes. After telling Chrollo he didn’t want anymore blood to be spilled over the eyes, he didn’t mind the man stealing them back for him and could now freely dream of children. Maybe he could just get Chrollo to put off children for a few years, the man was reasonable and if he presented him with the fact that he didn’t want to be a teen mother he might just be okay with it. All in all, he did think he could be happy.

But, and this was the most damning of his thought process, was that technically he was Chrollo's prisoner. No matter how he looked at his situation it was sickening to fall for one’s captor, to the man who committed genocide against your people. How could he accept something that had been forced? It’s not a choice if you can’t say no.

Despite this Kurapika still found himself looking at Chrollo softly as he finally answered. “No, really I’m okay. I’m going to grab a drink, do you want something?”

Chrollo sighed, dissatisfaction tasting bitter but in the end shook his head and watched the boy as he left the room to head towards the kitchen of the small base.

Nobunaga watched the pair with a furrowed brow. Even with Pakunoda’s assurances that they would be officially mated soon, he found it hard to wait. It had been a week since they left Bonolenov’s village and it was clear to see the two had grown closer, the omega even looked at Chrollo with soft eyes more often, yet they still weren’t together.

“It will be any day now, those two are so in love with each other,” Uvogin told his friend, his eyes following the omega out of the room before walking away to join Machi in the kitchen. Nobunaga wasn’t convinced, they might seem to like each other, but obviously they needed a push or this will never happen. Pakunoda said it would happen by the omega’s next heat but that was a week away! And if he knows his boss, the man will try to be a gentleman and will bar himself away from the boy. He should just bite him already and be done with it!

Maybe he should give them the push they need? Nobunaga nodded to himself because he knew exactly what that push needs to be: an unprepared Chrollo faced with his omega in heat. If he doesn’t have time to plan he’ll go with instinct! Just like it should be.

Following the omega into the kitchen, the alpha made a quick stop by his bag to grab a little drug he had gotten a few months ago for no particular reason whatsoever and continued forward. The omega had been stopped by Koltopi who wanted to introduce the omega to yet another new board game. Grinning at his luck, Nobunaga grabbed a cup and pored the entire bottle of the drug into the cup and filled it with the water the omega had said he was fetching.
When the omega pulled himself from Koltopi and moved to fill a glass Nobunaga was there, offering the already filled glass of ice water.

“Here, I got it for you.” Kurapika looked at the man strangely, suspicious of everything he does.

“Thank you?” His eyes narrowed without taking the glass but the man gave away nothing in his facial expressions. Perhaps he was actually trying to make peace?

Kurapika took the glass hesitantly and then he turned away to rejoin Chrollo.

“You’re welcome,” Nobunaga grinned, sure Chrollo would thank him come morning.

Chrollo looked up when Kurapika returned and immediately felt the room brighten just a bit.

“So,” Chrollo cleared his throat as the boy sat down again. “We will be leaving tonight, your heat should be in a week and I figured you’d want to be somewhere comfortable.” Chrollo explained, hoping to not blunder this. He didn’t want to freak the boy out, only wished to tell and include him in the plans of the troupe.

Kurapika stiffened, his heat meant another week of Chrollo trying to force his way into his pants but he really couldn’t do anything about that. As long as he held strong then Chrollo wouldn’t be able to mate him he assured himself. “Where are we going?”

“Back to Ryuuseigai,” Chrollo offered, glad to see the boy didn’t have a panic attack about his own heat. Chrollo watched a little longingly as the omega took a few gulps of his water.

“When do we leave?”

“After dinner so just relax, if you want we can play more chess or I can grab your book?” Chrollo hopes he’d choose chess.

“Actually I finished my book, the Art Of War, would you like to discuss it?” Kurapika felt a small
blush rise to his cheeks, praying his plot to talk with the alpha more wasn’t seen through.

“I’d love to.” Chrollo grinned. His entire night became much, much better.
Kurapika shifted in discomfort as he sipped the last of his water. In front of him, Chrollo had just finished his own interpretation on the point of “All warfare is based on deception.” He was arguing how this wasn’t true while Kurapika had been defending the point.

“Sun Tzu wasn’t writing about or even considering small scale battles, especially ones involving just 13 people or less with nen abilities. If the group lacked nen, they would have to use many more tricks and tactics… Come to think of it, didn’t a particular small group use a hot air balloon to try to avoid detection during their attempted get away?”

“I believe you know what happened after that, namely berserk Enhancer.”

“Who kicked up a large cloud of dust when we fought and attempted to use it as a cover, thereby a deception if only to the eyes.”

“He must have been getting desperate!” Chrollo admitted with a smile before a throat cleared by the door. Both looked to see Franklin standing in the door, two plates containing some sort of chicken pasta in hand.

“Brought dinner for you two,” the Emitter stated as he entered the room and handed the plates to the pair. “I’ll leave you t-”

Nobunaga came into the room with his own plate in hand and sat down on a nearby couch, dragging Shizuku behind him who was staring at her own plate in confusion.

“Nobu! Get out of there!” Uvo growled as he moved into the doorframe, even Franklin sending the samurai a disapproving look.

“But we were going to watch a movie and the big tv is in here! Even let Machi choose the movie… Don’t know what this ‘Notebook’ is, but she was looking at you all sappy when she grabbed it.”

Uvogin stared at his best friend for a moment before looking to Chrollo. His danchou seemed to be thinking of it then looked to Kurapika. “Would you like to watch the movie or continue our conversation in another room?”

When the blonde looked to the alpha, the man noticed that his face was a bit flushed and he looked to be trying to concentrate on his plate. “They can… come in… I… I…”

Concern caused Chrollo to move closer to Kurapika, collecting both of their plates and setting them on the table in front of them. His hand immediately touched Kurapika’s head, checking his temperature.

“Do you want to lie down?” he asked quietly, but Kurapika shook his head.

“BEEP BEEP!” Shalnark declared as he pushed past Uvo into the room, laptop in hand though he froze when Franklin gave him an exasperated stare. “Nobu said we were watching a movie in here!”

“It’s alright, might as well,” Chrollo called, understanding that Kurapika wasn’t going to be continuing their debate. Maybe a few minutes to relax was what he needed. And his heat room
soon. Kurapika was smelling sweeter than Chrollo remembered him typically smelling at this point of his cycle.

The other troupe members entered the room several minutes later and Franklin went to collect his own plate as Shalnark set up the tv and Machi provided the movie.

“So what is ‘The Notebook’ about?” Phinks asked as he took Chrollo’s former seat as the alpha settled next to Kurapika, leaning the omega into his side.

“Romantic chick flick,” Pakunoda replied, earning a loud groan from Nobunaga, Phinks, and Feitan.

A groan coming from Kurapika caused all heads to turn as the omega doubled over as though he were in pain, and then the scent of heat began to fill the room.

Several yelps came as the shocked troupe watched Chrollo freeze, he didn’t have a plan in place for this! What was going on-?

Kurapika lunged toward Chrollo, knocking them both to the floor with a growl and the entire room gasped as several of them jumped to their feet, determined to either run from the room or…

Nobunaga gasped as well, this was beyond perfect! Chrollo was still stunned on the floor while the omega was bucking against him hard! They’d be mated within five minutes! He believed he was right when he watched Chrollo seize the omega’s shoulders.

It was hell! Chrollo was in no way prepared for this! Kurapika seemed desperate and the way he was thrusting against him, little Chrollo was getting very excited! It seemed like he was willing, but this wasn’t right! This heat wasn’t right! He had to stop this before…

Chrollo’s hands found Kurapika’s shoulders as he attempted to make him stop. He needed to get him out of this room and somewhere private!

Kurapika continued to buck against the alpha, purring loudly as he lowered his head and rubbed his face into Chrollo’s neck. Chrollo groaned, realizing this was going downhill fast as he struggled to sit up and Kurapika continued to cuddle.

The shocked faces of the troupe managed to help the alpha partially clear his cloudy head and he twisted hard, managing to force his feet under him as he pulled Kurapika up bridal style and rushed from the room.

A safe place… Safe place… Heat room… Chrollo’s brain was fogging again as he rushed down the hall, trying to think of a good place to settle Kurapika. But this base was very badly prepared for this! The only rooms were the kitchen, common room, three bedrooms and… a small library/game room he’d set up here! There were only a few books, but the room had a bathroom attached!

Kurapika was kissing his neck and whining as he carried the boy to the room, but he quickly became upset when Chrollo set him on the only couch in the room, hands grasping desperately at him, trying to keep contact. It confused the alpha, this wasn’t how Kurapika typically acted!

“Heat is like being drugged.”

Fanaka’s words struck Chrollo as he rushed from the room before he’d do something that would ruin his relationship with Kurapika. The beautiful boy sobbed and attempted to follow him, clawing at the door when Chrollo shut and locked it.
Chrollo in turn leaned hard against the door, wishing he could go back in. Wishing he could comfort the boy, but his brain finally was working again. Drugged. It made sense: the sudden onset of heat, Kurapika acting so unlike himself! Someone had done this! His only relief was that they hadn’t gotten him as well!

Moving away from the door was the most difficult thing he’d ever done, but Kurapika was going to need more than just a sofa.

Stumbling back to the movie room, Chrollo noted that half the troupe was surprised to see him back. Some part of him was especially pleased at the semi-stunned but respectful look Bono gave him.

“Kurapika needs pillows,” Chrollo gasped out. “Someone get my bag, he’ll probably want my coat as well. Uvo, we need sweets for him. Paku, find out who drugged Kurapika.”

Machi’s head instantly snapped towards a crestfallen Nobunaga and Chrollo glared at the alpha automatically as Paku approached him.

“Oh come on! You two were close and just needed a little push! That omega is still a virgin and soon as you went a round or two would probably be fine with marking!” the samurai argued, earning him a number of glares and shaking of heads.

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Killua felt his eye twitching as he scanned the news reports for a city that was roughly a two and a half day airship trip from their current location. Because Hisoka had no means of tracking most of the troupe, they had resorted to using the internet to try to track down crimes they might have committed.

The internet and Hunter website were rife with reports on the thefts of almost half of the Kuruta scarlet eyes. One particular mansion owned by a pop star who claimed to be related to the clan through an ancestor almost three generations ago reported that his three pairs of eyes had been stolen and his guards massacred.

There was one report that the silver-haired omega had just happened across of something so dastardly, so evil, it couldn’t have been committed by anyone OTHER than the troupe.

“There!” he announced angrily, drawing the attention of Gon and Hisoka. “They’re there!”

Gon groaned. “Another candy shop being cleared of all its merchandise? Haven’t we chased that lead before?”

“I WAS RIGHT THAT TIME TOO!”

Gon opened his mouth but found he had no retort. Killua had been right. “Does this mean he’s in heat?”

The look of shock and disgust on Killua’s face was only made more hilarious by Hisoka’s look of mild disappointment/shock. This could be bad for his plans, especially if Chrollo was spoiling the blonde omega fruit like this! They would need to move fast!

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Kurapika grumbled as he shifted on a mound of pillows, pulling the delicious smelling blanket firmly around him. He wasn’t certain where he was or how long he’d been here, but he was
comfortable.

The scrape of a lock finally drew him from his comfortable cocoon and Kurapika forced his eyes open. Soft grey fur was in front of his eyes, partially obscuring his vision, but he did recognize Chrollo as the alpha gently set a plate on a table by the door and collected a number of candy boxes and wrappers. Something about that wasn’t right…

“Chrollo?” he groaned after a moment, causing the alpha to freeze. The room was wrong but Kurapika’s head was too fuzzy to understand why.

“Are you lucid?” the alpha asked as he took a step back towards the door.

Kurapika’s groaned answer must have been taken as a confirmation.

“You were given a heat-inducing drug by Nobunaga,” Chrollo explained. “You’ve been in here for three days.”

The words jogged Kurapika’s memory a bit and his cheeks flushed after a moment. “Was I… Did I… tackle you?”

“Yes,” Chrollo replied honestly. “It took a fair amount of effort to get you in here, but you calmed down once you had my coat.”

“Coat?” Kurapika grasped the blanket and managed to turn his head enough to study it. Sure enough, it was Chrollo’s coat and even the act of pulling it away from his body caused him to erupt into shivers and snuggle into the garment.

“Easy there!” Chrollo declared, taking a step in from the door and tucking a pillow into Kurapika’s side but backed up quickly.

“We didn’t… did we?”

“You’re still an unmarked virgin.”

The assurance comforted the blonde a bit as he shifted a bit more on the couch.

“Shalnark did some research and believes that this heat will be over in a few more hours,” Chrollo continued. “Based on your return to lucidity, that follows the timeline he proposed. Once you’re ready to be let out, then call whoever you’d like.” He set down the phone Shalnark had recently given Kurapika.

“Ok… Guess we’re not going to Ryuuseigai.”

“No.” Chrollo gave a soft smile as he made that admission. “Also, I’ll need my coat back once you’re ready to come out.”

“Why?” Kurapika snuggled deeper into the coat.

“Because I’ve put off punishing Nobunaga until I could have that coat and suggestions from you.”

Nobunaga had been having a bad couple of days. Every member of the troupe was angry at him. Uvo was livid. Chrollo was still unmated and had been stationed by the door of the room holding the omega for three days straight.
It was practically a foregone conclusion that he would be getting punished by the high alpha despite the fact he viewed it as unnecessary at this point. He’d endured a four hour lecture from Paku, Machi, and Franklin on how he may have just ruined everything when the pair seemed to finally be clicking. The pair were talking more than ever and Paku had brushed by Kurapika earlier that day and knew that Kurapika was dreaming about a life with Chrollo.

“Kurapika was days away from agreeing!” the Specialist exploded. “He was wondering about what their first trip together would be and if Chrollo would be willing to wait a few years for children so he wouldn’t be a teen mother!”

“He was distracted to the point where he lost chess far sooner than normal! He was probably already thinking of broaching the subject!” Franklin added. “It’s why I wanted them to enjoy dinner in privacy!”

“Privacy might have made this worse,” Machi pointed out. “Danchou was able to get control because we were watching.”

Franklin growled. “It shouldn’t have been an issue in the first place! Why the hell did you even have that drug?!?”

“It was before we decided to not sell the omega. It was such a cold fish that I got it on a whim to try to get it in bed.”

Nobunaga knew that was the wrong thing to say almost immediately.

It got worse when Uvo came back with Phinks and Feitan, each of them carrying a large mound of boxes holding very expensive candy. Feitan had glared at him menacingly while Phinks and Uvo, especially Uvo, had taken their turns yelling at him.

The only person who seemed neutral was Shalnark, and that was because that beta had no interest in the relationship of Chrollo and Kurapika beyond that it happened. His report on how long the effects of the drug would last only served to give Nobunaga a countdown on how long he had to attempt to escape until everyone calmed down.

Needless to say, even Shizuku had remembered that he’d done something that was bad enough to not allow him to leave.

So when Chrollo finally left his normal post and entered the main room, looking tired but… pleased, Nobunaga was ready to just face the music.

“Kurapika is lucid again,” the alpha announced as he moved through the room. “I gave him his phone so that he can call if he needs anything or wants to be let out. Do we have any of those roast pork buns? Kurapika enjoys those and he’ll need plenty of protein.”

Nobunaga blinked as Koltipi spoke up. “Sorry, I ate the last one for lunch yesterday.”

“Alright. Fresh ones will probably be better anyway. Nobunaga.”

The unspoken order had the samurai dragging himself to his feet, hand on his sword that was still cemented into its sheath.

Both alphas left the base without another word, heading out into the cold air. It was would be December soon and snow had already begun to fall in this part of the world.

“I believe that Kurapika and I will be separating from the troupe for a little while after this
incident,” Chrollo stated plainly as they moved down the street. “I don’t want you to be around Ryuuseigai during his next heat.”

Nobunaga raised his eyebrow in confusion: that hardly seemed like a punishment. “Other than that?”

“Kurapika will be deciding how else you will be punished.”

The statement struck Nobunaga like a brick. “The omega?! You’re going to let an omega punish an alpha?”

“He will be choosing your punishment.”

“It’s an omega! You’re intent to be his alpha, so you should be deciding whether or not to punish me!”

“I wasn’t the one you wronged!” Chrollo snapped angrily. “Kurapika has his own opinions, pride, and this is one of the few choices he has right now. You attempted to take all of those things from him!”

“He’s only going to be your mate!” Nobunaga growled. “Sooner that happens, sooner you settle him in a house to pop out babies and we only see him on occasion.”

The response angered Chrollo to the point that he was certain that had he been a Kuruta, his eyes would have been glowing scarlet. He could admit that he’d thought something of the sort when he initially set his eyes on mating Kurapika, but months of getting to know him had shattered his previous expectations. He’d found something worth FAR more than a docile baby-maker who he could have good conversations with. Every smile, every laugh, every debate made him fall for Kurapika a bit more.

Most of the other members of the troupe had noticed this as well, that Kurapika was more than just an omega. Koltopi enjoyed their games, Uvo knew as soon as he met Kurapika, even before knowing he was an omega, Franklin had struck up a friendship with the Kuruta as well. Paku had been a bit distant, but Chrollo knew that as soon as she and Kurapika got to know each other a bit better that they’d make good friends.

Nobunaga was the odd man out this time, the one who didn’t see anything special or wrong due to his belief in the stereotypes of omegas. A stereotype that Chrollo could admit he was ashamed to have ever believed at this point.

The pair kept their shopping trip quick, Chrollo not wanting to be near Nobunaga at that time but refusing to give up on getting the supplies for Kurapika or to send the man back to the base. If Kurapika decided he wanted out of his quarantine room right now, he felt it would be better for him to not see the samurai.

The roast pork buns at the nearest shop looked stale and Chrollo left immediately, heading towards a bakery down the street. This one was run by a fat baker who greeted them with a friendly gesture.

“Can I help you?” the man called as Chrollo looked towards the display that featured a small number of the buns. “Ah! Char sui? I pulled a fresh tray of those out of the oven not even five minutes ago. I could grab you a few?”

“Yes, thank you,” Chrollo replied and the baker, a weak alpha who smelled pleasantly of yeast and herbs, nodded before stalling for a moment as his nostrils flared.
A knowing smile crossed the man’s face as he grabbed a box and moved towards a tray set on the back counter, grabbing a pair of tongs. “How many?”

“Five.”

“Yessir! Special someone I’d wager?”

The last time someone outside of the troupe had asked about Kurapika, it had been a foul-smelling trafficker. So many times over the last several months he’d heard nasty remarks about omegas, so Chrollo braced himself. “Quite.”

“Good, smells like they’re crazy for you as well.”

It was a simple statement but it caused Chrollo to freeze.

“Hope that omega’s family was decent, so few are towards them these days.”

“They were very good to him.” Chrollo felt a lump rise in his throat.

The baker glanced at him, the man’s eyes softening. “Sounds like you got some good in-laws then. That’ll be 600 jenny.”

The box was warm as Chrollo carried it back to the base, Nobunaga grumbling about crazy being contagious. When they returned, Uvo glared at Nobunaga before turning to Chrollo. “Kurapika wanted out of the library, he’s in your room so we dragged our stuff out. His too.” Uvo pointed at Nobunaga as he finished his statement then took the box of buns from Chrollo before he walked towards the kitchen.

Chrollo passed the common areas and noted that Phinks and Paku were doing the laundry while Machi came out of the improvise heat room with a bucket of trash. “He cleaned up all the trash,” she told him as they passed each other.

Chrollo nodded before stopping in front of the door that was normally the alpha room. The door was shut and he raised his fist, gently rapping on the door. “Kurapika, can I come in?”

Kurapika glanced at the door when he heard Chrollo. Currently he was curled up in the alpha’s bedroll, his body still aching a bit from the unnatural heat. “Yes.”

The sight of the dark haired alpha opening the door reminded him too much of his reemerging memories from the last several days. He’d been out of his mind, jumping on Chrollo every opportunity he got the chance! And it had been far more than just that first night when the drug struck. When Chrollo had returned with pillows and his coat, Kurapika had struggled to take the man’s pants off in his desperation! He’d ended up wrapped in Chrollo’s coat as the other escaped! More than once he’d been at the door, begging Chrollo for… and the man had responded by pushing box after box of candy into his hands.

In total, he hadn’t taken advantage despite Kurapika beng the one to try to get into Chrollo’s pants.

“Thanks.” The simple word left his mouth as the alpha kneeled beside him, not attempting to take his coat back just yet.

“I got you those roast pork buns you like,” Chrollo responded, a soft smile touching his eyes before he leaned against the wall next to Kurapika’s head. “What were the Kuruta like?”
Kurapika’s eyebrows furrowed. “You’re interested?”

“I assume they have to be amazing if they turned out someone like you.”

Kurapika groaned at the cheesy response, even if he could tell that Chrollo was quite serious. “They were wonderful. We lived away from the rest of the world, growing our own food and staying in our forest. The elder and adults always warned that those outside of the clan were dangerous, that people hated us for our eyes and would kill us for them.”

Chrollo felt a knot form in his gut. He preferred to think he wasn’t like the rest of the world, that those from Ryuuseigai accepted anyone and the Kuruta did the opposite. It was why they had left the mantra of Ryuuseigai at the place. “Did they really object to all outsiders?”

“No.”

This surprised Chrollo and he glanced down at Kurapika.

“They welcomed anyone who married or mated a member of the clan as a member of the clan, regardless of whether they were an alpha, omega, or beta.”

The admission gave Chrollo a new feeling of regret: he’d always dreamed of a large family. Had he not gone after the Kuruta but still met Kurapika, then he might have had one. A father and mother-in-law at least. And the village had had quite a few children that the adults adored.

“I’m sorry.” The words were honest and heartfelt in that moment.

Kurapika glanced up at the alpha, feeling and hearing how upset he was. Regret. It was more than he’d ever expect to see the man to display in regards to his crime against his people. But his pain didn’t appeal to Kurapika at all.

Dragging his heavy body from the bedroll, Kurapika sat against the wall beside the man, leaning slightly into him. It wasn’t ok, but he was learning.

Perhaps it was residual hormones, but Kurapika felt a strange urge in that moment rise in him as the leader of the Phantom Troupe finally proved that he was human, even if he did monstrous things. A human who was learning.

His lips met Chrollo’s.
Chrollo pulled back from the omega quickly, forcing himself to get his hormones in check. Kurapika looked up at him with eyes tinged in red and a curious tilt to his head.

“You are still lucid, right?” He asked with a breathless tone, he was incredibly happy to have Kurapika be the one to move in for a kiss but at the same time he needed to make sure this was him and not his heat.

Kurapika cheeks dusted red and he nodded softly. Chrollo felt his heart give a light squeeze and he leaned back into Kurapika. A charge tingled through his body when his lips touched Kurapika’s again.

The kiss was soft, searching at first but it didn’t stay like that for long. It was surprisingly Kurapika that parted his lips first and a hesitant tiny tongue licked across Chrollo’s bottom lip.

Kurapika felt the need for answers, what did he feel for Chrollo? This might not be the best way to find out but in this moment, in this room, he felt like Chrollo capturing him could possibly be the best thing to ever happen to him.

Chrollo took his que, wrapping an arm around the boy’s waist and pulled him closer while Kurapika laced his fingers together behind his neck. They ended up on the floor after a moment, Kurapika under the alpha. He ran his hands down the omega’s sides, a groan vibrating against their connected lips as Kurapika arched up until their chests touched.

“Oh, Kurapika.” He whispered when the kiss broke, he peppered the boy’s face with every ounce of affection he had grown to feel for the boy.

“Chrollo,” Kurapika moaned back when the alpha’s hand wormed its way under his shirt.

Chrollo knew he was close to his rut, he knew if this continued he’d lose all control so while he was still lucid he had to know. He had to make sure that this is what Kurapika wanted, he wanted Kurapika to be happy so it needed to be his choice.
“Wait,” he pulled away, taking all of his strength to do so. The bright eyes of the Kuruta almost made him forget why he was pulling back.

“What is it?” Kurapika asked with a sultry whisper, his lips red and wet, a little swollen from being well loved. The shirt he wore had fallen off of his shoulder and he could trace with his eyes where he would place his mark. He was breathtaking.

“Kurapika, if we go any further I will mark you,” he told the boy honestly, incredibly pleased when he saw no fear leap into the boy’s eyes but he could tell by the flicker of red lighting that the passion had been dashed. “I need to know, is this what you want?”

Their panted breaths mixed and each second without an answer was a sledgehammer to Chrollo's heart.

“Kurapika would you be my mate?” He asked again but it was more like a plea. Kurapika stared with an emotion Chrollo couldn’t read and then his eyes broke the contact, looking down.

Rejected again.

Chrollo untangled himself from Kurapika quickly, needing to get out before he did something he would regret. Namely raping the unwilling love of his life.

“Chrollo, I-“ Kurapika tried to call but he refused to hear apologizing for not loving him the same way he loved Kurapika. He left the room quickly, knowing the boy wouldn’t follow him out of his space of safety.

The moment he left the room the aggression and desperation hit him. Running his fingers through his hair but he ended up gripping it as he paced quickly in the hallway. What did he do? Why did he have to ask?! He could have just gone with the flow, marked Kurapika and claimed it was an accident, but no! He had to be the gentleman.

It a flash he yelled, nothing intelligible just a yell as he kicked the wall. The troupe downstairs shifted uncomfortably, they could smell the violence wafting towards them.

“Better run for the hills Nobu,” Uvogin whispered to his friend, no matter how stupid his actions he didn’t want him to die! Nobunaga clasped the hilt of his sword out of habit, even if it was
useless now. A second kick could be heard and everyone jumped, Nobunaga jumped with so much vigor that his sword even came out an inch!

“Shit!” Chrollo yelled as he stomped down the stairs and straight to the kitchen. He basically ripped the door from its hinges and collected some food with an angry mumble to himself. His rut had started at the worst possible time! Now he was horny, pissed off and he didn’t know what to do. Does he keep trying? That was the logical conclusion but should he? This is the third time Kurapika has rejected him, and he has already stolen so much of his life away was he really prepared to steal the rest because of his own feelings?

More than anything he just wanted Kurapika to be happy, and maybe that just wasn’t going to be with him.

“I’m going out!” Chrollo yelled behind him, knowing he needed to be as far away as possible from Kurapika before he lost his mind completely.

Gon, Killua And Hisoka had set up around the troupe base. The troupe leader had left earlier but Kurapika was still surrounded by the rest of the troupe. But Hisoka had clued them into the slight relief that Kurapika hadn’t been marked, if he had the troupe leader wouldn’t have stormed out in such a rage.

“You two understand the plan?” Hisoka asked with the first hint of seriousness in his voice since they had teamed up.

“Yes, we distract the troupe and you’ll swoop in and grab Kurapika. When they move to follow you we will make our escape. We’ll met up at our meeting spot.” Hisoka nodded as he decided when they’d move in. He had wanted Chrollo to see him take his special toy as punishment for seeing through his plot, but it was probably better for them that the man was gone.

“We’re lucky he left, this should be at least a little easier right?”

“Maybe,” Hisoka mused, they had been watching the troupe for days and he could get a lot closer than the boys could. It would seem the omega he had chosen was more charming than he had originally thought, he had somehow managed to get the group of uninterested criminals to care about him. Even the love sick Machi had stepped aside for the little thing, it was amazing! The
troupe would protect the omega tooth and nail.

It was amazing and it only made him want the omega more, hopefully the boys didn’t notice his situation down south. Or maybe he wanted them to, it’s fun to watch them squirm.

Kurapika didn’t leave the room the first night, even when Franklin brought him dinner he had refused to open the door. His mind was in a spiral, he had done more than just kiss Chrollo this time and he was having a hard time rationalizing it in anyway that wasn’t him wanting to touch and be with Chrollo.

It was sick and twisted and just plain wrong but in a moment Chrollo had proven he wasn’t a total monster. That had been one of the last things holding him back, the idea that he’d be mated to a monster and yet now he only had his imprisonment to cling to. Even with that he didn’t even know if he wanted to cling to that anymore, plus could he even? Chrollo had admitted that he’d let him travel alone if he wanted to!

Would it be so bad to take the plunge and just go for it? Chrollo was smart, they could talk for hours. Sometimes even in the beginning he was superbly happy just to be in those debates and talks. Chrollo had proven that given the right circumstances he could be kind, it’s not like it was his fault he was raised in a place that emotion and empathy was considered to be useless to survival. Maybe, just maybe, he wasn’t a sociopath but a human being raised in the environment of monsters? Could he change Chrollo? Help him to be better, not hurt innocent people anymore?

Most importantly, did he love Chrollo Lucifer? He didn’t know yet, and he wasn’t sure how he felt about that at all.

Moving from the room took a lot of pacing and mumbling on his part until he built up the courage to leave. The troupe seemed to freeze when he came down the stairs, dressed and washed up. All of them looking like they wanted to ask what had happened, Kurapika hadn’t missed the yelling that had proceeded Chrollo storming out. After a long moment of silence, it had been Franklin to jump up and rush forward to get some leftovers together.

“I’m glad you’re up!” He have Kurapika a strained smile, holding back the question but Kurapika wasn’t going to allow it. He wanted to know everything right now and the troupe was like an extension of Chrollo. He wanted to see how they reacted.
“I kissed Chrollo,” he addressed the entire group. Again everyone froze, trying to figure out how that had led to Chrollo storming out. “And then it became more.” He blushed, letting them come to their own conclusions about what ‘more’ meant.

Pakunoda broke out of the stalemate first, a few of the troupe members were trying not to smile but they also knew that somehow it hadn’t ended well.

“So you kissed him and then. . .?” Her hand touched Kurapika’s as she fished for the memories that caused Chrollo to storm out in a fury. What she saw actually gave her hope, these weren’t the memories of a fight. No, it was the memory of Kurapika’s last defense before realizing what everyone else already saw. And of course, Chrollo proving he was worthy of that realization. By leaving before his rut hit and not taking advantage of Kurapika in the dregs of his heat, Chrollo would only reap benefits from that act.

“You weren’t sure yet, so you said nothing.” There was no accusation in her voice, only understanding.

“I’m sorry, he was so angry that I rejected him again.”

“He wasn’t angry with you, you were just trying to figure out your feelings. It’s okay.” Pakunoda was happy enough to smile just a little.

Looking around Kurapika could see the shock and surprise on everyone’s face but everyone aside from Nobunaga and Shalnark looked to have the same understanding. They weren’t angry at him for rejecting Chrollo again and that in itself was startling and endearing.

“Are you hungry?” Pakunoda asked, reaching over to grab the plate from the still shell shocked Franklin.

“Yeah.” Kurapika felt his throat crack a bit at the kindness around him. Over the course of just three months these people had really grown on him.

“We were just sitting down for a movie!” Uvogin called, incredibly happy just from the look on Pakunoda’s face. “Wanna watch?”

Kurapika nodded, taking his plate and giving Pakunoda a small smile. He wasn’t sure yet, but he
was getting there.

Nobunaga grumbled a bit when he passed and Kurapika made sure to glare at him.

“Might want to be nicer, I assure you I can be a sadist when I care to be,” he threatened and the room flooded with laughter at the samurai’s stricken face.

“Oh yeah, kick his ass Kurapika!” Phinks grinned with Feitan stuck to his side.

“When I feel like it.” Kurapika gave a teasing grin that Feitan could appreciate.

“Evil.” Feitan chuckled a bit, he liked the omega more and more everyday.

Sitting down everyone got comfortable as Shalnark started up the movie. It was an older film, “The Labyrinth” or something. He had to wonder who picked such a film.

The hours ticked by as they ended up playing a board game.

“What you mean I can’t just steal the boardwalk?! Uvogin shouted. As he pounded a fist on the floor Shalnark’s drink tipped, Kurapika only just saved it.

“Uvogin you have to buy it!” Machi was beginning to become frustrated with explaining the rules again and again to the man.

“But I shouldn’t have to! I should be able to just take it like I do in real life!” The alpha really didn’t like the idea of money and did not like having to use the fake money in the game.

“Will you just take your turn? Pay up or go to jail!” Shizuku demanded, for some reason she was really into the game.

Uvogin thought about it for a second. “Can I break out of jail?”
Everyone groaned, Feitan flipping the board and stomping away.

“This why we no play with Uvo!” He yelled. After a moment everyone just laughed, Uvogin seemed to be delighted that his actions had caused so much frustration.

“Well that broke a record,” Kurapika giggled as he helped pick up the pieces of the game. “Shortest game of monopoly ever!”

“I told you it wouldn’t be fun.” Machi sighed as she shut the box and threw it onto the table.

“I don’t know, I found that fun.” Kurapika didn’t tell her that he had been using the opportunity to watch the troupes’ behavior. It had only recently occurred to him that should he decide he wanted to be Chrollo’s mate then he wasn’t just committing to Chrollo but the troupe as well. They are his family. They would be Kurapika’s too if he chose this route.

He wasn’t aware when the troupe suddenly stiffened, everyone shifting into a defensive position but you'd have to be deaf and blind to miss what happened next.

“ROCK!” Kurapika instantly recognized Gon’s voice and turned with widening eyes. It was barely a second before the door was launched into the base in a blaze of nen exploding glory. From the look on Uvogins face he was even a little impressed.

Gon and Killua Jumped through the door with fists raised, ready to fight. Killua even had what looked like yo-yos of all things spinning around him.

“We’re here for our friend!” Gon yelled at the troupe, his eyes narrowed and angry.

“And we’re not leaving until we have him!” Killua finished up, his lips pulled back into a snarl.

The troupe seemed put off by the frontal assault. It had been a long time since anyone had attacked them so brashly. A few of the troupes eyes shifted to Kurapika hesitantly, they had made real progress in the last couple hours and they truest believed that when Chrollo returned the pair would be mated but that wouldn’t happen if they killed his friends.
“Gon, Killua!” Kurapika gasped, moving to step forward only for Phinks to block his path. “Come on guys this is your worst plan so far.” He was almost impressed by how fast they had devolved, truly not worried that the troupe would hurt the two boys.

Killua’s eyebrow twitched but he ignored it and continued with the plan.

“We are taking our friend back so let him go!”

“No way!” Uvogin jumped forward as Machi drew her strings threateningly, she wouldn’t hurt them. Just tie them up until Chrollo could decide what to do with them. “We won’t be giving you Kura-“

“Okay.” Everyone snapped their eyes to the dark alpha that loomed behind the two boys.

“Chrollo!?” Pakunoda asked in befuddlement when her boss didn’t grab the two children invading their base. “What do you mean ‘okay’?”

“I mean,” Chrollo’s eyes lifted to Kurapika’s. The boy was holding his breath, waiting for what he didn’t know. “Let him go.” Kurapika’s eyes flashed scarlet, a brilliant color Chrollo would never forget.

“WHAT?!?” Everyone yelled but no one louder than the two boys that had been expecting a battle.

Chrollo ignored everyone as he walked around the children and towards the beautiful, intelligent, miracle of a person he had fall head over heels for.

He had come to a conclusion over the last day of his rut raging through him and that was that he couldn’t make Kurapika love him. At the very least not while he was a prisoner, he had to let him go and hope, no pray, he’d come back.

“Chrollo? . . . What are you doing?” Kurapika asked, not understanding what was going on in the man’s head.

Chrollo sighed, already knowing this would be the hardest thing he has ever done. “I’m letting you
“It isn’t fair for me to keep you like some kind of pet Kurapika, and I’m sorry it took me so long to realize that.”

Gon and Killua both gasped when the troupe leader leaned down and quickly brushed his lips against their friend’s. And Kurapika didn’t even protest it!

Kurapika fixed his eyes to Chrollo’s, something within himself breaking and growing larger as he realized this was actually happening. Chrollo was seriously setting him free.

“And if you feel like it,” he whispered pushing something into his hand. “Call me?” Kurapika opened his mouth to reply but closed it when he found himself speechless. In his hands he saw the cellphone and he couldn’t believe it, looking around he saw that everyone was looking to Chrollo with awe or amazement. All mixed in with sadness and horror.

“Really?”

“Really.” Kurapika threw himself into Chrollo’s arms, hugging him close before looking over to his friends who were grinning.

“Gon! Killua!” He rushed at the two and gave them the biggest hug he could muster. Now he knew exactly what he wanted! The two boys had fixed the only problem he had left.

“Kurapika!” They hugged him back, relieved that this seemed to be over. No more worrying about what was happening to their friend! They could go on adventures again and get Leorio, they’d be a pack again!

“Thank you.” He whispered to the boys as he stood up, decision finally made.

“Guys I’m no-“ glass shattered above them and before he even knew what was going on grabbing hands were on Kurapika and pulling him into a hard chest. Looking up Kurapika felt panic shoot through him for one reason: Hisoka!
“Hisoka! What are you doing?!“ Gon yelled at the man, gearing up to fight him. Everyone drew their weapons except Nobunaga who still couldn’t draw his sword completely.

“Kurapika’s free! Stop it!” Killua growled angrily.

“Sorry my sweet fruits, but this sweet omega is coming with me!” Hisoka laughed as he pulled on thin air, obviously his bungee gum, and went flying into the air. Kurapika struggled in his grasp, yelling out for help. Chrollo moved to follow but Hisoka was already at the window, grinning back at them. “Can’t thank you enough for not marking him Chrollo! It would have been hard to find another omega of this quality!”

“HISOKA!” Chrollo yelled as he rushed forward but only managed to touch Kurapika’s hand before he was pulled away, Hisoka already using his hatsu to get to the roof of the next building. Chrollo snapped his head to look at the two boys. “We told you to stay away from that clown!” He yelled at them, feeling like a parent disciplining his children. The boys looked ashamed but Chrollo didn’t have time for that right now!

“Shalnark track his phone as long as you can! Phinks, Machi stay with the kids, everyone else go! After him!” Everyone got moving, even the boys moving to follow the clown, Machi and Phinks on their tail but unwilling to not be a part of the search for Kurapika. Even if they had to watch the boys while they did it.

Chrollo kept Shalnark on speaker, the beta yelling out which direction Hisoka was heading. He raced through the streets, opening up his Skill Hunter and teleporting forward as he searched for the boy who had stolen his heart.

Finally he saw a glimpse of blonde hair, he told Shalnark who was directing the others. They’d surround him soon. He teleported for the alleyway he saw Hisoka rush down, blocking the exit. Moments later Koltopi, Franklin, and Feitan were on the roof above blocking that exit.

“Hisoka!” Chrollo growled as the trapped male turned to him, he knew he was caught but he wasn’t going to give in yet. And he had the perfect hostage!

“Chrollo! It’s great to see you!” Hisoka laughed backing a bit as Machi and Phinks flanked him with the children.
“I can’t say I ever wanted to see you again.” Chrollo narrowed his eyes at the hand clasped over Kurapika’s mouth.

“So you only came for him?” Hisoka pulled Kurapika up close in front of him, pressing the omega’s back to his chest. “Oh, Chrollo you wound me! Hey tell me, why haven’t you marked him?”

Chrollo didn’t dignify that with a response, only glared harder.

“Well if you aren’t going to should I?” A collective gasp left the troupe and Chrollo felt something ugly and possessive rage inside him.

“If you lay a finger on him, I will gut you like the pig you are Hisoka!” Chrollo took two steps forward but froze when the clown hiked Kurapika up higher and the boy whimpered. A long tongue slid across Kurapika’s throat and he felt a fear he hadn’t known he could feel.

“Finders keepers Chrollo!” Hisoka laughed, his teeth glinting in the low light as he bent down to brace them against Kurapika’s flesh.

Kurapika could feel Hisoka’s venom run down his skin, his eyes looking to Chrollo in panic. He wished in that moment that he had said yes to Chrollo, he wanted to be with him. Now Hisoka was going to steal his newest family away from him!

And then he began to bite down. It was all over.
The terror in Kurapika’s eyes as Hisoka’s teeth touched his neck caused Chrollo more anguish than he ever remembered feeling in his life. The fact that he couldn’t think of any moves right now to stop the psychotic murderer and aforementioned psycho seemed to be moving agonizingly slow with adding pressure to his bite. Like he wasn’t quite eager to break Kurapika’s skin just yet…

Illumi! Those two were weird for each other! It was odd and rare, but an omega could be shared by two alphas provided they both marked the omega within minutes of each other. Hisoka was stalling also, looking for a way out so he could share Kurapika with Illumi!

But he would definitely mark him if he didn’t do something fast Chrollo realized as the other’s teeth continued to close at a teasing rate.

“Kill me!” Chrollo barked, not certain what he was doing in that moment. But the shout worked: Hisoka froze and looked towards him, eyes glinting in excitement.

“Kill you? Are you offering to fight me Chrollo?” Hisoka asked as he pulled his head back slightly from Kurapika’s neck. The skin was moist and Kurapika was shivering, disgust obvious.

“No.” Chrollo’s thoughts began to gather as Hisoka’s eyes narrowed at him in confusion and irritation. “You want to fight me, I’ve known that quite well and made a point to always deny you that. If you mark Kurapika unwillingly, then you may as well kill me now. I will never fight you, not even if it means dying by your hand!”

Hisoka’s eyes were very narrow now, his anger at even the thought of forever being denied a fight and a kill he’d waited so long for, planned for, was one he didn’t like at all. Chrollo could read him well enough to know that.

“Doesn’t mean the rest of us will just let you kill danchou!” Uvo yelled at the clown, the other spiders loudly echoing his sentiment.

Chrollo cleared his throat loudly when he saw an interested spark in Hisoka’s eye. “But…”

Hisoka’s eye glint shifted to him, he blinked at him and craned his neck slightly, keeping his mouth close enough to Kurapika’s neck so none would dare to try to trick him. “But…” he asked, taking the bait.

“If you release him, I’ll fight you. Not now, soon though. To the death since that is how you prefer it.”

Hisoka stared at Chrollo hard as he tried to see any trick only to find there wasn’t any! The man was authentically offering to fight him in exchange for the little fruit he currently held!

But was it worth it? Giving up this wonderful omega and probably pissing off Illumi in exchange for a fight against Chrollo? A fight he had pined for and dreamt of for years now or an omega? Sharp golden eyes glanced down at Kurapika as he adjusted his hold on the smaller man, feeling him squirm and shiver in disgust.

Mate a spirited and smart omega that he’d initially thought might make a fun fight one day or have his fight with Chrollo? Could he have both? Even if he let the omega go now and Chrollo marked
him immediately, once he fought Chrollo he could either fight Kurapika as well or take him then. Illumi might not be thrilled to have their children born by an omega he didn’t mark himself, but he’d probably be fine with it eventually. Yes… That seemed a good answer!

Hisoka’s grip on Kurapika loosened slightly, just enough that the omega could slip away from him. Kurapika didn’t hesitate, the moment he was able to slip free he rushed to Chrollo, practically clinging to the man who wrapped an arm protectively around him before moving back, away from Hisoka.

The other members of the troupe took this as their cue to leave, Phinks and Uvo grabbing the two kids. None of them left before Chrollo, or Machi’s final statement to the clown.

“You know that if you kill Chrollo, I’ll never stop until I kill you!”

“Same here!” Uvo called as Phinks yelled his agreement and he was followed by the rest of the troupe.

Kurapika scrubbed at his neck as he walked with Chrollo back to the base of the spiders, feeling more disgusting than he’d ever felt in his life! He wanted nothing more than to take a VERY hot shower, possibly…

The Kuruta’s face heated when he remembered the baths and showers that he’d shared with Chrollo since leaving the onsen in the Gyudondon village. Unlike then, the showers and bathtubs weren’t as spacious and more than once they’d bumped into one another in the shower. Now he wanted one of those, preferably with Chrollo washing his back to get the last of Hisoka’s nauseating scent off of him!

“Where are we going?” he asked after a long moment when he realized that he’d been separated from Gon and Killua.

Chrollo squeezed his shoulder before letting his arm drop, giving Kurapika some space. “Back to the base. You’ll need your clothes and I still want to give you the scarlet eyes.”

“I-”

Dark eyes glanced at him fondly. “Where do you plan on going first?”

Kurapika glanced up at the stars. “Didn’t you mention learning to ski in Nepas?”

Chrollo almost misstepped in that moment, though his mood took a total upswing! Was Kurapika suggesting that they go on their trip and meet up? Did he want them to remain to-

“Danchou!” Nobunaga yelled as they turned a street and Chrollo realized that Hisoka had taken a very roundabout route that hadn’t taken him far from the base. He knew because Nobunaga came running towards them from the base. “You could of just jumped the rooftops and gotten back here fast! Anyway, Uvo and Phinks have the kids and Machi is insisting they need a lecture on staying away from Hisoka.”

“That should serve while Kurapika gathers his things,” Chrollo replied as he continued towards the base while Kurapika snorted darkly.

“They’ll be getting a lot more than a lecture from me,” he promised as they entered the base, passing Franklin who was already repairing the window Hisoka had burst through. “I told them to
“Well they didn’t and now Chrollo’s gotta fight the guy!” Nobunaga snarled as they entered the main common room. “Even if he agreed to fight him, until that guy’s dead, he’ll keep coming back! We’re literally going to be defending the neck and ass of an omega that tu-”

Kurapika went stiff as he absorbed the samurai’s words, not noticing when his mouth got covered by Paku’s hands, her expression irritated.

Hisoka could and would come back. Chrollo had agreed to fight him for his release, but that was just for now! It made the decision Kurapika had come to when Chrollo had freed him all the more important. And more pressing when he turned his attention to Chrollo only to find the man was kneeling, fiddling with the nen restraint that had not been removed for so many months now.

The restraint clanked off and Kurapika felt the rush of his nen return with a gasp. He’d gotten so used to feeling so weak for so long that the feeling of his nen, his power, was divine!

“We’ll release the boys as soon as you’re ready to go,” Chrollo stated as he stood. “If you want to meet up and learn to ski, you have my number…”

Kurapika’s hands latched onto Chrollo’s arm before he could move away and around the room, the troupe members suddenly stopped, all of them sensing that something was about to happen. Machi most notably stopped in the middle of a lecture about trusting the wrong people.

His hands were cold, his mouth dry, but Kurapika knew what he wanted and had no intent of letting his new family ever being taken from him.

“Yes,” he finally forced out after a moment. “I will mate you, Chrollo.”

Dead silence filled the room, broken several seconds later when Gon let out a shocked/surprised “EH?!?”


“Are you sure?” he asked once silence was restored by Uvo and Phinks covering the mouths of the two boys, even Franklin stopped his construction project and was poking his head through the empty window pane.

“Yes.”

“Why now?” Chrollo pressed. “You can count on the fact that I won’t let Hisoka go after you again, you don’t need to think I want this in return.”

“I don’t.” Kurapika licked his lips, more nervous than he’d ever been. “You… I fell for you… And you were willing to let me go since you believed it would make me happy. I made my decision before Hisoka arrived.”

Phinks yelped in shock when electricity arced from Killua, dancing sharply in the air. “Kurapika! You can’t be thinking that you want this! What did they do, induce Stockholm syndrome?!?”

“That’s right!” Gon joined in when Uvo jerked his hand away from the boy’s mouth with a shout of “He LICKED me!”

“Kurapika, these people killed your clan and you’ve been hunting them since! You said you
wanted to bring them to justice, make them answer for their crimes and all the innocent people
you killed!”

“I know! But things changed…” Kurapika replied. “We talked and we learned. I don’t anticipate
you understanding that now, but maybe one day you will.”

Chrollo’s heart pounded as Kurapika’s grey eyes turned back to him, a faint scarlet glow in them.
“Are you sure?” he repeated.

“Yes, I’m ready.” Kurapika’s fingers twined into Chrollo’s.

Nodding, the alpha took a step back towards their room, attempting to draw the blonde with him.
He wanted some privacy for the marking but Kurapika planted his feet.

“Please, do it here,” Kurapika insisted lightly. “It was a Kuruta tradition that when someone joined
the clan, the marking and ring exchange occurred in front of the clan.”

The ghost of a smile crossed Chrollo’s lips as he turned to face Kurapika. He had just likened the
troupe to his clan. Their family now.

The boys were hushed by the troupe members as Chrollo studied Kurapika’s pale, porcelain neck.
He’d been considering for weeks about where he’d place his mark and the moment had finally
come. His venom tasted sharp on his tongue as his fingers brushed Kurapika’s hair aside, noting
that they hadn’t cut it at all and it had definitely gotten longer now, almost brushing Kurapika’s
shoulder blades. He seemed more beautiful than ever.

Kurapika’s neck was warm as his lips met the tender flesh and the younger man gasped slightly
when he kissed the spot but he displayed none of the signs of discomfort or disgust that Chrollo
had previously seen at the thought of being mated.

Not wanting to draw this out too long or cause unnecessary pain, Chrollo sank his teeth into the
flesh, feeling his venom mix with Kurapika’s blood. It would serve to make the mark permanent
and change Kurapika’s scent so that all would know that he was now spoken for.

Kurapika’s eyes were fully scarlet when Chrollo withdrew and he smiled at him with his lips
closed, still tasting Kurapika’s blood on his teeth. They were mates now and tonight…

Chrollo was suddenly very aware in that moment that they were going to have 12 ears listening that
night, 14 if one counted the boys and he had a feeling that they counted now… He didn’t find
himself wanting to repeat the situation that Phinks and Feitan inadvertently caused when they
finally got together. Plus, he wanted their first time together to be special and not something that
occurred in a crowded base in a bedroll.

“Machi, would you help Kurapika clean up and get ready? We’re going out for the night.”

“Yessir!” Machi called, immediately then paused. “What about the kids?”

Chrollo wasn’t sure for a long moment. They had come with Hisoka, but it had been with the intent
of helping Kurapika who they thought was in trouble… “Continue with the lecture then give them
dinner. They can spend the night in the room Kurapika and I share.”

“After a bath,” Paku stated as all of them studied the boys, even the silver haired one finally
looking self aware and glancing at himself and the alpha. They were both dirty, sweaty, and his
hair had some mats.
Kurapika giggled slightly as Machi grabbed his hand and guided him away to a bathroom. “Can’t put anything on the mark just yet, but soap and water shouldn’t do any harm,” she observed as she checked his neck and nodded. “I’ll get some clean clothes.”

“Ok.”

Kurapika felt… He wasn’t sure in that moment, instead he turned his attention towards the mirror and studied the new mark. It was prominent right now and still a bit bloody, but it was positioned in a way that he liked, a way he had hoped he’d one day be marked. It wasn’t behind his shoulder either, showing that he’d been facing Chrollo while being marked.

Grabbing a washcloth, he poured some peppermint body wash on it, worked it into a lather under the faucet, then gently washed the tender area. Blood came away quickly and the fresh mark was more easily studied. It looked like it would be well shaded once it healed.

A knock on the door drew his attention and he opened it after a moment. Machi stood there with a surprisingly large bundle of clothing in her arms. Clothing he didn’t believe he’d ever seen before because it looked to be made completely of leather!

“Might want to be quick, Paku has postponed the lecture for the boys in favor of shoving them into the shower.”

Kurapika barely held back a snort but he took Machi’s words to heart, quickly shutting the door again and checking out the clothing. White leather was the theme. The top was a sleeveless white leather top with a few gold chains. Small red stones followed the seams. The same theme extended to the pants that were tight. A golden chain served as a pseudo-belt and the red stones lined the seams of the pants as they extended down his legs. The boots of white and red that he’d worn when Chrollo took him shopping were present as was a wool lined white jacket.

Slipping on the clothes, Kurapika studied his hair for a moment and wondered if he should try to find a brush when another knock came from the door. It wasn’t Machi on the other side this time, rather the boys stood there looking completely hen-pecked with Paku behind them. She had her hands on both of their shoulders, obviously keeping them from running.

Paku looked him up and down, nodding with a smile. “Chrollo also changed,” she stated as she waited for him to exit the room then pushed the boys into the room. “Use whatever soaps you want, but you’re not to come out until you’re both clean! Franklin will be making dinner and we’ll be further discussing your choice in partners!”

The door shut with a snap and Kurapika knew the boys were attempting to plan out their next move immediately, but there wasn’t much he could do about that. The boys had learned the hard way that they couldn’t trust Hisoka and he doubted the troupe would harm them.

The door down the hall opened and Chrollo stepped into the hall as well. He’d changed into a black suit complete with a black tie and a black shirt. The bandages were gone from his forehead and his hair wasn’t gelled back, allowed to fall naturally around his face. He was quite handsome.

Chrollo’s fingers gently brushed Kurapika’s before intertwining their fingers. A crash caused him to glance at the bathroom as he lost a small smile as the noise of the arguing boys came through the door.

“I’ll come in there if I must!” Pakunoda called through the door as the pair walked down the hall.

Uvo had taken over the repair of the window and Shizuku was cleaning up the mess from Hisoka’s
entrance. Nobunaga was repairing the door that Gon had knocked off the hinges with Bono’s help and Franklin was in the kitchen, arguing over recipes and ingredients with Shalnark and Koltopi. Phinks and Feitan were doing some repairs on the furniture that had gotten overturned and kicked during the attack. All of them glanced up when Kurapika and Chrollo passed by.

“Enjoy your night out!” “Make sure to have a good meal!” were some of the calls that followed them out. Shalnark was the one who surprised Kurapika when he called out to Chrollo, “Can I unlock his phone now?”

“Yes!” Chrollo replied before glancing down and picking said phone up from the floor where Kurapika had dropped it when Hisoka had grabbed him. “He can call anyone he wants.”
The jumping of nerves in Kurapika’s stomach were making him queasy. It was excitement but also a little nervousness. He understood what exactly would happen when they got to their destination: he wouldn’t be a virgin anymore. Even though this was his choice in the end it was still scary.

Chrollo seemed to be walking on cloud nine, he had their hands clasped and his goofy grin was making Kurapika smile too.

“You think the boys will be alright with the troupe?” Kurapika asked mostly out of the need to end the silence so he didn’t think himself into a frenzy.

Chrollo looked down at his beautiful mate, god he still couldn’t believe it, and took in his worried expression. He understood Kurapika was nervous, it was his first time so he played along with starting a conversation.

“Our packs are combined now, we’re family. They’ll be fine.” Chrollo laughed a bit as he thought of how protective the troupe had acted with the children. It was normal considering they knew Kurapika thought of the two as his children.

“You’re right, I trust them.” Kurapika smiled at bit. Pakunoda looked like she was almost having fun parenting the rambunctious children.

Chrollo suddenly began to laugh, bringing his other hand up to cover his mouth. Kurapika pouted a bit at his side as they walked through the city. Alphas were stopping to stare but it was different now that he had a mark on his shoulder. There was still lust and envy but now the men and women didn’t dare to linger too close with his alpha so close.

“Why are you laughing?” Kurapika bumped his shoulder into Chrollo’s, just a little peeved that he was laughing.

“Well three months ago the troupe caught two children spying on them and this feisty beta came in and demanded their freedom in exchange for himself, who would have expected this?”
“Certainly not me.” Kurapika began to giggle too. It was a ridiculous situation. If someone had told him he’d fall for the leader of the phantom troupe he probably would have beat them to death for suggesting it.

“Maybe we should organize a dinner for your friends to meet the troupe,” Chrollo hummed. “It would be good for everyone to get together so no one accidentally hurts each other.”

Kurapika nodded along, the hotel they were moving towards was getting closer and Kurapika couldn’t handle the blush growing on his face.

“I can see our families clashing if they don’t know each other, that’s a good idea.”

“I’m glad you agree,” Chrollo smiled broadly as they reached the hotel and he pulled on the door to hold it open for him.

Kurapika bowed his head, feeling a slight panic well up in his chest. They had kissed before and all that but the moment just felt right, how would this go down exactly? Kurapika didn’t know what to expect.

“I called the hotel while you were changing, they have dinner all set up for us,” Chrollo spoke calmly, trying to make sure the boy didn’t think he had to do anything he didn’t want to. He was willing to wait if that’s what Kurapika wanted. “We can just eat and enjoy an evening together if that makes you feel more comfortable.”

The small smile that lit up Kurapika face was blinding and a deep blush began to color the bridge of his nose cutely.

“Let’s check in,” Kurapika felt a little calmer now, but the buzz in every limb was ever present.

Chrollo led him with a hand at the small of his back to the front desk, the small blond beta women with a stern look on her face gave them a pinched smile.

“Hello and welcome to the Sariad hotel and suites. What can I do for you?” She didn't even glance at Kurapika once, deferring to the dark alpha.
“We’re checking in, I have a reservation for Lucilfer.” Chrollo spoke charmingly to the women, too happy to deal with the obvious disdain she held for the omega at his side. She was upset that all the hot alphas were always so focused on the damn living sex dolls that were omegas.

“A new omega? Wow, you really show them a good time!” Chrollo froze at the tone of her voice and at the look she gave Kurapika’s fresh mark. “Your dinner is ready in your room, top floor.” Chrollo took the card key with a small glare but he refused to allow this women to ruin this night. With no words of thanks he took Kurapika’s hand and moved toward the elevator.

“She didn’t offend you, did she?” Chrollo looked down to see Kurapika’s unconcerned face.

“No, it’s the way they are taught.” Kurapika muttered, letting it go quickly. It’s not like it happens often.

“Doesn’t make it right.”

The ride up to the top floor was mostly silent, both just soaking in how amazing their relationship was, and how incredible that they even came together in the end.

Gon was in a staring contest with the giant man with spiky long hair, Gon was glaring but the man seemed happy and content.

“Eat, you’ve both lost weight,” the blonde woman snapped at them but neither wanted to touch the mac and cheese the scarred beta had made for them. Gon’s hair was still wet from his shower with Killua, the other boy was glaring at the pick haired beta who had taken his clothes to patch up. “I will force it down your throats if I have to!” The blonde yelled again when they didn’t eat.

“Okay let’s cut the crap, what did you people do to Kurapika?!” Killua slammed down his fist. He was incredibly upset to realize that Kurapika had been brainwashed or something! There was no way he just fell in love with the man that murdered his family!

“We didn’t do a thing to him,” the pink haired one spoke up as she took a bit of her food and went back to sewing without a care.
“Well you must have done something!” Gon shouted with a growl as he kicked back his chair. “At the Hunter Exam he couldn’t even look at a spider without flying into a rage! And now he’s asking that man to mark him!”

“Eat your dinner!” Pakunoda was sick of the boys not listening to her and continuing to believe that they had somehow brainwashed the Kuruta.

Gon roared before dumping the entire plate of baked noodles down his throat and struggled to swallow it. He slammed the plate back onto the table with a grumpy expression. “I ate, okay!?”

Killua became the sole focus of Pakunoda’s sharp eyes and after a small standoff, the white haired omega scooped up a heaping forkful of the food and stuffed it into his mouth, a little more irritated that it was good.

Pakunoda nodded and went back to her magazine.

“So we have a few hours, who wants to watch another movie?” A troupe member behind the boys asked only for the blonde male on the computer to suddenly groan loudly. Both boys were almost wide eyed as the troupe spoke with each other like family.

“Okay fine, we won’t watch a movie!” The scarred one backed away begrudgingly.

“It’s not that, I just got an email from the Hunter Association,” Shalnark pouted as he reread the email, and just when he was going to get a break too! Looking up, he explained to the others who were now staring at him curiously. “They want me to preside over the second round of the exams coming up.”

The troupe began to laugh, this was one of the reasons none of them wanted to get a license.

“There won’t be a second round.” They all turned to see the white haired omega had spoken up, his food almost done.

Shalnark was the most interested in the announcement.
“Why do you say that, omeg-kid?”

“Because Kil is gonna win it all in one round!” The black haired one yelled out with a proud look at his omega.

Uvogin gave a booming laugh as he smacked his knee. “Ha! That’s what I call standing behind your partner!” He called as he slung an arm over Machi’s shoulder. Both boys blanched and flushed at the insinuation that they were together like that.

“So you really think you can win in one round?” Shalnark asked the white haired omega directly. The blue eyes were filled with determination and he nodded at the blonde. “Then I guess I don’t even need to check in!” Shalnark smiles happily at all the video game time that had just been saved for him! He was beginning to like that omega.

“Hey! What was that move you used to blow down the door!?” Uvogin asked the black haired boy with bright happy eyes. Gon was almost put off by how friendly the man was with them.

“You are so corny sometimes!” Kurapika laughed, as he played with his crystal champagne flute that had plump raspberry’s laying on the bottom.

“What? Some people call that romantic.” Chrollo laughed, savoring his lovely piece of Cordon Bleu as he took in Kurapika’s relaxed bare shoulders and content look.

“I still call it corny,” Kurapika teased lightly, the soft look the man directed at him. Dinner had been splendid and the alcohol had done wonders for his nerves.

“Come here, I want to show you something.” Chrollo stood and Kurapika’s heart jumped, guess he was still freaking out a bit. He knew the basics of intercourse but that was all only in theory! Now he was going to be doing it, and doesn’t it hurt? He’d been hurt before, he could handle pain but pain in . . . That area seemed like it would be personal and well, he was scared.

“Okay,” Kurapika whispered as he followed Chrollo to the window. Chrollo placed the boy in
front of him, wrapping his arms around his shoulders to stare out at the city.

“The skyline of this city isn’t overly impressive but it’s still beautiful, like you.”

“See? Corny!” Kurapika burst, his nerves disappearing once again in favor of laughing.

“Romantic~” Chrollo singsonged, happy to see the boy relax again. By now his venom should have rewired Kurapika’s brain just a bit, that was nature. Now the venom should be a natural relaxer and aphrodisiac for Kurapika, not so much to be out of his mind but at least to help him through his first time.

“It’s pretty,” Kurapika hummed after a moment leaning back into the alpha’s chest.

Kurapika didn’t move when Chrollo gently pushed his hair away from the bend in his neck. “I’m always so fascinated by how soft your skin is.” Chrollo whispered as he traced the slowly healing mark, it was erotic to see the imprint of his teeth on the boy’s neck. When he caught sight the now scar from where Kurapika had bitten him during his first heat he could almost laugh, looks like they were even.

“I don’t do anything special, must be an omega thing.” Kurapika hummed as he tilted his head to give Chrollo more access.

Kurapika did jump when lips touched his scarred skin but immediately melted back into the alpha as he continued to lick and tease the tender area.

“Let’s go to bed,” Kurapika decided to stop the ridiculous suspense, he just wanted to get on with it before he thought himself into a hole. He turned in Chrollo's arms quickly and let himself get pulled into the man’s chest.

“Yes, lets.” Chrollo pulled them back towards the bed with a sultry smile. His legs bumped into the end of the bed and he allowed them to tumble onto the mattress, quickly turning them so he was caging Kurapika. He didn’t waste a moment in attacking those lovely lips, he had been dreaming of them long enough.

Energy sparked between them as the kiss immediately deepened, Kurapika was sloppy and kept pulling back his tongue. He didn’t know how to kiss yet but that was okay, Chrollo would teach
“It’s okay to push your tongue against mine, in fact it feels good. Try it,” he whispered as he broke the fast and furious kiss and leaned back in slowly, pushing his lips open against Kurapika’s.

Kurapika tentatively moved his tongue into the wet cavern of Chrollo’s mouth and licked the roof of his mouth.

Chrollo shivered and chuckled into the slow, searing kiss.

“That’s right, just like that.” Chrollo whispered against the boy’s lips breathily. His gums were producing venom like crazy now, its spicy flavor mixing between their mouths. His hands reached down and he found himself clawing over Kurapika’s clothes as he moaned between their intertwined tongues.

Kurapika felt his heart jumping at every touch of Chrollo’s fingers. He could feel his body getting into it and his mind letting go of the fear and anxiety. And then Chrollo began to undress him.

Kurapika’s entire body jumped and he found himself grabbing onto Chrollo’s hands with frightened eyes.

Chrollo snapped his eyes up to look at Kurapika’s, worried he’d gone to fast. The moment was charged and Chrollo felt his fear that everything up to this point had been some cosmic joke. God, what if Hisoka has knocked him out and this was all just a dream?

“I...” Kurapika tried to explain softly. “I-I’m scared...” He whispered, feeling foolish even as water gathered in his eyes. “Does it hurt?”

Chrollo smiled softly, the relief was insurmountable. He was just nervous, totally understandable!

“Don’t worry,” he whispered and kissed the boy’s forehead gently. “I’ll be gentle, I promise you’ll like it.”

Chrollo waited for the boy to calm down and nod to him before raising himself up and working to
Kurapika bit his lip as Chrollo slowly worked the buttons of his top. He watched the man's sensuality push the leather shirt off his chest before moving to his pants. The moment the button of his pants popped Kurapika was immediately uncomfortable. He was about to be fully naked and Chrollo was still fully clothed!

“’You get naked too!’” Kurapika snapped with a pout.

Chrollo immediately laughed before giving the shy boy a little smirk as he rolled his shoulders. He pulled himself up onto his knees, making sure to keep eye contact as he slowly began to strip for the boy. Each button raised the heat in the room, Kurapika felt his mouth go dry as the muscles he had glimpsed so long ago were slowly revealed.

“’Now can I finally get into your pants?’” Chrollo teased with a seductive tilt to his dark voice and Kurapika gulped.

Chrollo curled his fingers over the waistline of his pants and slowly began to slip them off, underwear and all. With a flushed face Kurapika turned his head away in embarrassment, he was hard.

“Don’t look away,” Chrollo commanded gently, crawling back over the boy to cup his face. He looked absolutely divine framed against the sheets, the lights filtering through the window and the lovely flush going down to his beautiful chest. When he opened his eyes again they were scarlet and glowing, creating an aura around them. If Chrollo could steal one moment and relive it forever, it would be this. “I love you Kurapika.”

Kurapika felt a red tinted tear run down his cheek before he threw his arms around the man’s neck and pulled him close.

“Chrollo, make love to me.” The whispered plea went straight to Chrollo’s groin. He growled as he pushed Kurapika back onto the bed, latching his teeth to the unscarred side of his neck, intent to leave marks there as well. He’d mark up every inch of his boy’s ivory skin with evidence of their love.

Kurapika moaned when the man licked up behind his ear, his hand teasing his nipple in such a way that his moan turned into a gasp.
Chrollo’s hand continued to play with his chest until his nipples hardened and Kurapika shivered in pleasure at the feeling, the alpha fiddled with him like he was a vault with treasures tightly locked away. His nerves tingled where Chrollo touched, mixing with the pleasure of Chrollo sucking and lightly nibbling at his neck.

Kurapika let off a soft whine as the pleasure started to mix and mount together. Chrollo chuckled against the boy’s skin before placing feather light kisses from his chest and to the pink nipple he’d been teasing.

Kurapika shivered when the cold touched his wet neck, red hickeys now decorating his skin, but then gasped when a tongue was suddenly swirling around his sensitive bud.

“Chrollo!” Kurapika cried out and clasped the man’s hair as he began to suckle and bite. His breath felt cool on his skin, making his hot mouth feel all the more intense.

“God you’re so beautiful.” He gasped as one hand ran down his back, caressing the flesh as his other hand continued to play with the nipple not in his mouth.

Kurapika could feel slick gathering and making a mess of his thighs, and he knew Chrollo’s venom was making his body hot but that wasn’t the only thing causing his arousal. Chrollo was very skilled, he could tell that much.

Chrollo grinned against the boy’s flesh as he slowly began to work his way down to the boy’s flat stomach. He had lost muscle but slowly his weight was starting to come back. He dipped his tongue into his belly button, enjoying when Kurapika arched up in surprise, a breathy gasp on his lips.

“What are you doing?” Kurapika whispered as he threw a hand over his mouth to cover a surprised yelp when the man grazed his teeth over his hip bone.

“Making you feel good,” Chrollo explained with three little kisses trailing from his hip down. “Keep your eyes on me for this, love.” That was his only warning before Chrollo was taking his dick in hand and licking up the shaft.

The gasping moan that left Kurapika as he arched up made Chrollo almost wither in his own lust for the boy. Kurapika closed his eyes, completely taken in by the first touch of another to his
“Eyes here Kurapika.” He ordered not unkindly. Kurapika peeled his eyes back open to look to Chrollo who took his que. The moment he had the omega’s attention, he took the boy’s member slowly into his mouth.

Scarlet light grew even brighter, Kurapika felt his breath hitch as the alpha pleasured him. He expected a lot but he didn’t think Chrollo would take the time to do something like this!

“Oh god!” Kurapika gasped when Chrollo’s tongue circled around the tip and a hand began to caress his ass, not minding the slick there.

Chrollo bobbed his head, keeping their eyes connected, watching his reaction as he pushed a finger inside the boy’s twitching entrance. He bit his lip and almost closed his eyes but he didn’t seem to be in any pain so Chrollo worked the finger at a delicate pace, searching for the spot that would bring his boy to heaven.

He curled his fingers up, stretching while his searched blind, still suckling around Kurapika’s dick. The sound of Kurapika’s panting and gasping was music to his ears, his body was beginning to twist and his legs spreading out of instinct. It was beautiful. After a moment Chrollo added another finger to aid in finding the omega’s sweet spot.

Kurapika gave a slight sound of discomfort but the relaxer had helped, he was stretching easily.

“Holy crap!” Kurapika cursed, his eyes flying wide when Chrollo finally found his bundle of nerves.

“There it is.” Chrollo let Kurapika’s member side out of his mouth with a pop to watch the omega clench up and arch in ecstasy. He continued to rub at the spot, hitting it with every pump of his hand, slipping another finger in and the boy didn’t even notice.

Chrollo blew cold air on Kurapika’s moist member, loving how he gasped and his toes curled. He took the boy back into his mouth, pumping in his three fingers and stretching. Working to pushing the boy to orgasm, it would be the least painful point for him to enter the boy for the first time.

Kurapika felt pressure mounting inside him everytime Chrollo touched that weird deep bundle of
nerves inside him. He knew he was chanting something but he couldn’t grasp it as he arched further and further up.

“Ah!” Kurapika slammed back down but Chrollo didn’t miss a beat. He continued to suck and swirl his tongue and pump his fingers into him until Kurapika felt like an absolute mess! Every nerve jumping and his breath didn’t seem to hold inside his chest!

The dam felt too full and suddenly his insides were rolling, convulsing. His mouth dropped open and he groaned, feeling Chrollo release his member, remove his fingers and crawled up his twitching body.

Kurapika was still mid-orgasm when Chrollo’s lips devoured his again, he could taste his own seed on the man’s lips. Somehow that made everything hotter.

Kurapika was hyper aware of Chrollo lining his member up with his entrance, but he couldn’t even be worried about it. He felt too good right then.

“You ready?” Chrollo asked but didn’t wait for the boy to respond, knowing he really couldn’t at the moment.

Chrollo held back enough to slowly slide in, being careful to watch for any signs of pain in the boy’s face. When he didn’t see any he knew he had prepared him enough. Once he was fully sheathed inside the boy he paused, letting him come down from his orgasm and become adjusted to the feel of another inside of him.

Once Kurapika had a moment to come back to his senses Chrollo shifted, pulling out just a bit to search for any pain at all. Again none.

“Aren’t you supposed to move?” Kurapika asked breathlessly. His red eyes half lidded in satisfaction, being brought to climax was a lot better with two people than just yourself.

“Just making sure you aren’t in pain,” Chrollo assured the boy as he kissed the bridge of his nose.

“I’m not gonna break Chrollo,” Kurapika reminded him pointedly even as Chrollo pulled out to the tip and thrust back in until their bodies met.
“I know, but that doesn’t mean I want to hurt you.”

“I know you wouldn’t hurt me.” Kurapika sighed softly as the pleasure began to mount again. Chrollo crushed his lips to Kurapika’s, the room grew 20 degrees warmer as the slow thrusts got faster.

Kurapika curled his tongue with Chrollo’s, teeth clashed together but neither minded much.

The pace was fast but it had a rhythm, Kurapika hung onto Chrollo’s shoulders. Their breath mingled, gasps and moans passed from one to the other. Every pull of a muscle was intimate, every breath lost to the moment.

Kurapika didn’t know he could feel this way but it only got more intense when Chrollo found that special place inside of him again. The man seemed to line up with that bundle of nerves and he hit it every time. Soon every thrust was accompanied with the sounds of Kurapika’s pleasure.

“Ah! Ah!” Kurapika cried out his nails dragging over the alpha’s back and arm. Scratching up the spider tattoo. The man became almost rabid, his thrusts faster, harder. So much so, Kurapika wondered briefly if his thighs would be bruised come morning. Chrollo knot began to form, he could feel it catching at the rim of his entrance. He was close.

“Ah yes, yes Kurapika!” Chrollo roared as he bit down once again into Kurapika’s still tender shoulder.

The two stayed like that for awhile, stuck together by the knot, panting for breath and holding each other. It took at least ten minutes before Kurapika felt he could talk again.

“Can-let’s do that again.” That was amazing.

Chrollo just laughed, he should be careful for it seemed he’d just caught a vixen.
The evening was a confusing one for both Gon and Killua. It started with Kurapika asking the leader of the Phantom Troupe to be his mate. That was followed by the two of them being shoved into a shower by a woman who pretty much ordered them to bathe and then to eat dinner.

After dinner, they'd been steered to a sofa in some sort of common room where the remaining 11 members of the troupe congregated with sodas and bowls of popcorn to watch a movie.

Killua had no memory of ever being so uncomfortable, the only good news was that not one of the members referred to him as ‘omega’ or spoke down to him. Or tried to separate him from Gon, who sat beside him with a very pronounced pout.

The only thing more surprising than the movie that was chosen was when the blonde who had complained about receiving an order to act as an examiner for the upcoming Hunter Exam had leaned over the back of the couch and ruffled their hair with a laugh.

“Come on, Mamma Mia is a great movie!” the blonde declared with a grin when Killua and Gon had glared at him.

Following the movie, both boys were marched to the room that the troupe leader had forced Kurapika to share with him. Neither boy went near the bedroll, clearly smelling Chrollo and Kurapika in the blankets.

“I’ll be checking on you in a few hours,” the blonde woman had informed them. “Kurapika and Chrollo should be back in the morning.”

Killua shivered as he stared at the blankets and pillows on the travel bed. Chrollo had demanded that Kurapika sleep with him in return for letting Gon and him go the first time, had he started using and breaking Kurapika down back then? If so, then what had demanding that they share a bath achieved?

“Killua, can we still save Kurapika?” Gon suddenly asked, suddenly looking very tired as he slid down the wall to sit on the floor.

The silverette honestly didn’t know and remained silent for a minute longer. “We should get out of here.”

“Why? I want to know how Kurapika is! Maybe we can snap him out of this!”

“And what will that achieve?” Killua demanded sharply. “He’ll still be mated to the leader of the Phantom Troupe! If we get out of here, we might be able to find a way to break this mating! If we stay, they might use us as a means of controlling Kurapika even more, maybe even force him to get pregnant immediately!”

Gon winced then nodded in understanding. Luckily, the room had a window and there was no one to stop them.

_________________________________________________

Hisoka knew he had messed up. He doubted that Chrollo would have delayed marking Kurapika’s
pretty porcelain neck beyond taking a second to wipe off Hisoka’s saliva and venom. Taking a marked omega after killing its alpha didn’t bother Hisoka, but he realized now that Illumi would be less than pleased.

Sighing, Hisoka shifted the 10-pound box of chocolate truffles he’d grabbed on the way to see his partner, praying that he wouldn’t be banished from Illumi’s bed for the next month for losing the omega.

Illumi had taken over the penthouse of an upscale hotel and had left Hisoka a key at the front desk. Obviously he intended for them to spend their first night with their omega here…

He wasn’t going to get any for a year!

Sighing, the clown rode the elevator to the top floor and moved to the single door on the floor. The key slipped easily in the card reader and the locks turned, allowing him to use the conventional and utterly boring method of entrance that Illumi insisted he use when they formally met.

“Illumi~?” he called into the space, spying the dark head of straight, long hair that appeared over the back of the couch.

“Hisoka, good. I got impatient for you to choose an omega.”

The blunt statement caused Hisoka to pause in surprise and he blinked at the man.

“I bought one.”

Now Hisoka was quick to move around the couch, bringing Illumi into his full view and he stared at the boy curled up next to Illumi with his head on the alpha’s lap.

At first glance he could have sworn that he was staring at Killua. The slender body and silver hair were similar, even the slant of the boy’s face. However this omega was several years older than Killua and his eyes were emerald green. He didn’t have anywhere near the level of confidence or fight that the other boy had and shook slightly as Illumi threaded his fingers through the silver hair, petting him.

Hisoka pouted, instantly not liking the omega and not resisting when Illumi took the box of chocolate from his hands.

“I realize that he isn’t exactly what you would want, but that can be fixed,” Illumi stated as he opened the box and studied the assortment of truffles before selecting one and lifting it from the box and holding it at the omega’s lips. “A few years in the Zoldyck compound with my mother will boost his confidence and make him a good childbearer.”

“This looks more like your dream!” Hisoka hissed at his partner. “That thing has no fight or fire!”

The omega was shaking now, staring in confusion at the treat while his eyes shifted between Illumi and Hisoka.

“You have another omega in mind?” Illumi challenged flatly. “Or perhaps you’re more interested in having an omega in bed rather than me?”

Hisoka bit his tongue to keep his own retort back then stared disapprovingly at the omega. It wasn’t interesting to him: no fight, no power, just an easy pointless kill. But if Illumi believed that could be fixed, then fine! He wouldn’t be bedding the thing until that happened.
“Let’s get this over with,” he finally declared as he moved towards the couch only for Illumi to rise and head towards a hall, entering a bedroom. It wasn’t the Master suite and Hisoka approved of the message Illumi was giving them. They were still the key couple, the omega was just the childbearing extra that they needed to start their family.

The omega shook as Illumi easily pulled off his thin clothing, leaving the boy bare between the two alphas before they lowered their heads, each taking one shoulder. There was no signal, both alphas knew each other to the point where they didn’t need such a thing, and the omega gasped as both bit into his tender flesh, marking him and sending their venom into his system as well as their nen, initiating the boy.

Hisoka pulled back first as the omega’s nen awakened in response to the initiation from the two alphas. He still was unimpressed by the way the boy’s eyes widened in shock at what had just happened, but he did watch as Illumi pulled the boy back towards the bed for his first mating.

Chrollo stared out of the large window from his spot in the bed, feeling content with the world at large. Kurapika was asleep in his arms, nude body pressed against his and his blonde hair catching much of the morning light. He looked even more beautiful than he had the day before.

Much of the night had been spent making love, Kurapika learning quickly under Chrollo’s experienced touch. Hesitance and fear of pain had dissolved as the night continued.

Glancing down at their bodies, a smile crossed the alpha’s face as he realized they were definitely going to need to bathe before leaving the hotel. Grabbing a pillow, he switched to a tested trick in order to slowly free himself without disturbing Kurapika, slowly wedging them between their bodies until the blonde was hugging the pillows rather than him.

Sliding from the bed, Chrollo considered calling for room service but pushed the idea aside. He wanted to return to the base, dismiss the troupe for the next several months, and begin his long honeymoon with Kurapika. He’d need to make arrangements for the boys, possibly send them on a training trip with Uvo and Machi or maybe even Pakunoda…

He was definitely getting them some coffee for right now. Luckily the hotel included a coffee maker in the suite and Chrollo was quick to set it up, pulling out his own coffee that he had brought along after seeing the brand that the hotel offered. One would think that with the price these people charged per night that they would at least provide decent coffee!

A groan from the bed touched his ears and Chrollo turned his head, watching as the beauty in bed shifted and hugged the pillows, grumbling in his sleep. Chrollo didn’t miss the small wince the boy made when he shifted his hips and he realized that what they had done last night would have been a lot for someone well seasoned in sex and pleasure. Without a doubt Kurapika would be very sore when he woke up.

Coffee was good, but a warm bath would be even better for easing soreness.

Still naked, Chrollo headed to the bathroom and began to run water into the deep jacuzzi tub, sniffing the oils that were provided before settling on a peppermint that smelled similar to his soap and shampoo.

Walking back to the main bedroom, the alpha froze at the sight of Kurapika’s eyes blinking open and staring at him vaguely, a small satisfied smile on his lips before he began to stretch- and immediately hissed in slight pain as he settled back down in the bed.
“It didn’t hurt last night!” Kurapika declared, looking more than a little perplexed over his pain while Chrollo approached the bed.

“I prepared you well last night. Unfortunately, no amount of preparation will help the fact that we went a little overboard last night.”

“Six times was too much?” Kurapika asked innocently and Chrollo lost a grin in response. “Great, that grin again…”

“Luckily I know a great cure for sore muscles: a long soak in a warm bath!” Chrollo announced as his arms reached out and he easily scooped Kurapika up bridal style. “And seeing how I already started the coffee and it’s no good cold, I guess you’ll be enjoying a long soak with a mug of it!”

“It’s not going to be the consistency of syrup that has been watered down with milk or cream, is it?” Kurapika teased as Chrollo carried him to the bathroom, earning a laugh from the alpha.

The bath did wonders for relieving Kurapika’s aches and pains, Chrollo remaining nearby as he took a shower then sipped at his own cup of coffee. It seemed that half of the morning flew by and then they were both dressed once more and leaving, even if Kurapika was a little unsteady on his feet.

A morning had never felt as grand as that one did for Chrollo; the sun seemed brighter and the air sweeter despite that they were in a city in December. He mentally planned the first steps of their honeymoon: first would be Sarip to finally visit the archives and read through so many historical texts. While there they could discuss where to go next, whether that be to Jappon for the Winter Festival or somewhere else so that they could start Kurapika’s career as a Knowledge Hunter. It was something they would both enjoy and Chrollo believed involving their shared passions in this honeymoon would be the perfect way to start out their life together.

Kurapika on the other hand noticed how silent Chrollo was as they walked back to the base, even if the man was smiling brightly and his hand was warm on Kurapika’s. Each step back to the base made him a bit uneasy. How were things going to change now that he had mated Chrollo? Would Gon and Killua come to accept this?

Both noticed Pakunoda standing outside of the base, a worried expression on her face though she brightened at the sight of them.

“Paku, is something the matter?” Chrollo asked as he gently guided Kurapika through the door of the base.

The woman looked momentarily embarrassed. “I… The boys ran off last night.”

“What?” Kurapika demanded, uncertain of what that could mean. Hadn’t the troupe been watching them?!

“We left them to sleep in your room and they jumped out of the window.”

Kurapika didn’t know whether to be worried or to laugh. The troupe had actually left the boys alone in a room and hadn’t thought that they would run off? At least they hadn’t been treated as prisoners.

“No need to worry about that!” Shalnark declared with a grin as they entered the common room and Kurapika froze when he saw the entire troupe organized in the room, a large number of wrapped gifts either on the floor, being held in their arms, or on any available flat surface. Phinks was even balancing one on his head!
“I placed a tracker on each of them last night when we were watching a movie,” Shalnark explained. “Think of it as a way for us to ensure they don’t go charging into Hisoka’s arms ever again!”

A tracker?! It was both outrageous yet undeniably necessary! Kurapika stared at Shalnark, uncertain as to whether he should demand to know where the boys were immediately or to tell him to shut down the system. He didn’t get a chance to decide what to say before Uvo had grabbed both his and Chrollo’s shoulders and pushed them in front of what had to be the largest gift in the room.

“Made it myself!” the giant declared proudly as Kurapika stared at the enormous gift wrapped thing. It looked like the wrapping paper was being held in place by the enormous bow! Chrollo apparently thought so as well since he squeezed Kurapika’s hand before stepping forward and tugging at the bow.

Surprisingly, it didn’t seem to have any effect on the rest of the package and Kurapika stepped up next to Chrollo to help him rip off the overabundance of paper. How many rolls had Uvo used? Kurapika counted at least three patterns and four layers of wrapping paper. Finally it was all off and Kurapika stared numbly at the gift.

A handmade crib sat in front of him, probably one of the most beautiful he’d ever seen. The bars were individually carved in the shape of blocks, ducks, and several other animals and toys. Kurapika was speechless at the implications that such a gift usually meant.

“Never know when you two will start a family, so good to be prepared!” Uvo declared with a grin while Chrollo looked far more pleased at the gift.

“We’ll keep it in Ryuuseigai until Kurapika feels that it’s time,” he finally stated and Kurapika almost sighed in relief.

“Oh! Danchou mated!” Shizuku declared as she handed her present to Kurapika. “I thought you looked familiar!”

“Thank you?” Kurapika replied before glancing at Chrollo then gingerly pulling off the wrapping paper. The gift caused both of them to smile: board games. Very beautiful, ornate board games. The chessboard looked to be made of carved marble along with the pieces. Go and Gungi were also included, the pieces similarly made of high end wood or stones.

Machi was next and her gifts were a bit shocking as the pair found themselves receiving several outfits, many of them matching, and Kurapika also received a coat that looked like the white twin of Chrollo’s!

Franklin was next and he grinned broadly as he presented the pair with two new bedrolls. The first one was large and would easily fit both of them. It was made of some of the best materials on the market and even included an insert that the packaging claimed was perfect for helping to calm omegas in heat. The second bedroll was smaller but made with equal quality.

“Thought you two needed something bigger than Chrollo’s one person bedroll. The second one is in case you decide not to sleep together some nights.”

It was a thoughtful gift Kurapika decided, he was even more impressed when he found a receipt included.

The bright smile at the receipt caused Franklin to smile a bit wider. No one needed to know that he’d paid for this bedroll using the money originally intended to pay for Kurapika’s bonding ring!
Paku’s present proved to be a journal and a twin sword set, nearly identical to the pair Kurapika had originally had that had been destroyed during the Hunter exam.

Bono’s present was a collection of books on the Gyudondon that Kurapika had never seen before. Peeking behind the cover, he was shocked to find they were handwritten. Chrollo was similarly fascinated and it took several minutes for them to be dragged from the books.

Shalnark presented each of them with a new top-of-the-line laptop.

Feitan and Phinks presented their gift next, shoving it straight into Chrollo’s arm. Chrollo looked immediately suspicious and had very carefully tugged at a portion of the wrapping paper. Kurapika didn’t even get to see what it was before the man blushed bright red and quickly shoved it to the bottom of the large pile of presents, promising Kurapika he’d show him what it was later. That caused Feitan and Phinks to chuckle, Machi to blush, Uvo to laugh loudly, Paku resembled a tomato after Phinks brushed by her, and the other troupe members to share laughs. Kurapika and Shizuku were the only two who were innocent enough to not understand.

“Danchou have fun showing tonight,” Feitan promised with a smirk that caused Kurapika’s stomach to drop. Surely he wasn’t implying…?

A pair of fluffy pink handcuffs were shoved into Chrollo’s hands by a less-than-pleased looking Nobunaga. Once again Chrollo blushed and was quick to tuck the things away though Kurapika wasn’t sure why. Why would someone give someone else handcuffs, especially since Kurapika didn’t intend to be a Blacklist Hunter anymore? Had Chrollo not told anyone?

The final gift was from Koltopi and the short man had serious difficulty dragging it over, not because it was heavy, but because it was cumbersome! Kurapika watched the thing shift and move under the wrapping paper, not quite certain what could move like that. Chrollo was the brave one this time as he tore off the wrapping paper before taking a step back in shock.

Someone whistled as the mountain that now sat in the common room of the base.

“Geez Koltopi, I think you got them enough diapers to last through potty training their first two kids!”

“They already got two!” Uvo called back to Phinks. “They’ve been following us around for months!”

“The next two then! Hey, how many do you plan to have?”

“One.” “Twelve.”

Kurapika’s jaw went slack as Chrollo’s response hit his ears. Twelve?! Who could possibly have a life with twelve kids?!?

The rest of the troupe also noticed the different answers and were glancing between the two.

“Twelve always seemed like a good number,” Chrollo explained after a long moment. “We could travel with them and have plenty of help.”

“Sounds more like you intended for the Phantom troupe to become a family business,” Paku teased as she attempted to bump Kurapika’s shoulder. “Why just one?”

Kurapika licked his suddenly very dry lips. “That’s how many we normally had in the village. There weren’t enough resources for most families to have more than one child, two was the
unspoken maximum.”

Chrollo nodded at the response. It was easy to understand why someone with that kind of background would be terrified at the thought of having 12 children… He’d get Kurapika some birth control later to show him that he was willing to talk about this and not force such a large number on him. Besides, Kurapika was young enough that he might decide he wanted more when their first children were grown.

“Thank you all for your generous gifts,” Chrollo stated as he squeezed Kurapika’s hand again, noting that it had gone a bit cold. “I feel the time had come for us to part for now, but I would be happy if we could have brunch together before that. Paku, would you mind looking after the boys along with Shalnark while Kurapika and I go on an extended honeymoon?”

“Yes,” the mindreader replied while the gamer thought on it.

“The silver-haired one promised that he’d knock out the entire exam pool for the Hunter exam in round 1. If he does and the first examiner doesn’t pass him, I could and then get back to this game I’m interested in.”

“Game?” Chrollo asked.

“Greed Island! A game for nen users.”

“I see. Kurapika, would you be willing to cook brunch while I pack our things?”

Kurapika glanced up at Chrollo, feeling lost and overwhelmed in that moment. He was asking him to cook? Kurapika nodded mutely, cooking meant a bit of time in the kitchen to clear his head.

“Uvo and I will get most of this stuff to Ryuuseigai,” Machi volunteered as Kurapika left the room and headed towards the kitchen. He was pleased to find that it was clean and that somebody, most likely Franklin, had washed the dishes the night before. There was an odd coffee cup but Kurapika thought nothing of it as he headed to the fridge and pulled out some bacon and eggs. Easy to cook.

Pulling out a skillet, he set it on the stove to heat when he became aware of a presence behind him. Turning sharply, he saw Nobunaga staring at him with a dark expression.

Months of being powerless before this alpha that had tried to take advantage of him multiple times almost made Kurapika shrink back and attempt to ignore him, but he shook that off quickly. He had his nen back, he wasn’t a helpless victim! Reaching for his nen, he attempted to summon his chain to remind this man that he had teeth and claws again… Nothing.

Kurapika’s eyes widened as panic gripped him and he flexed his hand. No chains. He could feel his nen again, but his hatsu was gone!

“Finally submitted,” the topknot alpha snarled as he glared at Kurapika. “Time for you to finally look the part of a proper omega!”

A collar was thrown at Kurapika before the man turned and stormed out of the kitchen. A pitch black collar that Kurapika recognized.

Seeming to let him go, giving him back his nen… Had it all been a lie? A way to trick Kurapika into agreeing to mate? He didn’t want to think so, but the evidence way on the floor in front of him and his bare hand. His hatsu was still gone, the boys were gone, and the troupe leader wanted 12 kids! One couldn’t be a Hunter and be a mother for twelve children!
It had all been a trick?!

Heading spinning, Kurapika felt panic settle in his stomach as his eyes scanned the kitchen. He’d been trained to the point where he felt like the kitchen was a good place!

Grabbing a cup of water, he tossed it into the skillet before wheeling around and running to the small kitchen window, jumping through it to freedom.

Chrollo finished packing the last of his and Kurapika’s things with a smile and summoned Bandit’s Secret to use the Fun Fun cloth to carry it when he remembered something he’d long forgotten: Kurapika’s hatsu! He still had it in his book!

Moving rapidly down the hallway to the kitchen, he heard the sound of something frying in a skillet and entered the room, certain he was about to find Kurapika with a spatula in hand.

“Hey, I forg-” Chrollo froze at the sight of the empty room as the last of the water finally evaporated from the hot skillet.
A new life for many.

Chapter by Boozombie

Chrollo could hear his heart beating. For how fast it was going, his thoughts sure were blank he thought to himself. Chrollo didn’t understand, or maybe he didn’t want to. The evidence was all here in front of him, the black collar discarded in the open trash, the now burning pan, the chill from the open window.

His family had grown in and then shrunk in the course of a single day. Kurapika was gone and he had taken Chrollo's heart with him.

Walking numbly over to the stove, he removed the pan and turned off the heat. His brain tried to process it all even as he moved to the collar and picked it up. He had been sure that he had thrown this out months ago! What was it doing here? Did it have anything to do with Kurapika just being gone?

He didn’t even say goodbye.

“Is Kurapika burning something?” Franklin walked into the kitchen with a dopey smile. Chrollo knew what he thought would be distracting Kurapika enough to burn food but Chrollo simply couldn’t deal with it at the moment. So he walked past the man and moved straight for the woman he always went to when he didn’t know what to do. Pakunoda, his right hand woman.

The woman seemed to sense something was wrong the moment he moved into the living room, her stiffened shoulders made the rest of the troupe turn in attention. Her eyes glanced at the collar he was roughly holding but didn’t comment, she waited for what he had to say.

“He’s gone.”

Pakunoda’s eyes widened dramatically as she and everyone else immediately looked to the kitchen, everyone had heard him cooking! The beta turned back to look at Chrollo and felt her face soften, it had been a long time since the man had looked like he needed a hug this badly.

“What do you mean he’s gone?!” Uvogin gasped as he ran to the kitchen to see the empty room, his shoulders deflating.
“He’s just gone, do you think he went to find the boys?” Chrollo asked almost helplessly, but why wouldn’t he just say that? He could have just told him where he was going and asked for his hatsu back before he left! Hell Chrollo would have gone with him if that was okay!

No one spoke even as Chrollo began to really process that Kurapika wasn’t coming back.

“The collar, how did the collar get here?” Chrollo finally began to feel and that feeling was anger! Had it all been a trick? Had this all been some plot to cripple him emotionally? Some kind of final revenge he’d never bounce back from because that’s what it felt like. Without Kurapika was there any reason to even continue with this kind of life? It all felt meaningless without the knowledge that he’d come out of that kitchen again.

No one had an answer to his question because finally he looked to pakunoda with a pleading look. He couldn’t think, couldn’t plan, he felt useless with his mind in a jumble. “What do I do Paku?” he begged.

Pakunoda flicked her eyes up when she noticed the small sound of the door opening, they immediately narrowed when she noticed Nobunaga sneaking out with a guilty expression. She didn’t need her nen to know that the man had done something, possibly caused some kind of misunderstanding. The blonde didn’t want the topknot alpha dead at the moment, no matter how much he definitely deserved a beating, so she didn’t say anything as he slipped out. He’d hide away until Chrollo came back to his senses and got through the worst of his anger.

“We’ll go after him, it’s all a big mistake. Okay Chrollo?” Pakunoda took the man into a rare hug. It wasn’t often the man wanted or needed physical attention.

Hisoka pouted the entire way to Kukuroo Mountain. They had taken turns carrying the stupid weak shit omega that was now their mate. It was Illumi’s turn to hold it now as they took a car up towards the gates, it hadn’t said a word since Illumi surprised him with it but that was to be expected with the shock of having its Nen activated and double mated at the same time. They were lucky it hadn’t died!

The stupid thing was looking around with wide eyes like it had never seen the outside world before, which actually was possible considering it was raised in a literal factory.
The gate came into view just as Hisoka began to contemplate killing the driver and seeing if they could survive a surprise crash out of boredom.

“See there, that will be where you live.” Illumi directed the omega’s eyes to the huge gates and it let out an almost inaudible whimper. See? Weak. “My mother will be around more than us, I’m sure she’ll want grandchildren soon,” he continued in a bored tone. The omega’s eyes fell to the floor of the car, taking on a submissive look. It wasn’t even going to fight them on it, disgusting. Kurapika would have been much more fun than this.

Kikyo waited excitedly for her son to return, the first of her children to be officially mated! She was so excited to meet the omega, hear the tale of how Illumi and his partner wooed the omega into agreeing to a polyamory relationship. She practically vibrated as the gate began to open, trying to spot the strong omega that could be a mate for both her son and the crazy Hisoka. Would they be a boy or a girl? She would guess a boy, her son seemed to prefer them and Hisoka as well. Yes, definitely a male omega.

She felt her eyebrows twist up when she saw the shock of white hair bundled up in her son’s arms, for a moment she thought it was Killua. And that was a rather terrifying thought in of itself.

“Illumi! My favorite little alpha, let me have a look at the lucky omega!” She rushed forward, just a little desperate to make sure the omega in his arms didn’t look how she feared he looked.

Illumi shrugged and set the boy down, whispering something to him to make him stand on his own. Kikyo gasped when the boy turned around, turn his eyes blue and that was Killua grown up! What the hell was this? She knew Illumi had a bit of a brother complex concerning Killua but this was just madness! It’s like Illumi’s way of saying he’d take his young brother as a mate if he could.

The revelation was shocking enough that she almost missed the blank look in the boy’s green eyes and the way he stood unassumingly and she just knew: this was a factory omega. How could she raise a son that would disrespect her gender so much?

Taking a deep breath Kikyo turned a bit to look at her other omega son, Kalluto, who never strayed too far from her side. Her first steps in dealing with this situation should be to remove her cute son from Illumi’s line of sight. It was probably a good thing that Killua left when he did.

Her second step would be to properly berate her son for daring to buy a factory omega! But that could wait for them to get to the house.
“Kalluto!” She snapped for the boy, he needed to leave immediately. “Pack a bag and go join Killua where ever he is!” The boy’s eyes widened but immediately got moving the moment she gave that look that spoke of a night in the torture chamber should he disobey her.

Illumi went to pick up the omega again but Kikyo stopped him with a wave of her hand. This was a human being and human beings walk themselves up this mountain! His first lesson would be that he is not a pet!

“Come along boy!” She called with less kindness than she would have liked to use but hell she was annoyed! She hoped desperately that this situation could be explained away, maybe her son had fallen for the omega? Broken him out or something, she didn’t want to face that she raised another stupid alpha that believes omega are just their personal baby factories.

“Check with the Phantom Troupe!” Hisoka called to the small boy as he moved ahead to gather a bag to start his journey. He felt a slight hope when seeing Illumi’s mother immediately taking charge but could anyone really make their omega better?

He followed behind leisurely as the older omega marched their new one up the mountain trail, trying to picture how their children would look. If they are raised here they are bound to be strong, maybe one of them will kill him some day! That would be a blast.

“Mother we can’t stay too long, we just wanted to drop off our omega. We’d like it to be a little stronger to suit our tastes,” Illumi began to speak to his mother. The women froze and her back went rigid, by the terrified look on Kallutos face he assumed murder was written over her bandaged face.

“Suit your tastes? It?” She whispered in a threatening manner. “Son, What is this boy to you?” Her voice held a sharp tone and the white haired omega seemed to start trying to struggle away from her.

“So is that how you think of omegas Illumi? They are just baby factories for you and your homicidal alpha pet?!?”
“I resent that.” Hisoka added in slightly amused at the development.

“Mother, these omegas are not like you, they are different.” Illumi started, his voice holding that hollow confused sound he gets when he doesn’t quite understand a situation. “These omegas were raised for this—“

The slap that came shocked even Hisoka. “THEY WERE BRAINWASHED FOR THIS!” Kikyo yelled at her son, the little omega began to whimper in earnest. The sight of someone beating on one of his alpha’s was panic inducing, even if it was in his defense. “How dare you treat this boy like property! Do you even know his name?!?”

“We hadn’t given him one yet, but I had a few ideas.” Illumi tried, he really didn’t understand why his mother was upset. It’s just a factory omega.

“You haven’t named him yet?! He’s a person, not your pet! No matter what those facilities claim, you can’t just name him like an animal!” Kikyo pushed the omega behind her so she could latch her hand onto her son’s ear and pull his lengthy body down to her level with a glare under her binocular eye mask.

“Well—” Illumi began but his mother slapped him across the face to shut him up before looking to the shaking boy.

“Boy, what is your name?!” She growled at him and he jumped almost a foot in the air at being directly addressed. He pressed his lips together to keep in his whimpers, What was he supposed to tell this scary omega? All omegas were stripped of their name, he didn’t have a name anymore! His alpha was supposed to give him one when he was bought, he didn’t expect to get two! “Come now, think! You have a name and it’s in there somewhere!” He jumped again but did as the scary woman ordered, twisting his brow as he searched long buried memories for his name.

“KYO! KYO, RUN!” Oh yeah that was right, his name was Kyo.

“It's K-Kyo, ma'am.” He whispered softly in a shaking voice. This situation made no sense to him. Had he walked into an alternate reality where omegas had power? He had never seen an omega talk to an alpha like this, not even if that omega was the alpha’s mother.

“Kyo, that's a very pretty name.” The woman gave him a brilliant smile before it turned sour when she looked back at his first alpha who was still caught by the ear. “I deeply apologize for my
stupid son, he should know better but you’re their mate now so we will just have to deal with this situation.”

“De-deal. . . ?” Kyo whispered as he took a step back, normally when someone said they had to deal with a situation it was never a good thing for the omega involved. He instantly remembers a time when two of the omegas in his class started dating and both ended up sold at a discount to different alphas after being whipped and tortured for three days. What would the scary woman do to him?!

Kikyo didn’t notice the internal panic Kyo was going through as she yanked Illumi closer to her to glare at Hisoka. “Hey, what was your part in this?!?” She asked his second alpha with a cold voice, he could tell the women did not care for his second alpha. He didn’t really like him much either, he was terrifying.

“Well I wanted a different omega. I only lost him because I didn’t want to force my mark without Illumi with me to do the same,” Hisoka said with no concern for his own life.

“You LITTLE BRAT!” Kikyo marches forward, dragging Illumi with her to reach forward at lightning speed to wrench the red head’s ear as well. “You are both in so much trouble!” With that she began to drag both alphas up the mountain.

Kyo was left starstruck by the omega woman, he really must have walked into an alternate reality!

“Kyo! Come along and we will get you a warm bath and some food. Oh! And you’ll have to pick out some clothes you actually like!” The woman called when he didn’t move from his spot.

“Oh-okay!” With one last startled jump he began to follow after the woman and his two alphas who were being dragged like naughty children.

It was a whole new world!

Kurapika felt hollow as he jumped off the red line bus and looked around for a different bus, hopefully something going far away and soon!
Maybe he should take a train, but he felt bad enough sneaking onto the first bus without paying. No buses were leaving immediately so he moved toward the waiting area. Now that he was no longer crying or stuck in his own depressed head he could see the people leering at him around the shady bus station. He tried to ignore it but it was gross.

Trying to distract himself he began to check his pockets for the hell of it, and was surprised to feel something in his pocket! Pulling it out he found his wallet, Machi must have put it in his clothes when she gave them to him to change this morning! Checking through he found everything was in there, even his Hunter license all the way to the three hundred Jenny he’d had on him the day he was taken.

Seeing the woman had done something so kind for him almost made him break down in tears again. They had tricked him but he had really liked everyone.

Continuing to check over himself, he found he’d forgotten that he’d hidden Pakunoda present in the back of his pants out of habit. So he wasn’t weaponless then and he could actually buy a bus ticket. Although he should probably stick to cash for awhile, at least until he is sure Chrollo wouldn’t come after him.

Moving to the bus terminal Kurapika began the process to buy a ticket from the machine.

“Hey hey, does your alpha know you’re out here all alone?” Someone clapped a hand on Kurapika’s shoulder and he jumped, a bit startled.

Looking up, Kurapika glared at the group that had approached him, two alphas and a beta all leering at him threateningly. Hitting the man’s hand off his shoulder Kurapika decided to ignore them all pointedly.

“Are you really trying to ignore us? What, you lost or something?” The alpha that had grabbed him laughed and the others began to as well. “Or maybe your alpha wasn’t good enough for a little bitch like you, he’s probably running away!” The hand came back to lay over his shoulder, this time his nails digging into his skin. “I can promise you I’ll be man enough for you, little cutie.”

“Do not touch me.” Kurapika smacked the hand off of himself once again and grabbed the ticket that had been dispensed before trying to walk around the men blocking him in.
“Hey! Obus is a great alpha, you’re lucky he’s even looking at you bitch!” The beta growled at him but Kurapika wasn’t impressed.

“Now, lets just calm down here, he’s probably just brain damaged. But I’m sure by now he realizes he should just come with me, right?” The man Kurapika assumed was Obus spoke this time reaching for Kurapika’s chest.

Kurapika felt the dam of emotion break and the only thing he could feel was anger. Before the dirty man dared touch him again he reached out and grabbed his hand. For a brief moment the alpha thought he was complying to him before with his nen powered strength, he bent the man’s hand back to break his wrist.

The alpha screamed and fell to his knees while the other two stepped away in shock.

“Touch me again and I’ll break more than your hand!” He spat, eying the man’s crotch to get his point across. Without looking back Kurapika jumped onto his bus, taking the back entrance in fear that the driver might not let him on after seeing him break someone’s hand.

By the time he was settled in his seat at the back the bus was moving. Now that he had a moment to breathe the sadness and anger set in again.

Chrollo had really tricked him, and then the moment he was his mate he was asking him to go cook and be a proper omega, talking about 12 kids! It had all been a plot to trick him before going back to how they expected him to be in that first month of being with them. He couldn’t believe he had fallen for it!

Couldn’t believed he’d . . . . Fallen in love.

The tears came again, silent and endless as they soaked his cheeks and dropped onto his clenched fists. His shoulders shook and all he wanted in the world was just for someone to hug him.

Gon and Killua probably hated him for being so gullible and now they were being tracked so he couldn’t go find them. His only option was the one person that hadn’t gotten involved with the Phantom Troupe in the first place.

He missed that man, he had become something of a best friend in such a short amount of time. He
wanted to talk to him so badly so after hours on the bus he knew who he’d call, not to rescue him. He wanted to be alone for awhile, but just to talk. He needed someone to say he’d be alright.

Jumping off the bus, two cities over from where he’d run away from, he immediately moved to the phone booth. He used the last of his change and each ring he had the thought of just leaving. He’d just say he’d been stupid!

“Hello?” The voice startled Kurapika out of his thoughts and the happiness at hearing the man’s annoying voice was unexpected.

“Hello? Is anyone there?!” He called again when Kurapika didn’t say anything. “Listen, I will hang up!”

“Leorio. . .” Kurapika breathed as he began to cry happy tears.

“KURAPIKA?!” Leorio voice rose to a pitch that made him pull the phone away from his ear.

“Yes,” he cried as he began to sob over the phone. Unable to answer the man’s questions about his well-being. “Leorio, I messed up!”

It was the beginning of a very long conversation.
“It’s all a mess,” Kurapika explained into the phone, not sure where to start. “I mean they were exactly as I thought at first and then things changed and it seemed like things were getting better but it was all a lie!”

“What was all a lie?” Leorio demanded. “Context!”

Taking a deep breath even though he was still tearing up, Kurapika realized that Leorio didn’t know all that had happened. “When we were in York Shin-”

“Where did you go? You said we’d meet up but you never called and then Gon and Killua disappeared also!”

“The Phantom Troupe.”

That one phrase stopped Leorio’s tirade cold. A minute passed slowly as Kurapika waited for the inevitable questions.

“What did they do?”

“I-I made a plan with Hisoka…” Just the thought of the alpha caused Kurapika to shake slightly as he remembered his teeth on his neck, and Chrollo’s look, like he was about to lose something he valued more than anything. “We were going to try to take out the troupe, he wanted to fight the leader.” A fight Chrollo stated would never happen, even if Hisoka killed him if he marked Kurapika.

“Did he betray you?”

“No… yes. The troupe got wise of him, figured out what he was doing. He attempted to distract them by sending Gon and Killua their way.”

“WHAT?! Are they okay?”

“They called me and demanded a trade, my life for Gon’s, but I revealed myself to be an omega and they released both of them. They planned to sell me at first but then there was the book store and I spoke poorly of ‘Hero With A Thousand Faces’ to the leader and we started talking…”

“So you convinced them you were human and got them to let you go?” the doctor-to-be asked, his voice gentle and hopeful.

“No, he became convinced that I would make him a good mate.” The sound of air being sucked in was loud even over the phone. “Things changed… The troupe started being nice, like they cared. Gon and Killua tried several times to free me but were caught each time…”

“Did he forcefully mark you?” Leorio demanded, seeming to have accepted Kurapika being an omega very quick.

“No… He could have, especially when he caught the boys, but he never did. Chrollo… wanted me to agree. He…” Was ridiculous, goofy, smart, thoughtful. Images of the alpha in that dress and high heels during that shopping trip and the pink speedo at the onsen, just to see him laugh flooded
his mind. “He made me fall for him.”

Leorio was silent for a moment. “Then what?”

“Hisoka attempted to mark me. Chrollo knew that Hisoka wanted to fight him and swore that even if that clown killed him, he wouldn’t fight if he marked me, which caused Hisoka to release me. Then he let me go.”

“And you’re calling me when it sounds like you want to talk to him?”

Kurapika felt another tear roll down his cheek in that moment. “I asked him to be my mate when he let me go. Then…” Even in that moment, remembering a number of the mating gifts they had received from the troupe caused Kurapika to feel a rising wave of panic and anxiety. The troupe seemed to expect that he’d be pregnant soon and then Nobunaga had said those things and thrown that horrible collar at him.

“Kurapika!” Leorio’s voice grounded him in that moment and he focused on it, pushing aside the mounting emotions.

“It was a mistake, but I can’t take it back!”

“How was it a mistake? What happened after?”

“One of the troupe said that they’d planted trackers on Gon and Killua so they can make sure they don’t go near Hisoka again.”

“That doesn’t seem like a bad idea.”

“Then Chrollo asked me to cook brunch while he packed our things so we could go on a honeymoon.”

“Still doesn’t sound bad.”

Why was it that Leorio giving such assurances made it seem like he had overreacted? There hadn’t been pressure from the rest of the troupe, just several gifts that were meant for preparing for children, the rest had been things that Kurapika could admit that both he and Chrollo would enjoy or have use for. And Chrollo had said that the gifts meant for babies would be stored in Ryuuseigai until he was ready.

But 12 children?!

Then there was the collar! Why was that collar still around?! Nobunaga’s words came back to him and Kurapika shivered. But that was Nobunaga talking and he had always been nasty!

“Kurapika…”

“Some things were said after we mated,” Kurapika admitted.

“By this Chrollo guy?”

“No.”

Leorio sighed heavily. “I think that you just had a bit of a shock and someone scared you very badly. You needed some space to think and ground yourself. Where are you?”

Kurapika told him the name of the city and listened as Leorio pulled out a map then groaned
loudly.

“Wrong side of the continent! Okay, listen. You need to calm down first, so I want you to go to a hotel that has rooms that are free for Hunters. Stay there for the night. Then you might want to consider calling Chrollo, talk to him since it seems he’s willing to talk and listen.”

The omega blew out a breath as he considered this. “I don’t have his number.”

“You’re kidding?”

“It was in a phone they gave me, but I didn’t memorize it and I don’t have it!”

“Alright, go to a hotel then grab an airship tomorrow. Call me when you know when you’ll arrive. We’ll think of something.”

“Thanks.”

The payphone demanded more money in that moment and Kurapika said his goodbyes and hung up before turning his attention down the street. There were several hotels in this town, two of which claimed to have free rooms for Hunters. Luckily he had his license and he moved to the closer of the two hotels rapidly, eager to be out of the cold.

The receptionist was a beta male who seemed quite surprised when Kurapika approached alone. His eyebrows met his hairline when Kurapika set his license on the desk.

“I’d like to check into one of the Hunter rooms,” Kurapika explained as the man continued to stare at him for a long moment before his eyes shifted to Kurapika’s now marked neck then shifted behind him, obviously looking for an alpha.

“I’m sorry, but the owner of this license needs to be present. Your alpha should know better than to send you ahead with something this precious. In fact, I believe I’ll hold onto this until he arrives,” the man stated as his fingers attempted to close around the license only for Kurapika to snatch it faster than the man could see.

“This is MY license,” Kurapika snarled angrily.

The man blinked at him for a moment, thoroughly confused by Kurapika’s behavior then chuckled. “I don’t think your alpha gave that to you totally, it’s not a sweet or pretty piece of clothing- Hey! If your alpha sent you here, then they’ll expect you to wait here!” the receptionist yelled after Kurapika as he turned heel and marched out of the hotel.

Once back out in the cold again, Kurapika took a breath and tried to center himself. He wasn’t disguised as a beta anymore, people were going to anticipate that he was neither a Hunter nor independent. They would expect an obedient sex toy who was scared to be alone.

For a long moment Kurapika considered trying the other hotel, claiming that his mate was the Hunter who sent him ahead to get some sleep and see if the receptionist would be a bit more “understanding” of his situation but found he couldn’t stand the thought. Perhaps it was best just to get a ticket on an airship and sleep while inflight? He had no issue over waiting at the airport for a few hours for Leorio.

Taking a deep breath, Kurapika turned to begin walking to the airport when his shoulder was gently tapped. Turning, he found a pair of betas who were looking at him with concern in their eyes.
“Are you lost?” the woman asked automatically before nodding at the hotel. “We saw you come out so quickly, what hotel is your alpha staying in?”

Her tone indicated that she believed Kurapika to have the intellect of a child and it thoroughly annoyed him. “No.”

Turning, he marched up the street, ignoring how the woman attempted to follow him.

“Hey pretty thing!” a disgusting smelling alpha jeered at Kurapika as he passed him. “I know of a good place for you!” The man adjusted his pants in a suggestive manner and Kurapika glared sharply.

The entire way to the airport seemed to involve people either soliciting him, asking if he were lost, or one particularly nasty alpha offering him a bed in her whorehouse.

“You could live quite comfortably, maybe even have a child! You definitely won’t lack for customers, one may even decide to ‘keep’ you.”

Finally Kurapika lost the persistent alpha as he entered the airport and approached the ticketing area, license at the ready. The agent in charge of sales did a double take when she realized that the omega before her seemed intent to get a ticket.

“Umm… Can I help you?” she asked with uncertainty.

“I need a ticket to Rumo,” Kurapika replied as he slid the Hunter license to the woman.

Not even five minutes later, Kurapika was out of the building again, hot tears pricking his eyes. He’d been refused once again because no one believed that his license was actually his! For a long moment he considered calling Leorio but pushed that thought away. He’d disturbed his friend once tonight, he’d call him tomorrow to tell him what had happened and assure him that he’ll find a way to reach Rumo, even if he had to walk.

The sound of his empty stomach seemed a good indication that this was going to be a long, cold trip.

Chrollo hadn’t slept the night before, he couldn’t as he paced back and forth, waiting for someone to get a clue on Kurapika’s whereabouts. Shalnark was hacking into various security camera systems, checking for any sign of his while Machi checked various omega websites.

More than once, Chrollo glared at the web pages where alphas who seemed obsessed with omegas posted every time they sighted one. He didn’t like the idea of them posting either a picture or description of Kurapika on one of these sites as well as a score on how pretty he is.

As hours ticked by, despair was slowly replaced by anger as he thought about all that had happened. Had Kurapika tricked him? Made him fall in love just so he could hurt him? But would he involve the boys, even if that had been his intent? And why was the collar here?!

His pacing slowly drew the attention of the rest of the troupe, all of them sensing his growing irritation.

“There was a sighting in a neighboring city!” Machi called and half the room jumped to the computer. Included was a picture of Kurapika on a payphone, looking terribly upset. But even the observer called him “exquisite” and his ranking was at a solid 10/10 by the community.
Chrollo stared at the picture, fingers following the outline of his form. “He won’t be allowed to travel alone again for a long time,” he decided after a moment.

“Alone?” Shizuku looked thoughtful in that moment. “Where’s Nobunaga?”

Nobunaga… Chrollo goes rigid as he realizes that the alpha isn’t present. Did he go to search for Kurapika or-

Paku’s hand appeared over his own, her eyes staring hard at him. “I suspected he was to blame,” she admitted to him, causing Chrollo’s stomach to fall. “Nobunaga left immediately when you found Kurapika gone, looking guilty. He probably salvaged the collar and threatened Kurapika with it, in turn Kurapika had just been shocked when you said that you wanted 12 children. You both have a lot to discuss I think, and he seems to be upset as well.”

Chrollo’s eyes traveled back to the screen and he stared at Kurapika’s face. Upset, sorrowful.

Shalnark hacked the security feed from a bank then and found Kurapika, looking pale and upset as he spoke into the payphone. Not like he’d just had his revenge, but like he was hurting and disappointed.

“He made me fall for him.”

The sound was garbled but the words were understandable and Chrollo felt most of his anger melt away. But was Kurapika upset because of Nobunaga or at himself for falling for him? Kurapika admitted to falling for him, so this was real.

“Find Nobunaga,” he ordered after a long moment as the troupe nodded. “Paku, you and Shal shall find the boys and keep them safe. I’ll be searching for Kurap-”

A knock at the door caused all 11 heads to snap towards the door.

“Is it the boys?” Paku asked before Shal checked his phone and shook his head as Franklin stood and approached the door. He stepped aside a moment later, allowing a small omega child of indeterminable sex to enter the room.

“Is my brother, Killua, here?” the child asked immediately when he saw the entire troupe staring at him.

“He was the night before last, we’re about to go looking for them,” Pakunoda admitted. “Is something wrong?”

The omega stared at them for a moment then nodded shyly. “Mother told me to join Killua and Hisoka said that he was probably near you.”

“Hisoka?!” half of the members hissed.

“Yes, he and Illumi did something… bad. Mother is most displeased and doesn’t want Killua or me around as she sets them straight.”

Chrollo thought for a moment as he considered the child who he suspected was male. If this one was a Zoldyck as well… “Your mother is Lady Zoldyck I presume?” The boy nodded so Chrollo continued. “What exactly is she doing to Hisoka and Illumi?”

“I believe she is tearing off their ears and has stuffed them both into a torture chamber. She hasn’t done that to Illumi since he was quite young from what I’ve been told.”
The thought of Hisoka missing his ears and being tortured made most of them smile happily.

“Why?”

“Because Illumi made a rather strange choice in omega to share with Hisoka, it was like he was trying to mate Killua!”

The horror that sank into all the members of the troupe was summed up by a single word that was bellowed simultaneously by Paku, Phinks, Machi, Uvo, and Chrollo.

“What?!?”
Greetings from the Zoldyck’s and the demon omega

Chapter by Boozombie

Kurapika sighed as he moved into an abandoned building on the outskirts of the town. Getting there had been rough, it involved a lot of ducking and dodging alphas and well meaning betas. Well maybe not entirely well meaning if they just saw him as a lost puppy that needed help getting home.

The irony was not lost on Kurapika as he rummaged around for something to keep himself warm. Here he was, finally away from the big bad Phantom Troupe and he was still forced to stay inside disgusting abandoned dwellings! And apparently it was harder to find a decent one than he would have guessed, at one point he had even stumbled upon what could very well have been a Phantom base. He had thought about opening it, he knew how the troupe opened their Nen doors, but decided to keep moving. He wouldn’t put it past Shalnark to have motion activated cameras on the front doors of every base.

Kurapika found an old blanket and some newspaper that would at the very least keep him warm. His lip curled with disgust at the thought of that blanket touching his skin but it was winter and sacrifices for warmth would have to be made.

Making a small nest of newspaper in the darkest corner of the rotting building, Kurapika laid himself down and wrapped the worn smelly blanket around himself. It took a few hours for him to fall asleep, he was hyper aware of every sound in the darkness. Somehow he’d always felt safe in these types of places when the troupe had been there. Even if he could protect himself just fine, thank you very much.

It also took some time to fall asleep just because of the sheer weight of every problem with his escape plan that kept cropping up. And that was the biggest issue, this was less of an escape plan and more of a spur of the moment terrible decision. Even if he was right and it had all been some big trick, he should have planned better! He should have realized that no one would give a room to an omega even if they had a Hunter license!

The Hunter Association didn’t ban omegas from the test but no one believed one could pass it. Kurapika almost wanted to hurl the stupid piece of plastic away from him but he had worked so hard to get it! He couldn’t just throw it away. Maybe he could call Netero? He could do something about people not taking his card surely!

With that thought in mind Kurapika was finally able to drift off to sleep.
Kyo looked around with a touch of fear, the scary woman that had introduced herself as Kikyo, (but he should call her mother, her words not his) had dragged him to a large closet after shoving his alphas at a large and intimidating man. Her only words to the man had been to give them “the works” before changing her demeanor completely and beginning to chatter about what kind of clothes he’d look nice in. As he was far more comfortable in dresses, since he had worn them for most of his life, Kyo had been given what he believed to be called a kimono. It was white and gold with swirls of water color green. It was beautiful and looked like a shimmering holy pond within a forest, not to mention how soft and warm it was.

Next came the thickest pair of socks to ever touch his feet, all after a warm and soothing bath. Kyo has never felt so warm and comfortable in his rememberable life. It was like a dream, he had dreamed many times for items like this while in his cage. The other omegas had dreamed of it too, of a life outside of the white cold walls, but Kyo knew that dreams had to end and sooner or later someone would break this dream, proving that this was all just surface. Life was always hell for him wherever he went, Why should this place be different?

Now he was seated at a table, instructed to wait for Kikyo to return while she gathered some things and retrieved his alphas for dinner not six hours after arriving at this strange place.

Kyo held himself in the pose he’d been instructed to wait in most his life, head down, hands folded delicately in his lap, and his weight on his knees folded underneath him. The perfect picture of a submissive partner.

“Mother, please my ears are still bleeding.” Kyo almost flinched when he heard his normally monotonous alpha’s voice as the wooden door to the room slid open. Forcing himself to continue staring at the table like a good omega, Kyo almost clenched his fist in the effort to not look up in curiosity.

“Well they wouldn’t be bleeding if you hadn’t proven how stupid you are!” Came a new voice, this one older and full of wisdom hard won from a full life.

“Can we go back to the screeching chamber after dinner? That was fun~.” The sound of his second alpha’s voice did in fact make him flinch.

“Kyo?! Have you been sitting like that this entire time?” Kikyo was the first to call out to him and he was relieved, his neck had began to ache very badly in his current position. Finally moving, Kyo looked up to the woman to nod to her, he had stayed still the entire time like a good boy.
“Kyo honey, you don’t have to do that anymore. I only meant wait in the room,” Kikyo explained softly before turning back to glare at Hisoka for the little scoff he gave in his direction. His second alpha didn’t seem to like him much it seemed.

“Oh,” Kyo breathed softly as he hesitantly relaxed his pose and sat a little more comfortably. His head was spinning from the entire situation, this was not the life he had been prepared for.

“Hisoka, you both will be returning to the chamber once dinner is over.” The large man sat down at the head of the table with a rumble, he was giving his first alpha a very dark look, one that made Kyo shiver. But that could just be from all the alpha pheromones in the air, so far they were up too four alphas and two omegas. Would they all be sharing him? He didn’t know if he could handle that, he didn’t even know if he could handle the first two!

Kyo had so much he wanted to ask, about what he should expect, about what they planned to do with him considering no one seemed too happy about his presence but his training held him back from speaking and before he could gather his scattered courage, workers were filling the table with plates of food.

His mouth immediately watered at the sight before him, the facility didn’t have food like this! He’d only ever had unseasoned steamed vegetables, boiled chicken and rice, so he didn’t even know what to call everything that was set down on the table. That chicken looked roasted! Well he’d never seen one roasted before but he’d heard about it and that looked right, all kinds of aromas wafted off of it and he just knew it wouldn’t be as slimy as the chicken he knew. Some kind of thin green stuff with tiny glimmering red gems scattered on top with what he would guess was the legendary cheese!

There was even some kind of steamed bun thing that looked like a softer and nicer version of the stiff rolls they’d be rewarded with every once in a while.

Kyo wanted to dive into that table and just eat it all but decorum had been beaten into him, so out of habit he averted his eyes to the ground.

Kikyo sighed a bit when she saw the newest member of her family look away from the food in an obvious attempt to hide how excited he was. This would have to be corrected, a strong omega, not to mention human and member of the Zoldyck family, should always just take what they want.

“Kyo if you want food you have to take it,” she spoke with a strong voice, knowing he wouldn’t
benefit if she babies him.

Kyo felt out of place, he was never allowed to grab his own food before but now that Kikyo had spoken no one was eating, they were all just waiting for him to do something. Gulpimg a bit and shaking from the attention, Kyo reached out gingerly. He bumped his hand against the table and almost cursed himself for it, ever since the bonding his body had been strange. It didn’t feel right, like he was stronger? Shaking it off, he continued and took one of the large serving forks to place a few pieces of meat on his plate.

Suddenly he realized he probably should have served his alphas first! He was so stupid, why didn’t he think of that? That would have been the proper thing to do!

“I’m so s-sorry! I should have served you first, what would you like?” Kyo tried to correct his mistake. Moving to remove his piece and transfer it to one of his alphas plates only to find they didn’t have one.

“Kyo they are grown boys, they can feed themselves. Plus as part of their punishment they won’t be eating for the next week.” Kikyo growled threateningly at the two alphas.

“Aww~!” came the soft sigh from his red headed alpha before he turned to the other. “If I knew accompanying you home would be such a buzzkill I wouldn’t of come.” He frowned dramatically while leaning his full body weight on the dark haired alpha.

“I would have hunted you down regardless!” Kikyo slammed a hand down on the table, startling Kyo into moving again. He quickly finished filling his plate and plopped right back down with his back straight and a slight tremor in his spine. “Actions have consequences you perverted clown!”

“Not to mention the stain you have left on the Zoldyck name!” The large white haired man spoke for the first time.

Kyo didn’t know what to do with himself as the woman and the man shared an odd moment that seemed to promise pain for those that opposed them before his thought process was suddenly interrupted by a man in a suit suddenly approaching from the side.

“Gravy master Zoldyck?” The man asked and Kyo jumped, looking around for who he could be referring to, but he was staring right at him!
“Me?” He asked unsure.

“Yes master, would you like some gravy?” Kyo shifted his eyes down to an odd looking bowl with a lip like a teapot in the man’s hand. It held some kind of thick brown liquid that smelled delicious.

“Um... Yes?” He answered like a question and moved aside to allow the man to pour a small portion over the meat when he made it clear he wouldn’t allow Kyo to do it himself. It didn’t feel right for someone to wait on him! Calling him master? It was all wrong! This wasn’t what he expected! “Th-thank you.”

The man stepped back to stand with the other well dressed people lined up against the wall and Kyo turned back to the conversation that had been continuing on without him.

“The Zoldyck’s have always maintained a deep respect for omegas! Hundreds of years, even before the rest of the world turned their backs on them, we have remained loyal to our ways and now you just trampled on that!” The white haired man lectured the two alphas.

“Why am I being included in this?! I’m not your son, as far as I’m concerned I can do what I want!” The redhead hissed, losing his almost goofy/crazy demeanor in his annoyance.

“That was before you became bonded into this family!” The elderly alpha shouted at the alpha as he grabbed his ear and yanked him up so he was sitting up straight.

“I really think you are all overreacting,” The dark one spoke calmly.

“You have tarnished our name Illumi!” The elder yelled again and finally Kyo now knew the name of at least one of his alphas, he had been too upset before to catch it.

The door behind him was suddenly slammed open as a load and obnoxious voice suddenly rang out. “You started dinner without me?!”

“Milluki, please do not yell!” Kikyo yelled at the person behind him, out of habit Kyo curled his body to appear smaller.
“Oi! Killua when did you get ho- that isn’t Killua?” Kyo turned slightly to see a large man lumber into the room, staring at him with a piercing look. He was a beta, oh god no!

Kyo felt his breath falter and panic envelope him. Betas were bad, betas hurt you worse than alphas! Everyone that ever touched him sexually had been relatively gentle, but the betas couldn’t touch him that way so they just beat him. He didn’t want that beta anywhere near him!

“Kyo honey are you alright?” Kikyo asked kindly and Kyo tried to nod, tried to go back to his pose of subservience. “Oh that’s right we haven’t introduced everyone!” She determined as the problem and Kyo was glad for it. He didn’t want the beta to know how terrified he was of him.

“Those two disappointing alphas are Illumi, my eldest son, and Hisoka, the man he for some reason loves.” She pointed out his two alphas who didn’t even look at him, like they were mad at him. That made Kyo crouch into himself even more, he didn’t like his alphas being upset with him. “That is my equally disappointing son Milluki. He’s a beta and I wished so hard for him to be an omega!” She sighed.

“Mother!” Milluki cried out like a child at the woman. Kyo felt his eyes widen. She would have preferred him to be an omega? That wasn’t right, no one wanted omega children. No one...

“Never forget Kyo, mommy loves you, mommy wanted you.”

No, no one wanted an omega. He just couldn’t believe someone would want an omega over a beta.

“The Zoldyck have always had strong alphas and omegas, we haven’t had a beta in over a generation, it is a shame,” the elder agreed with Kikyo and Kyo could almost faint from all the confusion he felt.

Milluki sulked but at least he wasn’t staring at him anymore.

“Well anywho, you know me and this is my husband and mate Silva,” she gestured to the large white haired man who gave her a smile before turning that smile to Kyo. “And then we have my father-in-law Zeno.”

“Call me Grandpa.” The elder also gave him a smile and Kyo decided he wouldn’t lose anything by just giving a small smile back.
Maybe the dream won’t break?

Kurapika awoke to a startling flash of light and the sound of footsteps and whispers creeping up on him. For a moment he didn’t know where he was, for a moment he was just an 18-year-old teenager who didn’t like the dark and he was afraid. Then he sensed a hand reaching out for him and instinct kicked in.

Without a second thought to what he was doing, Kurapika grabbed the handle to his hidden swords and slashed out at whoever and whatever was trying to touch him. His eyes flashed red against the light of the camera, plunging the room into a strange scarlet light.

A scream rang out in the darkness and a wet spray sloshed over Kurapika’s face, metallic and sharp tasting on his tongue; blood.

“My hand! It cut off my hand!” A deep voice he didn’t recognize began to scream and Kurapika jumped up to a crouch, his sword out and ready in case anyone else tried to touch him. A bright light was running around and a different voice was yelling out behind the light.

“Oh shit! What the fuck!? It has red eyes!” Came the hysterical voice, having seen me cut off someone’s hand.

“Dude stop recording! Fuck! Get me out of here! That bitch! My hand!” The man who he apparently cut the hand off of sounded frantic and his words choppy.

“It was live! Holy shit, what the hell is wrong with that thing?!” The voices faded as the light backed off, the two he could now smell were alphas were running away. With the light gone, Kurapika could finally think and let his eyes adjust.

The abandoned building slowly came back into focus without that camera light blinding him. Nothing had changed except the now fresh blood splatter and the disembodied hand laying forgotten on the floor. Apparently he would have to find better hiding spots to sleep if he didn’t want to cut off more hands on this journey. It was chilling that they had been recording him, were they trying to rape him in his sleep? Well he guessed he had shown them to sneak up on omegas
and think they had the upper hand just because of their gender!

With an annoyed and irritated huff, he used the dirty blanket to wipe off his blade and returned it to its sheath hiding in his pants. He’d have to find a public bathroom or river to clean off the blood on his entire upper body and he wished for a new shirt but he didn’t have any money and he refused to steal. He wouldn’t sink to Chrollo’s level. . . Hopefully.

With the plan to clean up in mind and all possibility of getting back to sleep gone, Kurapika got moving again.

Chrollo has been staring at the picture of Kurapika in his skill hunter, a little known feature of the book that showed the nen master at the moment of stealing the Hatsu. He had been starting at it for about an hour as Phinks drove and Machi sat sewing something in the backseat. Kurapika’s last known location was about two cities away meaning it was a good six hour drive but with Phinks driving it would only be 4 hours. It still wasn’t enough. He couldn’t stop thinking about little Kalluto, if Hisoka was as disappointed in his omega as the boy had said then what was to stop him from hunting Kurapika again?

He didn’t think Hisoka particularly cared if he took and kept an omega that was marked or not, all that pervert cared about was if his victims could fight him in a way he found interesting.

Chrollo’s phone dinged and he was pulled away from tracing the outline of Kurapika’s face for the hundredth time. Maybe it was time to give the book a rest, look at the other photos of Kurapika he had. It was sad that he only realized when his mate was gone that they hadn’t ever taken a picture together, none, like they had never happened.

Looking to his phone he found that Shalnark had texted him a link with a small amount of text under it.

‘This is freaking comedy gold, looks like you were lucky not to be missing limbs! XD LOLZZZ!!’

Rolling his eyes at Shalnark, his beta’s texting always threw him for a loop.

He clicked on the link only because it was better than worrying his lip over matters he had no control over and began to watch.
“Hey there Maxi City! Dan Seaver’s here on another episode of omega hunt!” A young looking teenager he assumed was an alpha spoke to the camera. He was attractive but average and honestly he didn’t understand what he was watching. “A couple of hours ago someone posted an omega sighting of this cutie!” The teen held up his phone to show off a picture.

Chrollo stiffened as he found himself staring right at Kurapika, it was the phone booth picture that had been uploaded online! Anger rose inside of him at the thought of this teen literally stalking his mate.

“He’s in the city now and we’ve followed him to this abandoned warehouse! It’s like he wants an alpha to come and save him, so let’s get this started shall we?” The teen smiled at the camera and Chrollo growled, he watched as whoever manned the camera turned on some kind of night scope as they snuck into the building.

“I put Kurapika’s wallet in his clothes, why is he sleeping out in the cold?!” Machi gasped from behind him, apparently she had started watching the video as well at some point.

“I don’t know,” but really he did have an idea. He’d seen the way others treated Kurapika even when by his side, he probably couldn’t get a room anywhere. His poor sweet Kurapika was sleeping bundled up in what looked like newspaper and a greasy blanket! It made his heart hurt a bit.

Kurapika didn’t wake up as the alphas got close to him, commenting on how pretty he was and how fun, whatever ‘this’ was, was going going to be. The camera panned back over to the teen alpha and he gave the camera a grin as he popped the button in his jeans. “Time for another omega to see who owns these streets, you gotta pay the fine if you want to walk about alone,” he whispered and my eyes widened.

Why the hell would Shalnark say this was funny?! This was horrible! The camera focused back on the prone form of his mate and the guy called from off screen. “Okay now!”

A bright light flashed as the teen moved towards the startled Kurapika. He reached out, intent to grab the blonde by the hair. It happened so fast, one second Kurapika was blinking in confusion and the next his eyes were widened in fear. His hand whipped out, going so fast you could almost miss the blade in his hands.

He hadn’t even realized that Kurapika had taken the swords with him but in this moment he was grateful he did. Red flashed over the screen and Chrollo did chuckle a bit when he watched the teen’s hand go flying to the side as he began to scream. Kurapika was balanced on the balls of his
feet, crouched down with the sword out in a defensive stance. He hissed at the camera and considering the darkness of the building, it probably only looked like a bright light to him.

Kurapika's eyes were bright red and he looked like a feral animal that was ready to kill with blood on his face and his lips pulled back into a snarl.

“Oh shit! What the fuck?!” Came the voice of the camera man for the first time as the camera was jostled as he jumped back and panned the camera between the teen’s bleeding stump arm and Kurapika’s snarling beautiful face. “It has red eyes!” He shouted that like he had just seen proof of demons for the first time, his voice was hysterical.

“Dude stop recording! Fuck!” The new amputee cussed as he slipped in his own blood. “Get me out of here! That bitch! MY HAND!” The alpha teen screamed out as he tried to stumble to his friend.

The two screamed a bit more before managing to run out of the building. “Dude! We gotta get you to a hospital!” The cameraman grabbed his friend’s shoulder to help him stay standing, the camera forgotten in his hand.

“Yeah, yeah oh god it hurts!” The alpha teen suddenly became quiet before speaking hoarsely to his friend. “Point that camera at me again.”

“Oh-okay man,” the camera panned up to the pale alpha’s sweaty and bloodied face. He seemed to be clenching his teeth in pain as he panted and gasped.

“This is Dan Seaver’s and whatever that was, it wasn’t human.” He spoke like he had just seen the devil himself. “If you’re thinking of tracking that thing down: don’t. Stay away from the demon omega.” With that the video ended and Chrollo couldn’t believe what he had just witnessed. It was hard to even process mostly because it was easy to forget how terrifying a nen user can be to a regular joe. They’d been with Kurapika for almost four months and that entire time his nen had been restrained, it was even easier for Chrollo to forget how powerful Kurapika actually was.

Shalnark has sent him three more texts while he had watched the video.

“Kurapika’s freaking boss! Demon omega CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?! LMFAO!”
“But seriously I wonder why he didn’t make swords for his Hatsu! XD!! He’s obviously good with them, are his chains that good?”

“Hope you find him soon.”

Chrollo smiled a bit, looks like it only took Kurapika cutting off some pervert’s hand to finally get Shalnark’s approval. His mind caught on Shalnark’s comment about Kurapika’s chains, didn’t the blonde have a chain he used to find things?

Flipping his book open again, uncaring how quiet the car had become after the video, he immediately found Kurapika’s page and looked over the information again.

From a few memories of Kurapika that Pakunoda had shared, he knew the chains were almost unbelievably powerful. He summoned up the Dowsing chain and let it dangle over his lap.

“Point me to Kurapika.” He commanded the chain but was immediately surprised to find it only swung about four inches in the direction they were already driving and then swung back to the center and repeating. “Hmm.” That was not how it worked in Kurapika’s memory.

“What’s the problem?” Phinks asked as he notice was Chrollo was doing.

“It’s not as powerful for me.” He told the other alpha. Strange, Chrollo summoned up the Holy chain next just to test a few things and held up his hand where he knew he had a small cut that was too small to bother Machi about.

The chain very slowly wrapped around his arm and glowed dully but he didn’t heal instantly like how Uvogin described from his fight with Kurapika months ago. That confirmed the theory he had been slowly building in his head.

“What do you think the problem is?” Machi asked, interested now in the mystery but given another moment, she’d probably have it all figured out.

“That little sneak,” Chrollo chuckled fondly. “He put a condition on himself, it’s the only way he could have boosted the power that much.” It was with pride to realize his mate was so resourceful but also with a touch of fear. A power boost like this means he has to be putting something big on the line. Knowing Kurapika and how uncaring of his own life he is, it was probably his life.
They’d need to have a talk about that when he found him again that was for sure.

“Clever,” Machi mumbled before going back to sewing, worried just as much as Chrollo since she had also come to the same conclusion and more. If Kurapika was willing to put his life in the line for some power boost in his Hatsu, then how much will he risk to avoid them?

They needed to find him fast, before he puts himself in danger.
Gon groaned loudly as he finally sat down, Killua silent beside him. Ever since leaving the headquarters for the Spiders, they had been moving non stop. Killua had insisted on it, declaring it was one thing for the Spiders to lock them in a room and leave and quite another for them to be running from the group.

It had made sense at the time, but after days of not seeing the group, Gon felt it was perfectly fine for them to rest!

“Want some pizza?” Gon asked his friend as both of their stomachs grumbled, they hadn’t eaten since the dinner that the Spiders had forced them to eat.

Killua wasn’t sure what he wanted, especially now that they had stopped moving. While running he’d been able to keep his head clear, now everything came right back to him. Hisoka had betrayed them and attempted to mark Kurapika and the troupe leader had essentially offered his life to save their friend from that horrible fate.

Then there was the moment Kurapika had asked the man to be his mate! Right when he’d said that they could leave! To say he was confused didn’t even begin to cover this situation! No, not confused, he was certain he knew what had happened. Kurapika had been with the troupe for months, had traded so many freedoms in return for their safety and the troupe seemed to be treating him well… Stockholm syndrome?

“Hey, Killua?” Gon’s voice cut through Killua’s silent contemplation. “Think Kurapika’s okay?”

As much as Killua wanted to be reassuring, he didn’t think he could be in that moment. None of them were currently okay! Kurapika was mated to the man who ordered the death of his people and their pack…

It was perfectly understandable why the troupe had switched gears with them when Kurapika was marked: their little pack was being absorbed by the Phantom Troupe! They had functioned thus far because they were four Hunter or Hunters-to-be, two older betas, an alpha, and an omega. That dynamic hadn’t shifted in his mind even when Kurapika was outed as an omega, but to the rest of the world it made a lot of difference. Kurapika had been the responsible and powerful one in their group, he was respected even by alphas when they believed him a beta.

The moment it was known that Kurapika was an omega, people would not acknowledge him any longer. That left Gon and Leorio as potential leaders to their pack which was fine by the standards of most. The Phantom troupe didn’t fall into that category. Leorio was old enough but not powerful enough in the eyes of the troupe. Gon, though on the same level as the troupe leader as an alpha, was still a kid and not strong enough to oppose them yet. Taking Kurapika, the only one that could fight them, meant either taking their pack or abandoning them.

Apparently the troupe didn’t abandon those they considered their own.

“Is there a way to… Undo mating?” Gon asked as he finally stood, both of them moving toward several buildings, one of which the aroma of pizza wafted out of.

Once again Killua was silent. He’d been spoken to more than once by his mother about taking his time, knowing he had made the right choice in regards to his mate. Marking made an omega
permanently bound to that alpha, the venom of the alpha ensured that. It was why so many historical texts from before the shift, when omegas were considered people, wrote about how omegas would be courted for years! Alphas gave them gifts to get their attention and to show they understood their interests and likes. Alphas that forcefully marked omegas were treated and viewed as scum, some were even put to death if the omega was mistreated!

That had all changed when one particular lord about 200 years ago, a lecherous man who realized that if he controlled all of the omegas, he controlled the alphas. He had made his troupes sweep across his lands, seizing all omegas and relocating them to the first “facility”. It had been little more than a brothel where soldiers loyal to their lord could have any omega they wanted, even ones that had already mated.

The practice had swept across the land as other lords and kings had tried to increase their own armaments, a few provinces held out but were eventually overrun by the troupes of other lands. Alphas that were already mated swore fealty to try to get their mates back but few ever saw them again. Having an omega soon became a commodity, a sign of rank, wealth, and power. Parents feared having an omega, knowing they would be taken.

It was at that time that his great-great-grandfather had decided to walk the path of the assassin and had taken the first contract of the Zoldycks, murdering the lord that had dared to seize his mate and the mates of the people in his village.

At no point in any of the books that he’d read had he come across any indication of a way to undo a mating. If there was a way, then the purges on omega literature had probably wiped it out.

“I’ll call my grandfather, see if he knows anything,” he finally promised, relaxing slightly when Gon brightened. If there was a way to undo mating, it was probably recorded somewhere in the large library of the Zoldyck estate.

“If who knows what?” a voice asked right as they reached the door of the pizza parlour, a hand landing on one of the shoulders of the boys. Both froze as they recognized the voice. The speaker steered them into the restaurant and to a booth, directing one to either side of the table.

Neither needed to look to see that it was the blonde beta woman from the troupe, but they still did as she slipped into the booth next to Killua as the other blonde beta male with the strange smile seated himself next to Gon.

“Kalluto?!” Killua gasped when his younger brother settled elegantly in the booth on the other side of the woman. “What are you doing here?!?”

“Mother ordered me to come join you,” his brother replied as he gently smoothed out his kimono, their little table already attracting the attention of a number of the patrons of the restaurant.

Killua stared at him. “As in bring me home?”

“No, she wants us both to stay away from the mansion.”

“Do you even know how worried we’ve been, especially knowing that Hisoka might be running about?” the woman demanded as she grabbed a menu from the end of the table.

“He’s unlikely to be running anywhere for several months. Mother was most displeased and will likely hunt him down if he escapes.”

Then grinning beta next to Gon offered a small laugh. “How about we get dinner then determine our destination? I’m very interested to try this Greed Island game and I think we’ll all be able to
play!"

Gon and Killua felt their insides shrink at the suggestion. Biscuit would likely still be in the game and they had promised that they’d be back weeks ago!

“Fine, dinner and batters. These two don’t look like they’ve showered since they ran off.”

Killua resisted the urge to bang his head against the table, he had been very right to believe that the troupe was absorbing their pack! God, they’d have to be sure to never mention Leorio or they might drag him out of med school by his nose hairs to make the old man actually train his nen!

“Why would Hisoka come after us?” Gon suddenly asked as a waitress approached their table.

“Water all around, lemonade for the kids, and I believe we both want some beer?” Pakunoda glanced at Shalnark at the end of her sentence. In turn, Shalnark had turned slightly to Gon, his smile dropping a bit. “Actually, make that a double shot of whiskey for both of us.”

The waitress nodded before scuttling away rapidly when she saw the irritated expression on Paku’s face.

“Not you in particular, I think it’s Illumi we’re more…” Shalnark’s voice trailed off, unsure of what to say for once and Pakunoda didn’t blame him even as she pulled out her phone.

Now Killua fixed his gaze on Kalluto as Pakunoda handed him the menu with a quick “Choose your favorite toppings.” Gon followed his gaze and the boy turned his head to stare at the pair, mostly at his brother.

“What happened?” Killua demanded.

“Illumi mated an omega that looks exactly like you,” the boy stated after a moment. “He and Hisoka were planning to share him and he seemed… Strange. Quiet. He didn’t talk and stared at the ground.”

With the exception of Gon, the rest of the occupants of the table were still. It was not new news to Shalnark and Paku, but they were still utterly disgusted by the implications. Killua on the other hand turned grey and green simultaneously as his hair stood on end. Gon was instantly concerned and reached out to grab his friend’s hand, squeezing it slightly.

“Hisoka didn’t seem to like the omega, but mother was very angry at both of them. Do you like olives, brother?”

It made too much sense for the troupe to claim to have been worried about them being near Hisoka, especially hearing that Illumi had fancied him! Killua was still stock still when the waitress returned with their drinks and took their order for a large pizza, not even capable of opposing when red peppers were included.

“Hello, Franklin?”

Even Pakunoda’s voice sounded distant to him right then.

“Yes, it seems the pack has a fourth member.”

Both Gon and Killua jumped as they realized who the woman was talking about.

“His name is Leorio Paladiknight, a beta. He seems to be a medical student though he’s also a
licensed Hunter, but he has utterly ignored training his nen.”

“Tell him I’ll text his location in a few hours!” Shalnark called with a grin still firmly planted on his face.

Kyo was still utterly confused with his situation. Last night he’d been guided to a large room with a large bed. He already knew by just the smell that this was the room of one of his alphas, the dark-haired one named Illumi, but he wasn’t sure what to do. He’d received no instructions!

Shouldn’t he wait for his alphas to come? Likely on the bed and undressed so they could have their way as they pleased when they arrived? That was what he’d been led to believe at the facility when he’d been trained.

Shivering as he disrobed, Kyo settled on the bed to await the arrival of his alphas. He’d grown cold rather rapidly and had wrapped one of the blankets around his form. Somehow, sleep had crept up on him and he was startled awake as a knock sounded from the door.

“Master Zoldyck?” a voice called in. “Are you awake Master Zoldyck?”

Kyo glanced around the room but was surprised to find he was alone. Did they believe one of his alphas was in here? Or was this a continuation of last night, when one of the well-dressed people at dinner had called him “Master Zoldyck” as well? Surely they didn’t mean him! An omega being a ‘Master’? That seemed preposterous at best!

“Hey hey! Settle down there!” the aged voice from the previous night called as Kyo slowly rose from the bed and grabbed the kimono he had worn the previous day. “I’ll get him, intending to have breakfast and get to know him anyway.”

“Of course Master Zoldyck,” the voice stated formally. “Shall I assist the young Master in dressing for the day? Lady Kikyo sent this for him.”

“Sure, fine by me.”

The door opened as Kyo attempted to close the kimono around himself and the well-dressed beta entered, clucking and immediately disapproving of him “attempting to wear the same thing two days in a row!” Kyo had only worn the dress for a few hours, it was clean! Then, as if things couldn’t get even more bizarre, the well-dressed person rolled in a large rack of clothing.

“The butlers in charge of tailoring made these for you specifically at the request of Lady Kikyo,” the person stated as he set up the clothing before Kyo. “Please, pick something that you would like to wear for the day.”

Kyo felt like he had been glob-smacked as he stared at the selection before him. All of these… were for him?! This… this wasn’t right!

“If you are not seeing something pleasing, then I’m certain we can find you something you would enjoy.”

Omegas didn’t have things! Their Masters or mates were the ones who decided on everything, including the clothes they wore! Kyo stared at the selection, the fact that he was allowed to choose once again, that these clothes were ‘his’ made the room feel sideways. The expectant look from the beta that kept calling him “Master” made his skin feel hot and tight. WHAT WAS GOING ON?!!?
The dream wasn’t ending, so maybe he needed to see how far this sweetness went? Understand the limits?

Kyo glanced over the selection before his hand reached out hesitantly to touch one of the dresses before noticing the pants that hung next to it. PANTS?! Those were meant for alphas and betas, he’d been told that his entire life!

But his hand slipped to the pants instead, tugging at them slightly and the well-dressed person took that as an indication of his choice.

There was no yelling about being inappropriate, no slapping, no demands that he accept a dress, nothing. Rather he was hustled to the bathroom were the other person was quick to deliver his new toothbrush and allowed him to do his business before helping him dress in the pants and top that went with them. Kyo’s head was spinning long before he found himself in the hall, being guided by the elderly alpha from the night before who insisted that he call him ‘grandpa’.

The old alpha seemed friendly as they moved down the hall towards where he had had breakfast set up. He was talking about his mate, who was apparently still alive, his son, and grandchildren, the oldest being one of his alphas.

“Illumi seemed so promising, so respectful. It seems he forgot why the Zoldyck family began our-“

BOOM!

The hall rocked alarmingly as Kyo scrambled to the wall. The old man didn’t even budge.

“Huh, might have hope for you. Most people scream and hit the floor when they hear and feel an explosion.” The compliment was strange on Kyo’s ears and he found himself fighting a blush as the old man pulled a small phone from his pocket. “Kikyo? Yeah, I’m near him- But Kikyo! Alright…”

Kikyo was the name of the omega woman who seemed to be in charge. What…?

“Apparently Milluki set off an experimental explosive device and Kikyo is busy with Illumi and Hisoka. She wants me to reprimand him because that explosion got the clown excited in an inappropriate manner.”

An alpha was taking orders from an omega?!? Kyo wasn’t sure what to make of this… An alternate dimension perhaps? One where omegas reigned?

Milluki, the very fat beta, was looking horribly unpleasant that morning as he sat in front a large array of computers, tools scattered and the far wall of his room was partially collapsed, the edges blackened. A number of the well-dressed people were already there, cleaning up the mess. Several were attempting to drag the beta from his computers as well, arguing that the area needed to be cleaned.

At just a glance, Kyo agreed with them.

The beta didn’t. He had anchored his hands on the heavy desk that the computers were on and was yelling, determined not to budge even as bags, bottles, and crumbs rained down on him.

“That’s enough for right now,” Zeno called, clapping his hands sharply and the well-dressed people immediately stood at attention, including the ones that were attempting to clean up the debris. “I would like to have a word with my grandson about setting off explosives inside. Again.”

The people nodded and began to move towards the exit, Kyo uncertain whether he’d been
dismissed or not. He decided to stay since the old man hadn’t said to leave, it seemed he was right when he wasn’t given the order to leave even after the other people had left.

“Milluki, what have we told you before? Since you were seven in fact, we’ve been telling you that if you wanted to test explosives or other destructive items that it be done outside! This applies to you as well Kyo!”

Kyo’s head snapped toward the man as his jaw unhinged. Was this man telling him to set off explosives?!

“What did you make this time anyway?” the old man continued, staring hard at Milluki.

The beta barely blinked. “I worked on upgrading that explosive I made that can fit on a mosquito. It finally has some actual power! Though that could have been because it accidentally flew into some tanks…”

“Tanks of what?”

“Where is that other bomb I made!” the beta yelled as he turned back to his computers. “You’d see this is genius if you just look at it! Those butlers didn’t think it was trash, did they?”

Zeno went rigid and turned to sharply, charging up the stairs to the door and into the hallway beyond. His feet were absolutely silent on the stone floors, and then Kyo found he was alone with the beta who regarded him with narrow eyes. He looked mean.

“You… play with explosives? Ha!” the beta sneered as he turned his attention back to his computers, but he seemed unable to concentrate. “Go somewhere else!”

“Wh-where?” Kyo barely managed to whisper even though this seemed more normal: an irritated beta yelling at him.

“I don’t know! Where were you going with grandpa Zeno?”

Kyo swallowed in reflex. “He wanted me to have breakfast with him.”

“Huh…” If possible, the beta’s eyes narrowed further, as though he were even more upset at the news. “So, met everyone yet?”

“I-I think.”

The beta’s fingers tapped at the keys on his computer and a picture of a room popped up on the screen. Kyo had been in cages long enough to know when he saw one. This one was a luxurious cage, filled with stuffed animals and toys, but a cage nonetheless. In the center of the cage sat a young girl, probably an omega. Why was there an omega in a cage here?!

“Met her yet?” the beta asked with a nasty smirk. “We don’t go down to see her often.”

“No…” The people here had seemed so nice, like this was all a dream. Why was there an omega in a cage?!

“That’s Alluka, I think she’d like to meet you!”

Kyo asked no further questions, he followed the lumbering beta quietly and quickly through the halls and down a number of stairs to what Kyo believed was the basement. Soon they were in front of a thick metal door. A cage. Kyo squeezed his eyes shut for a moment, aware of how lonely
certain cages can be, and this omega was likely very lonely down here.

The beta grinned and Kyo hoped that this was what it had been so upset about, that he was free and this omega was locked up. He didn’t realize his mistake until after he had stepped into the room and the door was swiftly shut behind him.

This girl was no omega.

WHEN DID ALPHAS GET PUT INTO CAGES?!?

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Kurapika moved down the street quietly, glancing at the various restaurants and food carts. He’d only had 300 jenny on him when he’d been caught by the troupe which had been returned along with his wallet. That money had been used up between the bus ticket he had purchased and the phone call to Leorio, leaving him without even enough to buy a small piece of fruit or a roll. He refused to entertain even the thought of stealing.

As he glanced in the windows of diners eating lavish or simple meals, his stomach gurgled emptily and his mouth watered.

A door opening in a side alley drew his attention and Kurapika watched as a woman in a stained apron entered the alley with a bag of trash in hand. She tossed it carelessly into a can before returning to the kitchen where she seemed to work.

It had been several days since he’d run out on the troupe and he hadn’t eaten during that time. This seemed as good of an answer as any.

Turning into the alley, Kurapika moved to the can and pulled at the plastic of the bag, tearing it easily before he began to sort through what was available. Some items were still warm and felt welcoming in the cold.

Just as his fingers closed around a small leftover section of a panini, the door to the kitchen swung open and Kurapika jumped back as the beta woman came out with another bag of trash.

“Oh!” she exclaimed as she dropped the bag in surprise. Her eyes took in the sight of the small morsel in Kurapika’s hand before traveling to the can. “Oh.”

Kurapika took a step back, hating the pity he was receiving as she stared at his neck and then took in his rough appearance.

“Are you lost?”

It was the same question that he’d received so many times before and Kurapika narrowed his eyes as he stepped back.

“Guess not. But would you like something to eat?” the beta asked and Kurapika stopped as his stomach betrayed him loudly. “Wait right here.”

The thought of something warm to eat kept Kurapika rooted to his spot as the beta moved back into the kitchen. He heard the woman talking to someone and then there was some clacking of platters and a sound of assent. Rustling happened and then the woman was back with a paper bag that smelled divine to Kurapika. He could also feel it was warm when he accepted it.

“Take care,” the beta told him before grabbing the trash bag she had abandoned, setting it into the
Kurapika felt a small smile tug at his lips. It seemed there were some people who could be decent without being demeaning. He moved to the end of the alley quickly and continued down the street at a fast pace, keeping the warm bag under his coat until he found another empty looking building.

There was a sandwich in the bag, still warm from the press and loaded with chicken, peppers, artichokes, and pesto. Kurapika didn’t think he’d ever eaten anything as delicious as that single sandwich and then he glanced into the bag by chance.

A 500 jenny coin was at the bottom of the bag. It wasn’t much, would maybe buy him several apples for the road, but it was more than generous. Kurapika felt guilty for not thanking the woman as he picked up the coin.
Kyo had to take a breath, refocus himself after realizing he had made a few false conclusions about the situation. First of all the little girl wasn’t a trapped omega but a trapped alpha, which was weird and wrong on a number of points, but she was still a child.

She was no more than ten and stuck in this cage! How long had she been here? Who was taking care of her? Had anyone even hugged her recently?!

Childcare had been drummed into him since his first heat. Once he had to carry around a ten pound weight in his arms for three weeks because he dropped his practice doll in class. At the age of 14 he was put in charge of one of the younger omegas in the facility. The girl in front of him made him think of the small girl he used to play with.

The small girl looked up at him with big light blue eyes that suddenly filled with such excitement that he instantly fell in love. This was his alpha's little sister yes? Then he guessed she was now also his sister, and unlike the rest of the confounding family Kyo could handle a child.

“BROTHER!” She yelled as she jumped into his arms, Kyo was unprepared for that. The girl obviously thought him to be someone else because if she had been in this cage, how could she possibly know he had been mated by her brother? The girl shifted a bit in his arms and he carefully wrapped his arms around her small body to hold her up. “Brother why do you smell . . . different?” Out of reflex he patted her head so she’d look up at him and tried to give a reassuring smile.

“I’m sorry but I don’t think I’m the person you think I am.” He spoke softly, his confidence in the situation higher than it had been in the last 24 hours. He was comfortable around children, even an alpha child was still a child.

“Oh, I thought Killua had come back for me.” The girl frowned and retreated from his embrace and he let her. It was understandable she’d grow uncomfortable when she realized that he wasn’t actually her brother although he’d like to be, he already liked her.

“I’m sorry that I’m not this Killua,” he crouched down to look her in the eye, green against blue. He’d heard the name Killua before, the beta had called him that at first as well. “But you looked lonely and I wanted to know if you wanted to play a game?”
The small girl’s eyes sparkled a bit and she began to nod before she stopped and hunched her shoulders slightly before asking. “But- are you sure? You aren’t afraid?”

Kyo tilted his head to the side a bit in confusion. “Afraid of what?” He asked gently.

She frowned more and fidgeted, playing with her fingernails. “Of me...” She whispered so softly it was obvious this was some deep wound she had held onto for so long.

“Silly girl,” he gave a small laugh to her, smiling a little wider to hopefully show her how much he wanted to connect with her, and reached forward to gently pat her head again. “I already think you’re the sweetest thing!”

She rewarded him a happy gasp with wide eyes, like she just couldn’t believe anyone would ever say that to her. She took his hand when he moved to pull away and just simply held it. There was a desperation in the way she held his hand, like she was afraid he would disappear if she let go.

“Let’s play!” She grinned and began to pull him towards a large toy chest stuck in the corner.

Milluki watched with a twisted grin, soon he’d get to watch the stupid Killua look-alike die horribly! All the little brat needed to do was introduce himself and then Alluka would start making her requests, Milluki was the last one to wish. It had been for a super computer so her requests should be something large and cruel. It was going to be hilarious to watch the omega get crushed and pulverized, he could even pretend it was actually Killua. A nice little stress relief after a hard day.

“Milluki! There you are.” Milluki flinched when his grandfather's voice picked up behind him. Shit, now he was going to be in trouble because of that stupid omega! It’s not like anyone actually cared about him anyway, he was a normal human with no proper training. The only reason they were all doting on him was because he looked like the favorite Killua. “Do you know where Kyo went?”

Zeno had thought the boy would take the opportunity to get to know Milluki when he left. The boy was quite smart and if he wasn’t so lazy he could he so much more even if he’s a beta. But Kyo didn’t seem to have come with Milluki. When he found him in Alluka’s observatory he had hoped Milluki was warning Kyo about the danger of Alluka.

“He. . Um. . . He isn’t here.” Zeno’s eyes sharpened at the guilty undertone of his voice.
“Milluki I will only ask once more, where is Kyo?” He demanded with a hard glare at his grandson.

Milluki gulped but knew he couldn’t lie to his grandfather. His game was over. “Kyo wanted to meet Alluka, he’s in there.” He pointed to the mirror that showed off Alluka’s room.

Zeno’s eyes widened and he jumped forward to look into the room to see little Kyo just playing checkers and giggling with a monster! Kyo was in danger and he didn’t even realize it!

“Does it know his name yet?” He asked hastily, resisting the urge to call for the boy over the speaker. They needed to get him out of there before the thing learned his name!

“He didn’t introduce himself so no.” Milluki grumbled, upset that his game had been ruined before he got any enjoyment out of it.

“I’m calling Kikyo.” Zeno grabbed out his cellphone and Milluki jumped up.

“No! Don’t tell mother, she’ll put me in the chamber!” Kyo was mother’s newest favorite pet it seemed and Milluki just knew she’d punish him greatly for putting Kyo in the cage with Alluka!

“DO YOU EVEN UNDERSTAND ANYTHING?!” Zeno suddenly yelled at the pudgy boy. “Kyo is mated to Illumi! If that thing kills him it could transfer to Illumi as well!”

Milluki felt his eyes widen, how did he miss that? He thought he was just some omega that mother had taken a liking to because he looked like Killua and his name sounded like a shortened version of her name.

“Well no one told me that!” Milluki yelled in frustration. Can’t they just tell him to come out? Zeno was talking quickly on the phone, most likely with his mother. Turning to the microphone for the speakers in the room Milluki called out to the omega. “Omega! Come out of there now!” He commanded.

Kyo jumped when the beta’s voice called at a loud volume through the room, telling him to leave the little girl alone again. He almost jumped up to follow the orders but the falling of the girl’s face
stopped him, she was afraid he’d now leave obviously. Looking around the lovely cage the girl was kept isolated in, he took in the happy flowers painted on the walls and all the material things meant to keep her happy and complacent but the loneliness and depression was suffocating. For a moment Kyo felt a rare bout of courage and straightened his shoulders to glare at the speakers.

“No.” He spoke cleanly and made his move on the checkerboard and gave the girl a little smile as he giggled a bit, high from the exhilaration of disobeying an order. “King me.”

The girl’s eyes got big and she looked ready to cry when it became obvious that he wasn’t going to leave her. The easy conversation between them continued, mostly what her favorite colors were and telling him about her different toys and her favorite games to play by herself.

“Hey let me see your hands, I’ll show you the game the other omegas and I used to play,” he said sweetly. As the girl put her hands out with her palms up, he hovered his hands over her’s so they were close but not touching.

“What do I do?” She giggled up at him and Kyo’s already melted heart was just gushing at the seams. She was absurdly adorable and just so sweet. Why was she locked up like this?

“The object of the game is to be the one on top, how you do that when you are on the bottom is to touch the top of my hand, and I’ll try to dodge you okay?” He explained hoping she’d get it, he didn’t want to be the one to start on the bottom because if he slapped her hand without her knowing the object of the game, he might ruin the connection he had forged with her.

“Okay!” It happened so fast, he didn’t even see her hand move but suddenly his hands stung and his palms were hitting the floor from the force she used.

“Ow!” He cried out and her happy smile fell again as he rubbed his hands. Snapping into action Kyo put out his hands again but this time with his palms up. “Good one! You win that round.” He made sure to show her that he was okay and hadn’t done anything wrong. “Now it’s my turn!”

The girl blushed and put her small hands over his. “So would you tell me about this Killua? I keep hearing about him.”

“Killua is my big brother! He looks a lot like you do, but his eyes are blue.”
“Like yours?” He asked as he tried to slap her hand but she easily pulled her hands back faster than he could. She had great reflexes.

“Yeah, but his are bluer and he’s the best big brother in the world! He always played with me and was always there when I got hurt and he’s always nice to Nanika!” She pulled her hands back again before he could hit them.

“He sounds really nice, I wish I could meet him.” He thought for a moment on how much he didn’t know his alphas and how well she potentially did. “Would you tell me about Illumi?”

That did make her a little sad. “Illumi is my eldest brother and... He isn’t- I never really... Why do you want to know about him?” She asked with a pout.

“Well, as of a few days ago him and another marked me so... I guess I just wanted to know more about him.” He told her as he quickly moved one hand and brought it down on top of hers so it became sandwiched between both of his. She giggled suddenly and put her hands out, wanting to continue.

“So you’re my brother now?!” She asked with toothy smile.

“Yes I guess.” He grinned back happily.

Kikyo ran into Alluka’s observatory with Illumi and Hisoka behind her. She didn’t have time to care that they had followed her after the alarming news that little Kyo was in the monster’s cage. That child wasn’t hers anymore, something else had taken him over, but Kyo was so cute! She wouldn’t lose him when she just got him!

“Milluki how could you?!” Kikyo yelled at her beta son as she looked into the room to see Kyo and the thing that took over her child playing a game, sitting cross legged together with their heads close.

“I’m happy you're my brother now!” The thing smiled with a happy giggle. Kikyo was appalled! They needed to get Kyo out of there but none of them could go in since that thing knew all of their names!

“Did you tell him to come out?!”
“Of course we did! He said no!”

“Oh great, this is a hell of a time for him to grow a backbone!” She growled as the worst thing that could have happened began to happen at the worst time.

“So I believe Milluki called you Alluka? Is that your name?”

“Yes!” The thing grinned at him as Kyo put a hand out.

“Well it’s nice to meet you Alluka, my name is Kyo.” He looked happier and more confident than he’d been since arriving, it was a shame he was about to die.

Illumi felt actual worry in his gut. First of all, he didn’t want to see someone who looked so much like Killua die so horribly! Second, it was possible that Alluka could kill him and Hisoka as well. And third: that was in fact his mate. He didn’t want him to die!

“Kyo! Give me your brain!” Everyone froze and Illumi was prepared to run in there and grab up Kyo and race him out but Hisoka looked interested in what was happening so he held himself back.

Kyo tilted his head a bit at the strange request from his newest little sister, but kids were weird so he smiled and replied. “Okay sure,”

“Give me!” She reached out with her hands and Kyo laughed.

“Sorry Alluka but I need my brain to live.” She pouted and asked for his brain again.

“Okay how about this? My brain is yours so I will always think of you, but it needs to stay in my head. That okay with you?” Alluka tilted her head to think about it before grinning.

“Okay!”
In the observation room everyone stood in stunned silence. That had actually worked?

“Kyo! Give me your heart!” This time everyone was a little less afraid, they were more intrigued with what Kyo was going to do. Zeno had already gotten a glimpse of Kyo’s potential but this was a bit startling. How did none of them never think of bargaining with the monster like that? Or maybe it was just because he looked like Killua? The thing always seemed to have a soft spot for Killua.

“Alluka smiled and they continued with their game for awhile before the last request was issued.

“Kyo! Give me your love!”

Kyo laughed at that and patted the girl’s head. “Silly girl! I already love you most!” Kyo’s eyes widened when Alluka’s eyes suddenly turned black and her scent changed just slightly, not anything dramatic, but enough for him to know this was something, someone different.

The blank faced Alluka didn’t talk, just stared at him expectedly.

“You get to make a wish,” Kikyo’s voice called from the speaker and Kyo looked around a bit concerned, it looked like the girl needed to go to the hospital! “That is the monster that is possessing Alluka, you fulfilled its requests so it will now grant you a wish,” she explained.

Kyo didn’t like them calling Alluka an ‘it’, especially because she was an alpha. Alphas were suppose to be treated better than this!

“Well then, Alluka…” He felt out of place and he didn’t know exactly what kind of wish to give. What kind of power would a little girl have?

It struck Illumi that Kyo could potentially ask to be unmarked and he doubted his mother would allow him and Hisoka to remark the boy. They’d have to find another omega!

“Can he really ask for anything?” Hisoka asked with a happy sparkle in his eyes, having come to the same conclusion.
“Yes,” Zeno told them afraid he was about to lose his newest grandchild. It may have happened in the wrong way, but he liked Kyo and he had looked forward to training him. He could have been a great seductress and used poison!

“Well the only thing I want is your friendship!” No one had expected that, it wasn’t often that they met people that didn’t only think of themselves.

“‘Kay.”

“So Pakunoda found out about him from the boys, you sure you want me to go to his school?” Franklin spoke to Chrollo over the phone, he had been on the hunting party for Nobunaga but it looks like he’ll be separating from Uvogin, Feitan, and Shizuku to go find the other member of Kurapika’s pack. His concern about the matter is the oldest member of the pack was located at an Ivy League school and he was... well Franklin didn’t exactly fit in at a medical school.

“Yes, head out immediately.”

He said his goodbyes to the others, the three would find the man quickly wherever he had run off to and Chrollo was a fair leader. He’d punish him and then they could all move on and be a family again.

The trip to the beta’s school wasn’t very long and ended up being only a few hours away by train. People stared at him and mothers pulled their children to their sides protectively. He knew he was a scary man, and that was a normally very useful but now he was going to be the first to introduce the merger of their packs. He’d be the face of the troupe to this man and that was going to be hard when he was so incredibly freaky looking.

The students made a path for him as he marched through the campus, a picture of the beta he was looking for on his phone. He was an older man from the looks of the photo, but he knew nothing of his personality or if he had any idea about what had been happening with his pack. He wanted to believe the man would be expecting him since the boys would have told him, right?

Leorio was in the library, he didn’t have any classes today but most everyone else was in a class. He couldn’t study, Kurapika hadn’t shown up and he was worried. Everytime his phone rang he prayed in was the blonde.
Kurapika had sounded incredibly distraught over the phone and he had known about Kurapika being an omega and being captured by the troupe since Yorknew, but Kurapika hadn’t known that so he’d just let him vent. He never would have guessed four months ago that the entire situation would end with Kurapika in love with a criminal but he was happy for him and wanted to help him straighten out this situation. The alpha that had said those things to him seemed like an asshole, and from the stories of the Phantom Troupe leader, it didn’t seem like he was in agreement with that jerk!

God, he seriously couldn’t study like this! He was out of his mind with worry! His friend was out there with a broken heart that didn’t need to be broken and he was probably upset and maybe had cried a few times! He knew that the world was a hard place for a lone omega, he had a few friends as a child that were omegas and one day he woke up and they were just gone. All except one particular friend that had been undesirable because of a disease that rampaged through his town as a child. Bottom line: he was very concerned for Kurapika’s well-being.

Huffing, Leorio decided he needed a different book. He would study something easier, something that he could maybe grasp while all of this was happening. He had a few other concerns running through his head as well. With their unofficial leader now an omega and mated, where did that leave their pack? Normally he or Gon would be in charge but... He didn’t really want to be the leader of the pack and Gon was just much too young, plus he was just a little too erratic to be the alpha in charge.

But then from what he heard about the boys, it didn’t seem like the troupe leader was just going to steal Kurapika and leave them a broken pack. Honestly, he expected the Phantom Troupe to be knocking on his door any day now, either to see if he knows where Kurapika was, tell him he was no longer needed in his packs’ lives, or to welcome him to theirs. He didn’t know which was more disturbing.

As he passed a few dark shelves he noticed a shadow lurking. Like most things out of a nightmare, you don’t notice it at first, it was just a feeling before Leorio paused. He thought of that large shadow he’d seen and tried to think on what it could be but couldn’t and so with a creeping feeling running up his spine he turned back.

It hadn’t been a very nice day before this moment, but as the lurking shadow came back into view lightening decided to strike, sending a flash of light through the windows and illuminating the scars and deformed muscles of the axe murderer that apparently got into the school.

Leorio let out an embarrassing scream and bolted.
“Wait!” The person called but a murderer would be calling for him to stop running. It didn’t occur to Leorio that he was in fact a licensed Hunter and knew the basics of nen, he should be able to take on most assailants. The inhuman mass of man continued to run after him, shouting things but Leorio wasn’t going to listen to a man chasing him!

Franklin knew this would happen, this was why he’d been so sceptical about why Chrollo would send him! The beta he was looking for was now screaming bloody murder and running from him, it didn’t help that the weather had taken a turn for the worst and a thunderstorm had broken a few minutes ago and now his first meeting with the beta of Kurapika’s pack would always be remembered as the opening to a horror movie. Wonderful.

“Please stop running!”

“Oh that’s what you would like!” The man yelled back, actually moving pretty fast but unfortunately with his last comment, he had looked back to check see where he was and hadn’t watched where he was going and so slammed right into a bookshelf.

Franklin winced because he had tried to warn the man but it would seem he wasn’t even listening.

Leorio’s head smacked the floor and he could have cursed himself, now he was gonna be murdered! Oh and great the shelf was going to crush him!

Franklin gasped and jumped forward to stop the shelf from crushing his kinda-newest-pack member.

“Oh god please don’t kill me!” The man screamed and Franklin couldn’t help it, he laughed, the beta was just slightly ridiculous. He reminded him of a simpler time with the troupe, one where they had joked around much more and there was less blood and murder. Not that he was complaining about the blood and murder, he really didn’t mind it.

“Why the hell are you laughing?! Don’t laugh as you kill me!” The man screamed at him as he backed up against the now righted shelf.

“Aren’t you supposed to be a nen user?” He guffawed loudly as he looked down at the middle aged man in a tacky blue suit begging for his life yet still manage to look annoyed by it. It was incredible. “Old men shouldn’t beg for their lives man.”
“HEY! I am in my early twenties!” The man yelled and Franklin was actually surprised, he looked like he was at least thirty but as he looked closer he realized if the ma-boy, 20’s means he’s just a boy, would lose the suit he’d actually look his age. “And if you aren’t a psycho, why are you creeping in hallways! You scared the crap out of me!” Franklin almost laughed again simply because this trip had ended up so alarmingly surprising. This beta was not who he pictured as Kurapika’s pack mate. Seriously not one bit! Kurapika was just so reserved!

“I’m sorry about that, I tried to tell them I was the worst person to come see you today,” he explained as he offered a hand to the fellow beta to help him up.

“Wait, you were looking for me?” Leorio questioned as he look a step back. He found the scarred man very alarming and didn’t like someone who looked like that coming to look for him.

“Oh yes that’s right you don’t know,” he smacked a fist down on his open palm and smiled to Leorio before introducing himself properly. “My name is Franklin and I’m here from the Phantom Tro-“

“ARK!” Leorio jumped back, ramming into the shelf again as his greatest fear came true. The Phantom Troupe had come for him! “SO YOU ARE HERE TO KILL ME!” He screamed. Oh god, he shouldn’t have slackened on his nen training!

“No! Just listen!” Franklin was getting a little fed up with this. The man was now in the fighting pose, ready to go but it was obvious how terrified he was.

“If you aren’t here to kill me then you want information on Kurapika huh?! Well I’m not telling you where he is!” Leorio screamed at the man, the troupe had far reaching resources, he wouldn’t put it past them to know that the omega had called him. “You guys really hurt him!”

“You know where he is?!”

“What? Ah damnit- NO! I have no idea!” Leorio tried to correct his mistake. But the damage had been done. The troupe member was looking at him with narrowed eyes and so Leorio, caring for his own life, told the truth. “He called me up and explained what happened, seemed real distressed, more than I’ve ever actually heard from him before. I told him to check himself into a hotel and then fly here but he never showed!” The worry that flooded the scarred man’s eyes made Leorio feel a little better but also quite upset for Kurapika.
“Hey, he can take care of himself. He’s the smartest of all four of us and he doesn’t need you guys babying him!” Leorio snapped at the other beta.

“So you aren’t the least bit worried for a new omega, fleshly marked and with no experience in how the world will discriminate him?” Franklin asked with a raise of his brow, he was worried and he understood how strong Kurapika was but still!

“I am worried but Kurapika can handle himself, just like he did when you all made him an orphan!”

“God damn do you pull any punches?” Franklin hunched his shoulders, upset at the reminder of the sin they had committed against Kurapika.

“Not when it concerns my friends.” Leorio glared at the man, slowly becoming less afraid as the situation revealed itself to not be a mission to off him.

“Good, you’ll make a good addition to the pack then.” Franklin nodded happily, the man wasn’t very confident and he could barely tell he was a nen user but he stood up for his friends and treated Kurapika right. That all that mattered.

“What?” Leorio gasped even though he had been expecting this, it was the least likely outcome but he had thought it possible. “Do you guys really have time for this when Kurapika thinks you’ve all tricked him!?”

“What do you mean?” Franklin asked, feeling stupid for not realizing that if Kurapika really had called this man, then he knew why Kurapika had ran off! “What do you know?!”

“You really haven’t guessed it?!” Leorio growled, from what Kurapika told him the asshole alpha had been the cause of literally every problem! “That stupid alpha THREW A COLLAR at Kurapika and told him ‘he should look the part’ now that he’s ‘submitted’” Leorio spat each word in disgust, alphas like him were what was wrong with the world!

“Nobunaga?! That bastard!”

“Yeah! Kurapika thought your leader had been tricking him the entire time and, in a very Kurapika-like fashion, ran away! I tried to get him to just call him and talk it out but he didn’t bring his
“Wait, you tried to get him to come home?” He asked softly, the boys had just immediately assumed Stockholm syndrome and yet this man had one conversation with Kurapika and was with them on this!

“Well not go back but at least call.” Leorio snapped before growing frustrated. “And why wouldn’t I?” Kurapika had sounded like he’d actually been happy for a bit there, that’s all any of them really wanted for him.

“Well the boys thought we had beat him into submission or something,” Franklin admitted slowly, not wanting to get the med student thinking about it and possibly change his mind.

“That’s ridiculous, Kurapika showed no classic signs of abuse or manipulation in the way he spoke, he was just confused and the twelve children thing had already knocked him off balance, your leader should really think before he speaks.” Leorio brushed off even the idea of Kurapika having been abused, maybe in the beginning you could argue neglect and he was pissed about that but otherwise Kurapika mental state seemed just a little confused and distraught. He had a destructive personality so it wasn’t a big wonder why he’d run away after something like that when his place in the pack was so new and undetermined. He told this all to Franklin.

“Hold on a second I have to make a call.” Franklin put up a finger and flipped open his phone to call Chrollo with all this intel! Coming here had been a good plan.

As the phone rang he turned back to the man who was trying to remain grouchy and officially decided he wasn’t hopeless and they could train him up so they wouldn’t have to worry about his safety.

“Hey you’re bleeding!” Leorio suddenly yelled when he noticed a spot of blood on the man’s shoulder. Franklin raised an eyebrow, it was just a little slice on the shoulder and wasn’t that bad.

“Yeah I’ll have someone look at it,” he began but whispered the last part softly. “And she’ll charge me an arm and a leg.”

“You’re in a medical school, I’m training to be a doctor! Come on, I’ll fix you up at my apartment.” Leorio turned sharply and began to march the man towards the exit of the library.
The phone rang again as Franklin followed the beta mostly because he’d rather tell him the plans to help him through school and train him in his nen.

“It’s okay I don’t have money to pay for any medical attention right now.” Franklin told the beta as Chrollo finally picked up so he ignored the man’s squawking in favor of explaining the situation to Chrollo. The explanation was quick since they had already guessed that Nobunaga had something to do with all of this. Chrollo asked for the details of everything he found out be messaged reported later since they had just gotten to the city Kurapika should be in and he wanted to search.

“Alright, hope you find him.” Franklin snapped the phone shut.

“What the hell do you mean you can’t afford it?! I’m taking care of it, you don’t have to pay!” Leorio griped as he grabbed up his things and showed the man the short walk through the rain to his apartment that was just off campus. It was only ten minutes if they ran but they still got soaked.

“You really won’t charge me?” Franklin asked sceptically.

“No, someday I hope to not charge anyone, I can just help the people that need it.” Leorio smiled a bit at the thought of how close his dream was.

“Well then. . . thank you.” Franklin stepped into the man’s home. Maybe once he was a full fledged doctor the troupe would have a viable option other than Machi for medical care. “Now then let’s talk about nen, do you know your type yet?” He raised a brow as he looked around for a wine glass.

Leorio deflated and looked down a little in shame, he did not know yet. “No. What does it matter to you?” He crosses his arms in annoyance at the reminder that he was so far behind his friends.

“Because now I’m training you, so let’s find out.”
It had been a week since Kurapika had called Leorio and attempted to use his Hunter license for the first time. He’d received the sandwich and 500 jenny coin four days ago.

Kurapika had done his best to make that small amount of money last, buying a single apple a day as he continued to move, soon leaving the city behind again as he moved quickly over country roads.

Today he was in a small town and had bought yet another apple, probably the last he’d be able to buy, and the Kuruta was deeply considering whether he should try dumpster diving again. There was a bakery in this small town and he was certain that he would be able to grab a couple of rolls or loaves of bread when the man tossed out his old bread that day.

Each day he’d attempted to use his Hunter license, hoping for a bed or at least a shower. Each time he was denied, once a receptionist had even attempted to suggest renting a bed at a brothel. Even shelters for the homeless refused to allow him to stay for a single night or use of their showers.

That had to be the worst part of all of this: the sheer number of alphas or betas that believed they were ‘helping’ him by pointing out brothels or offering to introduce him to an alpha who was looking for an omega if he wasn’t being propositioned outright! Several had approached him in earlier days as well only to pull back immediately, murmuring ‘demon omega’ as they stumbled away.

Moving down the street, pulling his jacket close to try to ward off the cold, Kurapika knew he was beginning to look rather dirty and rough around the edges. His clothes were definitely not pristine white anymore. His hair felt greasy and he was aware that his face and hands were covered in dirt and grease. Scrubbing with snow didn’t do much to help and very few businesses were willing to allow him to use their bathroom.

Kurapika wondered if there was something wrong with his license after a moment. Maybe he needed some sort of mark on the license? Or was there something wrong with his license directly? He’d become desperate for a room two days ago and had attempted to get a room, claiming the license belonged to his alpha who had sent him ahead to rest. The receptionist at that hotel was understanding and had tried to help him, but had apologized since the license wasn’t accepted by the Hunter registry on their computer.

For a moment, Kurapika wondered if he should try to borrow a phone from the next beta that offered him help and call the Hunter Association. He didn’t know if anyone would allow him to borrow a phone at this point, but it might be his only option left.

As though the universe were agreeing with his decision, when Kurapika turned the next corner onto the side street by the bakery he almost ran into a payphone.

The device almost seemed to stare at Kurapika as he regarded the thing, barely believing that he could find one in such a small town. Reaching into his pocket, he withdrew the last few coins he had, only worth about 50 jenny. Enough for one phone call.

Leorio’s words came back to him and his heart ached horribly. He wanted to talk to Chrollo, he wanted to hear his voice right then and talk through what had happened. He wanted to be assured
that they could discuss things, come to a mutual decision and the collar that Nobunaga had thrown at him was just that one alpha being his normal self. Unfortunately, he didn’t know Chrollo’s number.

So what did that leave him with in regards to his options? Call Leorio again? Even if the other could get him a ticket on an airship or a train, Kurapika didn’t think that agents would let him check in without being accompanied by an alpha or a beta.

Maybe the answer was to call the Hunter Association? If they fixed whatever was wrong with his license, then he could get a hotel room as well as a means to reach Leorio until they could think of something. He could also call his likely very worried friend with some good news once he was in a hotel room.

Kurapika’s hand shook as he grabbed the receiver and dropped in the few coins he had before punching in the number listed on his card for contacting the main offices of Chairman Netero.

The line rang twice before it was picked up.

“Hello, this is Pariston Hill, Vice-chairman of the Hunter Association.”

The hope bubbling is Kurapika’s stomach caused him to swallow thickly before he asked, “Is Chairman Netero around?”

“Sorry, but I’m afraid he’s out today,” the chipper voice replied. “Is your business urgent?”

“Something seems to be wrong with my Hunter license, it’s not being accepted when it’s run on the registry by any place I have visited for over a week now!”

“That doesn’t sound like a matter that the chairman needs to be involved in, what’s your name and registration number?”

“Kurapika Kuruta, number-”

“Ah! I know which one you are! It came to our attention several months ago that you’re an omega when you were almost sold in an online auction! The Chairman was actually attempting to raise the money to purchase your freedom.”

He shouldn’t have been surprised that his plight was already known by the Hunter Association, Kurapika realized he should have expected it. But it was surprising to know that Netero himself had tried to rescue him in his own way!

“Unfortunately, when we checked your paperwork, it was discovered that you lied about your gender when you signed up to take the exam. That invalidates your license and last week the Review Board voted that it would not be restored.”

“I said I was male!”

“And you are, a male omega that is. It was decided that just saying ‘male’ gives the illusion that you are a beta, which you are not. Netero argued otherwise, demanding that we realize you did write your outward gender and didn’t ask for secondary gender, but the decision stood.”

Kurapika felt colder than he ever remembered feeling in his life.

“So I’m afraid that you have now been informed that your license is no longer valid. You will need to return the license at your earliest convenience. We are also aware of your plight, namely that you
seem to have escaped the Phantom Troupe but not before being marked.”

“ILLumi Zoldyck didn’t participate in the exam as himself!”

“But he did fill out the paperwork appropriately, disclosing his actual name and gender. Now, the Review Board also knows about you being the last of the Kuruta. Though our plan would have been better if you were an alpha or beta, we believe we have an excellent offer for you.”

“You just told me that my license isn’t any good!”

“But we can offer you protection! This offer will get you off of the streets and into a wonderful home that will be provided by the Hunter Association. What we ask in return is for you to provide 10 children, preferably with different fathers, to give a running start at reviving the Kuruta clan!”

Kurapika ears were ringing and the day seemed darker and colder than ever as this atrociously cheerful sounding person continued to speak.

“Seeing as how you can no longer be a Hunter and are an omega that has been forcefully marked, your options really are limited to accepting this gene—”

Kurapika slammed the phone down, cutting off the call as he stood by the phone box and shivered, tears pricking his eyes. His dreams… Everything had just been torn out from under him in that one call. Thoughts and plans to become a Knowledge Hunter, to research cultures that the world forgot, all of it reduced to dust in just minutes!

The blonde’s arms wrapped around himself for comfort, trying to hold himself together. He wanted Chrollo more than ever at that point, wanted…

“So I want you to consider what it is you really want. You could be an Archaeological Hunter, a Book Hunter, go to college, open an antique shop, anything you want. Find something that will make you happy. And know I’ll support whatever you choose.”

Kurapika wanted that to be true more than anything in that moment! Wanted to know for certain that Chrollo had been sincere, but he already knew he had been. He just wanted it to be confirmed again.

He didn’t visit the back of the bakery that day. Thoroughly disheartened and distressed, Kurapika started running, determined to get as far from that payphone as he could. He didn’t stop until night fell and he realized that he was over two towns over. It seemed that the only way he would be able to get to Leorio now would be if he walked the entire way.

Gon and Killua could honestly say that they were NOT looking forward to returning to Greed Island. But no amount of stalling was delaying it. It had taken the two troupe members they’d been caught by only a few days to secure a console and they were currently standing over aforementioned console.

“So Gon will enter first,” the male beta named Shalnark stated as he prepared to enter the game. Pakunoda was finishing one last equipment check, ensuring they had supplies for at least a week. “I’ll enter after Gon, Kalluto will be after me, then Paku and finally Killua!”

The two Spiders had determined the order that they believed would be best simply because it made either of the two older boys less likely to run. Gon simply wouldn’t leave Killua behind and the same was true of the other, and they were less likely to be able on one side or the other with both
adults there. Kalluto being added to the mix just made it even less likely that Killua would attempt to take off.

Gon stared at the console as Shalnark nudged him towards it before looking towards Killua and sighing. The other boy that had joined them, Kalluto, didn’t see anything wrong with the Spiders but he was Killua’s little brother so they couldn’t abandon him.

Raising his hands, Gon flexed his nen and with a WHOOSH, found himself being yanked into the console and transported through the strange space. Because he was a returning player, he didn’t have to go through the introduction again and was allowed to just enter the game.

The young Enhancer sat down once out of the tower and scowled at the surrounding landscape. Maybe they’d get lucky and Biscuit had already left?

“Wow, this is rather… Impressive,” Shalnark stated as he descended the stairs a few minutes later. “Whoever made this definitely put effort into it.” Now the Manipulator walked to stand next to Gon then knelt and grabbed a rock. It took a moment and then the rock turned into a card.

“Hmm… According to that girl, once I call ‘Gain’ then this will turn back into a rock and cannot be turned back into a card.”

Gon stared at the man for a long moment. “There are spell cards here as well that other players can use to try to steal other cards. We used cards like that to try to keep our valuable ones safe.”

“So I’m guessing that those cards steal random ones?” When he received a nod from Gon, the Spider seemed to consider the system further. “I see… This’ll be more fun than I thought! But something seems off about all of this.”

Gon refused to speak again as Kalluto joined them, then Pakunoda arrived. She glanced at him to ensure he was alright then checked on Kalluto and their supplies.

“Hey! Someone’s coming this way!”

Shalnark’s call caused Gon to look up and right as someone landed near the tower, having obviously used a spell card to reach this place. He gulped anxiously when he saw who it was.

“There you are! Finally came back?!” Biscuit yelled as she stomped towards Gon, looking quite upset.

“Uh… Biscuit-san-”

“Biscuit-chama!” the part-time teacher insisted. “You were supposed to be back weeks ago! You were gone so long that your original accounts were deleted! Good thing we hadn’t started collecting the cards yet or you would have lost them all too! Now where’s Killua?”

Both Shalnark and Paku stared at the woman that stood before a very nervous Gon. Thus far she seemed almost as weird as Hisoka.

“And don’t tell me that the two of you got mixed up with that perverted clown! I made it clear that you weren’t to go near him!”

Pakunoda felt a tug on her lips as the woman proved to have very good judgement with that one sentence. “I’m afraid that is just one of the things they’ve been up to,” she informed the woman right as Killua began trooping down the stairs. He froze in horror at the sight of the very pink lolita woman as she gained a rather evil look.
“Do tell, what have they been up to?” Biscuit asked as she set her face into a pleasant look as she turned to face Pakunoda.

“We were trying to rescue our friend!” Gon cut in automatically.

“From the Phantom troupe, where he was being courted by the leader of the troupe,” Pakunoda added. “They fell straight into the base one time and that was not the time they got tricked. The time they got tricked, they teamed up with that pervert, whose name is Hisoka, and kicked down the front door of the base of the troupe, challenging them outright before the clown dove into the base and attempted to kidnap and forcefully mate their friend.”

Biscuit didn’t yell or even look upset, it made her even more terrifying for Gon and Killua as she nodded. “And their friend?”

“Agreed to mate the troupe leader, who in turn asked us to watch the kids only for them to run away. Not long after, we received some distressing news that Hisoka and his alpha partner mated an omega that looks exactly like Killua. That partner also happens to be his older brother.”

Now Biscuit was beginning to look a bit upset. “So that pervert that was following them around during tryouts, who I told these two to stay away from, was not only teamed up with, but is now mated to someone who looks like him?!?” she demanded, pointing towards Killua.

“It was an uncanny resemblance,” Kalluto admitted as he stared at the woman.

Biscuit sighed again before declaring, “Book!” and snatching a card from the pages.

“Is that a magic spell?!” Shalnark demanded excitedly as he took a large step forward.

“Accompany on! To the wastelands!” Was Biscuits response before the card was consumed in light, a light that expanded around the small group.

Shalnark was practically jumping in excitement when they landed while Pakunoda seemed more sedate in her response. Kalluto looked confused while Gon and Killua looked thoroughly panicked and tried to run only to be caught and stopped by Pakunoda.

“Both of you are going to be severely punished!” Biscuit declared, finally dropping her calm look to glare at Gon and Killua. “Give me 5000 push-ups, sit-ups, squats, and jumping jacks! EACH!”

“But-”

“NOW!”

Paku blinked as both boys attempted to drop and start the push-ups. She had been trying to get the pair to mind her for days now! It seemed she had much to learn from this woman as well.

“So you’re with the Phantom troupe?” Biscuit asked as the two women focused on each other.

“Yes.” No denying it, she was in fact quite proud of the fact.

“Why’d you bring the boys back?”

Pakunoda glanced at Kalluto and decided there was no danger. “Since the one who mated our leader was the leader and strongest of their pack, we decided to absorb them into our own. This one came to us with the news about what happened about a day later.” She indicated Kalluto.

“So their friend-?”
“Admitted that he views the boys as the cubs he didn’t think he’d get to have. Our leader accepted them.”

Biscuit nodded sagely with a look of pride. Her students were truly turning into gems for even the leader of the Phantom troupe to acknowledge and take in the boys! But it seemed that there was going to be a third student joining the lessons.

Looking towards Kalluto, Biscuit felt a wave of excitement as she realized that the troupe at the very least didn’t seem to think poorly of omegas. And she would have the opportunity to train two very promising omega children!!!

“Let’s start the training with a three-way match to determine your skills,” she declared after a moment of consideration before looking towards Gon and Killua. “Well? Finish your first bit of punishment after the match! The three of you will fight until you either knock each other out or I call for a stop. The winner doesn’t have to do 2000 push-ups, in addition to the ones I’ve already assigned!”

Both Gon and Killua were up and ready in the time it took to draw a breath, Kalluto looking more than a bit confused only for both of the older boys to take a bound at him, starting the match.

Pakunoda watched for a moment as the boys obeyed without question before turning to study the small woman. “I believe I have much to learn from you as well.”

Chrollo had decided that when he caught up to Kurapika, it would be best to talk to him alone. Thus, he had separated from Machi and Phinks the day before. Phinks had seemed more than a little happy to get to join in the hunt for Nobunaga while Machi had been slightly less enthusiastic.

“Talk to him and listen,” she had stated plainly before heading to the train station.

Chrollo had every intent to do just that. He had received the call from Franklin about what Nobunaga had said/done, but he wanted to hear it from Kurapika. Let him know that he would listen to and believe him.

As he pulled the car over for gas, he summoned Kurapika’s chains and checked the Dowsing Chain yet again. Once again, it indicated the direction he’d been heading in.

Kurapika was a Conjurer, that meant he was thoughtful. He liked to have a plan. He wasn’t moving randomly, Chrollo was certain of that, and if he wanted to catch up to his mate, then he should anticipate where he was headed.

Thus far, Kurapika had been headed northwest since the second day after running away. What was in that direction? What could-

Glancing at his phone, Chrollo realized he knew the answer: the last pack member! The one he’d sent Franklin to! He had reported that the man had been in touch with Kurapika, had suggested him calling Chrollo but he didn’t know Chrollo’s number! In case he called, Chrollo had made it clear that they were to pass his number on to Kurapika if he called again!

Kurapika had to be heading in his direction because he didn’t have anyone else to turn to!

Settling into the car, Chrollo started the engine then jumped out again when he realized that he had forgotten to put the gas hose back! Kurapika would have been laughing. Or rolling his eyes with one of his smiles.
Embarrassment and sick intentions.

Chapter by Boozombie

Leorio growled in his throat, his brain hurt and his body was exhausted.

“Come on! You have to keep up the picture of the ball in your mind!” Franklin yelled at him, his ball must be wobbling again. The scarred man had him maintaining a ball of nen ten feet behind him while he studied. Everytime it drifted closer or the sides became a little less than smooth the beta yelled at him. Anytime his concentration slipped from his studying he was lectured about the importance of multiple tasking for a nen user and a doctor.

Franklin nodded in satisfaction, the ball smoothed out again. It was dumb luck that Leorio ended up being an Emitter, he had no idea how to go about training anyone from another nen class but he could handle a budding Emitter. He was also proud to be the one to start training the student, once he was trained up in nen and medical practice, the Phantom Troupe would be in a much better place.

Very soon they will be needing a real doctor, what with Machi and Kurapika on the fast track to starting families and having kids.

“Okay time for flash cards, if you get them all right then we can break for lunch!” He grinned when the man groaned. Franklin had to give his props to Kurapikas little group, all of them were pretty talented. The boys auras were incredibly impressive, Leorio was learning pretty quick, and from what Uvogin had said, Kurapika learned and mastered nen in just six months! They were all incredible, it’s like them and the troupe were meant to be.

“Fine fine continue your torture!” Leorio growled, annoyed that the troupe member ended up being such a task master. He didn’t even have time to spare a thought for Kurapika’s well being, everytime he tried to ask the man just said that his ‘danchou’ was handling it.

“Hey picture the ball! The sides need to remain smooth!” Franklin growled when the ball of nen started to look more like a square.

Franklin pulled out a large stack of flashcards he threatened a fellow student for, apparently the ones he had were no good because he had made them.

“Okay let's see here. . .” Franklin pulled out the first card as he moved to situate himself so he
could watch Leorio’s nen ball and make sure he was keeping conversation. “What is the term for
the bodily function that maintains the body's normal state?”

Leorio didn’t even have to think about that one. “Metabolism!” He grinned as his left eye twitched
at the effort it took to keep up the ball of nen. The man knew he had never used his nen before but
he was cutting Leorio no breaks.

“Alright good! Onto the next one!”

Leorio almost felt downtrodden by the sheer size of that stack of flashcards. It would be hours
before that were through with them all!

It was after twenty questions that Franklin finally announced the last question before he could take
a break. Leorio was almost panting from the effort it took to keep his concentration on two things
at once, his freaking brain hurt!

“Which cells in the blood do not have a nucleus?” He read off the card.

“Erythrocyte.” He mumbled through his exhaustion.

“Fantastic! You only missed two, so let’s have lunch!” Franklin grinned at the sweating and
panting man, he was still able to keep up the ball of nen regardless!

Franklin had prepared Leorio a large buffet of brain foods, from a spinach and walnut salad with a
side soup of lentil to a batch of pork chops. The beta was practically salivating over the delicacies,
even if it was all mostly dinner dishes and not lunch. He hadn’t eaten like this in long time.

“You are a god!” He cried out when he was handed a heaping plate of steaming food.

“Well I’ve had more practice than normal lately, What with teaching Kurapika to cook,” Franklin
preened under the praise.

“I still can’t believe you actually taught him to cook, honestly none of us were very good at it!”
Leorio laughed just thinking about the Hunter exam where none of them thought to even season
“Kurapika started a few fires in the beginning but once he knew what he was doing he was really good at it.” Franklin piled up a plate for himself right as his phone began to ring.

“Well I hope to try out his food soon.” Leorio said before shoving a large bite of meat into his mouth as Franklin smiled faintly as he took the call.

“Yeah? . . . Uh huh. . . Sounds like a good plan. . . Okay I’ll make you a plate.” The scarred beta spoke into the phone, nodding his head along as he placed his plate to the side and started to make another plate one handed.

“Who was that?” Leorio asked as the man fixed an extra plate dutifully. “Is someone else coming over?”

“Yes,” was his only response as Franklin opened up the door to let someone in, holding the plate out for whoever was coming into Leorio’s apartment. A black haired alpha stood in the doorway and Leorio almost jumped back from the man. He’d never smelled the pheromones of such a strong alpha before nor seen someone so intimidating. Franklin was scary, but this man looked like the personification of death come for vengeance. “Here you are danchou,” Franklin grinned as the man walked in with the confidence his status allotted him, accepting the plate with a nod and Leorio’s eyes widened to a comical size. Danchou. . . This was Kurapika’s mate!

The leader of the flipping Phantom Troupe was standing in his shabby run down studio apartment like it was normal, setting down his things and making himself comfortable!

“Hey! Isn’t he suppose to be looking for Kurapika?!” He gasped once his brain finally started working again.

The ravenette looked at him with a blank face, so composed that Leorio couldn’t believe Kurapika and him would get along well enough for him to fall in love! What did they do, sit for hours just staring at each other blank faced without talking?

“I am,” he spoke in a deep voice and his black eyes made Leorio feel like the man was bashing open his head and ripping out his every secret. Leorio gulped at the intensity of the alpha. “He’s headed here, so I decided the best way to find him would be to just wait here.”
Leorio narrowed his eyes, his protective instincts rearing up and consuming the instincts that told him to yield to this man. So far no one had been around to give him a talking to about hurting his best friend and kinda-sorta unofficial pack leader. Leorio was definitely the papa bear of the group and it was time to show it! As the man sat himself at the table to eat, acting like he didn’t have a care in the world, Leorio stood up and slammed his hands down on the table.

“HOW ARE YOU ABLE TO EAT?” He glared down his nose at the alpha, appearing as strong as he could even though he was shaking in his shoes. “Kurapika is sleeping in abandoned buildings and being harassed and you’re just going to sit here and wait for him?!”

“You do not have any idea about my relationship with Kurapika!” Chrollo snarled back. He was barely managing to keep a cool facade! But he had to keep up his act, he was meeting a member of Kurapika’s pack, his family, for the first time and he needed to make a good impression!

“YOU’RE DAMN RIGHT I DON’T!” He banged his fist on the table while Franklin looked between them, a bit concerned where this was going. He was just beginning to like the man and he could very well die soon. “But if you ever, AND I MEAN EVER, hurt him again I will be the first person to knock you one! Do you understand me!!?”

Chrollo blinked, for a moment there he thought this was going to be more like what happened with the boys, thinking he had beat Kurapika into submission or other such nonsense. He never expected the beta of the small pack to give him his blessing!

“Franklin, may I speak to you in the hall?” Chrollo finally spoke, choosing to let the matter with Kurapika’s beta rest for now so he could get a recap from Franklin about how the beta was progressing in nen. If he was going to stay here he might as well help out. Plus he wanted to keep Franklin in the loop about the hunt for Nobunaga.

Leorio was growling in his throat again at the obvious dismissal of their confrontation but Franklin was fast in his reaction.

“Okay.” He immediately rushed for the door, forgetting about eating since he was just happy no one died. “Eat up, we’re back on flash cards after lunch and then studying and nen concentration until dinner and then nen theory until bed.”

“Why are you the way that you are?” Leorio’s anger stuttered to a halt as he let his heavy head thunk onto the table.
Franklin just laughed as he moved into the hall, leaving Leorio alone in the room for the first time in awhile. Leorio managed to eat the entirety of his plate and the Troupe leader’s plate just to be spiteful when his eyes landed on the ravenette’s bag.

Leorio wouldn't exactly be described as a polite and respectful person, so when presented with the opportunity to go through an international criminal’s bag he didn’t even hesitate.

First of all the alpha had way too many white button ups for someone who didn’t wear a shirt! Seriously, what is the deal with that? So what if you have a six pack?! Stop bragging!

In his rummaging he found a small magnetic chess board that didn’t have even a bit of wear and tear, it was almost lovingly packed into the bag. There was a book Kurapika had talked about before, something called ‘Ivan’ but he had no idea what it was about even though Kurapika had explained it. Well maybe that’s what attracted Kurapika to the Troupe leader. . . Moving on he found the most interesting find next: pictures of the blonde in question.

The first few pictures pissed Leorio off, Kurapika dressed up in clothes he’d never wear looking upset and downtrodden but then they began to change. Kurapika silhouetted against a setting sun on some sort of balcony in an embroidered white button up, gazing out at the ocean. Kurapika reading a book looking serene and actually content. The last really caught his attention: it was Kurapika playing chess. The troupe leader’s hand was slightly in the shot, so he knew that’s who Kurapika was playing. He looked so focused on the game, but what really struck Leorio was the happy smile on his face which had always been a rarity. And such a large, honest smile at that! It was kinda beautiful.

It was kinda cute that the Troupe leader would keep these pictures with him. Putting the pictures to the side, he saw something that made his cheeks burn. Was that a PINK SPEEDO?!

Did he make Kurapika wear this?! That pervert! It didn’t even look like it would fit the slim blonde! The speedo conjured up images of Kurapika fumbling and blushing as he tried to hold the piece of clothing up over his privates. It was not something Leorio wanted to see or even picture!

The door opened behind him and he was too pissed to even be ashamed that he was rifling through someone's things. He turned around fuming like a bull someone was waving a red flag in front of and began to shout at the startled alpha.

“DID YOU MAKE HIM WEAR THIS?! And what about all of this?!?” He held up the pictures, book, and chess board in one hand. Waving it around carelessly.
“Be careful with that!” Chrollo didn’t expect the beta to go through his things, he was used to his Troupe being a lot more respectful of everything that was his! “Those are priceless!” He yelled at the rude man, did he even realize what he was carelessly waving around?! Those pictures were irreplaceable, that book marked the beginning of his and Kurapika’s relationship, and that board was the board they had talked for hours while driving over!

“You looked through danchou’s things?!” Franklin growled threateningly, stepping forward and completely aghast that anyone would dare slight Chrollo Lucifer like that!

Chrollo rushed forward to rescue his keepsakes from the rude beta. It was unfortunate that he didn’t think he could punish him since Kurapika would be upset if he hurt him. He snatched his things from the beta, grabbing the speedo too since he had used that to get Kurapika to laugh. It was also special!

“YOU HAVEN’T ANSWERED MY QUESTION!” Leorio screeched at an ear piercing volume. “Did you force Kurapika to wear this?! He’d never wear it willingly!”

“I-NO!” Chrollo yelled back as a blush started to creep up his cheeks, it was beginning to look like he was going to have to explain. He never intended for any of his Troupe to see that side of him, that was saved for Kurapika!

“Then what?!”

“It’s mine!” He finally yelled as he stuffed it into his bag, embarrassed and just a bit flustered.

The room went silent, the two betas more than a little shocked that the feared leader of the Phantom Troupe, a cold heartless murderer that stole without remorse, wears a bright pink speedo. . . That’s just wrong.

Chrollo quickly tried to explain. “It’s not what you think! I don’t normally wear a speedo it’s just. . . Kurapika had a long day and h- he hadn’t smiled and I thought to do it as a joke. I wouldn’t normally wear it!” He felt so out of sorts trying to explain to the beta he had known most of his life and the new beta he’d probably know as well. It was incredibly awkward for Chrollo and he didn’t normally get himself into these situations. What the hell is up with this pack that they can all so easily throw him through a loop?!
“You wore a speedo to make Kurapika laugh...” Franklin deadpanned blankly. He and Leorio shared a look before laughter broke out.

Chrollo could only blush more.

Nobunaga was having a grand time, a week had passed since he reached his now favorite brothel ever. Now that he knew how attractive an omega could be, he had immediately searched for one when he left to let Chrollo cool his head a bit.

What did he do that was so wrong? The little bitch needed to be put back in his place! He was getting way too full of himself, who was he to say no to a prime alpha like Chrollo or himself? He could have ended up with some kind of creep, they’d practically saved him! From himself too, hiding as a beta, how ridiculous! Now he had a nice strong alpha to take the lead and protect him, all he had to do was lay back and have a few babies. Stupid bitch.

“Master you’re back again!” The beta running the front desk of the brothel greeting him with a large and happy smile. He’d been boarded up at the motel next door, coming in every day this week. He grinned back, this place was the best. He’d had a red head with lots of cute freckles, a brunette with the biggest blue eyes he’d ever seen and a ravenette with hair so dark it was almost blue and many many more. They were all masters at what they did, all beautiful and all without that stupid stuck up personality. Today he had a very special request.

“Oi! I’m ready to spend another fortune!” He slurred out in a way he thought was charming.

“Wonderful!” She clapped her hands together, the man really had been spending a lot of money in the establishment. He was a gift from the heavens above in her opinion, the omegas though found him to be a bit rough. Not like their opinions mattered anyway, he was a bag of money and as long as they can keep him around the better! “What kind of omega were you thinking of tonight?”

“Well male and blonde, as close to this picture as you can get.” He slammed down a picture he’d swiped of Kurapika, this one in the pink Lolita he never got to see in the flesh, that would have been amazing to see. It’s so sexy.

“Oh that’s a pretty omega! I think you’ll like Teli, we can even dress it in something like this if you want.” She grinned while holding back asking where she could find this omega. He’d be a
crowd pleaser, and he has that look of innocence that made alphas think this was the first time he’d been touched. She remembered that she had customers to deal with when a large behemoth of a man stepped in quietly behind the long haired man “Any special requests?”

Nobunaga thought about it before smirking. “Got any red color contacts?” His voice lowered to a sultry tone, already a little horny at the thought of plowing that stupid omega, even if it won’t be him really. God he really wanted to stick it to that bitch.

“Alright, Teli will be waiting for you in room 10! And you sir, thank you for being patient what kind of omega are you looking for?”

“This kind of place is what’s wrong with this world!” Uvogin glared at the back of Nobunaga’s head, feeling a small amount of satisfaction when what was shamefully his best friend froze. He knows what he’s done.

“Um. . Excuse me?” The beta’s smile became a bit strained at how frigid the room had gotten. Why did she suddenly feel very threatened? More people began to filter in and none looked friendly.

“Nobu,” Feitan warned with narrowed eyes when the man’s body stiffened like he was about to run.

Sighing dramatically, Nobunaga finally turned to face his would-be pack. They were just being ridiculous, it was just an omega! Well he’ll just have to make them underst-

Oh god, Uvogin looks pissed! His face was dark and his eyes normally so happy were hard and harsh. Gulping, he tried to summon up the conviction he had before he saw how upset his friend was.

“Guys come on! It was just an omega! It was getting way too big for its britches, I had to knock it down a peg! Show it where it belonged, at danchou’s feet!” Nobunaga yelled, surprising the working beta who was very confused about the situation.

“HIM! Not it! Kurapika is a human being who our FRIEND and BOSS loves and you made him think we had been tricking him!” Uvogin yelled back at his friend, who he didn’t even want to think of as his friend right now!
“Come on!” Nobunaga whined, seriously over how mooned eyed everyone was for that stupid thing! “Phinks man, you understand right? You wanted to fuck it as much as I did! It’s just a stupid slut that doesn’t understand what it’s made for!”

“Just shut it!” Phinks growled as Feitan snarled. He didn’t like thinking that his newest friend used to be the apple of his boyfriend’s eye, but he also hated to hear anyone talk about Kurapika like an object. “I was stupid then! Kurapika’s the reason I was able to see what I could have with Feitan!”

Nobunaga felt like he was going insane! What was happening to the Troupe? One omega and suddenly everyone had gone soft as Chrollo’s creme caramel pudding!

“You’re all delusional! Now if you excuse me, I have a pretty little blonde to bang so why don’t you all fuck off until you get your heads on straight!” Nobunaga tried to turn only for a shoulder to hit his sending him flying into the wall. The desk beta screamed as Feitan came flying at him and of course he wasn’t able to dodge as he was hit in the face with an umbrella. Thankfully he didn’t use the sword.

While he was dazed Phinks threw him onto the floor. When he began to struggle Uvogin held him down so Phinks could tie up his hands.

“What the hell are you guys doing?!” he yelled as Uvogin threw him over his shoulder.

“Taking you back to danchou of course.” Feitan jabbed a finger into one of Nobunaga’s pressure points. “Once he finds Kurapika, he’ll punish you.” He glared as the man’s jaw fell.

“THE OMEGA IS GOING TO PUNISH ME?!” He screeched just as Phinks stuffed what was definitely a dirty sock into his mouth.

“Just shut up!” Phinks was concerned Uvogin would snap the man’s back should he keep talking, no one had seen Uvogin so upset as he was when they overheard Nobu ordering an omega that looked like Kurapika. “You’re the one fantasizing about danchou’s mate! You should have expected this!” Uvogin’s hold tightened at the reminder of what they walked into.

The beta didn’t have a hope of calling back the dangerous group that was walking out. Who the hell was going to pay for her wall?!
“Trying to run again will just make it worse for yourself, Nobunaga. I’ll call danchou!” Feitan grinned evilly. Nobunaga was really going to get it! He kinda hoped Kurapika would let him in on the punishment.

The beta sneered as the group disappeared from view. That alpha had been creepy, but she never thought he’d be low enough to chase after a taken omega. That was just sick! Looking down at the photo of the blonde, she shivered in disgust before disposing of the picture. This omega belonged to someone, his picture shouldn’t be used in the way she suspected it was being used. Especially if it was your friend’s omega. What a sick bastard, hope he gets what’s coming to him.

A new customer walked in and she let the incident go as she asked him what kind of omega he’d like tonight.
Chrollo turned over in his bedroll as his phone began to ring, pulling Kurapika’s shirt from his nose he reached for the small device. Franklin was already up and in the kitchen while the sound of the shower alerted the alpha as to where their host likely was.

It was… Different. Chrollo had always felt that his pack would be limited to the Spider members yet he found himself already including three boys, two of which his mate viewed as his own cubs, and a beta intent to become a doctor. Aforementioned beta had gotten tipsy the night before and had blurted out his plans: become a Hunter, go to medical school, and provide free medical services to people who needed it and couldn’t afford the astronomical costs that were usually demanded.

Every member of the troupe that came from Ryuuseigai had witnessed at least one person waste away and die from an easily cured illness, all because no one had money there. It was easy to see why Franklin had developed an easy fondness towards the rather loud man.

He hoped that the gift the two of them had made the night before would be well received.

“Hello?” Chrollo asked as he finally settled his phone against his ear.

“Danchou!” Phinks’s voice called over the line. “We just caught Nob- Ow! You knock that off!”

Chrollo was certain he heard someone grumbling but he couldn’t tell if it was Nobunaga or Feitan.

“No, you can’t torture him yet!”

Feitan then, and the grumbles now sounded more like whining. In the background Chrollo swore he heard thumping on metal, curses, and Uvo cursing.

“No hurting or killing him,” Chrollo instructed.

“No problem. We’re not happy with him, but he’s still one of the pack. Machi just tied him to the roof of the car because none of us want to sit with him. Want us to go to a particular ba- NO UVO! You can’t drive! We all remember what happened the last time you did!”

Chrollo remembered that as well. Uvo had just watched Shalnark play a particular game called ‘Crazy Cab’ and thought it would be fun. It was agreed that Shal was not to play games like that around Uvogin in the future, earning many groans when the gamer got hooked on one with some name like ‘Grand Car Robbery.’

“Go to whatever base you like,” Chrollo finally cut in, interrupting the argument that he could already hear. “Just make sure to not let him escape until Kurapika decides on his punishment.”

“Alright!” Phinks called before hanging up the phone and Chrollo noticed in that moment that the shower was no longer on as he felt eyes on his back.

Turning his head, the dark alpha was met with the sight of Leorio staring at him from the door of his bedroom, a towel circling his waist. The beta’s eyes were slightly bloodshot, but there was an undeniable small smile on his lips.
“So you really do care about him,” the beta observed and Chrollo felt a surprising urge to blush. It was something he didn’t normally do.

Tucking away his phone, the troupe leader stood up and stretched. “Enough to wear a speedo to make him laugh. But I still haven’t figured out his favorite flower, though I know it isn’t roses now.”

Leorio chuckled slightly. “Marigolds.”

Chrollo stared as the man began to close the door of his room to dress. “Excuse me?”

“Kurapika’s favorite flowers are marigolds.”

Marigolds? But they were so simple! So ordinary! Neither of those words were ones that he’d associate with Kurapika! He never would have guessed that such a plain flower would be Kurapika’s favorite.

Leorio finished getting ready and went to school that day, not noticing the new bank book that Chrollo had set out for him. Franklin went out to gather supplies for them for a few more days and Chrollo asked him reluctantly to get some birth control for Kurapika.

Afternoon came and Chrollo found himself at a bookstore, browsing a number of the sections before his eyes landed on a flower almanac. He really should think about obtaining one of these with all the little messages he and Kurapika seemed to send through flowers. Actually, it might be fun to just leave a message in the form of a flower every now and then.

Pulling out the book, he turned to the page for marigolds and read through the description.

’Sometimes the biggest meaning comes from the smallest and most unassuming of flowers. Marigolds are such a flower with many deep meanings attached to them. Often appearing in garlands and bouquets for the grieving, marigolds are a symbol for lost love and remembrance of the dead.’

Ouch.

‘However, morbidity isn’t always attached to this cheerful flower. Between lovers, the flower symbolizes winning the affections of someone through hard work.’

The world around him was grey and distant. Cold. Just like how Kurapika felt inside. His eyes had felt hot for several hours after that phone call, but they were cold now as well.

A loud grumble echoed from his empty belly and Kurapika ignored it as he had for the past several days.

How could he have been so stupid? How could he have lost his license over ‘lying’ when he hadn’t?! He’d omitted certain facts, but there had been no blatant lie!

The blonde hadn’t rested since making that call, hadn’t stopped. His heat was fast approaching and he needed to make it to Leorio’s place. Kurapika had been desperate enough to ensure he made it that he had done something he’d never thought he’d do: steal. It wasn’t a car, just a bicycle that he’d taken from the roadside. It might not have been stealing since it looked to have been abandoned.
In the few hours that Kurapika had had that bike, he’d covered a much larger distance than that he had in the days previous combined. Right when he’d been certain that he’d be seeing Leorio in mere hours, the wheels of the bike had exploded. Considering the speed he had been going, Kurapika was surprised they’d lasted as long as they had. Truly, bikes were not made to carry nen users.

His coat had suffered badly in the crashing of the bike and Kurapika had made due with the only alternative he could afford: a newspaper.

If Chrollo...

Kurapika’s breathing hitched as he thought of his mate. Based solely on how things had seemed during their ‘courtship,’ if Chrollo saw him now then he probably would find himself under house arrest, more specifically, locked into a room with a bed, a bathroom, and orders to rest and eat. The thought of Chrollo caused a wave of warmth to pass over Kurapika and he gasped, finally knowing what such a thing meant. Combined with the image of Chrollo in that ridiculous speedo with a plate of cookies that his mind spat out, and Kurapika knew his heat was hours away at best.

He was definitely in trouble!

Passing the sign welcoming him to the town where Leorio’s school was almost caused the omega to cry with joy. If he could get to Leorio, then he could get inside!

His shivering escalated as warmth began to flood his being, even as he spotted what had to be the campus that Leorio studied at. His legs felt like lead as he stumbled the last few steps.

“See that?” a snide voice remarked and Kurapika turned his head to see a well-dressed woman, possibly the wife of a professor, steering an omega girl towards a building. “That is why you must be perfect and submit entirely to your alpha, so you don’t get abandoned like that!”

The child stared at him with hollow, almost empty looking eyes and Kurapika realized that despite maybe being eight year old, she was already being beaten down and abused, molded into what her parents believed an omega should be.

The heat in his body intensified in that moment as he glared at the woman that would dare to do such things to her child. Couldn’t she see how much her daughter was hurting?!

His mouth opened, intent to snap at this woman but the air felt like it froze in his lungs as a hand grabbed him, making his sensitive skin tingle.

“Hello there,” the alpha stated as he looked Kurapika up and down. “Looks like you could use a shower, I have one you could borrow.”

This alpha was definitely a student here, but Kurapika didn’t think he could be even a marginally successful one. His muscles were large but not strong and the book that was peeking out of his school bag looked like it hadn’t been opened, despite it being around the time for winter exams!

“Get away,” Kurapika snapped even as his eyes turned to search the area. He was near the campus library, probably the best place to find a directory and a phone. Unfortunately, there were a number of alphas that were appearing, their eyes leering at him. They could smell he was mated but they didn’t care.

“Come on gorgeous, I can take good care of you!” the alpha that had grabbed him assured him with so much pompous arrogance that Kurapika fought the urge to vomit.

“Let go.” The order was cold as it fell from Kurapika’s mouth, but the moan that escaped him a
moment later as the warmth in his body began to center on his belly took away any threat intended in the statement.

“See, you want it,” the disgusting prick stated as he brought a hand up- POW!

Kurapika didn’t remember the last time he’d seen Chrollo look so livid. It didn’t matter though as he felt himself immediately wrapped into a warm embrace by his mate as the shivers came back.

“What happened?” Chrollo demanded as he pushed the newspaper off of Kurapika’s shoulders and upon seeing the now destroyed coat, shrugged off his own and wrapped Kurapika in it, ignoring how dirty he was. “I was certain you’d be fine, you had your license with you!”

Tears pricked Kurapika’s eyes as Chrollo clucked over him, checking him for any injuries before the dark alpha leaned forward slightly, narrowly dodging a punch from the alpha he had just knocked aside.

“The hell do you think you’re doing?! I saw it first, wait your turn!”

“We’ll get you something to eat,” Chrollo promised, thoroughly ignoring the alpha that yelled at him in favor of Kurapika. “Franklin is here, he’s training Leorio and they seem to be doing well together. And I sent the boys with Paku and Shal on a trip.”

“Bastard! I want that one!” the alpha screamed as he attempted to throw another punch, this one intended to knock Kurapika out of Chrollo’s arms. The thief’s look darkened as he moved one of his arms just slightly, causing the blow to land on his arm rather than Kurapika before finally turning his attention on the would-be attacker. His pheromones skyrocketed as well, causing the other to take a dramatic step back as he pissed his pants.

“Do you mind? I’m talking to my mate,” Chrollo snapped in an irritated and dismissive manner, letting the other know how little he thought of him.

The alpha stared at him in horror before squeaking and scuttling away on all fours, terror in his eyes.

Kurapika could barely comprehend what was happening as Chrollo began to gently guide him away from the library. “How?” he managed to rasp as the alpha pulled out his cellphone.

“I figured you would be coming this way, so I came,” Chrollo stated gently as he brought the phone to his ear. “Kurapika just arrived, I’m bringing him to the apartment. Is Leorio there?”

Kurapika recognized Franklin’s voice over the line and heard rustling. “He’s here, doing exercises right now and has an evening class coming up.”

“Alright, see if he is willing to check Kurapika when we arrive and get my bag ready.”

“Will do.”

Chrollo hung up the phone after that and focused on Kurapika yet again. “What happened?” he repeated. “With your Hunter license, you shouldn’t have had difficulty reaching here.”

Concern and being fussed over. Those were things that Kurapika had quietly been longing for since learning of the revocation of his license, to be reassured that everything was going to be fine. He swallowed in reflex as his eyes began to heat up again before a moan forced its way past his lips yet again.
“Easy!” Chrollo’s arms were strong and warm and Kurapika found himself unconsciously snuggling into the warmth before Chrollo’s arms shifted and he lifted Kurapika bridal style.

The day was turning out to be surprising for Chrollo. He had been leaving the library when he’d smelled a scent that he had longed for, one that was exceptionally sweet. He knew what it meant and had immediately begun to seek out a familiar head of blonde hair.

The alpha that had been propositioning Kurapika had been infuriating and weak, if Kurapika’s heat hadn’t been starting at the most inopportune time, he probably would have shattered the bones in the man’s arm!

Now as Chrollo carried Kurapika towards the apartment, he breathed in the sweet scent of his mate and smiled. He would find out what had happened when Kurapika was ready.

What was also surprising was the way he currently felt towards Kurapika. Ever since deciding he wanted Kurapika as his mate, whenever the other had been in heat he had longed to get in his pants. It hadn’t crossed his mind until that moment, but Chrollo found he was more interested in getting Kurapika warm where he could have a shower and a good meal.

Grabbing his phone, he dialed Bono’s number and was slightly surprised when Fanaka picked up the phone.

“Hello?” The woman’s voice sounded strange to Chrollo in that moment and he felt chills run up his spine. “I know you’re there~!”

“Is Bonolenov there?” Chrollo asked as Kurapika shivered again and he found himself fighting the urge to start stealing coats off of random people. He was far too thin!

The giggle he received shocked Chrollo to the bone and he knew for certain that he would not be going to the onsen for a while. “He’s a little… tied down.”

Certainty struck Chrollo in that moment, Fana was in heat!

“Would you be let him talk on the phone?”

Shuffling could be heard and after a moment Bonolenov offered a far too lazy and relaxed sounding, “Hello?”

“I just found Kurapika,” Chrollo explained. “He’s in heat but I don’t feel any urges…” Kurapika snuggled firmly into Chrollo’s chest right then and he paused, expecting some desire or image of Kurapika in the buff, but nothing came. It was oddly a relief.

“If he’s in rough shape, then you’re going to want to care for him first. Won’t feel anything until he’s comfortable. You’re mates now.”

That was actually a relief. The last thing that any of them needed was Kurapika and him taking over the apartment for several days. It was only a few hours to his house, so they should move there for now and could come back after Kurapika’s heat, if Kurapika wanted to.

Leorio met them at the entrance to the apartment and was quick to hustle Kurapika to the bathroom for a shower and a check up. Chrollo turned his attention to their bags and picked through them before pulling out a thick shirt, pants, socks, underwear, and a heavy coat. They were all items that Kurapika had chosen when they had gone shopping together.

The shower turned on and Leorio returned to the main room as Chrollo finished packing up the last
of their things, pulling out a pair of shoes for Kurapika as well since he would probably want something other than his boots.

“How is he?” Chrollo asked automatically as Leorio moved into the kitchen.

“Tired, hungry, but otherwise fine. Physically at least. Where are you going?”

“My house. It’s just a few hours away and it’ll give him some privacy for his heat without inconveniencing you.”

“And let him talk?” Leorio pressed and Chrollo glanced at the doctor-to-be.

“You can tell as well then.”

“Yeah.” The beta had started the coffee maker and had pulled out a mug. After a moment, he pulled out a second mug and set it by the first. “How does Kurapika like his coffee?”

“With milk.”

Franklin snorted as he finished several sandwiches and wrapped them as Chrollo stood up and collected the pile of clothing for Kurapika. The door to the bathroom wasn’t even locked and he gently settled the pile on the counter. He glanced at the shower, knowing Kurapika was behind the thin material, but decided to let him have a moment even though he longed to hold him. He did smell his peppermint shampoo and bodywash though which made him smile.

Instead he collected the clothes Kurapika had run off in and carried them out. There was no salvaging the items at this point.

For his part, Kurapika stood for several minutes under the hot spray of the shower. It was warmer than he normally would like, but it felt good in that moment. He knew he was in heat, but this one seemed far more muted than his previous ones had been. The burning need was there, but had been significantly dialed down.

For once he was aware when Chrollo entered the room and he remained silent, longing for the man to speak, to hold him, but also to let him finish. Finally grabbing the bottles of shampoo and soap, he began the long process of scrubbing himself clean, finding it oddly fascinating to watch the water go from grey to clear as it washed the dirt, oil, and other things from his body.

The clean clothing that was left were items he recognized, items he liked and smelled to have been laundered not long before. The blonde breathed in the smell of them before pulling on the clothes, his heat still muted, before leaving the bathroom.

A cup of coffee was pushed into his hands automatically as Chrollo moved to collect his toiletries then to tuck them into his bag. Were they leaving? Already?!

Chrollo’s eyes were soft when he looked to Kurapika, and the omega took a shaking breath. “I… know that something upset you,” the man started. “And when you’re ready, I want to hear what it is. What Nobunaga might have said or done. But I also think it would be better for us to move somewhere private while we can so that if your heat picks up or my rut goes out of control, we won’t end up displacing Franklin or Leorio.”

Oh. It made sense and was… Considerate. Chrollo might not have been asking him a direct question, but his tone made it clear he would listen to any objections Kurapika had. There were some things Kurapika wanted to discuss as well, and he didn’t want to say those things in front of Leorio or Franklin.
He nodded slightly before taking a sip of his coffee as Chrollo nodded in turn and stood, both of their bags in hand as Franklin brought over the sandwiches and quietly passed them to Kurapika.

The walk to the car was slow and mostly silent, Kurapika was extremely uncomfortable in his warm clothes and found he was beginning to crave pillows and something sweet. His coffee began to taste acrid and he ended up pouring it out in the snow next to the car, unable to bring himself to drink more. Chrollo seemed to already see what was happening and was quick to shove their bags into the trunk of the car before handing Kurapika his coat yet again.

“You can sit in the front or lie down in the back,” he offered, but Kurapika remained silent as he opened the door and settled in the front passenger seat, Chrollo’s coat held firmly against his chest.

Chrollo in turn settled into the driver’s seat and started the car then began to rapidly adjust the heat to ensure Kurapika would be warm. “We’ll need groceries,” he stated as the car began to warm up. “If you’d like anything special, then we’ll get it. How about those breakfast cakes that you’re fond of?”

Weeks of wandering, broken dreams, and heartache had been building up for quite some time. Those feelings had slowly begun to simmer after he’d been caught by Chrollo and taken to Leorio’s apartment. Now that they were alone, even though he was still terribly tired, those emotions finally boiled over.

“WHAT AM I TO YOU?!” the blonde finally screamed. “Just a game? Something for you to win over and then dominate?!”

Shock at the sudden yelling shook Chrollo and he stared at Kurapika.

“Did you mean ANYTHING that you said? THAT YOU PROMISED?! Did you make me fall for you just to feel even more satisfaction at being able to collar me?” The last part was almost sobbed as Kurapika began to tear up, clutching Chrollo’s coat as though it were a lifeline.

“No!”

“Then why did Nobunaga have that collar?!”

“He picked it up after I disposed of it!” Chrollo’s eyes were beseeching as he stared at Kurapika. “I threw that thing out months ago and had something far more appropriate made.”

Kurapika felt something like terror grip his heart as Chrollo reached into his coat that Kurapika still held, but the feeling dissolved into confusion as he pulled out two small boxes. Far too small for a collar to be in one of them.

Chrollo checked the boxes then handed one to Kurapika who accepted it as the last of the terror slowly left his being. Inside was a small ring, slightly masculine in design, carved from dark stone. The red diamonds he remembered as having been on the collar adorned the ring.

His cold hands were in Chrollo’s a moment later as his mate took the ring from the box in Kurapika’s shaking hands.

“You weren’t the only one who fell in love,” Chrollo’s voice was quiet but emotional. “When you left, I… I actually almost cried on Paku’s shoulder.”

“Almost?” Kurapika managed to tease before moaning slightly and pulled his right hand free to grasp the warm coat he held.
“Sobbed like a baby!” Now Chrollo’s tone was bright again though his eyes showed considerable concern for Kurapika. “May I?”

Kurapika nodded slightly and Chrollo gently slid the ring onto his small finger. The size was a bit large, but they could have that corrected later.

“It’ll be a few hours before we reach my house,” Chrollo said as he kissed Kurapika’s fingers then released his hand to return his attention to the steering wheel. “I’d suggest you get some rest and consider how you want Nobunaga to be punished.”

“You haven’t punished him?” Kurapika asked blankly.

“You were the one he drugged and disrespected, not me. You get to decide on his punishment. Just make sure it is reasonable.”
Giving up and starting over.
Chapter by Boozombie

The car ride was silent, Kurapika found his mind completely occupied. The small moans that slipped out were becoming more frequent as warmth came back to the ends of his finger tips.

He was happy about Chrollo proving Nobunaga’s words to be false but then there was still so much Kurapika had to be upset about. It really was the worst time for his heat. Falling into a beastly crazed pile with Chrollo while all of it hung over his head would not be good for their relationship.

Chrollo was beginning to feel the itch of rut build up from his groin, but it was still a tender situation even with his ring on Kurapika’s finger so he didn’t want to force anything on him.

“Do you want to talk about it at all?” Chrollo asked softly, he didn’t seem any happier so there must be more to what happened.

Kurapika nodded but didn’t speak. Chrollo waited, he had to be patient. Show Kurapika just how understanding and loving he could be. It wouldn’t be good to have a mate that didn’t trust him with his feelings.

A good twenty minutes went by as Kurapika ran through everything in his head. The easiest emotion for him to act on was the one he grasped onto: anger. In a way this was all Chrollo’s fault. If he hadn’t revealed Kurapika’s gender to the entire world he’d still be a Hunter, he had worked so hard for that license! He’d dreamed of it even before the massacre and now it was gone; invalid. The embarrassment and shame were nothing compared to the feelings of uselessness.

“But at least Chrollo loves me,’ his brain supplied and that was true. Maybe it was time to just accept that he was an omega and people were never going to treat him like a person. Just be happy he had a mate that respected him and live out his life peacefully, but that made him angry because he didn’t want that!

Kurapika wanted so much more than the life of a house omega but so much of that had been dependent on his Hunter license!

“I feel so. . .” Kurapika started but stopped when a particularly heavy wave of heat attacked him and he moaned loudly.
Chrollo opened his mouth to show sympathy towards his mate, it must be hard to think about his feelings when in the middle of a heat. But Kurapika growled angrily and held his head in his hands as he curled into a ball, what really stopped Chrollo was the soft sound of sniffling. Kurapika was beginning to cry.

“THERE’S A SUGAR!!!” He suddenly screamed through a stabbing sob. Chrollo slammed on the brakes, jerking the car to the side of the darkening road. The dimming sunlight was harsh as Chrollo turned sharply to the blonde, glaring at him. He’d never heard Kurapika sound so stupid!

“You are worth more than this world!” Chrollo yelled at him as he threw the car into park and snapped him seat belt off.

“No! I’m worthless and stupid! How could I have miscalculated so much?!” Kurapika cried into his knees. “Now I’m nothing, I’m not even a Hunter!”

Chrollo stared at the his mate, he looked so fragile all bundled up, hugging his coat while he gave deep desperate sobs that were anguish to Chrollo’s heart.

“Kurapika I can’t understand what you’re talking about if you don’t explain it to me first.” Chrollo was afraid to even touch the boy but what the hell is he supposed to do in this situation? Kurapika didn’t seem to hear him and just continued to shake and cry, he kept gasping out breaths that convinced Chrollo that Kurapika wasn’t even breathing right at the moment.

Chrollo felt more and more out of his depth every moment that Kurapika didn’t calm down. His rut was completely chased away by Kurapika’s tears, he couldn’t even think about arousal.

Kurapika couldn’t breathe, the pain in his chest was too deep, it felt like the world had betrayed him entirely. He knew Chrollo had said something but he couldn’t process it because he didn’t know how to breathe at all. How do you breathe when the air felt like it had turned against him as well?

‘Fuck it.’ Chrollo took Kurapika’s shoulders and turned him then took his mate’s chin and smashed their lips together. The effect was instant. Kurapika’s shoulders relaxed and his breathing returned to normal as he tentatively moved his lips against Chrollo’s. It was a sweet kiss, Chrollo put every ounce of his love and concern for Kurapika into it.
When he pulled back he found Kurapika’s gorgeous red eyes staring up at him, his cheeks wet and his plump lips slightly parted.

“Do you think you could tell me what happened now?” Chrollo managed a smile and brushed his finger down his flushed cheek. Kurapika nodded mutely and flushed a bit deeper. Now he just felt dead eyed and tired.

“I called the Hunter Association. Apparently because I didn’t identify myself as a male omega they invalidated my license, I’m no longer a Hunter.” A silent tear slid down his cheek and Chrollo wiped it away dutifully. Listening to every word no matter the righteous fury flowing into him. How dare they?! “And then they... They said if I wanted protection from the Phantom Troupe I would have to... ha-have to.” He let out a small smothered sob and shook his head.

Chrollo’s face darkened and he could guess what the Hunters had asked for that would cause Kurapika to react like this. Still he waited for Kurapika to offer up the words even as his fingers tightened on Kurapika’s shoulders.

“I’d h-have to gi-give birth, they wan-wanted ten children fro-from different men.” Chrollo couldn’t even hope to catch every silent tear rolling down his cheeks. Kurapika added his clenched first in the effort to dry his face and once it was done Chrollo took his hands and began to gently rub his thumb over the back of his hand. A small whining moan escaped his lips, immediately chased out by yet another deep heaving sob. “Even the Hunters see me as only a whore now!”

“Kurapika you are not a whore!” How could he even think that? He was a virgin up to a month ago and hadn’t even been kissed! Just because some idiots thought they could use him doesn’t make him something he is definitely not!

“Then why does everyone want double digits from me?!” Kurapika shouted and smacked Chrollo's hands away. “You want 12 children and the Hunters want 10! You’re my mate but I don’t want that many! But no one cares about what I want!” Chrollo wanted to say something but Kurapika kept going.

“In the last month I’ve been stalked, threatened, almost raped, and used as an example to young omegas for why they should just blindly allow alphas to do as they please with them!” Kurapika shook his head. “It’s not fair! I hate people treating me like this, like a personified object, just because I’m an omega!” Kurapika gasped in a breath and arched his back when he began to tremble with lust. Decidedly Kurapika reached forward and pulled Chrollo down to him, if the world refused to allow him to be independent then why not just be Chrollo's mate and mother to his children? “I hate it but...”
“Kurapika wha-“

“It’s okay, I’ll be okay.” Kurapika whispered between desperate kisses. “I can learn to be happy like this, just take me away from it all.”

Chrollo’s eyes widened. That was everything he’d ever wanted to hear from Kurapika but now that he had, it felt like a stab to his heart. Kurapika was his everything and thus deserved everything. He should be able to have every happiness, freedom and respect. He didn’t want Kurapika to compromise anything just because the world was a cruel and unfair place.

“Kurapika . . .” Chrollo gasped when Kurapika’s lips found his and pried his mouth open with his lips. He was being way too rushed, he thrust his tongue into Chrollo’s mouth. “Wait!” Chrollo pushed Kurapika away by the shoulders, not liking the depressed and desperate look in his red eyes. The slight tremble of his lips betrayed his blank face, Chrollo panted. He was aroused yes, but Kurapika needed comfort and attention so he needed to handle himself damnit.

“What?” Kurapika snapped, going from 0 to 60 right before his eyes. One second he didn’t have an emotion on his face and then it was flooding with anger. “Wait for what!? I don’t care anymore okay?!” Kurapika yelled.

“It doesn’t matter anymore! I’m not a Hunter and I could barely last a month on my own and . . . You’re my mate so let’s just move on!” Kurapika tried to pull Chrollo back to him but he was not allowing it. “Just bring me to your island or whatever and let’s just move on.” Kurapika sighed, lost and forlorn, sadness dripping down every contour of his body. “I think I can be happy like that.”

Chrollo didn’t know what to say, he just stared at his mate with a slack jaw. He’d never hurt Kurapika but the way he was talking made him feel like slapping him. His abilities didn’t hinge on him being a Hunter! Sure it made doing the things he wanted to do a little harder but hey, he was mated to a criminal so maybe everything isn’t always going to be so legal and simple.

Kurapika tried to struggle Chrollo’s hands off his shoulders so he could just attack him, get started on this being mates thing! Start a family maybe? Or was he being a little crazy?

Chrollo sighed trying to come up with what he was going to say to all of this, but how does one inspire someone to not give up just because the world was awful? Normally he wasn’t the “inspiring” type, more the “do-what-I-say-or-I’ll-hunt-down-everyone-you’ve-ever-looked” ultimatum type. ‘Hm maybe an ultimatum would work?’
It’s never really worked before, but Kurapika and his relationship was built on them. The first time they met, and the first time he admitted his feelings, every important step in their relationship was paved with them. So he got himself ready to make one final ultimatum.

Firming his resolve, Chrollo straightened his back and slipped into the persona he hadn’t shown Kurapika for so long.

With a quick and gentle movement, Chrollo pulled the blonde close to him. He tried to move in for a kiss but Chrollo continued to deny him. Soon he had the little omega in his lap, his back against the steering wheel. Kurapika struggled, hating being handled so gently when all he wanted was Chrollo to hold him down and let him forget how pointless his life was for a minute!

“KURAPIKA! Stop struggling!” Chrollo used his deepest tone, commanding his omega with his alpha voice. Kurapika immediately paused and whimpered, rubbing his lower half into Chrollo's but he had to stay strong. This wasn’t about sex, this was bigger than sex. “I’m going to make you a deal.”

Kurapika’s hazy eyes cleared for a moment, the lust chased away by confusion and then came even more anger.

“Is this really the time? Another deal! Really?!” Kurapika groaned and rutted his hips forward. “Let’s stop talking, it's been a month Chrollo! Just rip my clothes off!”

“You’d be very upset about that once the heat wears off, you like these clothes.” Chrollo groaned, god his rut was an impatient asshole.

“I don’t care, I just don’t care anymore.”

“That's the problem,” Chrollo sighed and pulled Kurapika close so he could hug his wiggling body to his chest, holding him close and biting the inside of his cheek to hold off the urge to do exactly as Kurapika asked. “You can’t just not care, it's not your style. You care about everything you do and I love that about you and it’s why you’re perfect.”

“Perfect for what!?” Kurapika mumbled, not liking how Chrollo kept him pinned to his chest, but he was enjoying nuzzling it. He’d forgotten how built the Troupe leader was.
Kyo sat cross legged in front of grandpa as he had been for the last two days. He hadn’t had anything to eat or drink in that time because grandpa had locked the door. Everytime he asked for food from the tray in front of him, he was told he wasn’t allowed to eat.

He was beginning to become desperate! His mouth felt like mud and his stomach was rumbling so loudly it felt like an earthquake to his weak body.

Grandpa just sat like he was meditating, his eyes closed and a slight hum in his throat. He must be hungry too, he’d been in here the entire time as well. This was the third time they had done this and the first two times he had accepted his fate and passed out from hunger. He thought that they were going to kill him after disobeying them but no, they just kept bringing him to this room and refusing him anything to eat. And then when he passes out, they take care of him until he could walk again and put him back in here!

He was also beginning to become angry. How long was this going to go on? He kept asking for that heavenly looking glass of water but he kept being denied! What did they want from him? Was he supposed to do something or not? Why have the food changed out every couple hours so it stayed fresh and wonderful if they were going to let him have it?

A growl was building in his chest and it felt unfamiliar and strange to him, he hadn’t ever felt like this! He was so frustrated and tired and he just wanted to eat!

“Please grandp-“

“You are not allowed to eat.” He spoke with absolute authority in his voice and Kyo folded into himself before his eyes caught on the food. They traveled back up to look at grandpa to realize he hadn’t opened his eyes yet. It was sneaky and against everything he’d ever been taught, but maybe he wouldn’t notice if he just ate quietly?

He was a quiet boy by nature, omega training had only enhanced that. It was why he’d been so expensive, he was a master at not being heard. Like a perfect omega. With practiced movements Kyo took the tea cup, reaching out his pinky so the saucer didn’t clatter. It was like they chose the
loudest dishware but he could handle it, it was rude for an omega to make any noise when eating. Even as he gulped down every last drop of the water not one noise was heard. When he was able to set down the tea cup without alerting grandpa, his courage spiked. Maybe taking a few bites of food wouldn’t hurt?

A smirk pulled at his lips, he felt so bad! The good kind of bad! It was dangerous and he kinda wanted to see how far he could go before he was caught!

This was fun!

The bread roll was still warm, it was a weird shape too, like a crescent moon. It was buttery and flaky with something sweet and golden drizzled on top. He almost moaned at how sweet and wonderful it was but he remained quiet.

Grandpa didn’t even twitch, he was in the clear!

“So you’ve disobeyed me then?”

Maybe not.

Kyo jumped and gasped, the tray clattering as his knee hit it. “How did you know!?” He breathed out, hoping to delay any punishment he may have coming to him.

“Your stomach stopped growling, you disobeyed and ate so silently that any normal man wouldn’t have been able to tell.” Kyo hung his head as grandpa continued on. “And you’ve passed.”

Kyo snapped his head up, shocked. Wait, what? He’s passed? Because he disobeyed?!

“You look confused, I admit that wasn’t how I thought you’d go about it, but now you’ve learned.” Zeno had no idea his grandson’s little omega could be so sneaky! If he hadn’t heard the sound of his stomach stop then the alpha wouldn’t have known. It was actually impressive for someone with no proper training to be that silent, it seems they wouldn’t be starting from scratch with him. “Obedience is the only thing you don’t need here.”
Kyo absorbed it silently, he still didn’t get it. Why did this place insist that he didn’t need the lessons and teachings he had spent his life learning?

“Well you’ve passed so the day is yours.” Kyo’s chest lightened in excitement.

“May I go see Alluka?”

Zeno raised an eyebrow, they had told him how dangerous the stunt he had pulled was but he still wanted to see it. He has no sense of fear in the right circumstances, he will make a wonderful assassin someday.

“Alright, since you like It so much.”

Kyo didn’t even try to correct grandpa about the pronoun that he should use for Alluka, only jumped up happily and skipped out of the room.

His alphas were still in the torture chamber, so he only saw them at dinner and no one else was about as he made it Alluka’s door.

When he entered the room Alluka was ecstatic, she jumped into his arms with a happy cry of ‘BROTHER!’ Kyo laughed and spun her around for a moment. They laughed and played and he listened to her talk. She talked for hours about her amazing big brother.

He’d like to meet him someday.
Kurapika had been burning a mere moment ago, determined that he would get whatever he needed in order to stop the building fire in his gut. He could feel Chrollo’s member, knew his mate was wanting him just as much.

And then the alpha had to say the one thing that could stop Kurapika in his tracks.

Join the troupe?! Kurapika stared into Chrollo’s dark eyes, expecting some sort of joke, praying this was a joke, but the man was completely serious. He might not want to kill the troupe any more, but that didn’t mean he’d ever be willing to do what they did!

“The troupe?” Kurapika knew his voice was quiet from shock, but a strange anger rose in him at just the thought of it being suggested that he join. “Why wo-”

Chrollo settled a finger over Kurapika’s lips as his eyes softened slightly, becoming more like the goofy guy that wore a speedo to make him laugh and less like the Danchou of the Phantom Troupe.

“I know it’s not something you ever considered, especially after what happened…” Chrollo’s voice trailed off for a moment and he took a breath as Kurapika’s eyes momentarily hardened. “But I believe this would be an excellent choice for you. You are strong, smart, and capable. You’re better trained in identifying artifacts than just about any member of the troupe.”

“But I don’t want to kill people!”

“You won’t have to!” Chrollo reassured as his fingers found their way to Kurapika and began to run up and down his sides. “And with you around, you can remind us of the consequences that we might face by attacking innocent people.”

Kurapika still shook his head, disliking what was being offered. He’d trained to be a Hunter! He’d dreamed of being a Hunter! Not a bandit! He opened his mouth to state this but was cut off as Chrollo began to speak again.

“The choices you have currently are that you can join the troupe or settle in for a quiet life, either in Ryuuseigai or the Gyudondong village. We’ll still travel and you can start a shop or something if you do decide to not join the troupe. But joining the troupe will give you the opportunity to fight back against the unfairness you’ve faced in this world. And I promise, the troupe would welcome you as a full member and not just as my mate. Most of them.”

Now Kurapika was divided as he allowed Chrollo to guide him back to his seat and buckled the seat belt. His dream of a bookshop filled with valuable books and worn toys for a child came back to him… But along with it came a dream of becoming powerful enough that the Hunters begged him to come back. To make them regret their decision.

And if joining the troupe meant he might be able to direct their attentions away from isolated tribes of people that would be helpless against them and noble establishments such as museums…

Kurapika shook his head in order to clear it. “I was willing to just become the little housewife you wanted, but you’re letting me choose not to?”

“It’s not you, Kurapika.” The voice that responded was both the leader of the Phantom Troupe and
his mate. “I didn’t fall for a docile, broken omega that just wanted to live quietly and have children. I fell for an intelligent and spunky man, determined and full of dreams. I don’t want to lose that, the real you.”

The car was moving again and Kurapika could feel his heat beginning to return as he calmed down.

They had only been driving a minute when Chrollo spoke again. “I won’t accept an answer today since I want you to think on this, especially after your heat is over. So answer me once you have.”

Things quieted down for an hour after that as Kurapika stared out of the window as his head buzzed. He actually did try to think on Chrollo’s offer, the pros and cons of his options. If he stayed in the Gyudondong village, he’d be surrounded with other omegas in a place where they wouldn’t expect him to submit to the absurd stereotypes on omegas. He’d be near Fanaka-bennu and he didn’t remember the village having a bookshop or library. Chrollo said he had a large collection of books, so maybe he could start something with extra copies?

Even as he thought on this, Kurapika imagined having to part from Chrollo due to troupe business and his thoughts turned to what it would be like to just go with him instead. To travel with his mate, visit the archeological sites he was interested in when they weren’t on a troupe raid… Maybe even get the troupe to help capture raiders and treasure hunters that might try to destroy and rob tombs? Or clear out private museums? Kurapika knew such things existed and many held items that were stolen, extorted, and withheld from the public, the true owners never to see the items again.

One particularly nasty individual that Kurapika had heard of collected rare copies of books and either hoarded or destroyed them, increasing the value of the few that remained. This disgusting piece had been rumored to cause fires and other accidents so he could take the items without anyone the wiser. Kurapika had no issue over stealing from his.

He barely noticed when Chrollo pulled over at a market after an hour for a few minutes and returned with a bag of groceries, snarling at the alphas that had wandered over to stare at Kurapika, following the scent of heat. They could smell Kurapika was mated, but several of them had never seen an omega that was of age and didn’t care. One in particular was creeping towards the car, a hopeful look on her face.

The alpha backed away when Chrollo growled in annoyance, a cowed expression on her face as she moved back a respectful distance as Chrollo settled the groceries into the backseat before moving to the driver seat. Kurapika still hadn’t touched the sandwiches that Franklin had made and barely reacted when he was offered a candy bar.

Chrollo found himself extremely aware of the small group of alphas that had gathered outside of the car, all staring at Kurapika. It irked him more than a little that they would do such a thing.

The final leg of the journey took them away from the town to a large lake, one that had several small islands. Kurapika was licking the chocolate bar absently at this point and Chrollo found himself hard pressed to not stare or he’d likely end up unable to get them to his house and they’d be spending the duration of their heat/rut in the car.

Kurapika was definitely in heat now, he stumbled nearly continuously as Chrollo collected their bags and the groceries, clinging to the coat as though it were his lifeline as Chrollo guided him to a small motorboat on the dock.

“It’ll just be ten minutes,” Chrollo promised even as he glanced up at the sky as he realized the
time. He enjoyed this location because of the privacy it offered, the peace and quiet. The lake wasn’t used as a boating or water recreation area due to the near constant mist and rain. The rain in particular was like clockwork, lasting several hours each day.

Kurapika stumbled getting into the boat and Chrollo barely caught him, dropping his own bag into the water as he did, then settled his mate onto one of the small seats before rescuing his bag. Mentally he praised his foresight that had caused him to ensure he had a waterproof bag years ago when he’d had his home built on the island.

Kurapika blinked at him and Chrollo knew they had minutes before the ‘crazies’ would start again. Turning, he focused on the engine and prayed that it wouldn’t give him any trouble as he checked the gas levels before attempting to start the engine. The hand that found its way to his butt right as the engine started almost had him turning to pounce on his little mate, but he could feel the chill in that hand. He needed to get Kurapika into his house to get warm, then they could focus on other activities that were very warming.

Kurapika was purring when he turned around, snuggling the coat as his eyes focused on Chrollo as he settled down to guide the boat out into the water. The wind began to pick up and the first cold drops of water began to fall. The shiver that rose from Kurapika had Chrollo internally wincing. Those shivers continued across the water to the tiny dock in a small cove on an island that was several acres across and Chrollo urged the boat to go faster with each shuddering movement. The rain began right as he managed to dock and tie off the boat, Kurapika crawling onto the dock with his bag in hand. Grabbing his own bag and the groceries, Chrollo quickly helped his mate to his feet and began to help him along the narrow path to his house.

Kurapika’s eyes were hooded now, he looked drunk and Chrollo could smell his sweet scent like never before, a tantalizing mix of milk and honey then was now seasoned with vanilla. Utterly intoxicating.

As the house came into sight, Chrollo knew that Kurapika was not aware of it as he began to tug at his now wet clothing and Chrollo’s, intent obvious.

“Just a few more minutes,” Chrollo promised as they hobbled to the door. “We’ll get in and get you into be-” Kurapika’s lips against his own were divine, but Chrollo fought with the last of his control to pull out his key and unlock the door while trying to keep Kurapika’s hands out of his pants. Leaning into the door, he stumbled into the house and almost fell face-first onto the rug, Kurapika falling with him.

The jolt from the fall seemed to bring Kurapika back to his right mind for a moment and he struggled to right himself as Chrollo shut the door. His eyes traveled over the front room in mild surprise before focusing on the couch and he practically flew for the soft cushions, falling on them in a tired heap.

“The bedroom is down the hall, first door on the right,” Chrollo called as he moved to the kitchen and checked his small generator. He made sure that the tank was full before starting it up and turning on the lights briefly so he could put the groceries in the fridge before grabbing the birth control from his bag and a glass of water.

Kurapika still hadn’t moved from the couch when Chrollo exited the kitchen, instead he’d only removed his shoes and was pulling Chrollo’s coat firmly around himself.

“Hey-ey!” the words Chrollo had planned to say were lost as a yelp when Kurapika finally lost control and lunged at him when Chrollo attempted to hand him the water and medicine. The tackle
had sent both of them to the floor and for the second time in his life, Chrollo found himself on his back with a bucking and grinding Kurapika on top of him.

The soggy sweater Kurapika had been wearing was pulled off way too fast and Chrollo stared at the beautiful ivory skin and pink nipples that were revealed as Kurapika’s fingers danced up the buttons of his own shirt and began tugging it off of him.

The movements that followed were desperate ones as Chrollo managed to kick off his shoes while Kurapika made short work of unbuttoning their pants. It was as Chrollo allowed his pants to be slipped off of his hips that he noticed the birth control bottle again, but his fuzzy brain didn’t comprehend it as his fingers found their way to Kurapika’s entrance despite their underwear still being in the way. His own underwear felt horribly confining and he lifted his hips to push them down in order to free his member, little Chrollo eager to come out to play and help them make babies…

BABIES!!!

Chrollo’s eyes returned to the bottle and his hand grasped at it as his other stretched Kurapika’s warm entrance, the other keening wildly and pushing himself onto Chrollo’s fingers with delight to finally have his heat sated.

“Kurapika, you need to take these!” Chrollo stated in mild panic, rut forgotten in that moment as he imagined Kurapika’s ire and his own disappointment if they ended up expecting after this first heat. Their honeymoon and all possibilities for Kurapika’s future would be ruined/delayed.

The blonde’s head turned down to stare at him, irises a bright scarlet but he didn’t seem to comprehend him. His hands had moved down to grasp Chrollo’s boxers, ignoring it as Chrollo tried to hand the bottle of birth control to him.

Cool air met Chrollo’s member and he gasped as a now warm hand grasped him, Kurapika shifting to try to line it up with his entrance, but Chrollo’s fingers still blocked the way.

A groan and muffled sob echoed from Kurapika’s throat as Chrollo tucked the bottle under his chin, fingers desperately twisting at the lid before tearing through the seal to grab two pills.

Tucking the pills into his mouth, Chrollo sat up with a heave, catching Kurapika’s mouth with his own. His tongue dove into Kurapika’s mouth, delivering the pills while thoroughly enjoying the kiss. Some part of Kurapika must have realizes what Chrollo had given him since he swallowed on reflex.

Duty finished and feeling as though it was now safe to continue, Chrollo stood quickly and picked Kurapika up bridal style before heading to his bedroom.

Killua glared at the two Spiders who had taken to following Gon and him and brought Kalluto with them. They had been careful to keep an eye on the three of them since arriving at Greed Island and for some strange reason, they seemed to have Biscuit in their corner.

To make matters worse, he couldn’t convince Kalluto that they needed to escape. His little brother seemed to not mind the Spiders at all and was even respectful to the pair.

Currently the blonde male Spider, who insisted they call him Shal or Shalnark, was discussing plans for Killua and him to leave in two days time for the Hunter Exam.
“I collected the necessary cards when we were in town two days ago and-”

Biscuit looked mortified. “You should have had the boys do it as training!”

“I did! I kept the cards after!”

“Good!”

Killua almost growled before he received another ladleful of the stew they were having tonight delivered to his bowl by Paku. While Biscuit and Shalnark had taken over training, the Specialist seemed to have taken up slightly more… Domestic duties. She would cook and watch them at night.

Both of the Spiders had found out just a few days ago about Biscuit being an omega and they’d both been rather quiet for a while before seeming to accept the news.

“Guess those facilities don’t manage to snatch and brainwash all omegas,” Shalnark had finally stated several hours later.

“We should introduce her to Kurapika once…” The way Pakunoda had trailed off left Killua more than a little suspicious.

What had happened? If Paku meant after leaving the game or once Kurapika and the leader-jerk he mated were back from whatever newly mated pairs did, she wouldn’t hesitate to say something!

He’d have to ask some questions once he got the opportunity when he returned to the real world. The examiner for the first round might know something, and Killua was willing to drag things out for a few hours to get an answer. And if he didn’t…

Sharp eyes glanced at Shalnark’s too cheerful smile and he shivered. He didn’t know how the beta would respond to being threatened to answer his questions or he’d let the second round occur, but he was willing to try.

“I should have seen this coming,” Chrollo admitted as he relaxed into his bed, his body sated for the moment but Kurapika didn’t seem to share in that feeling. “I should have known the moment I even considered giving you your hatsu back.”

The only response he got was a cheeky grin as the beauty above him leaned down and gave one of his nipples a light lick as his hips ground against Chrollo’s.

“If I had known, I might have tried keeping your power for a while,” the dark haired alpha admitted as he gasped at the teasing. “Maybe… maybe…”

The jingle of a chain caused the Spider to glance down and to see that Kurapika’s chains were starting to circle his thighs, stimulating him in a way he’d never quite experienced. Chained down and dominated by his mate when he decided to return his hatsu during a brief break… If he’d known it would be this exciting, he’d have suggested it on their first night!
Houses to never be homes and raising hell.

Chapter by Boozombie

Chrollo awoke content and a little numb. His body was so satisfied he could purr and stretch like a cat under the warm morning light filtering through the curtains of their bedroom.

Their bedroom...

Chrollo actually purred now, he’d never been able to think that before about his private home, only now that he shared his home with his mate did he realize how lonely it all was. His home had never felt so bright before.

Chrollo finally opened his eyes to be greeted with the beautiful sight of Kurapika’s sleeping face. Every muscle in his body was like jelly, he looked unbelievably comfortable curled up in all the blankets, Chrollo wasn’t even mad that he had taken all of them at some point during the night. He looked too cute to be mad at.

The chains had disappeared at some point in night so Chrollo stretched, grinning when his bones cracked like a firecracker all the way down his back. Kurapika didn’t even stir!

“Kurapika,” Chrollo called softly, brushing his forefinger down his pale cheek and gently brushing a few strands of golden hair out of his mouth. They were wet with drool and must have tickled his face because he immediately rubbed at his cheek with his knuckles like a child and mumbled something about being hungry.

It was incredibly adorable.

“Hungry? I’m not surprised, you were pretty active all night.” Chrollo spoke softly to his still sleeping mate, his only response was to snore softly and turn around irritably, dragging the blankets he was hugging with him. It figures he’d fall for the only monster in the world whose libido and stamina trumped his own. “I’ll go make you something to eat.” Chrollo couldn’t wipe the smile off his face if he tried as he left the bed behind and threw on a pair of comfortable sweatpants, skipping a shirt or socks since it was pleasantly warm this morning.

He found himself humming and so he decided to click on the small radio he had in the kitchen. He set it to a soft volume and bobbed his head a bit to the jazzy beat that played as he washed his hands and set the oven to preheat.
The vision of living here with his mate and their future children entrapped him as he added some butter to a glass pan and slid it into the oven so the butter could melt while he mixed the other ingredients.

The thought was just as brilliant as he knew it would be: he could imagine a small child running around his feet as he cooked. Kurapika reading at the table with another settled in his lap, bright excited eyes eating up the information because of course their children would be intelligent! It was as he lost himself in the fantasy that he ended up hitting his hip into the sharp edge of the table.

The breath was knocked out of him at the pain that tore up his side, he hadn’t been expecting it so he’d had no nen to protect him.

He stared at the sharp corner for a moment, the fantasy in his end shifting into a large concern as he was reminded that his house would need some massive child proofing before they even thought about having a baby.

He let it go easily since it was a problem easily fixed and moved to the fridge to gather up some milk and eggs.

It was good he thought to grab some groceries since it’s a hassle to get in the boat and then deal with the ten minute walk into town, then of course carrying it all back. Plus with the random downpours there was a good chance you’ll end up doing it all soaking wet.

It’s a good thing the kids will have both of them so they won’t have to go out in all that. . . Wait. . . Chrollo could be away a lot, couldn’t he? Same with Kurapika if he joined the troupe or did something else. Would that mean one of them would have to sail across the lake, possibly in a raging storm carrying a newborn?!

That wasn’t very good. In fact that was a good way to lose a baby and just the thought of losing a child made his heart freeze.

They could just live somewhere else until the children were old enough to be alone in the house for half an hour, but didn’t that call into question his own sanity? Did he really originally plan to just leave Kurapika here alone? With a newborn was one thing, but the thought of a heavily pregnant Kurapika trying to sail across the lake in the middle of the night because of a craving was just terrifying. The worst thing was that he knew Kurapika was crazy enough to do it.
Shaking his head because they had plenty of time to discuss such matters, children were a ways off. It’s not like Kurapika was going to get pregnant anytime soon.

He added some cinnamon to the bowl and whisked for a moment as his fantasy evolved to Kurapika letting the children have fun on the beach while he went to do the shopping. As he poured the batter into the glass pan and set it to bake he remembered something he’d completely forgotten about: when he’d built his house he had added a few extra ‘defenses’. One being some rather vicious carnivorous fish added to the environment of the water.

Chrollo could smack himself as he looked around again and just knew this house could never truly be a safe home for children. With just a quick look around he could count many things that would seriously wound and even kill a child.

There was his weapons collection, most coated in poison, then the completely uncovered fireplace, and then there were the booby traps he’d set around the property that he should definitely warn Kurapika about as soon as possible. It looked like they wouldn’t be raising any children here.

That was fine though. They had plenty of options and it wasn’t like money was tight! He could build them a safe place to grow up anywhere Kurapika chose!

Chrollo jumped when two sly hands circled his waist and dipped immediately into the front of his pants.

“Kurapika!” His voice came out as a croak then a groan as Kurapika grasped him and began to run his fingers over his shaft. “Kurapika, how are you still revving to go?”

“Hungry,” was Kurapika’s only response.

“Well breakfast will be ready soon.” Chrollo took Kurapika’s hands off his now hard member and tried to keep him at bay long enough to get him fed. “Be patient.”

Kurapika frowned and pushed him back into the countertop.

“Different hunger, feed me.” Chrollo face flushed a bit and realized with closer examination that
the omega was still half asleep and definitely feeling the last bits of his heat.

“Alright.” Chrollo hummed happily, perfectly fine to let breakfast burn as he took the boy’s lips with his own. His mate sure was a task master, he was definitely a happy man.

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Killua sighed irritably, he couldn’t run away even though the Spider had left him to find his own way to the testing grounds. He felt absolutely stuck and the only thing he could think of was seeing if that old man in charge of the Hunter Exams would help him out. It was a long shot but he hoped, prayed for Netero to call him in for a private chat again.

Shalnark watched from a distance, he knew exactly where the first exam was to take place since it didn’t include moving and he’d have to start the second exam in the same building. He just wanted to make sure Killua got there alright, he was an omega! Not that he thought him weak.

That thought would be impossible after watching him train under Biscuit’s watchful eye, the boy was a prodigy! But that didn’t mean people wouldn’t try to mess with him. If something got out of control he wanted to know, that was all.

But once Killua had found the exam site Shalnark no longer had any reason to dally and so would have to face the Chairmen in his waiting area. Normally the man didn’t come out this early in the exams, but the beta was pretty sure the man knew he was a Spider so he probably wouldn’t be left alone while anywhere close to important information hubs.

There was also the concerning lack of information on Kurapika in any Hunter database. Yes there were the internet videos, the posts he’d put up about the sale, and Prince Tserriednich’s wanted ads to hunt down Kurapika, but nothing on his current status, if he’d reported in, or if anyone had found him.

No one had told him if danchou had even found Kurapika yet! He was really beginning to worry, especially since he knew Kurapika must be hip deep in heat at the moment.

When he entered the room his test would take place in he wasn’t even surprised to see Netero already waiting for him with two cups of tea ready. He should really figure out how he would test anyone left, but it seemed the chairman had something to talk about if the way he was stroking his beard was any indication.
As Shalnark sat across from the man he began to think that the only reason he was called for the exam this year was because Netero wanted to get him alone.

“Good day Mr. Chairman, I didn’t expect to see you so soon.” Shalnark started, eyes narrowed but his usual smile wide as ever.

“No need to be so formal. Shalnark, I was hoping to talk to you about one Kurapika Kuruta, who I have become aware that your group has captured and kept locked up for the last couple months.” Shalnark knew this was coming but what he didn’t expect was the surge of hope that Netero might just have some information on Kurapika. He couldn’t even stop the questions that came bursting forward.

“Have you guys heard anything from him!?” Shalnark gasped and set down his tea cup. “I know he can handle himself but those videos online made it look like he was having a hard time.”

Netero balked at the blonde beta for a moment, he had expected to be negotiating Kurapika's freedom from the troupe. It would be difficult seeing as he had been marked by the Phantom Troupe leader but he wanted to at least make sure he was free and happy. The only Hunter of the troupe being concerned for the omega was completely the opposite of what he thought would happen.

Netero took a moment to really understand the situation, it seemed immediately obvious that he knew nothing about the relationship between Kurapika and the troupe.

“Tell me Shalnark,” Netero started ignoring the young Hunter’s question completely. “How did Kurapika’s marking actually happen?”

“Why do you ask?” Shalnark smiled a little wider, annoyed that the man was ignoring him.

“Because your group had him for three months and even had an auction up and ready for him at one point but then you cancelled it.” Netero leaned forward on his elbows and took the other man apart with his eyes. “Then you all just fell off the face of the earth, no news about what you had all done with Kurapika before suddenly I hear your boss has marked him. You could say I’m interested in how that all happened.”

Shalnark remained silent, mostly out of loyalty. He wouldn’t reveal any secrets of the Phantom
“Look, I know you have to maintain your secrets. I just want to make sure he isn’t mistreated by your Troupe leader.”

“Don’t even suggest that!” Shalnark glared. “My danchou wouldn’t ever harm Kurapika! He cares deeply about him, none of us have ever seen him so happy!”

“But is Kurapika happy?!” Netero growled, losing his cool for just a moment.

“Yes!” Shalnark yelled out before reeling himself back in. “At least I think so, he wouldn’t have asked danchou to mark him otherwise!”

“Wait he asked?” Netero sat back a little stunned. Mostly because Kurapika didn’t seem the type to succumb to Stockholm syndrome or be brainwashed, so there had to be more to it all right?

“Well yes! Danchou said he was free to go and Kurapika turned around and asked to be marked, we could all tell they were goo goo for each other so I guess that’s just the nail in the coffin for Kurapika.” Shalnark eyes had a distance in them as he told Netero about the extraordinary circumstances that led to Kurapika becoming part of their family.

“So no torture or brainwashing occured?” Netero asked just to make sure.

“No none of that! . . . After the first month.” Shalnark blushed a bit when thinking of his sex education he’d tried to implement. Netero glared so Shalnark tried to explain himself. “Okay it was nothing bad! None of us had ever met an omega before so we didn’t know how they should act so we relied on stereotypes for awhile, once we realized our mistake we stopped!”

“So Kurapika was marked by choice?” Netero confirmed with a smile and Shalnark nodded. Netero leaned back with a hum. This last couple months had been a disappointing time for him, not only were his Hunters completely fine with turning their backs on one of their own, but they were also all fine with Pariston’s completely ridiculous plan! Now he felt a kinship with a criminal organization over his own Hunters. It had been an odd couple of months.

Now he just had to decide how he was going to deal with it all. When he’d met Kurapika during the Hunter exams he’d been incredibly impressed with how strong he’d grown up. He had seen him as
For years he’d occasionally stop and think of the little omega up on that branch looking so stricken, thinking to himself what had happened and if he should have helped him more than just making sure his family was laid to rest properly. Now he actually had a brilliant idea of how he could help Kurapika out.

“Shalnark, you should know that Kurapika did in fact call the Hunter Association, and according to our intel, he has safely returned to your boss.” Netero smiled, liking what he’d figured about Kurapika’s situation and the Phantom Troupe as a whole. If they could see past stereotypes when the Hunter council couldn’t, then they couldn’t be all bad.

“Really?” Shalnark grinned, finally he could stop worrying that Kurapika was dead in the ditch somewhere!

“But his license has been revoked against my wishes.”

Shalnark’s expression immediately became darker as Netero went on to explain everything that had happened and why and even the vice-chairman’s horrible and demeaning plan for Kurapika.

“Danchou will definitely take revenge for his mate! I hope you understand that!” Shalnark slammed down the rest of his now lukewarm tea irritably.

“That is what I’m counting on,” Netero grinned at Shalnark, liking the confused expression he gave that slowly melted into one of understanding.

“Go on.”

“Well you see I have an idea, considering you’ve merged your pack with Kurapika’s, Killua can now officially represent the rest of the Phantom Troupe.” Shalnark’s wide smile returned as he finally understood.

“So the Troupe might just be able to raise some sanctioned hell if they were all given Hunter licenses, but since none of them care to come get one Killua could potentially earn them for the Troupe?”

“Exactly, it’s a fairly unused loophole but it isn’t banned. What do you say?” Netero leaned
forward again. “I know you aren’t excited to be testing examinees, but if you don’t this really can’t
work.”

Shalnark thought on it but honestly it wasn’t a bad deal. He’d been trying to get the rest of the
Troupe to get their Hunter licenses for years and this would keep them from being hunted down
once they took revenge for Kurapika!

“Let’s do this!”
It took 3 hours for Kurapika to be sated to the point where Chrollo could get their breakfast out of the oven. Black was the only word to describe the food at that point so he turned his attention to making something else. After a long moment, he decided to make the breakfast cakes Kurapika was so fond of and mixed the ingredients quickly, terrified that at any moment his insatiable mate would decide he wanted to drain Chrollo of whatever was left from his barely functioning balls.

For the first time since they arrived, he was actually able to finish cooking and bring a plate of hot food to his mate rather than either a hastily made sandwich or half-cooked mess.

Kurapika was once again curled into the blankets of the bed, hugging a pillow as he stared out of the window, blinking slowly. He seemed to finally be regaining lucidity.

“It’s peaceful here,” Kurapika finally said as Chrollo settled on the bed next to him.

Chrollo nodded as he reached over and settled the plate next to Kurapika. “I always thought a lake house would be peaceful and quiet. I made sure to thoroughly scout several locations before settling on this one. It was so different from Ryuuseigai…”

Kurapika understood automatically. “Much like the snow and mountains.”

“I was planning for us to stay here for a few days and then head out. I’ve got my personal book collection here that I think you would enjoy. Where would you like to go?”

The plate was finally grabbed and Kurapika smiled at the food. “Guess it might be too late for the winter festival in Jappon.” The smile was slightly disappointed and Chrollo reached forward, tucking a stray strand of hair behind Kurapika’s ear.

“But the new year has just passed and I think both of us would enjoy having the trip I initially planned for us in Sarip.”

“And stay in that base where Gon and Killua fell through the ceiling?!”

Now Chrollo chuckled. “I was actually thinking of staying at a hotel this time, but if you want…”

“No, a hotel would be fine. What were you planning on our first trip before it was interrupted?”

The alpha smiled brightly as he described the archives and museums he believed they would both enjoy as well as the food. “Maybe we could even have a cooking class together?”

“I’ll make coffee and you can make the eggs?” Kurapika’s tone was light and teasing, causing Chrollo to laugh.

“You’re going to always remind me about telling you about that, aren’t you?”

“You saw my eggs.”

“I saw a lot of attempts at cooking, and I saw you get very good at it.” Kurapika blushed a bit at Chrollo’s praise. “And I’d like us to have a dish or two that we learn during this time and always make together.”
The pillow Kurapika had been hugging smacked him in the chest rather suddenly.

“Corny bastard,” the blonde declared in a teasing tone.

“Your corny bastard!”

Killua believed he was doing his good deed of the year as he finished knocking out the last of the applicants for the Hunter Exam. It was actually a lucky occurrence for all of them that the flamboyant examiner had made this portion of the exam a free-for-all brawl! It would have been a bit more difficult if the exam had been like Menchi’s portion during the previous one!

Collecting all the badges to ensure that no one would try to continue through even if one of them did manage to wake up in time, Killua moved to the stairway that the examiner indicated he would be waiting in.

The man looked shocked when Killua entered alone, even more so when he checked the other room.

“Killua! Great to see you!” Chairman Netero called as he seemed to appear out of thin air. For some reason, Killua could practically smell mischief on the man. “I see that we’ll be able to move on to the second portion of the exam now.”

“But Chairman, there’s only one applicant!” the examiner declared.

“It doesn’t mean that he has automatically passed the exam yet. I’ll let the second examiner decide. We have had years where no new Hunters joined our ranks after all… Though I do believe that your exam is the first one ever in the history of the exam to cause over 1000 fails in a single exam and leave only one person standing. Good job!”

The examiner looked thrilled and began to thank Netero, but the man just motioned for Killua to follow him up the stairs.

“There was a single present candidate that passed the first portion of the exam,” Netero called out as the entered a hall just a single story up. Shalnark was leaning against the wall with his normal grin on his face but there was something off about it, just as there was with Netero.

Killua’s gaze shifted between the men, certain that these two were planning something.

“I don’t believe we’ve told you yet about something that happened to your friend Kurapika,” Netero stated as they walked towards Shalnark, who opened the door that was next to him.

“Kurapika?! What did the troupe do to him?!?” Killua practically screeched as his hand shifted into a claw.

“Nothing! Danchou adores Kurapika!” Shalnark snapped. “So much so that he decided to merge our packs!”

“Which is key here,” Netero broke in. “You see, the troupe did out Kurapika as an omega, and the Hunter council… Decided to invalidate his license.”

“What?!!?” Killua roared in sudden anger and bloodlust. “I’m an omega and… Are you about to tell me that I can’t be licensed as well?!”
“Not at all! I’ve gone over your paperwork thoroughly and ensured they won’t be able to take your license. But we have decided on a bit of revenge. Revenge that we need your help in.”

“Alright.”

Shalnark blinked. “You don’t want to know how you’d help?”

“No. Besides, if Gon found out I hesitated, he’d be disappointed.”

Netero chuckled as he stroked his beard. “Then I declare you a valid proxy since you are a member of the pack and are in agreement!”

Proxy? He was representing someone else? “Are we getting Kurapika’s license reinstated?”

“That’s not quite possible, Kurapika has already taken and passed the exam. A person can only do that once. Now, what is your judgement Shalnark?”

“Then who is passing?!” Killua demanded hotly.

Shalnark grinned. “I declare that the proxy of the Phantom troupe, Killua, has passed the Hunter exam, representing both himself and eleven members of the troupe!”

Killua felt his jaw unhinge.

“I hereby cancel the bounties set on the members of the Phantom troupe and give them a mission: cause havoc in order to punish the parties responsible for tormenting the omega Kurapika!”

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Despite the fact that Kikyo had ordered Kyo to remain away from the room where his alphas were being held outside of meal times, he found himself staring at the door one day after spending time with Grandpa Zeno.

The old man insisted that what they did was called ‘training’ but it was vastly different from any training Kyo ever remembered going through. The man wanted him to act demure and polite, like a proper omega which Kyo was quite familiar with. But he wanted him to do that AFTER climbing several walls, picking several locks, and running from the gate of the property to the main house. All as silently as he could. What followed was the man trying to get Kyo to slip the contents of a vial into the beverages of the many butlers and family members in the house. He’d only been successful a handful of times, managing to deliver the contents into cups that belonged to several of the servants, Kikyo, and the unpleasant beta called Milluki.

He’d been worried at first over what the contents of the vial did until Grandpa Zeno called everyone together after the first training session and had them stick out their tongues. Everyone Kyo had managed to successfully slip the substance to had their tongue ‘tagged’ by blue dye.

Kikyo had been over the moon when he managed to ‘tag’ her for a second time several days later, insisting that he deserved a second serving of dessert. Milluki attempted to stop all intake of fluids when he found himself being ‘tagged’ each time. He’d thrown a hissy fit when he still ended up ‘tagged’ when Kyo slipped the contents of the vial onto a burger he had been chowing down on.

Kyo could admit that he was having a lot of fun but the knowledge that his alphas were still being punished always caused a strange empty feeling.

That was why he found himself staring at the door for the room his alphas were in, considering if
he should enter to check on them.

“Concerned?”

Kyo jumped at the voice, surprised to find a small man beside him, an extremely old alpha. He’d seen him at meals sometimes and Kikyo had introduced him as Great-grandfather Maha but they’d never spoken.

“There is an observation room if you want to check on them.” The short man motioned to a small door and led Kyo to it.

“Thank you,” Kyo stated softly, then stopped short as the short man took hold of Kyo’s arm.

“You might not like what you’re about to see, but you cannot free them,” the elderly alpha stated firmly. “Illumi has caused great shame on this family for purchasing an enslaved omega rather than courting one.”

“But… Isn’t that-?” The boy forced himself to stop as he realized he was about to argue with an alpha. What was this place doing to him?!

“That isn’t how it is supposed to be!” Maha practically shouted. “My father and mother started our family business and made it a point to remind every generation that alphas and omegas are equal! Two halves of the same whole! We have treasured each child, alpha or omega, and recognize that omegas can be stronger, better than an alpha! Illumi forgot that, even after being displaced from being the heir of the family by his younger omega brother!”

Kyo stood shock still as the old alpha moved smoothly down the hall, his head swimming. He knew that Kikyo had had five children, Illumi being the firstborn and an alpha. Milluki followed him. Killua was an omega that came third followed by Alluka who was also an alpha. Finally there was Kalluto, an omega that he had seen briefly before Kikyo sent him away when Kyo first arrived.

So, despite there being two alphas and a beta to choose between, one of the omegas was regarded as the strongest of the children and was thus the heir?!

Kyo’s brain felt fuzzy from shock as he moved into the observation room. What he saw through the large windows caused his to freeze, every instinct screaming at him to race to the aid of his alphas. Both of the men were strapped down on spiked chairs with heavy blocks of cement in their laps. What caused Kyo to not go to them was the warning he had heard in Great-grandfather Maha’s voice and the fact that neither man looked to be in pain. If anything, the dark-haired one, Illumi, looked apathetic while the insane redhead looked to be enjoying himself.

“Do you think they’ll turn on the screaming again?” the redhead asked his fellow alpha as Kyo forced himself to calm down.

“I hope not. My ears are still ringing.”

“What about those burning sticks?”

“You were whipped earlier today.”

“That was just a light spanking!”

Illumi gave his companion the stink eye and Kyo began to realize that the men either weren’t aware of him and didn’t deign to acknowledge him. Somehow, the thought of the latter option
caused a brief anger to spark in Kyo’s stomach before he forced it out.

“You know I love punishments! I just can’t wait for when we finally get out of here! Chrollo promised to finally fight me!”

Kyo could have sworn that his alpha looked aroused at just the thought.

“He will kill you, especially if you were correct in your evaluation of the worth of that omega you were interested in. Chrollo doesn’t take well to someone attempting to steal from him.”

“Do you think he’ll use those flesh-eating fish of his? I’ve also seen him use a teleportation technique! He’s a planner as well and is probably collecting techniques to surprise me! I hope he comes up with something good!”

Kyo was trembling as he took a step away from the window, his head spinning. Flesh-eating fish? His alpha getting killed?! The silver-haired omega tried to take a gasping breath and the heads of both alphas turned in his direction, but Kyo didn’t notice as he turned and rushed from the room, unaware that he hit one of the levers on his way out.

Inside the torture room, Illumi mentally groaned as the chairs began to deliver a series of electric shocks while beside him, Hisoka cackled. With the cement blocks holding them down, the jerking of their bodies drove the spikes on the chairs a little deeper into their skin.

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Chrollo hadn’t been kidding about having a large number of books in his private home. Once Kurapika had been lucid enough to bathe and dress himself, he had discovered that half of the house was dedicated to housing the books as a form of library!

Running his fingers over the spines of the collection, he found himself smiling at the titles he read. Many were first-editions, all were on subjects he found interesting. There was also a single shelf dedicated to some historical fiction novels and Kurapika glanced at Chrollo in question.

“I was young!” the man declared. “And those were interesting. I actually studied them and began to make correlations on which historical figure each character was based on.”

Chrollo looked handsome that afternoon, seated on a couch wearing a white button-up and black slacks, seemingly his normal choice in clothes when not acting as the troupe leader. His eyes were slightly wide during his explanation, making him look a bit younger and too innocent.

“Hmm… Then I might need to see if I agree with those deductions!” Kurapika replied as he grabbed the first book in the series before walking over to sit next to his mate.

Chrollo’s shoulder brushed his lightly and he leaned forward and pressed his lips to Kurapika’s neck lightly before his phone began to buzz.

Glancing at the offensive device, Chrollo grabbed his book and turned the page. “It’s been a few years since I last read them and the series isn’t complete. But I believe I’ll get you to agree to my research.”

“Is that a challenge?”

“Yes, and to make sure you don’t try to argue different figures, you’ll present your choices first!”

The phone had gone silent and Chrollo was more than happy to let it go and relax with his mate.
“Hello?” he began.

“Danchou, just giving you an important update. The Hunter Association has cancelled the bounties on the Phantom Troupe!”

Of all the possible things this call could have been about, Chrollo had NOT anticipated that! It wasn’t even a peripheral possibility! He was proud of his bounty! He’d worked hard to ensure that he and his troupe were some of the most feared bandits out there!

“How did that happen?” he demanded as Kurapika straightened up beside him, grey eyes flashing in question.

“You all passed the Hunter Exam so Chairman Netero saw fit to cancel the bounties!”

Shalnark’s smirk was apparent over the phone and caused Chrollo to pause. There was some sort of plot afoot here.

“When did we sign up and participate in the Hunter exam?”

“Just a few hours ago with Killua as the proxy for the troupe, allowed since I personally knew and could vouch for each of you. And Chairman Netero approved of it. He also gave us a mission.”

Now Chrollo felt a small tug at his lips. “Mission?”

“Yep! Raise some havoc, this time perfectly legal havoc to punish those that took away Kurapika’s Hunter license. And boss, I heard about a deal that those creeps tried to make with Kurapika.”

“What kind of deal?”

Machi sat up as her phone began to ring and glanced at Uvo as the giant grunted and glared at the device. They’d gone to a base along with Phinks, Feitan, and Nobunaga to await word on what the samurai’s punishment would be.

Nobunaga was stationed in a closet, nen binders in place while Phinks and Feitan glanced in from the next room, earning a growl from Uvo as he pulled the blanket over Machi’s bare shoulders.

“Danchou?”

“We have all been made licensed Hunters.”

“What?!” Machi was rarely surprised but this time she honestly was. Uvo wasn’t going to be thrilled about this.

“I need you to continue to watch Nobunaga while fulfilling a new mission we’ve been assigned by Chairman Netero himself.”
“After we check in which museum do you want to see first?” Chrollo grinned over to his lovely mate who sat with a peaceful smile in the passenger seat. He still couldn’t believe the Hunters would give Kurapika such a cruel deal and hearing it all again from Shalnark, getting the specifics of it all, it made him furious.

The first time he had heard of it Kurapika had been crying and there had been more pressing things to think about at the time. Now he was just plain pissed, the only thing that managed to calm him down was the knowledge that at this moment his Spiders were delivering righteous justice to those that would harm their alpha’s mate. They didn’t know yet that Kurapika was thinking of joining the Phantom Troupe but it didn’t matter to them, as far as he could tell they mostly all already thought of him as part of their pack.

“They just rebuilt the national treasure museum, and I heard they even added an observatory!” Kurapika’s voice barely hid how excited he truly was about this trip. Chrollo felt pride at how perfect the honeymoon he had planned was.

“Alright, looks like the Sarip National Treasure Museum it is.” Chrollo grinned, Kurapika hiding how excited he was is the cutest thing he had ever seen. “Shalnark is meeting us at the hotel to deliver my Hunter license, he also said one of the Scarlet eyes was close to Sarip. If you want we can take a little detour and pick it up at some point.” Kurapika wasn’t surprised by the fact that Chrollo now had a Hunter license because Chrollo had told him. They were mates now so of course Chrollo had told him, they didn’t want any secrets getting in the way of their relationship.

“That sounds fun.” Kurapika commented lightly, not letting it loose that he thought this was an ample opportunity to see how compatible he and Chrollo were in battle, and how he felt being on a Phantom Troupe mission.

“Then it’s decided, oh and knight to A6 and checkmate.” Kurapika groaned as he dutifully moved the piece on their magnetic chess board. Chrollo chuckled but didn’t let it go to his head considering it was the first time he’d won for a while now.

“You broke my winning streak!” Kurapika groaned out as he hurried to set up the board again. The alpha just laughed and didn’t tell his omega not to, they were close to their hotel but they might have enough time to at least start a new game.
“So you’re really okay?” Killua asked sceptically. Kurapika wasn’t expecting Shalnark to bring Killua along with him so had been caught off guard. He thought Killua would still be shouting about him being brainwashed or something else just as silly but no. Killua came at him with only one question.

Kurapika thought on it seriously, was he really okay? The simple answer was yes, the complicated one was no but not because of his relationship. It was just everything; the Hunters, the fact that the Troupe now had licenses and he didn’t, the general feeling of being lost, then of course Chrollo’s proposal. He wasn’t ready yet to unpack all of it so he nodded firmly to his white haired friend. Chrollo seemed to relax and Kurapika didn’t realize how tense the question had made everyone else in the room so he added his words for good measure.

“Yes Kil, I’m really okay.” Killua relaxed, his gaze flickering to Chrollo for a moment.

“Shalnark told me the whole story on the way here, I know it all but I still don’t understand.” Killua let his hands clench at his sides and didn’t let his eyes drop. Intense searching blue eyes dug into determined grey. “I can’t understand why you’d pick him.”

Kurapika felt his shoulders deflate a bit, he had been hoping that Killua and Gon would support him eventually.

“But,” Kurapika’s eyes widened hopefully. “You are my friend and that won’t change just because I don’t understand your choices.” Killua turned immediately to Chrollo and gave him his most intimidating glare. “So if you hurt him even the tiniest bit, know that I’m not the only one that’s gonna come and hunt you down!”

Chrollo kept a blank face, the same blank face that Kurapika now recognized as his thinking face. The subtle movements in his muscles telling him exactly what he was feeling. It was surprising to realize that somewhere along the way he had started to know the Troupe leader so well that he could now see through his calm composure. Chrollo looked like he was relieved, happy, and just a little proud. Kurapika didn’t know why he was proud but didn’t feel the need to ask.

“Of course.” Chrollo finally answered. The alpha and omega gave each other a small nod of respect before Shalnark decided it was time to start talking Troupe business with Chrollo and so they moved to the other room, leaving Kurapika and Killua alone for a moment.
Kurapika let his gaze linger on Chrollo's back, for some reason he felt horribly left out.

“You want to plan some havoc with them?” Killua raised a brow at the other omega. He was still more than a little put off by how much Kurapika had changed.

Kurapika jumped and tried for a strained smile. “No, but I mean they are doing it all for me, I’d like to be apart of it.”

“Well that’s good I guess, you’re still a busybody you can’t just sit back and let people help.” Killua felt much better about it all now.

“There’s nothing wrong with that, besides it’s my problem.” Kurapika huffed as he threw himself onto the couch and folded his arms. “I should be helping!”

“Then help.” Killua answered simply as he sat down next to his fellow omega. Kurapika was a little stunned by the response, he’d spent so long around Chrollo just doing as he was told that he’d almost forgotten that he wasn’t a prisoner anymore. If he wanted to help he could damn well do it!

“Thanks Kil.” Kurapika smiled, a soft and real smile for the first time since Killua had walked through the door behind Shalnark. They sat in comfortable silence for a bit, Kurapika basking in the knowledge that now at least Killua knew he wasn’t a captive anymore, it was nice to know they weren’t going to kick down the door and try to drag him away.

“Well I am your friend, you should talk to us more.” Killua grumbled in his usual slightly grumpy attitude.

“Then I guess I should probably get your phone number!” Kurapika bumped his shoulder suggestively. It felt awkward but Kurapika did want to start being a better friend, maybe it was because he no longer felt like the world was crashing down on him, but he felt lighter and more inclined to indulge in normal things like friendships.

The two omegas exchanged phone numbers, letting Killua oogle the phone he got from Shalnark for awhile before Chrollo and Shalnark came back. They said their goodbyes as Shalnark entrusted the game console to the alpha, saying that they should watch over it. Soon Chrollo and Kurapika were alone again.
Killua and Shalnark quickly got through the entrance of the game before heading out to the meeting spot, it hadn’t been long since they had left but Killua was ecstatic to see Gon again.

“KILLUA!” Gon tackled the white haired omega to the ground when he saw him, ignoring as the adults began to exchange greetings. “I was so worried! Did you get your license? Of course you did, you’re so strong!” Gon babbled like he had been gone years instead of just a few days.

Pakunoda watched the alpha/omega pair with a small smile, they were a cute couple. Kalluto watched almost intrigued, as if he was surprised Killua allowed the young alpha to tackle him.

“So when are you going to let him mark you?” Pakunoda teased lightly, Biscuit abruptly began to giggle behind her as the two immediately froze and snapped away from each other. Their faces gained the color of a beetroot, both boys refusing to look at the other as they tried to deny the obvious.

It took a few minutes for the boys’ embarrassment to fade, they never ended up answering. Gon turned to Killua and demanded to know every detail of his Hunter exam. Ignoring the adults and younger omega, Killua quickly lapsed into a prideful story of beating up everyone in the first round.

“That’s so you!” Gon laughed before the conversation turned somber as Killua continued the story into finding out all about Kurapika’s situation.

Gon’s eyes narrowed but he listened to the entire story, widening in surprise when Killua mentioned being a proxy for the entire Troupe and learning that Kurapika hadn’t been beaten into submission.

“Thos-those JERKS!” Gon roared, feeling like he needed to hit something. “How dare they just take Kurapika’s license because of a technicality!”

“I know! And that deal is just plain offensive!” Killua growled. Biscuit had eavesdropped a bit and also felt an anger consume her, it was what she had come to expect from the world but not from the Hunter Association.

“So the Phantom Troupe is now seeking revenge for him, totally legal!” Killua finished up.
“I don’t like it.” Gon’s hardened his eyes and glared at the two older Spiders. “We’re his friends, if anyone should be avenging him it should be us!” He huffed unhappily.

“But what could you do?” Shalnark tried to hold in a laugh, this 12-year-old getting all serious was very funny to him.

“I’ll become the chairman!” Gon declared, blushing a bit when everyone began to laugh at him.

“You become the Chairman? Are you serious?” Biscuit giggled, not holding back at all.

Gone face turned red again, flustered that none of them believed he could have a serious job.

“We-well then I’ll make Killua the Chairman!” Killua's eyes widened and immediately moved to try and hit his friend over the head but he completely froze at Pakunoda’s next words.

“I guess you’ll be raising the kids then?” She teased Gon, both almost falling over in embarrassment. “Since Killua will be busy running the Hunter Association after all,” she mocked them lightly.

“PAKU!” Gon yelled, incredibly embarrassed. Killua looked at Gon a bit startled, it seemed he wasn’t the only one that had gotten close to a Spider.

Kurapika had enjoyed the museum, so much so that he was still smiling even as he followed Chrollo through the mansion. At the omega’s behest, they weren’t going to be doing any killing so Chrollo was picking locks as they snuck through the shadows.

“If you continue looking so cute we might have to borrow one of this man’s suites,” Chrollo teased the blonde when he looked back to see him still smiling.

“We are on a heist, you should stop thinking with your second head!” Kurapika snapped at the man as he rolled his eyes heavenward. The fact that he actually said the word ‘heist’ didn’t go over his head.
“Who’d ever think, you and me on are first heist together.” Chrollo hummed as he finally cracked the lock on the main study and opened the door for the omega gentlemanly. “It’s like a date.”

“Chrollo Lucifer-“

“Ah, the way you say my name!” he cut in softly.

“-can’t you take this seriously?!”

Chrollo just laughed as they explored the large office, the alpha looking for the safe and the omega getting side tracked by the paperwork left out in the desk. His eyes flashed red as Chrollo pulled back a portion of the wall to reveal a small safe.

“So you feel like burning this place to the ground yet?” Chrollo asked casually as he began the process of breaking into the safe.

“You knew didn’t you?” Kurapika accused with no real heat behind his words. Inwardly he was a little happy, it seemed Chrollo didn’t intend to make him sit out on the whole getting revenge plan.

“That he was an adamant part of the reason you lost your Hunter license? No, I had no idea,” he answered back a bit cheekily. Kurapika shuffled a few of the papers and found something interesting, he smirked a bit and turned to the alpha with an upraised eyebrow.

“Are you sure? Or maybe you knew that he put in an application to be one of the alphas to breed me?”

“Oh yeah, I did know that.” He chuckled as he cracked the safe and grabbed up the scarlet eyes. “So have we decided on burning the house down or not?”

Kurapika took the eyes gingerly, looking down at them and feeling pissed off that someone would dare ruin his prospective career just because he wanted a taste of a living Kuruta.
“Let’s do it, it might make me feel better, torching this guy’s stuff,” Kurapika finally answered, taking a moment to ask himself what the hell was happening to him. Since when did thievery and arson because okay to him? Well, maybe it didn’t matter it’s not like he was innocent.

“If that isn’t the hottest thing ever, then I don’t know what is.”

“That was enjoyable,” Chrollo commented as he brushed a bit of ash from his jacket before helping Kurapika get some off his back. After setting the mansion ablaze the two had found a cozy spot on a hill to watch. The alpha knew how Kurapika felt about loss of life so had set the fire in such a way so anyone inside could escape.

“Yeah, it wasn’t horrible watching that place collapse.” Kurapika grinned, uncaring about the bits of soot on his face. The sun was rising and they hadn’t even slept yet but both were still pretty energized after the arson and heist.

“Right? I knew you’d like it.” Chrollo smiled giddily to himself.

“Hey! Don’t get ahead of yourself, I wouldn’t be okay with all that in normal circumstances. It was just because of the scarlet eyes and that he helped take my license!” Kurapika swatted the alpha’s chest before taking his hand in his.

“Yeah, yeah, you liked it. It was freeing wasn’t it?”

“Maybe a tiny, TINY, bit.” Kurapika growled. Neither noticed the looks they got as they walked the path back to their hotel, having ditched the car since they had just committed a crime.

Alphas kept a safe distance, looks of envy as they caught the omega’s lovely smile. Any betas huffed with disgust that the dark haired alpha would allow his property to speak to him that way, it wasn’t their place to tell an alpha how to handle his omega but it was still unseemly! Any omegas that might have been out to see the passing couple were also envious, not because they wanted the dark haired alpha but because they wanted the happiness that seemed to radiate from them. It was obvious the alpha actually cared for and loved the omega to anyone that passed.

‘What a lucky omega,’ every unhappy omega they passed thought to themselves, all except one.
Chrollo squeezed the young blonde’s hand, silently asking him to pause for a moment. 

Kurapika looked up at him curiously only for the alpha to point off to the side. “It’s an ice skating rink, would you like to try it?” Chrollo looked down at the blonde and smirked. “That is if you’re not too tired.”

“Oh you are on!” Kurapika was immediately up for the challenge that Chrollo proposed, especially because he was the one that had actual experience with winter sports. “First one to fall makes breakfast!”

“You just want me to make your favorite for you again!” Chrollo laughed as he began to lead the way towards the skating rink.

“Kurapika?” A soft voice gasped behind the two. Chrollo pulled his mate behind him protectively and raised a hand towards his hidden Benz knife.

The figure behind him was a short and stout little balding man. He didn’t seem dangerous at all, certainly not threatening.

“SENRITSU?!” Kurapika gasped back and moved from the alpha’s protective circle to embrace the ugly little omega. It was the first time Chrollo had ever met an omega that didn’t hide their gender besides the little Zoldyck but it was obviously because nobody would ever try to kidnap this omega. He wasn’t trying to be rude at all, just making observations. Either way it seemed Kurapika knew him.

“Kurapika, I’ve been very worried, you just disappeared.” Senritsu looked curiously at the alpha and then back to the omega she had started forming a friendship with months ago, her eyes not missing the freshly healed mark on his neck.

“It’s... Ah... Long story.” Kurapika grimaced, he knew Senritsu would know any lie he told so he didn’t bother trying. He just made it clear that he wouldn’t be explaining while in the crowded park. “What are you doing here?”

“I’ve heard rumors of one of the sonata being in this city, I was coming to see if I could find it.” Her voice was just as soft and sweet as he remembered. He really missed her, he didn’t even realize he did.
“Oh that’s good, I’m glad you’re making progress.”

“Kurapika, who is this?” Chrollo asked, not really wanting to ruin this reunion for his mate but also feeling really out of the loop.

“Oh yes of course,” Kurapika stood up. “Senritsu this is my . . . My mate Chrollo, and Chrollo this is my . . . My friend Senritsu.” Senritsu smiled gently at being labeled as a friend and not just a coworker. “She and I used to be bodyguards together.”

Chrollo managed to stop himself from slapping himself for not recognizing a lady, although to be fair she didn’t really look like one, and nodded to her respectfully.

“It’s good to see you have more friends.” Chrollo smiled and slipped a hand around Kurapika’s waist lovingly.

Senritsu looked between them for a moment, listening to the synchronized sounds of their heartbeats before feeling joy radiant from her own heart.

“How did you two meet?” She finally asked.

Kurapika shot Chrollo a look that screamed his worry about telling any lies. He had picked up that Kurapika had deliberately not told his friend a lie earlier and so played it safe with a half truth.

“I first noticed him in a bookstore, he yelled at me for my poor reading choices.” Chrollo couldn’t help the soft chuckle as he remembered the absolute disgust on his face when he saw that book.

Senritsu laughed as well because that did seem so much like Kurapika.

“I never expected the Phantom Troupe leader to be the one to help your heart Kurapika.” She gave the two a little buck toothed smirk when the couple froze.

“Yo-you know?!” Kurapika yelled before realizing everyone was looking at them. “How?” He
Senritsu gave Chrollo a meaningful look before turning to Kurapika. “You forget I have heard his heart, from a distance but it’s very recognizable.” She stepped close to Kurapika and took his hand softly. “Your heart sounds much better, it’s still slightly sad but the loneliness is gone, it is no longer crushing me with every beat.”

Kurapika didn’t really know how to feel about that, it was good and he did feel lighter but it was odd to have someone tell him he was better. In the end he went for hugging the small woman.

“And his heartbeat is better too.” She gestured to Chrollo who was standing casually to the side. He was intrigued by the girl’s ability and his attention was grabbed the moment she mentioned his heart.

“What do you mean?”

“When I heard your heart from a distance long ago it was the most paralyzing thing I had ever heard, but now it resonates with a deep happiness that has so much to live for. And I can feel it’s still growing stronger, you’re learning more emotions everyday.” She explained in a soft wisping of her voice. “I could scarcely believe it was you when I first heard it.”

Chrollo smiled down at the omega, knowing Kurapika was the reason for the change in his heartbeat.

“You two are good for each other.” Senritsu let her eyes close, incredibly happy for the two of them. “I’ll see you around Kurapika.”

“Wait!” Kurapika took out his phone and traded numbers with the mousy girl. “This way we can keep in touch.”

Chrollo approached again, having a pretty good idea on what sonatas the girl was looking for and for some reason wanted to help.

“Senritsu, I could help you track down the sonatas of darkness if you’d like.” Kurapika was surprised by the offer, less surprised that he’d figured out what music Senritsu was looking for so quickly, it seemed like the man was indeed growing a heart. That or he just considered anyone
Kurapika was friends with as under the umbrella of his responsibility.

“That’s nice of you Chrollo,” Senritsu didn’t even blink even the Troupe leader guessed what she was tracking down. “But this is my mission, I can get them myself.”

“Understandable, but if I hear any rumors concerning them I’ll let you know.”

“Thank you very much.” She mused before waving them off and heading out. They watched her go before Chrollo turned to the blonde and took his hand again.

“So ice skating?”
The skate rental place was extremely surprised when Chrollo approached, wanting two pairs of skates. Glancing around the rink, he saw that what few omegas were present were seated on benches around the ice, most shivering and watching the skaters despondently. Several were watching Kurapika with envious eyes as they pulled on their skates.

To say they made a spectacle when they took their first step onto the ice would be putting it lightly. Kurapika was stumbling and slipping while Chrollo attempted to split his attention between keeping his balance and keeping Kurapika up.

Three slipping “steps” later and they both fell, laughing, as Chrollo did his best to try to cushion Kurapika’s fall. Several betas and alphas sneered at them, but the omegas and a few of the alphas watched, envious as the pair got up, laughing.

“You fell!” Kurapika pointed out.

“Only because I was trying to keep you from falling!” Chrollo teased in return. “I want waffles for breakfast!”

“You pulled me down with you!” Kurapika argued, still smiling as he bumped Chrollo’s shoulder with his own.

Deciding to be dramatic, Chrollo pretended to be knocked off balance by the bump and began to flap his arms, authentically unbalancing himself and falling yet again. Their laughter drew more eyes and half the people on the rink watched as Kurapika attempted to help Chrollo up only to become unbalanced and fall next to his mate.

“ Took a while, but you truly have fallen for me!”

The line was corny and drew more laughter as the pair managed to stand on shaking legs.

Little by little they figured out how to skate on the slippery ice, their legs becoming steadier. Their hands remained connected, fingers folded as they slowly made their way around the ice, smiles on both of their faces.

“So what shall we do for breakfast?” Chrollo asked after a long moment. “We are in a hotel after all… Want to order room service or stop in a cafe?”

“What happened to cooking?”

Chrollo hummed for a moment. “How about we take a cooking class this evening?”

“So save the cooking for then?”

“Yes!”

A cold breeze caused Kurapika to press into Chrollo’s side and they settled back into a comfortable silence as they continued to make their way around the ice.

“Is it getting darker?”
Kurapika’s question came as several lamps around the skating rink came on and Chrollo found
himself going cross-eyed when a snowflake touched his nose.

“I think I’m ready for some coffee,” the thief stated as he turned his head to ask what Kurapika’s
thoughts were but froze.

Kurapika looked like an angel, the lights causing his hair to gain a slight halo of gold and making
his pale skin glow as the small flurries began to fill the air. The smile on his face was peaceful and
authentically happy and his eyes were bright as he looked to Chrollo.

Kurapika didn’t flinch or react at first when Chrollo leaned in and kissed him as he began to reply,
instead he wrapped his arms around his mate’s shoulders and kissed back.

It was dinner time again and Kyo was smiling brightly as grandpa Zeno did a tongue check and
discovered that he had been tagged at some point! Kikyo was laughing brightly despite having
been tagged herself and Milluki was sulking over being tagged yet again, the bright blue of his
tongue indicating that he’d been tagged multiple times.

Silva, who seemed to be the main alpha of the house, though he deferred to the elderly alphas and
his mate, was thus far the only person aside from the great-grandfather, that had not been tagged in
Kyo’s game. He still seemed impressed when his father laughed over being caught.

“Seems that he’s quite talented,” the alpha offered, the closest thing to praise the large, brawny
man was likely to give.

“Dear, you know that no one has ever managed to catch your father!” Kikyo exclaimed proudly.
“Even Killua never managed to move silently enough to slip the dye into his cup and Kyo is a
natural who has managed it with only a minimum amount of training! He’ll make a fine assassin
yet!”

Kyo’s cheeks had warmed with the praise he was receiving from Kikyo until the word ‘assassin’
had crossed her lips, and his blood ran cold. Assassin? He knew that word well from the factory:
assassins killed people! But how did killing people correlate with…

His eyes caught on Milluki who was attempting to scrub his tongue to try to get the dye off and it
clicked. If he’d been putting poison into the beverages and food of the people who surrounded him,
them he would have killed them, many never being the wiser!

Glancing at where his mates sat, he winced when he saw their tongues, once again blue. He wasn’t
sure why he had taken to putting the dye in the water intended for them, but it gave him a small
thrill when he saw their tongues had been stained. Until this point.

His head began to pound as Kyo glanced around the table, suddenly realizing what these people
that he had rapidly come to love did. What they expected from him.

Kyo’s hand shook so hard that he dropped his spoon.

The entire table turned their attention to him in that moment and Kyo tried his best to be still and
quiet, exactly as his training had taught him. Regardless, they all saw that something was wrong.

Illumi stared at the omega as well, noting the reaction of his mate. “See, it obviously cannot handle
this sort of life and has its uses in other places.”
Kyo was torn by the words of his alpha, terrified at the notion of not being able to serve his purpose that these people had for him. Would things change if he disappointed them, with him no longer being able to do fun things? Or choose his clothing? He’d come to enjoy pants, even if he alternated between wearing them and the dresses he’d been told all his life were appropriate.

He barely noticed as the table went silent and still as a strange heat filled his limbs, but most of the family relaxed a bit when a sweet scent began to fill the air.

“It’s obviously not meant to be an assassin, so would you allow me to be excused from punishment for a few days to try to impregnate it, mother?”

Kikyo rose suddenly, drawing the attention of everyone, including Kyo, who was terrified at what was about to happen. He was terrified of rejection now, of being cast aside.

The slap that Kikyo delivered to Illumi’s face resounded loudly in the dining room, drawing shocked expressions from no one except Kyo.

“Your MATE is new to this life,” Kikyo snarled angrily. “He’s new to choices, to not being expected to serve submissively, to being a HUMAN and not a PET! His shock and hesitation are to be expected! What is unexpected and unacceptable is your utter dismissal of the fact that he has thoughts and feelings!”

Having someone come to his defense, an omega who seemed to have the complete backing of her alpha and that alpha’s alpha, especially when he had just been afraid that he was about to be rejected, caused Kyo to stare in shock for a long moment before a small smile began to pull at his lips.

A smile that was missed by everyone except for a certain redhead. A redhead who could admit he was already starting to see a small change in his shared mate.

That night Kyo returned to his room to discover that it had been transformed at some point. At the factory, if an omega had their first heat before they were sold, they were given an extra blanket for the duration of the heat. Despite how different his new home already was from the factory, he hadn’t expected what he walked into.

Large soft pillows lined the bed now, softer than any he had ever felt. The sheets had been replaced with something that had Kyo almost purring when he touched them. Extra blankets and pillows were on half of the surfaces in the room as well and those that did not boast extra bedding held what Kyo could only guess were sweets! Candies and luscious desserts and what looked like cups with beverages!

Sweets had been scarce in the factory, the ultimate reward that an omega could receive! One earned them by performing well in lessons, for being obedient and silent. Candy might be doled out each week, given to omegas that behaved, though most never got the reward more than once or twice. The betas seemed to love accusing them of “crimes” and every little infraction, resulting in most of the omegas not receiving candy over something such as a sneeze or cough.

Kyo reached out and gingerly took one of the confections from a plate, recognizing it distantly as a “cookie”, something he’d been forced to learn to make with his future alpha and children in mind. He’d never been allowed to try one, always having to present the cookies to the various guards and instructors.

A knock on the door caused the silver-haired boy to jump and drop the cookie. “Yes?”
“Lady Kikyo sent some heat robes for you, Master,” the voice of one of the many butlers called.

Heat robes?

Kurapika didn’t think he’d ever been more uncomfortable in his life than when he entered the cooking class with Chrollo, and he believed he had a good basis of comparison to go on. With the exception of those vile dresses or being made to practice blowjobs on a banana, having the cooking instructor and entire class full of alphas and betas stare at him took the cake for uncomfortable.

The idiot instructor seemed to think Kurapika was either stupid or deaf because he first tried to send him out to sit in the front lobby until Chrollo cut in and informed the man that he had paid for them both to attend. Following that, the chef had spoken in a very loud and slow tone whenever he had to address Kurapika.

The blonde found himself getting annoyed FAST, but tried to keep his anger in check as he and Chrollo worked to debone their duck. Chrollo seemed to take significant offense as well and began to very purposefully mess up on his portion of the dish.

Kurapika would likely never know how the man managed to believably mix up mushrooms and carrots, but it was hysterical to watch as the chef became bewildered. The dish they were making did not include mushrooms and none were out. Most importantly, Kurapika knew that Chrollo HATED them!

Things escalated as the class went on as Chrollo’s antics included setting a skillet on fire, somehow getting a potato wedged up his nose, spraying the chef with wine, and a number of different bits of petty revenge for each slight that the man made towards Kurapika.

Somehow, their dish still came out looking fantastic, easily the best in the class and the chef seemed to have come to a conclusion on what happened.

“Don’t let him in the kitchen. EVER!” the chef declared to Kurapika as he pointed at Chrollo, completely missing it as the thief used some carrots to mimic the man’s bushy red-orange eyebrows then switched them to vampire teeth.

Kurapika couldn’t keep the smile off of his face as the chef seemed to realize that something was happening behind and turned to find an unrepentant Chrollo still mocking him.

“He’s my goofball.”

The next day the pair visited the National Archives and enjoyed a late dinner before spending one last night in the hotel and deciding to move on.

“Any requests for our next destination?”

Kurapika settled into his seat in the car and thought for a long moment. “Would you mind if we visited Leorio? I… really was out of it when I was there last.”

Chrollo nodded slightly in understanding. “I don’t see why not, I’d like for you to be checked over and he seems trustworthy.”
Gon and Killua were a bit ashamed that they had lost to the younger Zoldyck more than a few times despite teaming up against him. The few times they had won was because Biscuit had called no nen for those rounds. It was painful to admit but Kalluto was better at Nen than they were, he was meticulous in the way he used his abilities.

Pakunoda suggested going to town to get some food and give them all a break after noticing that all three boys were gasping and panting, the round dragging on longer than the others. Biscuit agreed and even let the boys off of the supply run since Pakunoda pointed out that overworking them wouldn’t make them stronger.

Biscuit agreed to head off with Shalnark to gather supplies while Pakunoda supervised the three boys as they took a much needed break. She did not in fact factor in the incredible rebound of three young boys and their ability to run around in three different directions.

By the time she had chased down the three hyper children they were all starving and she had all the money.

“Why were you so hard to find Paku? Was it some kind of test?” Gon pouted, his shoulders sagged from exhaustion after instigating a game of tag with Killua on an empty stomach. “Aren’t we supposed to be on break?” He whined.

Pakunoda had to restrain herself from crushing his hand that for some reason he had slid into hers. She just couldn’t believe he’d blame her for him not being fed yet.

“I wasn’t hiding from you, I’ve been chasing you three through town for hours!” She snapped at the boy holding her right hand, feeling silly about it since she wasn’t the boy’s mother but didn’t feel the need to snatch her hand back. She regretted it the moment Kalluto took her other hand like they were her children and they were in a Sunday picnic.

“Well you're awful at tag and hide and sneak then,” Killua scoffed from Gon’s side.
“That’s true,” Kalluto added in, confirming to Pakunoda that she knew nothing about taking care or being around children.

“Let’s just be silent for a little while okay?” She tried to get all three of the whiny children to just stop talking for a moment. Kalluto had seemed like he’d calm the other two down but it seemed that the opposite effect was happening and Gon was hyping up both of the Zoldyck omegas. Gon was her personal worst nightmare when it came to babysitting and that was becoming very apparent.

Pakunoda somehow managed to get all three boys into a small restaurant with little trouble. All three of them ran for the bar seats the moment they stepped through the door, almost knocking someone over in their rush. Sighing in exasperation, Pakunoda regretted wanting to babysit these three.

She didn’t know why she felt the need to get these children to respect and like her but with three of her oldest friends now in serious relationships she felt she might be dealing with kids more often in the near future since she was definitely the person that would be the most trusted with babysitting. Was it really so wrong that she wanted to get some practice now?

The boys had already deliberated over the menu and ordered the biggest thing on it. She honestly did not feel like paying for these little hellions which worked out perfect since the NPC behind the counter let them know if they finished the meal in thirty minutes it would be free.

“You three better eat fast,” Pakunoda stated a little too sharply, she was very irritated that they made her chase them for so long.

“Or what?” Killua snarked making her eye twitch in irritation but he did start to scarf down food so she let it go. Killua was probably the hardest and easiest of the three to deal with. He reined in Gon most of the time but also had a very sassy disposition and still had a lot of resentment toward the Phantom Troupe, which was annoying since he kept being snarky in his replies to them.

“This is good.” Kalluto ate with decorum, lots of small bites and slow eating from him. If he didn’t get his ass in gear Gon would eat everything.

“Eat faster Kalluto.” Pakunoda mumbled while ordering a coffee for herself. Kalluto was an odd one that was for sure, he rarely spoke unless Gon was pressing him for information about himself. He honestly wanted a better relationship with his brother, especially now that they were both free to roam by their mother’s approval, he could actually forge a real friendship but Killua was a brick wall on that front. Still he was trying very hard for a closed off boy in a kimono.
Some kind of commotion was happening outside the establishment but she paid it no mind, no sense adding to her troubles. The children were a lot easier to deal with when they had some kind of activity that worked toward some small goal. Were all children like this?

The boys finished in a startling ten minutes, but it probably should have been because she had once seen Gon almost eat a plate in his hurry to inhale a cake, and they had been awarded a useless card.

While the boys complained about the cards the noise outside became almost panicky in its tone. Gon with his inhuman abilities managed to notice it first and practically dragged Killua from his seat to investigate. That’s the problem with feeding children, they get their energy back.

Killua went with little protest and Kalluto immediately jumped up to follow even as pakunoda protested but of course they didn’t listen.

Gon felt a strange excitement thrill up his spine, where there was a panicked crowd there was someone to save! After three months of chasing down Kurapika but being unable to save him even once it was safe to say Gon was frustrated. Killua was as well, despite how well the situation had turned out they still felt like they had failed to save their friend. It didn’t help that now the Phantom Troupe was babysitting them like they couldn’t handle anything!

This was an opportunity to make things right, maybe even prove to Pakunoda that she could ease off just a bit.

“Boys!” Pakunoda called out as she moved after them, the sounds outside were that of a mob. She’d kill everyone in the crowd if she had too but really didn’t want to!

Fortunately, or maybe unfortunately, the moment everyone had left the establishment they were sprayed red with blood, a boom echoing in the air, it looked like she wouldn’t need to kill anyone. Bits of skull and bones were everywhere and all three boys seemed shocked by what they’d just witnessed.

It looked like things were about to get interesting.
Kurapika and Chrollo had a good mood flowing between them. After hours of chess games, inside jokes and teasing both wore content smiles as they left the car behind to head up to see Leorio and Franklin.

They’d called ahead, Chrollo instructing that he wanted Kurapika looked over just to make sure he was back to 100% after being on the street for awhile. He seemed fine but you never know when it came to sleeping on the streets. Kurapika was a little annoyed by that but Chrollo had teased him until he let it go.

Leorio has been taking a power nap between studying and advanced nen training, he’d apparently learned fast with the hands on-training Franklin was giving him, plus the troupe member really knew how to motivate the doctor trainee.

Kurapika felt lighter than air as they headed up to the apartment, Chrollo taking his hand like it was the most natural thing to do. Everything was just good lately, yeah they would have to deal with Nobunaga soon but right now he was in love and they almost had all the scarlet eyes! Life was good, even his pack was finally coming around to acknowledging the Troupe leader as his mate.

Kurapika knocked lightly on the door and then moved to just open the door only for it to fly open! He stumbled forward as Leorio pushed past him aggressively.

Kurapika had no idea what was happening until Leorio threw a black book in Chrollo's face and snapped at him.

“What’s the big idea?! I get you’re rich but you don’t need to rub it in my face, got it?!” Leorio was snarling, almost foaming at the mouth. Kurapika’s eyes found Chrollo's startled ones, he couldn’t get over how bad Chrollo was at dealing with people that didn’t behave how he thought they should. He was so used to dealing with flirty betas that fell at his feet and his Spiders that treated him like an infallible genius that when faced with the boys or Leorio he had no idea how to proceed. It was cute to Kurapika, so he giggled and decided to let the situation play out for the entertainment alone.

Chrollo caught the black bank book he’d left behind that the beta had thrown at him and took a moment to try and understand what was happening. He listed it out.

First: Leorio had approved of their relationship. Second: he’d been impressed with the future doctor and his drive so left a bank book to help out with any expenses he might have in the future that couldn’t be covered by his Hunter license. Third: they’d arrived back to visit and Leorio was
yelling about being rich and him rubbing it in. He didn’t know out to respond because it all really didn’t make sense. He’d thought he was being nice, offering help monetarily, wasn’t that something seen by normal people as a very kind and generous thing to do?

Leorio was still ranting too. “HOW DARE YOU! You’re a no good thief! You DON’T get to flaunt around your money like some sort of big shot! What did you think?” Leorio snapped each word, getting threateningly closer to the dark haired alpha as he phrased the question. “Think I’d be impressed?! IMPRESSED THAT YOU’RE RICH AND I'M NOT?!”

Chrollo had taken to waving his hands frantically, the bank book in one hand and that apparently making it all worse.

Kurapika was trying to stifle his laughter, finding everything that was happening extremely hilarious. Chrollo had a habit of doing things without really thinking it through, he didn’t understand how people would react to his actions. Kurapika theorized that it was because Chrollo never doubted his intentions and thought his actions to always be right. Damn he was going to fumble a lot as a father. Kurapika giggled at the thought, especially if they inherited his personality.

“Please calm down.” Chrollo tried as Leorio just kept finding new ways to order him against ‘rubbing his face in Chrollo's large sum of money’. Kurapika was no help at all and he sent a small glare over to the blonde omega. If he had wanted to he could have calmed the beta, as he was the leader of the small pack but he seemed content to let the beta yell at him.

Finally Franklin came bursting into the room and clipped the other beta behind the ear, seeming to understand what was going on better that the alpha.

“I told you there was probably a reasonable explanation!” Franklin growled as he dragged the beta back by his collar to allow the Troupe leader to finally enter the apartment and shut the door. “What happened to letting him explain? You promised me you weren’t going to freak out at him!”

Leorio pouted, obviously upset at the beta reprimanding him, there was a sense of respect between the two. They’d grown close in such a small amount of time. After a moment of grouchy pensiveness Leorio gave him a hard glare and snapped, “Well?!”

He obviously meant his intentions for leaving the bank book. Chrollo brushed back his hair a bit anxiously, if this is how he reacted with Chrollo just leaving his bank book here how would he react when finding out Chrollo had done it to help him? Would he yell about not needing his help?
Kurapika raised a brow behind Leorio at his mate. The smirk on his face telling him that he knew exactly why he had left the book and what he was thinking.

Sighing, Chrollo tried to explain rationally. “I just wanted to make sure you had absolutely everything you needed.” Leorio’s face blanked and Kurapika finally approached the doctor trainee, placing a hand on his arm and giving him a kind smile as Chrollo continued on. “If anything came up that couldn’t be covered by your Hunter license, that money was yours to use. As you mentioned I have enough money to help my pack, I wanted you to be able to reach your dreams.”

The alpha left out that him becoming a doctor was very beneficial to the Troupe.

Leorio looked at him a bit flabbergasted before he visibly deflated. “Oh,” he breathed softly. “Umm, this is embarrassing. I guess I overreacted.”

Kurapika and Franklin laughed leaving the beta and alpha to awkwardly stare at each other while they decided to discuss the cooking class the two had visited.

When they left to talk in the kitchen Leorio decided to clear his throat and give a sheepish pull at his lips. “Want something to eat?” He finally asked.

“That would be lovely.”

“Where are you taking me?” Kurapika asked jovially as he carefully stepped exactly where Chrollo did. You could say he was being to careful but he didn’t believe it was possible to be to careful when your mate was towing you through a minefield.

They stayed over at Leorio’s that night and had a great time. Kurapika had a moment to catch up with Leorio, happy to hear how much he was enjoying school and even starting to really like the nen training, they’d even talked about ideas for his Hatsu. He had some great ideas that were great for battle but also useful for his trade.

Chrollo had discussed some things with Franklin until the night had evolved into everyone sitting
around drinking and talking, while a movie played in the background. It had been nice.

In the morning Leorio gave the omega a check up, constantly reminding Chrollo that he was only a student and a real doctor should look him over at some point and then took a blood sample and promised to have a friend look it over. After the check up Chrollo already had them both packed up, a mysterious picnic basket in the backseat of the car, and they headed out.

“You’ll see!” Chrollo laughed, his eyes focused so that he wouldn’t step on one of the land mines, the basket balanced in one hand and a blanket in the other.

Kurapika grinned even as he felt annoyed by the secretive way Chrollo was acting, but he was incredibly excited for whatever the surprise was. Throughout this trip Chrollo had planned out so many amazing activities, the Troupe leader definitely didn’t hold back when showing that he cares.

“Why the minefield?” Kurapika was keeping his eyes down so he couldn’t see what was coming ahead of them. It wasn’t intentional, he just didn’t want to blow them up.

“Because of this.” Chrollo suddenly pulled him to his side and held out a hand. What lay in front of them was a beautiful white sand beach, completely untouched by human hands for what had to be around 50 years! Cliffs rose up on both sides making it a private beach for anyone brave enough to make their way through the abandoned battlefield.

“This is. . .” Chrollo waited breathlessly as Kurapika looked over the piece of untouched land with those wide gorgeous eyes of his before turning back to him with a slight blush. “Beautiful! Oh, Chrollo!”

“Come, Franklin packed us a picnic.” The alpha grinned, having gotten the reaction he was after. Kurapika nodded and stepped after the alpha, still cautious of land mines but it seemed that the danger had passed.

Chrollo laid out the blanket and set the basket on top.

“I’m guessing you have our swimsuits ready?” Kurapika smirked as he looked between the calm sea and Chrollo who was setting out the food and pouring some warm drink into two glasses.

“A little cold for swimming isn’t it?” He smirked back.
“You’re the one that brought me to a beach, I figured you had some type of plan.”

“Can’t a man just want to have a lovely picnic with his mate?” He handed Kurapika his cup and realized it was coffee. It was made the way Kurapika liked it too, the gesture did not go unnoticed by the omega. He sat down by the dark alpha and pecked his cheek to show his appreciation.

“I find you are unlike any man.” They grinned at each other light heartedly before their gazes suddenly became heavier and tension rose up between them.

Chrollo cleared his throat, coming off as more of a growl than anything. “You know this beach is completely private, no one can see us.” He gestured around suggestively.

“Oh. . .” Kurapika looked around and wasn’t surprised to find Chrollo was now much closer. “That’s very interesting.” Kurapika inched forward too only for Chrollo to swiftly take his neck in his hand and pull the omega forward to devour his lips.

Kurapika growled huskily in his throat and kissed the man back, pushing his tongue to clash with the alpha’s.

Chrollo ran a hand up Kurapika’s side, pushing up his sweater to fondle at his chest. He smirked against Kurapika’s lips as he gasped when he pinched his pink nipple. Gently the dark alpha pushed the omega to lay on his back, placing himself firmly between his sprawled legs.

“God you’re beautiful,” he whispered as he peppered kisses down his chin and over his neck.

“You would know!” Kurapika snapped with a gasp when Chrollo began to suck on his skin, obviously intent to decorate his neck with hickeys.

Chrollo nipped at the scar on his neck from his mating mark and dragged his teeth across it. Kurapika arched up, a current of electricity shooting through him.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Chrollo teased while using one hand to play with the omega’s right nipple and the other to slowly unbutton his shirt.
“You’re the thief, you tell me.” Kurapika teased as he reached up and grabbed the alpha’s shirt to drag him back down.

Chrollo chuckled against his lips but complied with his mate’s wish, pulling at his sweater to try to remove it. He could crack most kinds of safes and yet this sweater seemed to be beating him.

They broke apart, panting, hot breath mixing between them. “Need help?” Kurapika whispered sneakily even as he sat up a bit to throw off his sweater.

“Well thank you my love.” Chrollo grinned before diving down to claim his left nipple with his mouth. Kurapika immediately gasped at the feeling of the alpha’s tongue swirling around the nub.

Kurapika found his hand flying up to land on his mate’s shoulders, digging his nails into his pale skin.

“Oh god!” He gasped, hands moving to Chrollo’s head to dive into his thick black hair when fangs nipped at his wet nipple.

Kurapika reached up to fiddle with Chrollo’s belt only for the alpha to take his wrists in hand and pin them to the soft blanket.

“Ah ah ah, this time I get to be in charge.” Chrollo whispered huskily, loving the look of frustration on the omega’s face.

“Rude.” He gasped when Chrollo pulled on his leggings, dragging them down and exposing him to the cold air. The alpha teasingly bit at his hip bones and up his chest, still keeping his wrists pinned onto the blanket. Kurapika moaned and bit his lip when Chrollo took one hand and began trying to stretch his already slippery entrance. “If you want to be in charge then don’t waste my time with this preparation shit!” He growled at the alpha.

“Someone’s impatient today.” Chrollo chuckled as he released Kurapika’s hip to release himself from the causal dark jeans he’d put on that morning.

“Well we couldn’t do anything last night-“ his sentence ended with a squeal as Chrollo obeyed
his mate and sheathed himself inside the blonde. “-so good.” He moaned, simply forgetting what he was saying before. Chrollo wanted to tease him but he was also losing his ability to speak past a few words.

Chrollo decided to put his useless tongue to work and smashed their mouths together again, licking the roof of his mouth.

Kurapika sucked on his tongue, claws digging into his hand as he hitched up Kurapika hips to better his angle. Kurapika’s legs wrapped around his hips, his toes curled from Chrollo managing to hit his prostate with every thrust.

Sand was everywhere, and goosebumps blossomed over skin as the two devolved into animalistic growls, grunts, and moans. Their pace quickened as Chrollo claimed his mate’s neck in a bite only just light enough not to break his skin. Kurapika shouted a long moan as his entire being rolled and he arched into Chrollo’s thrusts.

Chrollo came only a moment after Kurapika, using his last bit of energy to roll them over so he didn’t crush the small omega with his weight.

For a while they didn’t speak, Chrollo took the time to gently brush his fingers through the omega’s golden hair, drifting over his neck and spine on occasion.

“I love you.” He whispered into the silence of the beach, surprising even himself with the depth of emotion in his voice. It was true though, he loved the blonde, more than anything else.

Kurapika looked up at him, his eyes slightly scarlet and a small smile on his face, he didn’t even need to say it, Chrollo could read the words on his face. But still he said it. “I love you too.”

Chrollo kissed his forehead and snuggled closer to him and sighed.

“We’re going to have to deal with Nobunaga soon.”

Kurapika peeked up at him with a quirked eyebrow. Then he began to laugh.
“Wow, way to ruin the mood.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this took so long, between planning my wedding, work, and writing I’ve not had a lot of free time. But I hope you like this chapter.
Games and Promises

Chapter by Serenechaos

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gon stared at the scene before them as five people rose into the air before their bodies, shredded due to some sort of explosion, disappeared.

“They were telling us that they were double-crossed by some guy named Genthru who is also the Bomber!” a woman explained to the growing crowd. “He marked a large number of people and was going to detonate them all at once!”

“Damn, the Bomber strikes again. But at least we know who the Bomber is now.”

“Don’t think about it! That guy also took a lot of cards! With any luck, he’ll win the game and leave the rest of us alone.”

Pakunoda glanced at Gon and knew there was going to be trouble in that moment, the young alpha looked like he had just sucked a lemon. Killua also looked less than pleased while Kalluto looked apathetic.

“Wasn’t this the group that was hoarding all of the magic cards?”

Attempting to grab Gon’s shoulders was ineffective as the young alpha turned and charged off. Due to them being in Masadora already, she had a pretty good idea of where he was headed.

“Killua, Kalluto,” Paku called/ordered, but both were already following Gon so she took off after the trio of kids as well. And just as she thought, Gon led them all to the shop for magic cards. The fully stocked shop that had been sold out completely for weeks.

Gon stared at the cards, shaking slightly in anger and Pakunoda sighed. It seemed that they might need to push the training of the trio to involve collecting the cards to try to derail Genthru’s plans.

Placing her hand on Gon’s shoulder, the Specialist felt and saw the boy’s thoughts, how disappointed and... hurt he was that someone would do this to try to win his father’s game.

“Chrollo requested that we take you on a training trip, I don’t see why we can’t include winning this game as part of that trip,” she stated and felt Gon go still before stony determination filled his being.

Over the next several weeks, Kurapika and Chrollo slowly made their way through a series of destinations, thoroughly enjoying their time together. After leaving Leorio’s place they had headed to a mountain range and spent a week learning to ski.

Chrollo had paid for them to stay at a lodge and both had enjoyed the activity, despite falling many times. They had ended that week by stealing a pair of Scarlet eyes from the mountain home of an eccentric businessman.

Following that, they had moved from place to place, usually only staying somewhere for a few
days, long enough to visit museums, bookstores, restaurants, and other things. During a warm day when they were near the equator to see the ‘light sea’, an event where the sea would light up because of bioluminescent bacteria, Chrollo had insisted that they go out on the boat early. What had followed had been a wonderful, relaxing day as they sat under an umbrella on a gently rocking boat, reading a book together.

Both lost track of the passing time until one morning when Chrollo woke and realized that Kurapika’s scent was shifting to a sweet scent. The scramble that resulted had confused Kurapika as the alpha had jumped around the room, grabbing their things and packing while yelling into his phone, trying to arrange an airship.

“No time for pancakes?” Kurapika asked his mate languidly, confused since they had just arrived at their newest location just the previous night. The answer he received was Chrollo passing him his birth control pills.

Realization struck and Kurapika lurched out of the bed. They weren’t on the same continent as Chrollo’s house, if they left now then they might make it!

Kurapika was yanking on a pair of pale blue pants and a white shirt when Chrollo practically threw down his phone.

“No airships heading to the towns near our house for three days, and it’ll be a five day trip in the trip,” the alpha growled.

Meaning if they waited, Kurapika would go into heat in the ship. “What about other destinations?”

“Closest we’d get would make Ryuuseigai a closer destination, and we’d barely make that.”

Kurapika wasn’t happy at the thought of going to Ryuuseigai for his heat, but it might be their only option. At least there was a heat room set up already. Just the thought of that very comfy room with the cushions put Kurapika into a better mood.

Breakfast that morning was pancakes, grabbed at the airport since they needed to rush. The waitress as the restaurant had looked perplexed when Chrollo let Kurapika order whatever he wanted. The manager tried to force them to leave due to Kurapika’s preheat aroma causing ‘disturbance’ amongst the alphas.

The flat look that Chrollo gave the man was one that clearly showed how little he thought of him.

Things were similarly strange when they arrived at the gate as boarding was happening. The gate agent, a pretty young beta woman, had smiled and attempted to flirt with Chrollo only for him to pull Kurapika close. She had attempted to invalidate their tickets.

“This is definitely different,” Chrollo admitted as they settled into their First Class cabin. He had had to pull out his Hunter license to ensure they weren’t kicked off of the flight. His formerly normal solution of killing the woman later would have delayed their departure and for Kurapika’s sake, he would let it go for now. He could also admit that it was rather fun to demand the airport manager and airline officer for the airport, knowing he had authority to do so, and seeing the woman get fired on the spot.

“Which part?” Kurapika asked as he checked the cabin then pulled out a small bag of chocolates that Chrollo had bought for him.

“The way people, especially betas, act now that I’m mated to such a lovely omega,” Chrollo replied as he pulled out their chess and Go sets. He caught the chocolate Kurapika threw at him
with a smirk, popping it into his mouth.

“Almost like you’re a nuisance for bringing me out into public? Imagine what it is like when you are an unmated, unsubmissive omega.” Kurapika sat at the small table as they began to organize their pieces for Go. “That’s the sad truth of life as an omega.”

A stewardess came by their cabin shortly after take off to offer coffee and a mid-morning snack. She had looked more than a little surprised to find the pair staring intently at the boardgame, before the blonde omega made a move that caused the alpha to practically collapse on his seat.

“Can the fates be so cruel as to cause me to lose to my own mate so soon?!?” the man declared in an exaggerated fashion while the blonde omega had grinned brightly.

“Guess you’ll just have to come up with another strategy!”

The scene was… Strange but cute. Unexpected. The stewardess had entered First Class cabins plenty of times to witness an omega being beaten or not allowed more than half a portion of a meal for days at a time. Her own parents had tried to hide her omega sister only to end up losing her when omega traders had broken in and stolen her. It took four years to get her back, her parents exhausting legal channels and their financial resources before they were able to reclaim her, but the bright and funny girl had been but a shell of her former self. They lost her less than a year later to suicide when more traders had attempted to take her yet again.

She made it a point to leave some extra snacks for the pair.

The next couple of days in the airship caused both Kurapika and Chrollo to develop cabin fever. Kurapika couldn’t leave the cabin without some idiot crewmember thinking he was lost and attempting to escort him back unless Chrollo was with him. When they went to the dining room or small library on the ship, Kurapika was stared at with hungry eyes by a number of alphas, something which was beginning to drive Chrollo insane.

There were two other omegas on the ship, both of whom were kept on short leashes by their ‘mates,’ one of them was pregnant. On the first day neither had been seen, then on the second both had appeared with their mates in the dining room, the intent of the alphas obviously being attempts to impress. Kurapika and Chrollo had felt the envious eyes of the omegas on them as they ate, talking quietly about the books they had been reading that day. Those eyes had been exceptionally teary and envious when Chrollo had passed Kurapika the dessert menu, knowing that he would have a sweet tooth with his heat approaching.

Though he didn’t have to take the birth control until his heat started, as Kurapika began to feel the edges of it creeping up on him on their fourth day in the airship, he took the first of the pills to try to push it back a bit. Surprisingly, it did bring him a bit of relief whether by placebo or having an actual chemical effect.

The final hours on the airship were tense as Kurapika began to feel tingling in his limbs and his sweet tooth peaked. His breakfast was mostly syrup that day, though Chrollo said not a single word and shot dirty looks at anyone who dared to say anything. Trying to distract each other with a board game was almost useless as Kurapika began to fidget and Chrollo became very annoyed whenever anyone came close, not wanting anyone to touch Kurapika.

A knock on the door as the landing process began almost drew a snarl from the alpha as he moved to the cabin door, determined to tell whoever it was to leave immediately. He was unimpressed by the stewardess that stood on the other side, though he did admit that she was probably the only non-idiot of the crew who had not attempted to talk down to Kurapika.
“I’ve gotten you special permission to disembark from the airship first,” the stewardess stated before Chrollo could demand an explanation. “If you would collect your things and follow me, then I will let you out of the ship as soon as we have landed. Your Hunter license should make passing through Customs a simple matter.”

Irritation bled out of Chrollo and he almost sighed in relief before turning back to the room and almost laughing when Kurapika snuggled into his side, their two bags already in hand. He fought Chrollo’s attempts to take the bags with a cheeky grin that bordered on meaning something more.

The stewardess actually was smiling at their banter and play as they followed her to the main passenger ramp even as stewards and stewardesses got other passengers to their cabins and seats for the arrival. She opened the door for them as soon as the ramp was in place then surprised them by handing Chrollo a couple of bags of cookies and several water bottles.

“In case you have a ways to go,” she stated. “Don’t exactly have time to stop right now, do you?”

“Thank you!” Chrollo called as he followed Kurapika down the ramp, noting that they were truly out of time. Kurapika was beginning to blush and pressed himself firmly against Chrollo the moment their feet were on the ground. Already the thief knew they were in for a nasty time: Ryuuseigai was two hours away by car and he still needed to get one!

Glancing to the parking lot, Chrollo focused on a rather nice looking car, a Mercedes, but tossed the idea aside. Kurapika would HATE it if he stole a car, even right now.

Moving to the service desk of the airport, Chrollo began to check for a rental place while Kurapika continued to snuggle, moving on to kissing his neck.

The dark alpha took a deep breath then reached into his duffel, still held by Kurapika, and pulled out his coat. It was far too hot here for such a garment, but he still settled it over Kurapika’s shoulders. The effect was immediate as Kurapika began to cuddle the coat where he stood.

Finally spying a rental and valet service desk, Chrollo moved them in that direction and settled Kurapika gently on a bench with their bags before approaching the desk. He made sure to turn his head every so often so naturally, when he saw an alpha saunter up to Kurapika and sit far too close to him, he was quick to turn around to head back towards his mate-

“Valet! Park my car in long term parking!” a snobby woman demanded as she shoved a key into his face.

Chrollo blinked in surprise then looked towards the woman that had gotten between him and his mate. She was past middle age and was looking him up and down like a side of meat. Everything from her clothes to hair just screamed of privilege, meaning she had probably been born into it since she was neither good-looking nor seemed very intelligent. Just an uppity beta who believed she could have anything.

The thief was about to sharply inform her that he was no valet when he realized something: this woman was GIVING him her car. He was in a rush, Kurapika needed to get to his heat room, and who was he to turn down a gift?

“Of course my lady,” he replied with one of his fake suave smiles as he accepted the key.

The woman trotted off, giggling in a sickeningly girlish way while Chrollo turned his attention to the alpha that was attempting to slide closer to Kurapika, who was attempting to shove Chrollo’s duffel between them as he growled slightly.
“Come on lovely! I doubt your seller will-” The alpha reached towards Kurapika and gasped as his hand was roughly caught by Chrollo. “Are you the seller? I’d like to make an offer-”

“That is my mate!” Chrollo snarled then stopped cold when Kurapika used the duffel to beam the offending alpha across the head, knocking him out with the heavy bag.

A small laugh escaped Chrollo as Kurapika stood on shaking legs. “Yet again you remind me why you’re so special,” he stated.

“Good.” Kurapika’s voice was a bit distant, he obviously needed to focus to get the words out.

“Our chariot awaits.”

Once again Chrollo attempted to take his duffel but Kurapika kept a firm hold of it as they moved out to where the expensive Selux was parked. Chrollo felt absolutely no remorse as he settled their bags in the trunk and attempted to guide Kurapika to the back seat so he could lie down only for his mate to slip by him and hop into the front passenger seat.

The woman should have known that this would happen sooner or later if she was used to handing her keys to random men.

Kurapika was growling, purring, and shifting in the front seat as Chrollo settled in and started the car. Checking the gas tank, he felt a small smile tug at his lips. At least that woman had had the sense to fill the gas tank for them.

Any and all speed limits were ignored as Chrollo pulled away from the airfield, and the police in turn ignored him when he turned the car towards the desert, to Ryuuseigai. The police never dared to get closer than they had to.

The road to Ryuuseigai was rough and terrible where it existed, but Chrollo soon came to appreciate the shocks on the car. They were barely jostled at all as the vehicle sped through the rocky and sandy terrain.

He felt Ryuuseigai before they arrived, knew that the car was being watched and that a party was moving to intercept and stop them. Rolling down the window and sticking his head out, he saw the shadows of these beings as they retreated upon realizing who he was. Beside him, Kurapika groaned as the air conditioning escaped inside of the few seconds that he’d had the window down. His coat was pulled off and Kurapika now clutched the thing desperately as he buried his nose into the fur lining the collar.

“Just a few more minutes,” Chrollo promised as he pressed the car to go faster. If this was how their life was going to be with them rushing to a base or their home for Kurapika’s heat every month, Chrollo was going to seriously consider buying at least one house on every continent.

Some level of lucidity must have struck Kurapika when the dilapidated buildings rose around them because he grabbed the birth control pills and swallowed his next pills before the base was even in sight.

Chrollo doubted anyone had ever driven into Ryuuseigai at such speeds, but he barreled through the narrow ‘streets’ so quickly that people were diving to avoid the car before he stopped the vehicle in front of the Spider base right.

“Heat room,” Chrollo promised and the blonde nodded as he began trying to open his door and get out of the car on shaking legs.
“Chrollo?!” a voice called out and the dark alpha turned to see an elder approaching, a look of shock on his face before it melted into delight. “Good that you’re here, we have some…”

The elder trailed off as Kurapika stumbled towards the building, his scent betraying his predicament and the alphas in the area groaned in unison as the blonde disappeared into the building.

Chrollo didn’t even bother trying to unload their things, no one in Ryuuseigai would dare to try to steal something from him, especially if it was right in front of the Spider base. He simply moved towards the door of the base as well and paused in the doorway.

“I believe you remember the promise I made about what would happen if I was ever disturbed again while my mate is in heat.”

The look of terror was answer enough for Chrollo as he slammed the door of the base shut and locked it for good measure.

Kurapika was already out of sight when Chrollo turned around after locking the door. Following his nose, he found his lovely mate in the kitchen, pulling frozen cookie dough out of the fridge. He took a bite of the dough before looking towards Chrollo with a content look.

“I’ll make you some cookies later,” Chrollo promised as Kurapika took another bit of the cookie dough. He was surprised when his mate held it up to his lips, offering the small bite and Chrollo accepted it, kissing Kurapika’s fingers to collect all the small bits of the sticky dough.

The cookie dough didn’t make it back into the freezer and the pair barely made it to the heat room before Kurapika’s lust and Chrollo’s rut stole the blood from their brains.

_________________________________________________

It had been several weeks since the incident in town when Pakunoda and the kids had heard of the attack by the Bomber. Currently all three children were asleep after training that day so the three adults were planning the route they would follow to collect the cards.

“We’re here,” Shalnark explained as he tapped their map on their current location. “I’ve made a list of the various cards we’ll need and their locations. As well as where we should head first.” Now he tapped a small village in the forest near the wastelands they currently inhabited.

“Why there?” Biscuit asked as she glanced over the map, her own route in mind.

“Lucky Alexandrite. The information I have indicates that we can get this card from the village. We should head there first and go back for it later. After, If we follow this pattern, we’ll collect the most cards the quickest. We can even split into teams to collect the certain cards and meet up afterwards, each of us accompanying one of the kids.”

“But why Lucky Alexandrite first?” Biscuit pressed, slightly annoyed.

“Because according to my information, you have to give up everything in your inventory now to receive Lucky Alexandrite later. I think we’d all prefer not having to recollect the cards.”

Chapter End Notes
Sorry for the wait everyone, classes are very demanding right now and I know they'll just be getting more so as the semester draws to a close. Will try to continue to write when I get the chance.
frustrations and fruit.

Chapter by Boozombie

Kurapika stretched like a feline as he yawned, his body was sore and his mind still a little groggy from almost a week of hormone induce insanity. Without anyone to make sure they ate and had water, the two days of Chrollo's rut had been pretty uncomfortable, not that Kurapika could remember it too well. It was all a blur.

Despite being sore the satisfaction was bone deep, after a week in the heat room Kurapika definitely felt satiated... At least for now.

Grumbling happily in his cozy nest Kurapika turned to cuddle into his mate’s chest only to find him gone. The cushions where he had laid were cold and the jacket he always seemed to want with desperation when in heat was draped over his naked body. Bodily fluids had dried to his skin and Kurapika shook his head in disgust. Heat was truly inconvenient but why did it always have to leave him so dirty and sticky when he finally came back to his senses?

And for another thing, how is it fair that Chrollo's rut lasts two days and his heat was almost a week long!? It was like natural prejudice against omegas!

With a yawn and a sigh Kurapika decided to take a nice relaxing bath, wasting a good thirty minutes just to make sure all the white sticky stuff was completely off and his skin was once again clean and fresh. It wasn’t as bad as the sand that had been everywhere, and he meant EVERYWHERE, but still. Kurapika was a very tidy person so waking up covered in dried slick and cum was always distressing.

Once he felt sufficiently clean and smelled of peppermint again, Kurapika decided to get dressed and find wherever Chrollo had disappeared to. It wasn’t hard to figure out that he probably had some work to do, considering he pseudo-ran this city. The last time they had been here he had been constantly interrupted for him to fill out paperwork and protect the city. Then it had been a godsend, this time it had been a large part of the reason he didn’t want to spend his heat here. Luckily Chrollo’s threat had worked and they hadn’t been interrupted once, so he probably had a lot of work to catch up on.

Walking a little wobbly to his bag and pulling out a black t-shirt with a swoop neck to show off his mark and some jean overalls. It wasn’t his usual style but Chrollo thought he looked really cute in them and so he couldn’t resist buying them. Plus they were incredibly comfortable. Pulling on some plain black shoes and hopping up, he was excited to find Chrollo and get some breakfast.
The base was definitely very quiet without the rest of the troupe around, it was silly but he kind of missed them, it was like being a part of a small nomadic clan. Moving around and making dinner together, playing and having fun. He understood that they all had their own lives and places they called home but it was a little sad that they didn’t get all together more frequently. Thinking of that, Machi, Uvo, Phinks, and Feitan were all still stuck in Bonolenov’s village.

Kurapika did feel a little guilty that while he has been on a month long vacation, they’d been waiting around with Nobunaga, making sure he doesn’t escape. At the very least Chrollo and him could take a break from their break to just deal with the situation so they aren’t stuck there.

Although he still hadn’t decided how he’d like to punish him, should he join the troupe he’d like this punishment to be a lesson so they all can begin to understand that things won’t be the same with him apart of the group. As Chrollo’s mate he’d be in a leadership position for the troupe so he needed to get this right.

Chrollo wasn’t in the main room of the base, which was disappointing since that meant he’d have to go outside and find the Council’s headquarters while trying to ignore people staring at him.

That was simply never fun, it was worse when he didn’t have Chrollo there to take the looks with him. Sometimes when he’s off somewhere alone, even for a short moment he contemplates putting his earring back in just so people will leave him alone. But the idea of hiding his gender after everything, after the Hunters slighting him and all the people treating him like Chrollo’s pet made his anger rise. He wanted everyone that saw him now to understand that he won’t bend, he won’t break and he will fight for his rights!

Taking a deep breath Kurapika decided he had stalled long enough and opened the old door to enter the bright hot morning.

Of course everyone on the ‘street’ turned to him the moment he stepped out, luckily the respect Chrollo garnered here made it so not one alpha tried to hit on him and they even lowered their eyes respectfully.

Kurapika was actually feeling pretty good, well until the brunette beta approached.

“Are you looking for Chrollo? If he told you to wait here then you should probably stay, he’s with the Council right now so it’s nothing you should worry your pretty little head over.” The beta spoke to him as she moved to push him back into the building.
“If Chrollo is talking to the Council I’d like to be there.” Kurapika tried to rein in his anger, these were Chrollo’s people, he can’t just go beating them up can he?

“You should just do as Chrollo says, if you are to wait then wait here like a good boy.” She spoke down to him a little more forcefully this time.

“Chrollo doesn’t tell me what to do!” Kurapika finally snapped at her and ripped his arm away and stomped passed her, uncaring when he knocked her over in order to escape the situation.

Kurapika hadn’t notice the growing crowd until he stepped off the stairs but there half the freaking city was staring at him shocked and borderline disgusted. They looked like a mob.

“You are his omega!” The beta picked herself up and angrily chased after the blond.

The crowd was mumbling spouting off things like “it should know it’s place,” or “has Chrollo not finished training it? It’s so rude.”

“I AM HIS MATE! And he is mine!” Kurapika turned back to the beta and glared up at her. “He does not own me and Chrollo isn’t so depraved to ever claim that!” His life had really changed, he went from hunting down Chrollo to defending his honor.

“You little bitch!” The beta growled at him and raised her hand threatendingly.

Kurapika was a ready to catch that hand and flip the offending beta on her back but before she could even swing her hand Chrollo was there, holding her wrist in a bruising grip.

“Monica,” The deep growl immediately made the girl lose her bluster. “If you ever dare try to touch MY mate again, you will lose this hand. Do you understand?”

She was shaking where she stood, looking fit to fall over any moment from the abrasive pheromones attacking the air from Chrollo.

“Yes sir,” she whimpered pathetically. Chrollo dropped her hand and she fell jelly legged into the sand.
“Let’s go Kurapika, I’ve finished my work and we should be heading out for our next destination.” Chrollo motioned for Kurapika to head back to the base and begin collecting his things.

Kurapika bit his lip, a little irritated. He understood Chrollo was just trying to protect him, like just now or the alpha in the airport but it felt... Horribly emasculating. It was like being treated like a china doll, Chrollo constantly running to his side to stop situations that he can handle himself.

It’s not like he doesn’t like Chrollo protecting him, it fulfilled some weird omegan fetish but at the same time Kurapika was strong and he wanted to prove that.

“Ready to go?” Chrollo asked once they got everything into the no doubt stolen car.

“Yes.” Kurapika nodded, hoping he put enough fake cheer into his voice so he didn’t have to explain the weird resentment he was feeling.

“You okay?” Chrollo glanced at him while buckling his seatbelt.

“Yes.” Kurapika nodded again doing his best not to look at his mate. He couldn’t very well say he was upset because Chrollo was being too kind could he?

“Alright.” Chrollo glanced uncertainly at his mate, something was definitely bothering him but he would just have to wait for Kurapika to want to talk.

“Are you sure you want to do this now?” Chrollo asked a bit uneasily as they drive into the Gyrodondo village to meet up with his Troupe and punish Nobunaga. “You haven’t even thought of his punishment yet.”

“I know but if we keep putting it off the anxiety is going to eat me alive.” Kurapika sighed, happy to be somewhere people wouldn’t treat him like a dog.
“Are you nervous?”

“No,” Kurapika whispered as he waved to a few of the omegas he recognized. He was nervous, mainly because he still hadn’t made his decision about joining the Phantom Troupe and he was still testing the waters. If he can’t handle Nobunaga then what hope was there for him to be part of this group?

Why was he thinking like he’d already decided to join the group?!! Maybe it was because if he did then hopefully Chrollo would be forced to realized that he didn’t need constant protection. But in the case of deciding he just couldn’t be part of a group of thieves then he was exactly where he needed to be; he could have a look around the village and see if there was a good spot for a bookstore, maybe in his free time teach the Kuruta martial arts to anyone that wants to learn, even see if there was some kind of group that protects the village that he could join.

Kurapika honestly didn’t know what he wanted to do, it was one thing being mated to a professional thief but to actually become one himself? It was hard to fathom.

“KURA-HONEY!” Fanaka called out enthusiastically the moment he stepped out of the car. ‘It would seem I have gained a nickname,’ Kurapika thought with a chuckle. Fanaka had obviously also just left her own heat from the smell of wildflowers that attacked him as she physically tackled him against the car. She rubbed her head into his affectionately, almost aggressively, she probably just left her heat by how touchy-feely she was being.

“I cried in happiness when Bono-dear called to let me know you asked Chrollo to mark you!” She hugged him so tight he was having trouble breathing. “You two are such a great match, I'M SO HAPPY!”

“Fanaka, Kurapika can’t breath.” Chrollo laughed as he gently broke up the hug and pulled Kurapika against his chest, rubbing his back as he finally drew in a breath.

Kurapika felt his face twitch as once again Chrollo stepped in and didn’t allow him to handle a situation himself. Fanaka of course noticed the slight shift in his expression and gave him a meaningful look. It was like some kind of omega connection as they played through a whole conversation silently. Fanaka awed and looked between them and nodded before grinning up at Chrollo's confused face.

“Everyone is in the main lobby, they put your old nen chain on Nobunaga and he’s been sulking for like a month.” Fanaka laughed lightly and forcibly took Kurapikas bag and began to lead the way inside.
“Fana! I can carry that!” Kurapika tried to take the bag back but the woman refused.

“Oh no! I’m the owner and you two are my guests!” Fanaka made it clear that she would be carrying the bag. “Oh and I heard you’re thinking about moving here! If you wanted we could take an omegas day out tomorrow or something and have a look around for a nice spot for a little bookstore,” Fanaka offered and Kurapika smiled gently.

“I actually wanted to do that, it would be fun. Maybe we can head over to the waterfall and see everyone too,” Kurapika blushed a bit since it wasn’t often that he actually got to relax his stance of ‘I am not a stereotype!’ and just be an omega and relax back with a cup of tea. “I’ve really been craving that tea.”

“I’d like that too.” Fanaka stopped outside the door to the main room and gave Kurapika’s shoulder a squeeze before whispering in his ear. “And we can talk more about how you’re feeling?”

“Thanks Fana,” he whispered back before she took Chrollo’s bag and walked off to put it in their room.

Chrollo had been surprisingly quiet while Fanaka had talked so before opening the room Kurapika looked up at him curiously to find Chrollo looking at him with a ridiculously soft look.

“What?”

“I’m just glad you are making friends, it’s reassuring to know that should you stay here you won’t be alone.” Chrollo smiled happily but Kurapika felt odd. He knew the statement didn’t mean anything so why did he feel irritated like a cat wrapped up in a comforter and coddled from the world?

Kurapika decided not to answer, just gave a nod and a strained smile and opened the door.

The room beyond the door hadn’t changed since the last time they had been there but all noise and chatter silenced the second they stepped in. Nobunaga was pouting in the corner, Feitan glaring at him while sharpening a knife practically in Phinks’ lap. Phinks looked to be snoozing, the only noise in the room was his snoring. Machi was cuddled up on Uvogin’s side, looking up to him and Chrollo with a blank face but Kurapika managed to catch the look of excited contentment that was
odd for her. Combined with the bright pink hat that didn’t seem big enough for an adult, it even had kitty ears. Uvogin had a heavy arm draped over Machi, looking happier than the situation warranted.

“Danchou! Kurapika! Yer’ finally here!” Uvogin lumbered up after pressing a kiss to the top of Machi’s head. “Goin’ to take care of business?”

“Kurapi-” “I-” Chrollo and Kurapika both stopped and looked at each other blankly. Chrollo because it was. . . Well awkward to not be in the full leadership position and so had just immediately tried to do all the talking. Kurapika because he had thought Chrollo was going to allow him to head this, in his words it wasn’t him Nobunaga wronged after all.

“Go ahead.” Chrollo finally cleared his throat and stepped back bashfully. Although he didn’t know how he felt about it.

“I haven’t decided on a punishment yet-“

Nobunaga snorted loudly and leered up at the blonde omega with a harsh glare. “Haven’t decided on a lot of things have you?”

“What the hell is that suppose to mean?” Machi spoke up with a pinched expression.

“Well he couldn’t decide on a punishment even after a month, couldn’t decide on his fifth chain, maybe his little omegan brain just isn’t fit for making the hard decisions?” Nobunaga snapped cruelly. Kurapika blanched at the accusatory tone in his voice.

“Nobunaga! You will not talk to Kurapika that way!” Chrollo snapped at the samurai with real heat behind his words. Nobunaga flinched back at the tone and Kurapika finally admitted what the problem really was: the topknot did not respect him. And Chrollo’s ‘help’ was only making it worse, everytime the alpha ‘protected’ him it would just further confirm that he couldn’t handle anything himself.

“Chrollo it’s alright, it’s been a long day. I’ll think of something tonight for now let’s just take a bath and go to bed,” Kurapika sighed in frustration. Machi gave him an odd look at the strained way he spoke but quickly let it go when he shook his head at her.
The woman could look right through him and know everything but he simply didn’t want to talk about it right now. It wasn’t like it was a huge problem right?

“Oh- um . . . Okay, if you are sure.” Chrollo couldn't put his finger on it but he got an odd feeling that Kurapika was upset with him but he didn’t know why he would be.

“What do with Nobunaga?” Feitan spoke up.

Kurapika opened his mouth to say just watch him for the night but didn’t get the chance as Chrollo said it first. Kurapika bristled just a bit about that for a moment then turned on a dime and walked out, leaving Chrollo behind since obviously he wasn’t needed there.

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“What’s he reading?” Hisoka leaned over to ask Illumi after they’d been brought out of their last torture session to sit outside with their omega. The omega hadn’t even looked up at them, he seemed very engrossed in his book.

Illumi stretched his neck to see, more than a little bored already since he didn’t know what the purpose of them being here still was.

“It looks like a science textbook,” he stated a bit surprised, why was his omega studying chemistry? “I didn’t know it could read let alone understand something like that.” Illumi grumbled a bit, he didn’t like that his omega was being taught weird things while he had been tortured.

“Could you both just stay quiet?” Kyo snapped, looking up for the first time since they had been brought out. He was a bit pissed off since he’s had to go through two heats now without his alphas because they were too stupid to just do as their mother said and he was very unsatisfied at the moment. “Just because you have nothing going on doesn’t mean I don’t, I have homework due tomorrow and I have to finish this chapter.”

Illumi blinked even more surprised to have the once docile and scared omega glare fiercely up at him with those bright green eyes. He really did look like Killua, even more so when he glared like that.

“Homework?” Hisoka asked intrigued, his omega was actually becoming more and more
interesting with every interaction.

“Yes, Grandpa hired me a science teacher.” Kyo mumbled as he tried to finish the passage about protons before Grandpa arrived for whatever thing he’d been called outside for today.

“Yes?” Hisoka leaned over the table in wonder. Was his little omega dreaming of becoming a scientist? Or did he have other teachers to catch him up from the years of imprisonment?

Kyo looked up at his redheaded alpha and quickly explained. “Oh I asked for it, you know that blue dye I was putting in people’s drinks?” Both alphas nodded silently. “Well it’s clear before you ingest it and I wanted to know why and I liked learning about it so . . .” Kyo shrugged and went back to his studying.

Hisoka eyes narrowed with interest at the white haired omega, watching him bite at the end of his pen and make little notes on the inside of the book. He may look like Killua but personality wise they couldn’t be more different.

“Oh good, you’re all here,” Zeno moved to his students, happy to start the next step in fixing the mess those two idiots had made.

“Grandfather, why are we here?” Illumi asked with annoyance, he didn’t like how much attention Hisoka was focusing on Killu- Kyo, focusing on Kyo.

“You two decided to risk Kyo’s life and health by biting him with your nen, so you will be helping me train him as his fellow students!” Zeno grinned at the aghast faces of the two alphas and the confused look Kyo gave.

“Nen?” Kyo asked but for now Zeno ignored him.

“And you will have your nen restricted until Kyo decides to take them off for you.” Before either of the boys had a chase to run, he moved faster than they could see and clipped a binding shackle to both of their wrists. Hisoka looked down right murderous and seemed to be considering tearing off his arm to get it off.

“No! I will take torture but you cannot restrain my nen!” Hisoka growled and banged on the wooden table Kyo had been studying on, prompting Kyo to snatch up his books hurriedly.
“Grandfather I agree this is ridiculous!” Illumi stood in his upset. “And you can’t expect the omega to make the decision about when we get OUR nen back! It’s a factory omega!”

“HE’S a Zoldyck now!” Zeno growled back at the insolent little pup. “And you will obey my rules if you ever want to leave this mountain again!” Both alphas finally settled back down, Kyo looked a bit terrified and seemed to be choking on the aggressive pheromones in the air but order was restored for now. “Now first things first,” Zeno tried to find the way to best explain nen to the omega.

“Kyo,” he called gently, letting a calming scent take over his normal intimidating one, a high level skill for calming down his pack. Kyo looked up at him with a bit of water in his eyes. “Have you noticed that you’re a bit stronger?” He asked.

Kyo thought about it for a moment and then nodded. “Yeah, and my whole being feels kinda off? Sometimes when I’m studying really hard I think I can see a white aura around myself,” he explained with a cute pout.

“That’s your nen, think of it like a massive power inside yourself that has now been released, you have to train to use it correctly,” Zeno explained in the most basic way he could. He wanted to leave the bigger explanations to Illumi and Hisoka so the three can start to get to know each other better. “Do you think you can remember how to draw out that aura long enough to take a little test?” Zeno asked, already setting up a glass of water with a leaf in the middle.

“I can try?” Kyo looked curiously at the cup, the confused twist of his brow just twisting more. “What do I do?”

“Just put your hands here like this,” Zeno showed him quickly then continued onward. “And really concentrate on the glass, try to focus that aura. This will tell us what kind of nen you have.”

Hisoka ran through a list of possibilities for his omegas nen type but decided he didn’t have enough information to properly guess. He simply didn’t know their omega well enough to know if he was high strung or argumentative or earnest. At the very least he could cross off enhancer, Kyo could definitely be earnest but there was no way he was simple.

Kyo did as Zeno instructed and did his best to concentrate on the glass but his mind was so caught up with his chemistry lesson he ended up trying to figure out what the exact components made up the liquid in the glass. It could be simple water but for all he knew it was sake or even something
else. Was there a way to tell? He became so divided on the questions in his mind he didn’t even notice the blank look that slid over his face or the way his aura grew a bit more steady causing the three alphas be gape slightly in wonder.

‘It was so Illumi to pick out a natural talent for nen on random,’ Zeno praised mildly in his mind. He’d accidentally found himself an omega that could very well grow to be as powerful as any other Zoldyck!

“That’s enough,” Zeno stopped Kyo with a gentle voice and looked to the glass. It hadn’t broken or changed in any observable way so without thinking Zeno dripped a finger in the glass to taste the water.

It was sweet, too sweet. If he didn’t know any better he’d say Kyo had been practicing nen for weeks before this moment. He looked down at the still confused boy in amazement. He was seriously a natural talent, where the hell had Illumi found this child?!

“Transmuter,” Zeno announced after a moment of silence. Despite the talent Kyo had demonstrated he was unhappy with this development. Killua and him had the same nen type and Zeno was afraid Illumi would break further from reality now that Kyo and Killua were that much more a like. Something had to be done to once and for all break Illumi out of his delusion!

“Illumi, Hisoka, I want you two to explain nen to the boy. I need to speak with Kikyo.” With that Zeno left the mates to their time together, hopefully to actually get to know their mate beyond that of a baby factory.

Hisoka was felt an excited twist in his stomach at the demonstration his omega had shown. He might become a sweet fruit yet!
Kikyo paced angrily as she mulled over what Zeno had told her of Kyo’s nen type. The sweet omega reminded her of so much of Killua, but to hear that he had the same nen type, all the way to the same effect on the water during the divination exercise… Why couldn’t he have turned the water sour, salty, anything other than sweet?!

With this new information and the fact that he witnessed the transfiguration of the water, Illumi’s delusion was bound to deepen. If not dealt with, it might escalate to the point where he might believe that he actually did mate Killua. If that happened then several things could happen, it would depend on what.

If Kyo broke the delusion in a way that was very un-Killua-like, then Illumi might view him as an interloper and kill the boy before attempting to go after Killua, believing him to be his rightful mate.

If Killua broke the delusion when he mated, Illumi might react by trying to kill that mate and possibly Killua, believing him an adulterer.

Taking a deep breath, Kikyo knew what she needed to do: draw a line. Force Illumi to see the difference: that Kyo was his mate, not Killua.

First things first, Kyo’s future hatsu. If given the chance, Illumi might try to force him to develop a power similar to Killua, whether it suited him or not. Luckily that seemed to be already taken care of thanks to the tutors that had been brought in to provide a much needed education for Kyo. They had already reported that he had a profound talent in chemistry, a talent Kikyo believed would serve him well when it was time to develop his hatsu. She would allow Illumi and Hisoka to train with him in general abilities, but would keep them separate for hatsu training.

Then she would need to find other means to remind Illumi of who his mate was. One way for certain would be to make him actually use Kyo’s name. It was a relief that Kyo had even remembered his name and she hadn’t allowed Illumi to rename him, she was more than certain that she knew what that new name would have been.

Hisoka at least seemed to not be bothered by all of this and didn’t confuse Kyo for Killua. It was unfortunate that the clown was turning out to be slightly more sane than Illumi, she could see his interest in Kyo increasing as the boy became stronger and from what Kyo told her, Hisoka hadn’t touched him up to this point.

Glancing at a viewing window, Kikyo saw that Kyo was once again visiting ‘It.’ She sighed as she stared at the pair as they played, happy smiles on both of their faces. Kyo would make a good mother one day and… ‘It’ seemed to understand the value of an omega. Why was a monster so
much more capable of understanding than the son that she had always relied on?

Turning, the woman left to try to find Zeno and discuss her thoughts, see if he had any possible plans, and determine the best course of action they should take… And maybe discuss doing something about ‘It’/Alluka now that they knew of a way to deal with some of her requests. Make it clear that requests were to be fulfilled and that wishes were not allowed to be anything beyond some very limited list of low risk things that they could decide on. Gotoh would likely know which butlers could be trusted with the task.

Despite being tired, Kurapika found it difficult to sleep that night. Chrollo’s arms had felt warm and welcoming on previous nights, but for some reason Kurapika found them to be smothering that night. Too confining, too protective.

More than once Kurapika woke to find himself trying to escape those arms, feeling as though he couldn’t breathe.

Both of them awakened with a jerk the next morning when a roar of, “GOSIMBER!” shook the entire building. Through the ringing in his ears, Kurapika was certain he heard yelps from other rooms as well as a shriek as both he and Chrollo glanced out of the window, spying the fat alpha as he fled from a fuming Fanaka-bennu, carrying what appeared to be some sort of pastries and bacon.

“I have a feeling that that one’s instincts leave much to be desired,” Chrollo stated after a long moment as he rose from the bed and grabbed a shirt from his bag and a fresh pair of pants.

Kurapika watched Chrollo dress before the alpha looked to him. “I’m going to check on the coffee situation here. Fanaka-bennu is usually good at keeping a stock of it, so I’m sure we’ll be fine. Anything you’d like for breakfast?”

Kurapika shook his head then laid down, stretching. It felt good to have some space in that moment as Chrollo turned and left the room. It had honestly been… Suffocating to be near him in the last few hours. He seemed too protective right now, too overbearing.

After taking a few minutes to stretch and relax, Kurapika rose from bed as well and grabbed his clothes, changing before heading across the hall to the communal bathroom. He ran into Fanaka quite literally when he did.

“Kurapika!” Fanaka yelped as they collided, both trying to catch the other and both ending up leaning against a wall. “Still asleep?” Fanaka teased before she stared at Kurapika’s face. “You look like you should be.”

“Sorry,” the blonde stated as he took a step back. “I didn’t sleep well last night. I’ve been putting off Nobunaga’s punishment and then last night…”

Kurapika wasn’t sure what to say about what happened the night before when Chrollo had pretty much gone around him and not acted as though he was to possibly take a leadership role in the troupe. None of the troupe would authentically respect him if it seemed that he needed Chrollo to speak for him!

“If you’re worried about how to punish that samurai, then I know that Chrollo will support you!” the woman stated cheerily.

“It didn’t feel like it!” Kurapika snapped. “It felt more like… He intends to protect me when I don’t need that. Like he doesn’t respect me or believe I can fight my own battles.”
Fanaka-bennu sighed heavily. “Chrollo is still new to all of this, to omegas in general and being a mate. His instincts are telling him to protect you, especially if you’re uncomfortable. And when it comes to the troupe, he’s used to being in charge and ‘knowing’ that the members can hurt you. In addition, this member has done exactly that.”

There was no denying that, topknot had been nasty and had tried to rape Kurapika on day one. But even then Kurapika had fought, and he had his nen back now.

“But if I join the troupe, he can’t hope to keep doing this,” Kurapika grumbled as he moved to the bathroom, missing the way Fanaka’s eyes widened slightly.

Several minutes later, Kurapika moved down the hall after taking care of his business towards the kitchen. He smelled coffee and was unsurprised to see Chrollo there, an extra cup of coffee waiting for Kurapika, milk already added. Somehow even this gesture felt slightly suffocating when previously it had felt sweet.

Fanaka set a plate of muffins on the table as Kurapika settled next to his mate, dodging as Chrollo attempted his normal shoulder bump. The alpha’s brow furrowed in that moment at Kurapika’s strange action.

“Chrollo,” Fanaka’s voice cut in before the alpha could ask if something was wrong. “There seems to be a group of people, possibly omega hunters, that have set up camp near the village. Would you mind going with some of the warriors to drive them away?”

Chrollo looked up and actually seemed appalled by what Fanaka-bennu had just said. “Have they tried to take anyone?”

“Officially, no. But they are beginning to follow young, unmarked omegas in the street. We’ve actually had to cancel going to the waterfall for omega meetings when they tried to follow a group, getting far too close for comfort.”

Kurapika was shocked at the audacity as well, certain that these hunters should have known better! Glancing at Chrollo, he saw the stormy expression settling on the alpha’s face.

“I’m guessing that the alphas are going to deal with them?” the ravenette asked, his voice a deep rumble.

“The warriors are going to, please don’t assume them to be alphas,” Fanaka cut in. “I know at least four in the group of ten are omegas. I hope you don’t mind giving them a hand.”

“Very well.” The darkness on Chrollo’s face lightened as he looked to Kurapika. “I hope you don’t mind staying here? I have some extra books or you can explore more of the town. I don’t think they have a bookshop but you could check?”

Part of Kurapika felt like arguing, of telling Chrollo that he was perfectly capable of joining the warrior group as well, but Fanaka-bennu moved into his line of sight and Kurapika saw the glint in her eyes. She had a plan.

“Alright,” he stated after a moment, still not pleased but willing to give Fanaka’s plan a chance. He remembered how the woman had dealt with Gosimber in that moment as well as the advice she had given them and an idea struck in that moment. “I do have an idea on what Nobuanaga’s punishment should be and I’d like to discuss details with Fanaka if she’s willing.”

Chrollo’s smile brightened a bit. “Excellent. Once that is taken care of, we can discuss where we’d like to head next. We already collected the Scarlet eyes near here, so it’ll be a trek to reach the next
pair.”

“Alright.” Somehow, hearing that they will ‘discuss’ and knowing that Chrollo meant for both of them to plan this leg of the trip lifted Kurapika’s mood a bit. His mate was even showing trust in Kurapika giving a good punishment and not asking for details!

Feeling significantly better, Kurapika snagged one of the muffins, somehow aiming for the same one as Chrollo in that moment, and their hands brushed before both abandoned the muffin for different ones.

Chrollo left after breakfast to meet with the warriors and Fanaka sat across from Kurapika.

“I think working on a team with omegas will help him a bit to understand. Now what is it that you want to discuss in regards to punishing that bigoted samurai?”

“Ain’t happenin’!” a sharp voice called out and both of the omegas turned to see the samurai sauntering towards them. “I ain’t takin’ no punishment from an omega, danchou’s mate or not! It should just let this ridiculous notion go and let danchou choose to punish me, if he even thinks I deserve it. Which I doubt.”

“You were rude, abusive, and have kept up with this behavior!” Fanaka stated sharply as Kurapika growled slightly, feeling his chains forming on his hand.

“Omegas aren’t capable of making decisions! That thing has proven this multiple times! Only decision it was capable of making was deciding to let danchou mate it after he saved it from Hisoka! And that made the decision a serious no-brainer! Hisoka or Chrollo!”

“That wasn’t why I chose Chrollo!” Kurapika snarled as he rose. “He showed interest in my opinions and was willing to respect it!”

“He could have marked you at any moment and no one woulda blinked!” Nobunaga attempted to shove past Kurapika, eyes on the half empty plate of muffins. “You let this go and just settle in somewhere and have babies, it’s what you obviously want.”

“That’s hardly what I want!” Kurapika knew his eyes were beginning to glow red as he glared at the idiot before him as he snagged a muffin.

“Heh, you don’t know what you want. Just another stupid omega with a pretty face and body.” Fanaka-bennu was growling as well now, looking almost murderous as she began to rise from her seat.

Kurapika glared at the samurai in turn. Images of Chrollo and him laughing, talking, playing chess filled his head. Breaking into the mansion of the alpha who had petitioned for the removal of his Hunter license so that he could force himself on Kurapika then torching the place. The thrill of running after, covered in ash with Chrollo.

Other images came: cooking with Franklin, wrestling with Uvo, listening as Phinks attempted (and failed) to tell a scary story.

He knew what he wanted, and Chrollo was willing to let him keep it.

“If I’m just an idiot with a pretty face, then why did Chrollo offer me the open slot in the troupe?”

Nobunaga’s jaw froze mid-bite into the muffin, Fanaka looked a bit shocked as well.
“And I intend to take him up on it.”

The muffin was set back on the table so firmly that the pastry crumbled due to the force.

“Like hell that is going to happen!” Nobunaga bellowed as he turned sharply towards Kurapika, anger written across his features. “Danchou ain’t bringing an omega into the troupe!”

A laugh drew the attention of the people in the room as Uvo entered the doorway. “Yes he would! I could tell that he was considering it for quite a while! And this would also make Kurapika yur boss, Nobu!”

“That is not my boss!” Nobunaga screamed as he pointed at Kurapika. “It’s an omega!”

“Who decided on your punishment, if Fanaka-bennu agrees to it?” Kurapika cut in. “You’re going to remain here, following her orders and learning about how omegas actually are!”

Fanaka was grinning in a rather cruel fashion. “I agree to that.”

“I’m not going to do what an omega says!” the samurai argued. “You’re only my boss’s mate, you ain’t got any real power!”

“Then fight me!” Kurapika shouted. “If you win, then you get off without punishment. But when I win, you’ll accept your punishment!”

“Fine!” Nobunaga shouted, already turning towards the door. “Ready now or would you like to wait for Chrollo to get back? So he can jump in and protect you?”

Kurapika was boiling over the jab but Uvo’s hand on his shoulder helped him calm down. “Now is fine.”

“Give me a few minutes, Machi is in the bathroom and Phinks and Feitan will want to see this!”

Nobunaga stared at Uvo for a moment before grinning. “Yeah, I bet Phinks won’t want to miss seeing me put this uppity omega in its place!”

“Not him, seeing you get your ass kicked!”

“WHAT?!”

Uvo crossed his arms with a smirk. “Yer nen is still bound, and I ain’t releasing that cuff. You tried to beat Kurapika more than once when the situation was reversed-”

“No nen,” Kurapika cut in sharply, unwilling to do something similar and so dishonorable.

“Your funeral!” the samurai shot back.

Uvogin rallied Phinks and Feitan, the pair quickly rushing out when they heard that Kurapika and Nobunaga were going to fight. Machi was much slower in responding and coming out. She was clutching her stomach a bit and had accepted no food, only a glass of water.

Finally the pair faced off in the field behind the onsen, Nobunaga looking smug as he watched Kurapika stretch. He didn’t bother trying to stretch or warm up and set his sword aside when Kurapika looked ready.

“Gave up any advantage by not using nen,” Nobunaga sneered as they faced each other.
Kurapika snorted. “Unlike you, I don’t need nen to prove I can fight.”

Nobunaga’s smirk was slightly cruel as he launched himself towards Kurapika, fist cocked with the obvious intent to punch him. That smirk turned to surprise as Kurapika turned slightly, catching the alpha’s arm and throwing the alpha.

Nobunaga stumbled hard, barely catching himself only to be caught hard in the side by a roundhouse kick from Kurapika.

Snarling, the alpha twisted sharply, once again attempting to swing at Kurapika only for the omega to deftly dodge before sending his own into the underside of Nobunaga’s shoulder, popping the joint out of its socket.

The samurai yelped at the pain then growled even louder as he realized his arm was useless. From the sidelines, there were various shouts of encouragement. Sucking in a breath, Nobunaga took a second to calm down as he gauged what his arm was currently capable of. Not much.

Kurapika stared at the alpha, waiting for him to collect himself and ignoring the shouts to just kick Nobunaga’s ass. If he did that, made it seem like he beat Nobunaga in a cheap fashion, then the alpha never would respect him. He needed to make it clear that he could win without resorting to such tactics.

Nobunaga made another charge and Kurapika once again dodged, knowing much better than to try to weather a direct assault. His counter was a kick that caught Nobunaga on the hip and was strong enough to definitely be felt because the alpha stumbled and fell.

“Hey!” the call caused both combatants to pause and glance towards the sidelines where a group of about eleven people had just approached, Chrollo among them. The alpha looked immediately stricken by the obvious fight and seemed to want to intervene. Uvo and Fanaka had stopped him.

“This needs to happen, danchou,” the giant alpha stated.

Turning back to his opponent, Kurapika watched the samurai force himself back to his feet and prepared for the next assault. He did not anticipate the mud that was thrown.

Jumping back, Kurapika scraped at his eyes but kept his guard up due to knowing that Nobunaga would try to attack him while blind. He wasn’t wrong: the samurai attempted to punch him yet again before Kurapika could clear his eyes, catching Kurapika on the arm, but the omega was already moving to counter and his foot dug hard into the alpha’s knee.

The crack was loud as was Nobunaga’s scream over his knee being broken but he was still determined to try to continue the fight. Barely able to walk, he attempted to fall elbow first on Kurapika’s form since the smaller male had been knocked over by the punch.

Eyes still unseeing but senses sharp, Kurapika twisted, catching Nobunaga’s good arm as he fell, and twisting it with him. The end result was him sitting on Nobunaga’s back with his good arm twisted, other arm useless, and one leg out of commission. Pinned.

“You lose!” Kurapika announced sharply even as the samurai attempted to struggle. His one good leg kicked at the ground but did little other than pushing the pair around a few inches. This stopped when Kurapika twisted his arm more firmly.

“Get off!” Nobunaga yelled angrily. “I ain’t losing or taking orders from an omega!”

“That was the point of this fight. You’ve lost!” Kurapika snapped. “Now admit it and accept your punishment or you’ll be living the rest of your life knowing that your arm was broken by an
omega!"

“And I won’t stitch it up!” Machi shouted from the sidelines, earning extra cheers. “You’ll be recovering from those injuries for months!”

“Take your loss like a man!” Uvo shouted.

Phinks added his own line. “Even if you don’t, we all saw you lose!”

Nobunaga felt his blood boil but no amount of struggling seemed to do him any good and in that moment, as he realized he didn’t have the support of his pack, he finally went slack. “Fine! I’ll take the damn punishment!” It’s not like he wouldn’t manage to get away from here after all. Heck, he might even do Bonolenov a favor and tame the omegas here!

Kurapika released the man’s arm and got off, stumbling away from the alpha a few feet before trying to clean the mud from his eyes yet again. A soft cloth was pressed into his hand and Kurapika accepted it, scrubbing his eyes clean of the mud quickly.

Chrollo was the person who had handed him the cloth, he was the only one nearby when Kurapika opened his eyes. And he looked less than pleased.
“I can’t believe you’d put yourself in danger like that!” Kurapika immediately bristled. Chrollo didn’t even give him a word of praise or comment on how well he fought or even just say how amazed he was that he was able to actually beat down one of his infamous Spiders!

Kurapika tried to stay calm, Chrollo had walked into this cold so maybe he didn’t understand why it had happened?

“Chrollo, I had to get Nobunaga to respect me! I had no other choice.” He argued in the calmest manner he could while still trying to catch his breath from the fight with Nobunaga.

“That was stupid and dangerous Kurapika!” Chrollo basically growled back at him, grabbing his arm to start pulling him back to the onsen, intent on checking him over for injuries. Fanaka was immediately on red alert when Kurapika snarled loud enough to make a few lingering alphas jump and sprint away out of instinct. Chrollo ignored his struggling and snarling and continued with his lecture. “You should have let me deal with Nobunaga! I could have dealt with him easily, you didn’t not have to put yourself in danger!”

Kurapika dug his heels in, unaware of Fanaka following behind them fretfully. When he finally managed to tear his arm out of Chrollo’s grip, he would have fallen from the force of his own power if Fanaka hadn’t been ready to catch him.

“THAT WOULD HAVE DEFEATED THE PURPOSE!” Kurapika yelled at him, feeling frustrated tears build in his red eyes. “How is any of the troupe supposed to respect me if you are always stepping in and protecting me WHEN I DON'T NEED IT!” Kurapika was panting, hating himself for the tears he could feel trying to escape. He didn’t want to cry but for some reason he was. “I had to do this, do you not understand that?! I had to!”

Chrollo stopped and turned to look at his mate. The way Fanaka had to stop him from falling had him worried the blond really was injured. God, how could he be so stupid?

Maybe Kurapika as a part of the troupe wasn’t a good idea, maybe he needed to just stay here. It was much safer here than going off on missions, missions where he’d sometimes have to be without the alpha. God forbid if he got hurt while he wasn’t around! And look what happened today, he was gone for less than an hour and Kurapika got himself into a duel with the alpha in his troupe that had repeatedly tried to rape him!
“If you are going to be so reckless then maybe you need to stay here!” Kurapika froze, his veins felt like they were filled with slush as whatever he was going to say got stuck in his throat.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Fanaka asked in Kurapika’s place since he seemed to have gotten whiplash from the comment.

“It means I’m not sure joining the troupe is right for you anymore Kurapika,” Chrollo tried to take Kurapika’s arm again to finish pulling him into the building to get his arm looked at.

Kurapika jerked away from Chrollo with a look of such hurt and disgust that Chrollo almost felt like he had done something wrong, but this was for Kurapika’s own good! He was reckless, didn’t listen to him, and was far too frail looking! Chrollo doubled down and gave the omega a stern look.

“Do you really think so little of me?” Kurapika’s angry whisper felt like a crack of lightning. Then his voice grew in volume. “Do you think I’m so weak?! So weak that I need to be protected from EVERYTHING?”

“Kurapika! It is not a matter of being strong-“

“Then it’s a matter of my being an omega! That’s it isn’t it!?“ Kurapika shouted, ignoring as Fanaka tried to calm both parties down. “I’m just your little omega mate and that means I can’t defend myself! If that’s all I am too you then FUCK Y-“

“Okay! Let’s all just calm down!” Fanaka forced the pair apart. Kurapika felt a tear run down his cheek and roughly brushed it away.

“I’m going to the waterfall!” He suddenly spun around and began to march away. “Where HE can’t follow me!” Chrollo huffed angrily and tried to follow his mate but Fanaka stopped him with a hand on his chest.

“No, you both need to calm down before I’m allowing you to talk again,” she stated matter-of-factly.
“Allowing me?!” He found himself baring his teeth at his friend’s mate.

“Yes, allowing you. Give him and yourself a day to figure out your thoughts so you aren’t just yelling at each other!” She commanded and began to shove him towards the onsen. Chrollo wanted to argue but Kurapika was already out of sight and the reality of what he’d just said to his mate came down hard on him. He knew Kurapika wasn’t stupid but he’d basically called him stupid!

But he was acting like it wasn’t he?!

“Machi?” Fanaka called the moment she had them inside. “I need your help with something!”

Chrollo let his hands cover his face, he didn’t care about what Fanaka needed from Machi, all he cared about was that he’d just yelled at Kurapika and he didn’t know how to fix that!

“Whatsoever happened to calm and collected Chrollo Lucifer?” He asked himself miserably.

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Gon found Pakunoda to be a wonderful sparring partner. She was tough and an expert when it came to restraining someone, so it gave him ample opportunity to practice getting out of tricky situations. He was already stronger than he’d been just a few weeks before.

Biscuit and Pakunoda also seemed to get along very well, with Pakunoda frequently going to her to ask questions about childcare and so on.

Kalluto was also fun to fight against, he had a lot of tricks up his sleeve. He thinks he even got the cold young omega to smile once! The greatest thing of all was how happy Killua seemed to be at having an opportunity to actually have a relationship with his younger brother. He knew the white haired omega had been sad about not having any connections with his family.

Killua had been having a blast with Shalnark as well, any break they got he would rush off to plan strategy and play games with Shalnark. Sometimes Gon joined in but he liked talking with Pakunoda as well so he would split his breaks between Killua and all of his new friends.
“Pakunoda!” Killua grinned as he jumped up from his strategy meeting with Shalnark, interrupting her and Gon’s fight. “I think we’re ready to get that Plot Of The Beach card!"

Gon felt an excited shiver run up his spine, they get to fight someone for real soon!

Kurapika was poking a blue flower, letting his feet dip in the side of the pool. Around him some of the village children played and a few of the other omegas lingered about.

He came to the pool huffed and pissed off so no one had approached him as of yet, but the longer he sat there, the more he found himself side eying Rei who was brewing tea yet again.

“May I sit?” Kurapika jumped at the sound of Machi’s voice. She wasn’t allowed here!

“Machi?! This is omegas only!” Kurapika told her in a whispered tone, hoping it would keep everyone from noticing until he could get her out of here. Omegas were very territorial, he didn’t need to break up any fights!

Machi chuckled softly and sat herself down despite his efforts to turn her around. “I’ve got special permission,” she hummed as she dipped her feet into the warm water and rubbed at her stomach. “Plus, apparently pregnant women no matter their status are allowed to be here. Something about our pheromones being calming.”

Kurapika's eyes widened and he was completely caught off guard, he didn’t even know what to say to that!

“Ma-machi! Oh my g-, congratulations!” He hugged her side, the excited feeling showing on his face as he finally smiled again.

It appeared that the other omegas already knew Machi very well, Rei even approached with two cups of steaming tea and handed them over with a soft, “This should help with the morning sickness Machi-dear.” She thanked her with a nod.
“Uvogin is very excited,” she hummed and sipped her tea. Her hand was still gently rubbing her stomach. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen a man cry and jump around in excitement at the same time before.”

Kurapika laughed, he could picture it perfectly.

“I wanted to tell you before anyone else.” She side eyed the omega with red eyes and messy hair. Personally she didn’t see the problem with him beating up Nobunaga, he had handled the situation like a true Spider and she understood how he felt at the moment. Ever since telling Uvogin that she was carrying their child he has been afraid to let her out of the house.

It had been hard to go from being treated like a mighty warrior goddess to a frail child by her mate.

“Why?”

“Well, you’re kinda my boss now, as well as a trusted friend.” She bumped his shoulder kindly.

Kurapika smiled just a little before sighing and picking at one of his cuticles. The burning questions he had been fighting the last few days now applied to Machi. It was a very real possibility that they will be confined to this village forever.

“Are you afraid?” He asked even though he didn’t know why it seemed like such a bad thing to be at this village forever now. Just yesterday it was a viable option, today it was a prison sentence.

“Afraid? What would I ever have to be afraid of?”

“Afraid that now that you’re a mother they will always treat you like you’re somehow less?” He explained gloomily. He blushed a bit when Machi began to laugh with more vigor than she normally gives anything.

“If anyone tried that, they’d get a nice reminder about how tough I am in the form of a needle in their brain!” She sipped her tea and took a breath. “But more seriously, no I’m not afraid. Having this child doesn’t take away that I am strong, I may be here for awhile but I can still go out on missions. The only difference now is that I have a reason to always come back, and a mate that loves me that I can travel with.”
“You’re planning on staying here?” He looked up a bit confused, he thought she might set down roots in Ryuuseigai or wherever she went when the troupe wasn’t together.

“Uvo is an alpha, there’s a good chance we’d have an omega or alpha as well. I don’t want them growing up some place that thinks alphas have the right to behave like fools or omegas are less than human. Plus it’s nice and safe here, a whole village to protect him or her.” Kurapika nodded along because that did make sense, a rational decision he’d expect from her.

“How do you feel about the gender?”

“I have a strong feeling towards a girl.” She smiled wider than Kurapika had ever seen from her. “But really Kurapika, Chrollo loves you and he is doing his best. Just talk to him, explain to him how you’re feeling and even though he can be as stubborn and stupid as a rock, he is very smart and understanding. He’ll listen.”

“But what if he doesn’t?” Kurapika pulled his legs from the pool and huddled his knees into his chest. “He said he wanted to let me be free and support me, but he won’t even let me deal with nenless jerks picking a fight! And he said he wanted me part of the troupe but the second I try to be part of it he just takes away the offer!” Kurapika’s eyes started glowing scarlet the moment he started thinking of the situation.

“Talk to him, tell him what you’ve told me.” She started running a hand through her pink hair. Kurapika idly wondered if her baby would share that odd gene. “Look, you have to understand his side as well. We’ve all known each other for years, some of us from childhood. We’re well acquainted with our strengths, Chrollo knows how badly Nobunaga can beat someone into the dirt!”

She paused and took a breath. “But he doesn’t know yours yet, you’ve been without nen so of course he sees you as defenseless. Just try to remember that when you talk to him.”

“Thanks Machi.” He whispered but still felt he needed some time before he wanted to see Chrollo again.

“So you’ve had yer first fight,” Uvogin lumbered into the room and sat heavily next to his boss, his
friend, throwing a gargantuan arm over his slumped shoulders. “Congrats man.”

“Congrats?” Chrollo looked up at the man wearily, it had been hours and Kurapika still hadn’t come back, come home to him. “How exactly is this something to celebrate?” His voice took on an angry tone.

Uvogin just laughed and set a large jug of something that he guessed was alcoholic on the low table, then began to pour him a glass he’d apparently brought out as well. “Cause Danchou, this is when you get to see if yer relationship has the legs to go the distance!” He patted the black haired alpha on the back hard enough to almost knock him into the table.

“And how is that?” Chrollo sighed, just over being awake at this point but he couldn’t calm his nerves until he knew Kurapika was safe and warm inside.

“Every relationship is good when it starts, it’s when you fight and how you get through it that tells you if you’ve got something strong.” Uvogin gave him his great ‘sagely’ advice as he passed him the lukewarm alcohol. Chrollo downed it in one go and tipped his cup to Uvogin for more.

“But I’m right!” Chrollo growled, some of his aggression directed at himself for somehow ending the lovely honeymoon he’d been on.

“Being a good mate isn’t always about being right danchou,” Uvogin filled his glass and took a swig from the jug for himself.

“I get that, I do!” Chrollo didn’t like the raised eyebrow he got in return. “But how am I supposed to deal with him running off into danger! Nobunaga could have seriously injured him, or some random trafficker could grab him when I’m not around, he’s not strong enough to go on the kinds of missions we go on!”

Uvogin for his credit didn’t get angry or defensive, just set the jug back down and turned to his boss with a serious look. “Can I let you in on a few secrets?” He asked but he was going to tell them weather Chrollo wanted him to or not so the dominant alpha nodded. “First: Machi’s pregnant,” Chrollo felt shock, then surprise, and then just pure joy for his long time friend. Unfortunately a bit of jealousy also managed to get into the mix.

“Congratulations,” he told his friend, he didn’t really understand how that was relevant to what they were talking about but it was still big news.
Uvogin grinned so wide it probably tore a muscle before sliding back into a serious expression. “Thanks, and you know the funny thing? It actually started one of our biggest fights.”

Chrollo blinked, surprised that the news of their child could ever start a fight.

“I know, confusing huh?” He laughed and clapped Chrollo on the back again. “I tried to go full alpha on her, following her around, worried about everything she was doing. I tried to protect her from a paper cut! It’s just alpha instinct!” He chuckled to himself like he thought his past actions were the dumbest things he’d ever done. This was coming from the man who got infected with leeches because he wanted to fight the Shadow Beasts by himself!

“But then she just slapped me one day, it wasn’t hard and I don’t think she even realized she had done it for a few seconds.” Chrollo was gaping at his friend now, a reaction like that was very out of character for Machi. “Then she just burst into tears, screaming at me that she couldn’t stand to be around me, while apologizing and telling me she loved me. It was . . . Horrifying, she had so much built up frustration because of how I was treating her that she just lashed out and all the emotions came with it.” Uvogin sat back and took another swig out of the jug.

“Why are you telling me this?” Chrollo asked but truly he saw the comparison. Going ‘alpha’ on his mate and trying to over protect them only for them to snap at you. “Kurapika isn’t Machi, she can protect herself, pregnant or not.”

“You see that’s why I’m telling you this Danchou, you don’t know anything about Kurapika’s strength. You’ve only seen ‘im in a fight once and the first three months he didn’t even have nen. Try to see this from his perspective. He wants to be involved in yer life but yer refusing to see his efforts.” Uvogin put the cork back in the jug and began to stand. “Just listen to ‘im and tell ‘Im how yer feeling too, you two will work it out.”

The sound of the front door opening prompted Uvogin to begin to leave, Chrollo could smell his mate the moment he came in, yet guilt and uncertainty kept him rooted where he was. Uvogin was almost to the door and Chrollo had to stop him to ask. “What was the other secret?”

Uvogin paused, looked over his shoulder with an expression that Chrollo had never seen from him. It made a shiver of dread run down his spine. “If Shalnark hadn’t interrupted our fight, I think I would have lost. He would have killed me.” Uvo left. The room felt hollow after those somber honest words from the most earnest man he’d ever known.
Chrollo stood and hesitantly moved to the front room where he could smell Kurapika lingering. His grey eyes were red from tears, sending a bolt of regret through the alpha. He looked just as wary to begin this conversation as Chrollo felt.

“I-“

“Chrollo.” Kurapika cut in firmly. “I know we have to talk but... I can’t right now. Just give me a day to sort through my thoughts.” Kurapika told him with finality before he began to turn away. Chrollo felt he had to say something, anything, to make sure Kurapika knew he’d wait forever.

“Okay,” he breathed, his heart skipping when Kurapika stopped to listen to what he had to say. “Goodnight, I love you.”

“I love you too.” He felt him then.

Chrollo had a lot to think about.

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“What the hell is on your face?” Illumi gasped the moment his omega stepped out of the house for his first official training session. They’d explained as best they could so today they were going to work on Ten so he would stop leaking his aura everywhere.

Kyo immediately froze when his black haired Alpha shouted at him and it took him a moment to remember that he was wearing his new glasses.

“Y-you mean my glasses?” He asked with a little stutter since he didn’t know what he had done wrong. The glasses slid down his nose a bit and he pushed them up, a little frazzled when Illumi just continued to stare at him in a way he definitely didn’t like.

“Those are so... Cute~!” Hisoka sprinted past Illumi to awe over the deliciously adorable omega. They were big framed glasses that completely framed Kyo’s face. The frame was brown except for the lower half of the part holding the lens, which was clear. He looked like a Pin Up Doll!
“You like them?” Kyo blushed a pretty pink color and peered up at the redhead as he pushed the frames up his nose once again. His alphas hadn’t once shown him any attention so the redhead mooning over his new look made Kyo feel more than a little flustered.

“They’re disgusting.” Illumi pouted with a tired growl. The glasses obscured his face and highlighted the green of his eyes.

“What are you talking about?” Hisoka giggled and played with the glasses on the omega’s face, smile growing more when he got his hands smacked away. “They are adorable~! When did you get those?”

“Oh um. . . after our lesson yesterday, Kikyo said she’d noticed I was having trouble reading. Apparently I’m farsighted?” Kyo shrugged, his bravo improving a bit under the praise of at least one of his alphas. “Next thing I knew she was bringing me to a doctor and I was being given these.”

“And the new haircut and clothes~? Hisoka asked while eyeing the omega up and down, ignoring Illumi as he just continued to gloom a few feet behind him. Hisoka just couldn’t believe how absurdly wonderful he looked. Before he was a cheap copy of a strong omega. Now he was his own person and Hisoka found it unbelievably attractive.

“Oh we got them at the same time. Kikyo said that making my hair a touch darker would bring out my eyes.” Kyo flushed a bit deeper while working the sleeve of his new red sweater. “Do you like it as well?” He went to brush his now slightly darker silver hair behind his ear only to remember that he now had all his hair tied into braids on that side of his head, the rest had been chemically forced into loose curls that rested wildly around his cheeks, neck, and ear.

Hisoka couldn’t have been happier about his little mate’s new look. It was down right wholesome, and if anyone knew Hisoka, they knew he loved playing with wholesome little things. It also helped that he was slowly getting more powerful.

“Very, very much~.” His tone took on a seductive tone that he had no control of.

Illumi huffed, not liking how much attention Hisoka was giving the omega. It didn’t even look right anymore!

“Let’s get the lesson over with,” Illumi growled and turned sharply, a bit of menace leaking
through his aura at his annoyance.

Kikyo watched from a window with a smirk on her face as the two alphas began showing Kyo how to meditate and keep his aura from leaking out. It would take a while for him to master but she was sure he could do it if his natural talent was any indication.

Hisoka was actually making her proud today, Kyo’s new makeover had gone over wonderfully with him. He actually looked at Kyo like a person he wanted to know better instead of the omega he got stuck with.

Illumi obviously hated it since it was far and away from any style Killua had ever donned. But he’d come around in time, Kikyo had to have faith that once he stopped seeing Kyo as Killua he would actually come to like the smart, beautiful, talented omega he did mate.

Now she just had to make sure Illumi didn’t try to mold Kyo’s hatsu to match Killua’s. Luckily she had Kyo’s butler following him with strict orders to removed him from their presence if they dare try.

Kyo, Illumi, and Hisoka might actually have a chance at a happy mating if Illumi would stop being so stubborn and realize he can’t have Killua.
Chrollo didn’t sleep that night as he mulled over the news that Uvo had delivered: he would have lost his fight with Kurapika.

As the alpha considered this, Uvo’s initial attraction to Kurapika made a lot more sense. It wasn’t that Uvo had fallen for a pretty face, he had been faced with something that most of them would have believed unthinkable, namely Uvo losing a fight. Anyone capable of defeating the Enhancer deserved respect for their strength and prowess.

But it was difficult to wrap his mind around the fact that such a person wasn’t a faceless individual, but rather his petite mate! The nen-less person that he had initially intended to sell and then had fallen for when his thirst for knowledge had proven comparable to Chrollo’s own. How many nights had he slept with Kurapika tucked into his chest, determined to win him over, protect and keep him warm?

Little by little, Chrollo forced himself to swallow a very bitter pill: he viewed Kurapika as his intellectual equal but didn’t believe him capable as a fighter and he was being proven wrong.

He didn’t know everything about Kurapika, and nen was one of points that Chrollo had unwittingly neglected to consider. Kurapika had been without nen during the initial time when they’d been getting to know each other and then while they had courted.

In turn, he knew Nobunaga as well as his abilities and mentality. As the night dragged on, the alpha did have to admit that if he had ordered Nobunaga to stand down, to accept Kurapika as his mate and a superior in the Troupe, then the other alpha would have only shut his mouth and followed the minimum of what he demanded. He would have continued to view Kurapika as weak and wouldn’t have listened to him if they ended up in a group. That would have messed up the relationship between Kurapika and the rest of the troupe as well, causing divisions over lesser arguments.

Kurapika was right in that the fight was the only way to finally settle the dispute. But Chrollo had hated being surprised by it, would have preferred to have been there.

As the sun rose, he believed he finally understood the situation and felt his head was much cooler than it had been. It was still several hours before he left the room he had sequestered himself in, rushing out when he heard something that sounded like a noise of distress from Kurapika!

Entering the kitchen, he found that Nobunaga was responsible for the noises being made not just by Kurapika, but by Phinks, Uvo, and Feitan as well. The samurai had been forced into a pink lolita dress, the much bigger twin of the one that Kurapika had once been forced to wear. The ensemble was topped with a large pink bow on the samurai’s topknot.

It seemed that Machi had been busy the night before.

“Danchou…” Nobunaga began, obviously hoping that Chrollo would release him from this misery.
Chrollo blinked innocently as he raised his phone and snapped a picture. Phinks and Feitan finally ceased in attempting to cover up their snorts and practically collapsed in fits of laughter.

“Nobunaga, don’t dawdle!” Fanaka’s voice called from the kitchen. “You were supposed to deliver those muffins and then brew the coffee!”

“How long is this going to last?!” the samurai yowled, embarrassed already and definitely looking like he was hoping that Chrollo would end this.

“You made Kurapika’s life miserable with outfits and chores for a month, at which point most of the troupe had come to realize that he was a person. But you kept at it,” Fanaka pointed out as she brought a bowl of sliced fruit into the room. “A few days of experiencing the stereotypical treatment of an omega won’t kill you.”

“Try a few months,” Chrollo corrected. “I hope you have more appreciation for omegas when this is finished. Kurapika, can we talk?”

Grey eyes stared at him for a moment before the blonde nodded and quietly stood in order to walk with Chrollo to their bedroom. Once the door was shut, the alpha took a deep breath before beginning.

“You were right.”

Kurapika’s eyebrows rose in surprise, obviously anticipating having to argue for this.

“I’ve known Nobunaga for many years, most of our lives in fact. I know his abilities and personality well, and that he never would have accepted anything in regards to you if you didn’t prove to him that you were capable. In turn, I’m only familiar with you from the intellectual standpoint, I know nearly nothing of your abilities in regards to fighting and nen.”

“There hasn’t been much opportunity for that to change,” Kurapika admitted.

“No, and that is going to change,” Chrollo continued. “Uvo has told me that you would have defeated him during your original fight if Shalnark hadn’t interfered. Even knowing that, I think I would prefer to train with you. We can work together and help you decide on a good ability for your unassigned chain.”

It seemed like a good plan, a way for them to build trust in the abilities of the other and Kurapika found himself nodding again.

“And next time you decide to kick the butt of a troupe member, I’d like to know ahead of time rather than being shocked.”

Now Kurapika pressed his lips together firmly. “Are you saying I need your permission?”

“No!” Chrollo declared as a strange feeling of fear gripped him at the possibility that he upset Kurapika. “Just… Can we talk about it first so we both know what will happen? I could even tell you about how the other troupe members fight… To a certain extent.”

Kalluto glanced at his cards as Gon and Killua discussed how to deal with their newest problem with this game, namely obtaining the Plot of Beach card. The pair were looking through their own book, working through names of people they could contact about forming a team with in order to take on Razor’s crew.
Including him, the Spiders, and Biscuit plus that one guy from the first group, they had seven people and they needed fifteen in order to be able to challenge Razor and his crew of devils.

“What about Tsezguerra?” Gon asked as he pointed out a name in his book. “He seemed pretty strong.”

“We can ask…” Killua admitted as he stared at the book though Kalluto didn’t miss the faint grimace that passed over his features.

“You have someone else in mind?”

“No, and that’s the problem. I’m not seeing anyone who seems to stand out at all.”

Shalnark glanced at their books as well, obviously scanning for names then groaned. “I could go to the real world and see if there are any troupe members that would be interested.”

Both boys jumped, looking shocked at having such a thing suggested and Kalluto almost laughed.

“I… That might not be necessary-” Gon began but was cut off by Shalnark.

“It might be. Razor isn’t a newbie nen user, he is strong. Part of growing stronger yourself isn’t just about facing strong opponents, it also includes learning to work well with the members of your pack and accepting assistance,” the Manipulator lectured as Paku moved to stand beside him.

“You can’t approach this by just collecting 15 people, you already saw the result of that. Your allies in this will need to be strong.” Pakunoda added her piece and Killua nodded faintly in agreement before Gon sighed.

“What do you think, Killua?” the Enhancer asked and Kalluto felt a brief jolt of envy when he saw that the alpha was authentically asking for his brother’s opinion.

“It might be our best chance,” Killua admitted after a minute of thought.

“Nope! While you guys approach this Tsezguerra and discuss this with him, I’ll head out to see if anyone is available.” Shalnark began to jog away, waving at them with one hand as he departed.

Teaching Ten to Kyo had proven to be quite an interesting exercise for Hisoka. His mate was proving to be quite talented now that he was coming out of his shell. And innocent to the point where he was fun to tease and corrupt, especially with his new ‘wholesome’ look!

“He’s starting to show promise!” Hisoka stated as he and Illumi were returned to their cell for the day. The assassin in turn gave Hisoka a flat stare.

“It is changing its appearance without permission,” Illumi deadpanned. “I selected it because I liked its original appearance.”

“But he looks so much better!” Hisoka practically sang. “Almost like a little scholar with those glasses and sweater, but the hair was so innocent!”

Illumi narrowed his eyes in response, jealous that Hisoka would give the omega such attention when they mated it specifically to just bare their offspring. It was what they had agreed on when they had decided that they wanted to be together and Illumi had realized that he needed to provide a child a carry on the Zoldyck name, even if he wasn’t the heir of the family.
“We will have a say in its Hatsu at least,” Illumi finally stated after a long moment. “We will ensure it chooses something appropriate and worthy.”

Hisoka gave Illumi a sidelong stare that held more than a small amount of suspicion. “We’ll need to determine his strengths and see what interests him.”

Illumi cut off his partner with a hand on his shoulder. “It is our omega, it will do as we demand.”

In the observation room, Kikyo huffed angrily before touching a control and watching the pair of alphas get blasted apart by jets of ice cold water. How was it that her normally obedient and respectful son was proving to be an embarrassment while his perverted partner was behaving like a proper Zoldyck in regards to his mate?!

Franklin stared at his phone for a moment, confused as to why Shalnark would be calling him. Last he knew, he and Paku had been assigned to find and watch/train those two kids that Kurapika was so attached to as well as that additional Zoldyck child that had showed up at their base.

Glancing at where Leorio was unpacking his books for the semester despite having no classes for another week, Franklin selected the button to accept the call.

“Hey Franklin! We just had an issue come up and need to form a team to help the boys learn to work with a team.”

“Shal, that doesn’t make sense.”

“No, I guess it wouldn’t when explained like that. But what’s happening is that we have taken the boys into a game called Greed Island, a game for Hunters. Part of the game involves collecting these cards and unfortunately, one of them requires that we have a team of 15 or more people in order to challenge the guy who has the card.”

“Are you calling the troupe together along with those boys just for this card?” Franklin asked as he mentally counted the troupe (11 not including Nobunaga) + the boys (3) + Kurapika = 15.

“No, we just need eight people and the boys are trying to convince someone they know in the game to join us, meaning I need a minimum of four. More if that person doesn’t agree.”

Franklin glanced at Leorio as the doctor-in-training glanced over at him, eyebrow raised in question and he realized this could be a good field test for the man.

“Sure, I’ll join and I’ll bring Leorio with me. He has several days until classes and since I’m a Hunter now as well, they’ll accept me removing him for a training trip.”

“Great! I gave Danchou the game station with the game on it and he’s near Phinks, Feitan, and Uvo who have already agreed to come as well as Shizuku and Bonolenov. They’ll bring the game and we’ll meet at your location tomorrow! Be sure to pack a bag for several days, warm weather gear! We’ll be near a beach!”

“I’m sure we’ll enjoy it,” Franklin replied before hanging up and turning to Leorio. “We’ll be taking a few days for a training trip where we’ll meet up with the boys.”

“Gon and Killua?” the other Emitter asked in excitement.

“Yes, team training exercise. We’ll be leaving tomorrow, pack for beach weather.”
“YEAH!” the man cheered before practically skipping towards his room.

Franklin shrugged before glancing at the kitchen. Knowing Uvo and Phinks, they’d both arrive with appetites worthy of Enhancers and he believed they’d all set out on the right foot if it began with a good warm meal before heading into the game.

Glancing at the checkbook that Chrollo had left Leorio, he decided to forego using even a few jenny to buy the groceries. He was a thief after all!
And you won’t interrupt?” Kurapika narrowed his eyes at his overprotective mate. When the raven haired man didn’t say anything, he raised a questioning brow aggressively.

“I promise that I will not interrupt, okay?” Chrollo sighed before taking his blond mate’s hand. “Unless you get hurt.”

“Chrollo!” Kurapika smacked his hand away with annoyance.

“Okay, I’m sorry, okay? Pushing down my instincts to protect you is going to take me awhile to get use to alright?” Chrollo sighed, taking Kurapika’s hand again and raised his fingers to his lips to kiss them. “Baby steps.”

“But you know I can take care of myself right?” Kurapika pleaded, he really cared whether or not his mate believed he could do this.

“Yes, I know I do but it’s hard to accept,” Chrollo tried to explain once again how he was feeling, it was odd to have to share with another person. He was so used to just telling people what to do and not having to explain his reasonings. It was a lot to get used too. “But all I want is for you to be happy, so I will do my best to smother the part of me that wants to wrap you in bubble wrap and hide you away from any danger.”

Kurapika snorted lightly and took his hand back to continue eating his breakfast. “Bubble wrap?”

“It would be so adorable!” Chrollo chuckled, Kurapika laughing in that cute smothered way he does. “I can just picture your lip jutted out in a cute little pout as you yell at me.”

“You got the yelling part down, but if you tried to wrap me up like that, I’d throttle you.” Kurapika poked the ravenette hard in the shoulder before taking a large scoop of scrambled eggs and taking a bite.

Chrollo just grinned and began to eat his own food. He felt a little queasy about having Kurapika go face off against the traffickers in the forest alone but he’d be there if anything went wrong and
Kurapika made an excellent point: he had nen and they did not. He’d be fine.

“That reminds me, we should spar one of these days.” Chrollo smiled at his mate but Kurapika only began to look more irritated. “What? I’m serious, I’d like to spar with you sometime.”

“So you can go easy on me while too afraid to hurt me?” He asked, his eyebrows twitching.

“Kurapika, I trust I my ability to best you in a fight without hurting you, even at full strength.” Chrollo leaned forward and grinned. “We should fight so I can kick your ass.”

Kurapika was baffled at the teasing challenge Chrollo just issued. “Oh bring it on!” Kurapika slammed a fist down and grinned in return. “But just so you understand, I won’t be holding back. I have no issues with beating you into the ground!”

Somehow the exchange felt almost sexually charged, like trading challenges was in close proximity to flirting for them. Very aggressive flirting.

“I’d like to see you try!” Chrollo went for the cliched comeback as he sat forward and licked his lips. “Especially if it gives me another chance to feel those beautiful chains so snuggly wrapped around me.”

Kurapika flushed at the memory of literally chaining Chrollo to their bed in the midst of a particularly bad heat. The dark alpha immediately leaned in even closer, close enough that even an inch closer and their lips would touch.

“I look forward to it greatly.” The innuendo was thinly veiled and made Kurapika feel a little too hot.

“Okay, bed now.” Kurapika got up, grabbing the alpha by the back of his coat so he could begin to drag him back to their room. “This is all your own doing.”

“I love when a plan works out!” Chrollo snapped the smaller male up into his arms and raced them back to their room. They’d be late for everything they had planned today but by god would it be worth it.
“Pick up the pace!” Hisoka yelled to his little omega mate running along the obstacle course they had set up for him and Hisoka was getting bored. Bored because Kyo had a ridiculously low amount of stamina.

He was slow, clumsy, completely uncoordinated. He’d only been running for five minutes but he was already winded and panting, barely even moving! It was so boring!

“He isn’t getting any better,” Illumi said casually, like he didn’t care that their mate couldn’t out run a possum. “He seems like he’s getting slower.”

“Maybe he should take a break? This can’t be good for his confidence.” Hisoka sighed, he didn’t like having to be the serious one. It wasn’t his style, but Illumi had been acting weird and distant so it looked like it was up to the redhead to make sure they didn’t ruin their omega mate.

“What is wrong with you lately?” Hisoka hissed, not liking how cold Illumi had been to him. Illumi was always cold but never like this, never to him.

“Nothing, I’m fine.”

Hisoka sighed again and notice Kyo was definitely flagging now after clearing the rope wall. Ignoring Illumi for now since he was a big boy and could deal with his own emotions he called out to Kyo. “Kyo~! Stop now and take a break!”

Kyo looked up before borderline collapsing into himself. He held himself barely by placing his hands on his knees and gasped in large breaths of air. He was completely out of breath.

“You are in terrible shape,” Illumi told Kyo with an irritated pinch in his brow.

“Well~” he gasped and gulped like he was going to throw up his breakfast. “-it’s not like we had outdoor time in the facility!” He ground out angrily, looking up at Illumi in particular.
Maybe they should have gotten to know Kyo a little before marking him because as it was now seemed the two were like oil and water. Everyday Kyo seemed to get more and more upset with Illumi, at least up to this point it was contained to just annoyed looks and snappy replies but if it continued . . . Hisoka didn’t know but he didn’t like where it was heading. He really didn’t want to find a replacement omega and go through all of this again.

“Whatever, any thoughts on your hatsu?” Illumi cut straight to the chase. Zeno had explained hatsus to the omega just the other day, and had him thinking on what kind of power he’d like to create. Illumi had a better idea than anything the omega could ever come up with.

“I was thinking about something with chem-“

“What about electricity?” Illumi cut him off. Hisoka raised a brow at Illumi, why was he still pushing this? Kyo would never be strong if he just copies Killua.

“Electricity?” Kyo finally stood back up and stopped needing to breathe so hard. He cocked his head in a curious way, unsure but he was listening. “Why?”

“Yes, why?” Hisoka hissed, looking around for Kyo’s butler that normally followed them around like a shadow. But he was surprisingly absent. Illumi’s mother would kill him if Illumi succeeded in what Hisoka believed he was trying to do.

“Because it’s a Zoldyck thing, Zeno has an electricity hatsu and I’m sure he’d be proud if you followed in his footsteps,” Illumi spoke in that hypnotic way that Hisoka normally found rather enchanting and sexy, but right now it was just pissing him off.

“Oh I mean I could think about it,” Kyo muttered with a pensive look. Hisoka was baffled that he’d even consider such a ridiculous thing. “But I don’t know anything about lightening, I’ve never even felt so much as a shock before.” Exactly! Hisoka was glad he at least understood he couldn’t just develop a lightning hatsu from nothing, but he was still considering it!

“It doesn’t matter, we will help you make this power.” I won’t be helping anything Hisoka thought, feeling more and more irritated with Illumi.

“Masters,” a call from behind them cut off whatever Kyo was about to say. They all looked to see Kyo’s personal butler had arrived to stop this inevitable conversation. “Lunch is prepared and
Master Illumi, I’m sure your mother will want to talk with you once lunch is over.”

“Of course she will,” Illumi bit out as Kyo smiled and started moving towards his butler to head off to eat.

Kyo only managed to take two steps before tripping over his tired feet and plummeting towards the ground. Even without nen Hisoka was fast enough to catch the little thing, he took Kyo’s hand and held him up. Even felt some small affection when those large green eyes looked up at him in thanks just before catching a large needle that went flying for his head.

Hisoka straightened, bringing the needle close to inspect it. It had been a long time since Illumi had thrown a needle at his head. He turned and looked at his alpha mate, Illumi just looked at him with an expression screaming, ‘What?! I’m pissed at you.’

“Something on your mind dear?” Hisoka rolled his tongue in a charming matter like nothing was wrong, but it sounded condescending mixed with the expression on his face.

Kyo looked between the two confused by what was happening. Where had that needle come from? Why was Hisoka upset with Illumi over it?

“I don’t know,” he shrugged tensely. “You sure you could tear yourself away from your new favorite mate?” He hissed with disgust.

Hisoka felt like he had whiplash! Illumi choice the freaking omega! And now Illumi was throwing a temper tantrum because he was doing exactly as the ravenette had said he wanted! But of course this was all rooted in Illumi’s obsession with Killua, like everything was. If Hisoka didn’t understand he’d be jealous with just how ‘doting’ his mate was towards his brother. Hisoka glanced to Kyo to see him watching the two of them with concern, it wouldn’t be good if Kyo was exposed to Illumi’s obsession so soon.

Who knows how Kyo would react to finding out that he was just his mate’s cheap replacement for a better omega.

Kyo jumped when Hisoka looked at him again, his eyes full of ice and disinterest. He had forgotten how frightening they actually were.
“Class is over today, go inside.” Hisoka voice chilled Kyo to the bone and so with every instinct telling him to get the hell away he did. He took the last few steps to his personal butler, Hansuke, and took his arm to keep his balance.

Kyo looked back to see his two alphas in a silent standoff like they were waiting for him to be out of ear shot, Kyo didn’t like it. He knew exactly what this was about, or at least it wasn’t hard to guess.

Jealousy bubbled up at the idea that maybe he never would be good enough for Illumi, never good enough to replace Killua.

Kurapika let the white leather slide over his skin as he got ready to take down some no good omega traffickers. Chrollo didn’t know he was going to wear the jacket Machi made, the jacket that matched Chrollo’s. It was like his own personal Phantom Troupe uniform, even if it was made before him joining was even a possibility.

Kurapika turned to look it the mirror, trying to really feel out the outfit. It felt, well, strange. He was used to the easy breathable fabric he made his own outfits from, this was a bit heavier with all the fur too. Machi of course made it with enough flexibility for him, but it was just weird. Not bad, just weird.

Never in his wildest nightmares did he ever think he’d be putting on a white version of the danchou of the Phantom Troupe’s coat and planning on going out on his official interview for a place in the Troupe.

Much to Kurapika’s chagrin, he looked great in the coat. White, gold, and grey over a dark blue top and high waisted white leather pants that hugged his legs snuggly. He even had an inverse pair of Chrollo’s boots.

“Wow,” Kurapika turned at the small gasp to see Chrollo had come in and was just staring dumbstruck. “Now I know how you felt the last time we were here.”

“You mean when I walked in on you changing and you teased me? It was really mean of you honestly,” Kurapika said with his own teasing grin.
“Mean, what are we children?” Chrollo laughed as he stepped closer to wrap an arm around the blonde’s waist.

“You definitely act like it sometimes,” Kurapika turned in his mate’s arms to peck at his lips.

“In that case, I was just tugging your pigtails,” Chrollo leaned in for another kiss this time deeper and slower. “You sure you want to do this alone? The warriors said they’d help, more than a few of them are omegas.”

“I’m pretty sure I can handle a few traffickers, the warriors and you didn’t even spot one with nen,” Kurapika assured his worry-wart of a mate. It was so cute. “I’m going to be late, let’s head out and no helping! I don’t need it.”

“I already promised you a hundred times, I’ll just watch but you really don’t need to prove yourself to the troupe. You have the spot already.”

“Because I’m your mate, or because you actually believe in my abilities?” Kurapika quirked his lips up in a smirk when Chrollo flinched. They’d talked everything out so it was alright now but the problem was this: Chrollo never had the chance to see his capabilities. This was an opportunity.

“Because I trust you,” he finally answered. Kurapika’s breath left him in a small gasp as something warm bloomed in his chest at just the words from the man that had come to mean everything to him.

They didn’t say anything after that, they didn’t need to.

A few villagers wished him luck as he headed out for the small camp the traffickers had set up for themselves but he didn’t need luck, he had skill and training.

Chrollo went ahead to station himself someplace to watch so it was only him when he got to the village which is where Fanaka and Machi were waiting to see him off.

“Go kick ass!” Fanaka told him with a happy grin.
“Yeah, what she said,” Machi added in. “By the way the coat looks good on you.” “

Kurapika grinned. “Really?” He snapped the lapels on the jacket, he didn’t look back as he stepped towards the forest, the jacket fluttering behind him as he went. “I think so too.” “
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

‘Entering’ the Greed Island game proved to be interesting for Shalnark as he demonstrated to the group what to do and was promptly followed by Phinks and then Feitan. Both men had stared at the new landscape in wonder for several minutes as Shizuku, Kortopi, Franklin, and Leorio had joined them.

“So what’re we doing here?” Phinks demanded/asked as Leorio stumbled down the stairs with a large suitcase and an inflatable beach ball in hand.

“The beach!” Leorio declared before Shalnark could reply. “I’m getting a tan and am going to try to get a bunch of pretty girls in bikinis to play volleyball!”

Feitan’s eye twitched in response as Leorio continued on with his rant on enjoying the warm weather before glancing at Franklin.

“I will admit to being a bit of a task master, but my training did not cause this,” the large man stated bluntly as Shizuku made her way down the stairs.

“Bono is coming next while Uvo finishes his meal… I think,” the bespectacled girl stated before her eyes fell on Leorio as he danced around in the heat. “Is he weird?”

Shalnark shrugged though his smile never fell. “I think all the studying for medical school has made him a bit weird in the head.”

“So we’ll have a doctor in the troupe now?”

Franklin had informed them all of Leorio’s plans and goals, so they all knew of his wish to provide free medical care to those that couldn’t afford it. It had immediately endeared him to several of them, particularly Uvo since his own child would be born in several months and he loved the idea of having a doctor in attendance for the birth.

Shalnark called for attention as soon as Uvo arrived.

“Alright, we’re here because there is a quest for this game that we need to complete to obtain a particular prize,” the blonde explained to the gathered members of the troupe. “The kids have been training hard and are eager to acquire this, but unfortunately we need 15 people to participate. They’ve been trying to recruit some players here but we’re a pack now and we support each other. And need to learn to work together.”

The technology geek then summoned his book, an action that was closely watched by the gathered group before pulling out a card. “Accompany on! To Pakunoda!”

The surprise at the transport spell was still evident on the faces of most of the troupe when their feet touched down, Pakunoda, the boys, and a girl in a frilly pink dress.

“Leorio!” Gon practically yelled as he charged at the off-balance man and tackled him, causing most of the man’s baggage to go flying. Franklin caught Leorio’s shoulders while Phinks caught
the beach ball and the rest of the stuff fell to the ground.

“Gon!” the doctor-in-training declared before squawking when he saw that his suitcase had popped open and his things were literally sitting in the sand.

“We got Tsezguerra and his men to agree to join us, so we still need…” Gon paused as he tried to mentally count the number they needed. “Seven more?”

Killua was on top of Gon a second later. “Four at least!”

The Spiders shuffled as Shalnark glanced at them, clearly evaluating skills sets. Franklin shoved Leorio forward.

“ Entire reason we came was for him to get some real world experience!”

“But the beach-!”

Franklin cut him off with a sharp gesture. “We’re here to work, not have fun! We’ll finish this task and then you can visit the beach with whatever time is left.”

“How long is this going to take?!” Leorio demanded as he turned sharply back towards the kids.

“It’ll be a few hours since Razor is issuing a sports challenge, but the main event will be a dodgeball tournament. Winning that will win the entire competition.”

“Alright, dodgeball!” Leorio looked relieved as several of the Spiders shared looks.

“Dodgeball?” Phinks asked as he tossed the beachball to Feitan who shook his head slightly. “Count us out. We’ll scope out the island and find whatever treasures are here!”

“You won’t be able to steal them, so you might as well just have some fun,” Shalnark informed the pair.

“Doing the same!” Uvo declared as he stretched. “My kid’ll be born soon and I’m going to see what this place has to offer. Might bring them here for training if it’s any good one day.”

Shalnark sighed then did a brief head count. “That means that Kortopi, Bono, and Shizuku can join our party.”

The three didn’t seem surprised or put out, but the elderly guy from the recruited team looked more than ready to raise a mutiny. He was stopped cold from saying anything by Pakunoda whispering something into his ear. Not that anyone aside from Biscuit noticed.

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As Kurapika moved quietly and lightly through the forest, he found that he could almost imagine this being his home. He’d need to learn of the different plants in this area, but he believed he could see himself taking children on camp outs in these woods and teaching them to survive.

He wouldn’t be wearing a white leather coat while doing that. He was having to pay so much attention to how he was currently moving in order to ensure that he didn’t get any marks or stains on the pristine coat before the traffickers spotted him.

The ensemble he’d chosen was one that he knew Chrollo had been drooling over, meant to make him look both innocent and sexy. The defense team in the village had seen that the traffickers definitely preferred that look and had shown no issues over following marked omegas.
Kurapika’s sharp senses couldn’t find Chrollo, but he was acutely aware of when several of the traffickers honed in on him and began to follow. Their camp was set up near a stream and Kurapika pretended not to be aware as he paused in a small clearing next to the stream and bent to pick a few flowers.

His sharp ears could hear the nearby camp and he was certain that he heard some muffled sobs after a few minutes, causing his blood pressure to rise. Did these jerks already have some captured omegas that they intended to sell?!

It took all of Kurapika’s resolve to keep his face pointed down as he continued to collect flowers, making a show of looking shocked when a throat was loudly cleared and he looked up to see a number of betas and a few alphas with really nasty expressions on their faces. The alphas looked slightly kinder, but it was obvious that they were mentally undressing him.

“Look at this one! It would sell for more than just a pretty penny!” one of the betas, a woman with a nasty snarl on her face growled.

“It’s marked,” one of the men next to her pointed out and he received a sharp blow from the woman’s elbow.

“Ain’t like we’ve never sold marked omegas before, especially with how stupid protective this place seems of them! Guess they’re protecting their investments, but they could still let us have some of the worthless sex dolls!”

“Something can hardly be worthless if it is sought after,” Kurapika cut in as he turned his attention back to the flowers and plucked one more. “As for this village, they protect their friends and families, the way all should. You’ll get nothing from this village so I advise that you leave. And release those that you hold captive to us.”

Gruff laughter that still held a slight tinge of shock at his words was the answer Kurapika received before a heavy feet began to walk towards him.

“Could have sold you to a nice alpha needing a mate, even one that was already marked. They do that you know, find omegas whose alphas have either died or abandoned them and get them fixed up again. Unfortunately for you, you’ve annoyed me enough that I think we’re going to sell you to this brothel I know of. Customers get to do anything they want whether that be beating or tying up the omegas until they can’t be used anymore. Maybe that’ll teach you to keep that pretty mouth shut!”

“I can think of plenty of things that he’ll be doing with the mouth other than keeping it shut!” one alpha called lewdly.

The hand that reached towards Kurapika, obviously intent to grab him, signaled that it was time to get rough. One moment the hand was mere inches from grabbing his jacket, the next it was on the ground as Kurapika stood, letting the flowers he had collected drop to show that he had been collecting the flowers to hide the short sword in his hand.

The beta who had just lost her hand stared at her new stump in utter shock as the rest of her group cackled, obviously having not seen what had happened.

“That omega has a sword! Oh help us!” one shouted as he mock fainted into his friend’s arms.

“Aisha, get that bitch! I want a round or two today to shut it up!”

The calls continued for a few seconds before petering out as the woman did not move or react. Not
even when Kurapika drew his second sword. His chains wouldn’t be as effective against these people and he wanted to teach them the harsh reality of the strength of omegas.

“My hand… Where is my hand?!” the trafficker screamed as she lunged at Kurapika and her other hand plus the portion of her arm below her elbow joined the other on the ground.

“Wait a minute…” one of the men murmured when he seemed to finally realize that something was wrong as Aisha’s legs gave out from under her. “Isn’t that the demon omega?!”

“That’s just an internet scam! Red eyes don’t exist!”

“They did when the Kuruta were around,” another pointed out. “That would make this omega the most valuable- HCK!”

Finally fed up and not wanting his secrets getting out more than they had, Kurapika went on the attack, racing forward and slamming the side of his sword into the man’s side, breaking ribs as his other blade sliced down and severed the Achilles tendon on his left leg. Kurapika didn’t want to kill these people, but he did intend to ensure that they deeply regretted their life choices and could never attack another omega again.

“Look out!”

“It’s a demon!”

“RUN!”

The last shout came from several of the traffickers at the back of the group who took off towards the woods, unknowingly heading straight towards the other omega fighters from the Gyudondong village. Their screams as they were put down drove the few that remained into a frenzy, some attempting to attack Kurapika and receiving severed limbs and tendons for their efforts, others attempting to run back to their camp where the captured omegas were being freed and hustled away. They likely met the worst fates.

In the end, there was just one of the traffickers left in the clearing, technically a kid of about 16. Kurapika stared at him coldly, waiting to see what the boy would do, but the kid looked shell shocked, staring at his comrades in horror.

“Well?” Kurapika demanded. “What are you going to do?”

The boy shook like a leaf and Kurapika stomped hard on the urge to reassure him. He needed to scare this kid straight, to realize that omegas were not objects to be taken and sold.

“Leave,” the boy croaked after a moment.

“And take this trash with you. As I said before, we protect our friends and families here. Omegas fall in both categories and anyone caught attempting to kidnap them will be dealt with. I suggest you gather these thugs and get out of here as soon as possible, after releasing any omegas left in your camp to us.”

Not a sound came as Kurapika tore a shirt from one of the traffickers and began to walk back towards the village and a well concealed shadow that was his mate and began to clean his swords.

Chapter End Notes
Sorry that this has taken so long, I had finals and summer classes piled on top and am about to start a hospital internship (very excited and VERY busy).
Chrollo watched Kurapika as he took the long way around towards the omega traffickers camp site. He’d just pulled off a perfect show of power, much bloodier than Chrollo had expected but it did the job. He might have even given that young boy the chance to learn the truth as he did.

Kurapika hadn’t been able to pick up on his presence yet so Chrollo took the opportunity to appreciate how wonderful his mate truly was. He plucked flowers as he trailed after the blonde, gathering a small boutique to give him once they reached the traffickers camp.

Kurapika is everything. He is Chrollo's dream come true, a partner, a confidant.

“My humanity,” Chrollo whispered to himself, quiet enough that Kurapika still wouldn’t notice.

“I may not be able to sense you,” Kurapika called out, looking around for any sign of his alpha but to no avail. “But I know you’re there! Chrollo, come out!”

Chrollo didn’t come out. His mind was caught up in a new yet old concern. Why didn’t Kurapika use his chains? His hatsu was powerful, flexible, and incredibly versatile so why didn’t he use his chains today?

And for that matter what exactly is he risking in order to keep that power? Chrollo didn’t like the idea of Kurapika harming himself just for a power that was made redundant by him giving up on revenge and them being mates.

Having learned just a little bit about being in a relationship after the fight he’d just had with Kurapika he decided that once they were back in the village, in the privacy of their own room he’d talk to him about it.

He wouldn't bring it up in the middle of a mission, and definitely not Kurapika’s mission. He really does have his heart set on this right now and Chrollo did not want to be the one to ruin this for him.
Kurapika huffed in that really cute annoyed way he does and strode forward into the traffickers camp site. Only a few of the traffickers were still alive but that was more to do with the omega warriors being more concerned with the captured omegas then finishing their kills.

There were about twelve, more from outside the village than not. They only had two from the village both incredibly young, and the only ones that didn’t seem scared. They knew the warriors would come for them.

Kurapika immediately took charge of the situation.

“Get these omegas to the onsen, a bath, and a warm meal! We can figure out everything else later!” Kurapika instructed, aiming to get the untrained omegas out of the open before destroying anything these bastards left.

A few of the omegas seemed to start crying more despite the warriors trying to assure them that they were safe now. The two young Gyudondond omegas were overjoyed and that seemed to calm down the others just a bit.

Kurapika kept an eye out for any sneak attacks, unlikely as they are but it impressed Chrollo that he’d think of every variable.

Chrollo decided then that the mission was a success and there was no longer a reason for him not to be next to his mate. He strolled out of the forest with a small bouquet of wildflowers tied off with a black ribbon. Kurapika instantly turned to him, they were always aware of each other and Chrollo felt so much pride in himself for that happy light in Kurapika's eyes. He wasn’t good enough for that light but he’d do whatever it takes to be better, even just a little bit. That meant no more killing innocents.

Chrollo could live with that.

“Are those for me?” Kurapika called with a small smile, more than a little excited that everything worked out without a hitch. “You’re getting really attached to flowers lately.”

Chrollo laughed, the omegas still in the small clearing froze. They began to shake in fear of a new alpha coming to take them away.
Their eyes widened comically when he took two large steps towards Kurapika before dropping onto one knee to present the bouquet. “It’s all your influence,” Chrollo declared.

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“Hisoka,” Mother called Kyo’s redhead alpha from the head of the table. “I hear you have an arrangement with Mr Lucifer.”

Hisoka's head snapped up from happily eating his food that he’d recently been allowed again and suddenly he was a ball of excited energy.

“Oh~! The promised duel of the ages!” Hisoka looked to be in the middle of climatic pleasure just thinking about this duel. Then he frowned. “Although as long as I’m stuck here, trading Kurapika for that fight was a total bust.”

Kyo’s ears perked up at the mention of a name he hadn’t yet heard before. Who’s Kurapika? And why did Hisoka have the opportunity to trade this person to another?

Kikyo hummed thoughtfully for a moment. “Yes, I heard about your lax attempt to steal the Phantom Troupe leader’s intended mate.” She casually cut into her steak and took a bite of the red dripping meat. “Although you could have done much better than relying on two children fifty levels below even one member of the troupe. Not even Grandfather treats them so carelessly.”

Hisoka sighed at the dressing down and Illumi seemed almost to be enjoying watching Hisoka be lectured for his wishy-washy ways. No one else dared speak, Kikyo’s pheromones demanding everyone in the room stand down and be quiet. Kyo just couldn’t believe what he was hearing, he didn’t know who the Phantom Troupe are but with a name like that it didn’t sound like they were people to be messed with! And stealing the leader’s omega mate?! Kyo couldn't even understand why he felt so betrayed, it’s not like Hisoka or Illumi ever claimed to actually care for him but he thought... well that maybe... No, it’s stupid of course.

“Tell me Hisoka, why were you so fixated on forcing a bond with this Kurapika?” Kikyo asked, noticing Kyo’s distress in this topic of conversation but simply not caring. Kyo would need to toughen up and realize his mates needed some serious handling if this was going to work.

“Well, it’s an easy choice isn’t it?” Hisoka felt microscopically bad for Kyo’s reacting flinch. “Kurapika is a trained Hunter! Beautiful, strong, feisty, and independent, he was my ideal.” Kikyo
was actually surprised by how enlightened that answer was. Yes he had been trying to force an omega to mate with him and Illumi, but his reasoning was actually mature. For Hisoka at least.

‘Great!’ Kyo laughed sarcastically and saddened inside his own head. ‘First Killua and now this Kurapika!’ Kyo didn’t know if he was good enough to replace two amazing, independent, and unbroken omegas.

“I have been thinking and since you’ve grown a bit I think it’s possible to allow you off of the mountain for a few days every month to begin scheduling your duel, as you put it.”

“Are you serious~?!” Hisoka jumped for joy, Illumi seemed shocked to his bones. His mother was actually being reasonable?

“You’re ungrounding us?” Illumi could feel a bit of excitement as well. Get the omega away from his mother and then he could shape it the way he wanted!

“No, just Hisoka.” Illumi felt rage and confusion drop his stomach. “You haven’t earned that right yet.” Kikyo’s cruel voice cut off whatever arguments were about to spill out of her son’s mouth.

Hisoka didn’t even seem to care that he’d be alone, he was too excited to finally get his fight with the powerful Chrollo Lucifer.

Later. After dinner. Kyo asked Mother Kikyo to allow him to speak with Hisoka, alone. The rest of the night after dinner he had been consumed with jealousy and he didn’t even know why. Hisoka didn’t even like him as a mate should, even if he found it in himself to fawn over Kyo whenever he braided his hair differently or decided to experiment with his wardrobe. Hisoka was a particularly huge fan of Kyo’s leather jacket with silver spikes.

But now Kyo was just worried, even though he cared for both his mates. Despite how little they obviously cared about him, Kyo cared a lot and he didn’t like the idea of losing either of them. Especially Hisoka, Illumi hadn’t really given him any reason to like him as much as he did Hisoka, god he might be crazy to actually hope for a real relationship with crazy clown Hisoka, instead of the precarious relationship between a master and his pet.

Kyo sent a silent prayer for his own sake before knocking on Hisoka’s cell door. Illumi and Hisoka had recently been separated so he really would be able to talk alone for once.
He didn’t need to knock, it’s not like Hisoka had much of a choice, he’d be coming in no matter what, it just seemed polite. After a moment of silence Kyo invited himself in.

“Kyo~! My cutie! You here to convince me to take you to bed?” Hisoka giggled from his spot on the swept concrete, his head propped on the one pillow he’d been allowed due to ‘good’ behavior. “I’m afraid that offer isn’t very tempting to me little one.” Kyo frowned a bit at the obvious taunt of calling Kyo ‘little one’. Hisoka just told him out right that he wasn’t good enough in his eyes. Would he ever be good enough for either of these men?

“You don’t have to tell me that, I know.” Kyo sat opposite to his redheaded mate with his frown still present.

“So then why are you here~? Since you know I have no interest in the body of a barely grown fruit,” he scoffed suddenly and began to fiddle with a gum wrapper idly. “Let’s face it, you’ve not blossomed yet.”

“Is it dangerous?” Kyo decided to not even touch of the criticism he was sure he’d just recieved from Hisoka. “The fight I mean, with this Lucifer person?”

“Ah~, you’re worried about me?” Hisoka finally sat up, looking at the now grey haired boy. “I’m flattered you care about my well being.” Hisoka giggled again, golden eyes looking over his tiny omega mate with only a touch of lust. Not enough to satisfy Kyo.

“Of course I’d be worried!” Kyo growled out at the insufferable alpha. “Now answer me, is this dangerous?!?” Kyo demanded.

“Yes, it will be to the death,” Hisoka didn’t mind telling Kyo this, it’s not like it mattered. “Exactly how I like it!”

Kyo couldn’t believe what he was hearing! Hisoka was just going to risk his own life for what? A fight, an omega that wasn’t him?!

“Why?” Kyo asked downtrodden.
Hisoka considered the omega for a moment, thought about the talented young thing that could become something he’d like, but at this moment it could go either way. He shrugged and decided to be mostly honest. Again it’s not like it mattered.

“Because I like it, it’s the simplest reason in the world.” Hisoka grinned like a mad devil. “I like the feeling of a fight where death could happen at any moment. Someone who can really test my skills, I don’t meet someone like that often.”

“So this person is stronger than you?” Kyo asked.

Hisoka went back to fiddling with the gum wrapper. “I don’t know, but I am excited to find out.”

Kyo pulled his shoulders up and gulped a few times. “What would you say if I asked you to not fight?”

Hisoka’s eyes snapped to Kyo, his eyes cold and cruel once again. “Then I’d tell you not to overstep yourself. Any small affection I may have for you won’t protect you should you get in my way.” A shiver chilled Kyo to the core but something else caused him to fight a smile. When he’d first been brought here Hisoka couldn’t have cared less but he just admitted to having grown some care in the time they’d been here.

“Then I’ll ask a different favor.” Kyo spoke softly but tried to keep his voice firm, like mother was teaching him.

“Oh~? A favor huh,” Hisoka hummed the ice melting a bit now that Kyo had given up trying to stop him. “Out with it, you’ve earned just a little leeway.”

Kyo gulped again nervously. “Take me with you.” He felt safe on this mountain, felt happy for the first time he could remember, but if Hisoka died in that fight he wouldn’t forgive himself if he wasn’t there.

“Hm?” Hisoka looked vaguely surprised and maybe even a little excited that Kyo had managed to surprise him with a request. “You want to watch me duel to the death? Maybe watch me die? Or possibly steal a victory kiss, I’m sorry to say but those will be restricted to Illumi.” Hisoka’s insistence tonight on making sure Kyo understood just how little he actually cared about him was evident but Kyo didn’t let that deter him.
“I just want to make sure you’re safe,” Kyo answered after a moment of hesitation. He didn’t know what he was trying to prove anymore, maybe he thought Hisoka would tell him he was happy that Kyo cared about his well being. Or even that he was glad Kyo wanted to support his battle, but no, all he got was quips and taunts about the lack of attraction he felt.

“How very sweet of you.” Hisoka sighed like he was disappointed and laid back down, turning away from the omega. “Talk to Kikyo about it, you know I have no control at the moment.”

Kyo sighed himself and stood back up. “I already have, I just wanted to make sure you were fine with it.” He left then, closing the door softly despite the odd urge to slam it.

Hisoka grinned from where he lay after Kyo had shut the door. He sat up and stared at the cell door and unconsciously licked his lips. “Getting greedy are we, little Kyo?”

“Why didn’t you use your chains?” Chrollo asked Kurapika the moment he’d entered their room for the night. He snapped his book shut as he moved over to allow Kurapika into the bed.

Kurapika stopped, looked to the left, and then moved to change into his sleep attire. “The swords are more intimidating, demon omega and all that.” Chrollo narrowed his eyes at the blatant lie.

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Kurapika stiffened. “Yes,” he hissed out defensively. “I’ve got a bit of a reputation with those swords, you know.”

Chrollo sighed before standing and taking Kurapika’s hands, rubbing his thumbs over the blonde’s palms.

“Kurapika,” Chrollo whispered softly, trying to convey to his mate that he wasn’t trying to judge or demean but he needed the full story. “Why didn’t you use your chains?” He asked again. This time almost a whisper, full of more emotion than anyone but Kurapika had ever heard from him.
Kurapika’s eyes flashed red for just a moment, proving to Chrollo how tender this topic was. The blonde sighed like the weight of the world was suddenly on his shoulders and broke away from the alpha to sit on the bed. Chrollo followed him, kneeling down in front of him but he didn’t take his hands again, he could understand when Kurapika wanted a bit of personal space.

“I-“ Kurapika cut himself off, rubbing a hand over his heart. “I wanted to defeat you, all of you,” he finally whispered, clenched the fabric against his chest. “But the chains wouldn’t have been strong enough if I hadn’t-“ he stopped, pausing to take a breath.

“What did you do to yourself?” Chrollo reached to cup Kurapika’s beautiful face in his hand, pulling his face up so their eyes met. “Kurapika, I’m concerned.”

“I put a condition on myself, a chain around my heart that will kill me if I break it.” Chrollo gasped softly and almost instinctively moved to grasp the omega’s trembling hand.

Chrollo didn’t interrupt, understanding that Kurapika wasn’t done and needed a moment to collect his thoughts.

After what could have been hours but was really only a minute of unbroken eye contact he continued. “I can only use my Chain Jail on members of the Phantom Troupe.”

Chrollo narrowed his eyes just a bit, there was more to this. There had to be. The memory of trying to use Kurapika's chains in that car floated through his head. He remained quiet, hoping Kurapika would continue.

“And-“ Kurapika breathed deeply for a moment, finally breaking eye contact. “When my eyes turn scarlet I can use Emperor Time, it allows me to use all nen types at 100%.” Kurapika’s voice cracked and his eyes held an odd sadness, the kind of sadness you feel right on the edge of regret. “It takes an hour off of my life for every second I use it.”

And there it was, suddenly everything about Kurapika made too much sense. Kurapika’s sudden sickness when they first captured him, the chains not working for the alpha, not using his chains in any dangerous situation since getting them back. Now that Kurapika had something to live for the point of them had become moot.

The heavy realization sat on their shoulders, a silent tear rolled down Kurapika’s cheek and Chrollo’s heart shattered once again. He wanted to pull Kurapika into his arms and whisper that he
was going to be okay but he knew that he’d caused this. Caused Kurapika to fall into such a pit of depression and loneliness that he’d forfeit his own life just for a shot at revenge. Kurapika may have wanted to die in some small subconscious part of his brain at one point, and Chrollo had caused that. He felt sick with himself.

Suddenly Kurapika's eyes became almost panicked and his lip trembled. “Are you still going to let me be part of the Troupe?” His voice sounded so desperate, desperate for somewhere to belong. For something that was bigger than him, anything that would give him the sense of family once more. Chrollo didn’t know how he didn’t see it before but once you took away his thirst for revenge, Kurapika was borderline lost.

For someone as prideful and adventurous as Kurapika, the feeling of having nothing to anchor you must feel like the worst kind of hell.

“Of course,” Chrollo pulled his mate into his arms and let him snuggle into his chest. “This is exactly why we need you in the Troupe.” Kurapika jerked, eyes wildly searching for his.

“What?”

“We need you so we never do anything this horrible again,” Chrollo whispered, placing a tender kiss on his forehead. “We need you to be the morality. Unfortunately our family doesn’t have a firm grasp on that concept.”

Kurapika felt a bit of a shock that Chrollo wasn’t going to rescind the offer to join the troupe, considering he’d just admitted to bargaining his life just to kill the Phantom Troupe. Still he could sense a ‘but’ coming into this conversation.

“But?” He prompted when Chrollo didn’t continue.

“You have to release that condition Kurapika.” Even though he knew he did, the thought almost hurt him but before he could argue the point Chrollo moved on. “And never, ever bargain your life again.” Normally Kurapika would have told Chrollo that he couldn’t tell him what to do but he could tell this came from a place of fear. Fear of losing him in the future if he didn’t put a stop to it.

“I’m not strong without it,” Kurapika finally whispered, his mind ping ponging around as he mentally listed the reasons to keep using the power and to not.
“Oh parish that thought!” Chrollo suddenly took him by the shoulders and shook him slightly. “You learned nen and created a Hatsu in six months! You lived, no, survived by yourself from the age of twelve! You got a Hunter license on your first try with no nen! Kurapika, you might be the strongest person on this earth.”

Kurapika felt his eyes fill with tears and glow softly with emotion as he pushed Chrollo’s hands away so he could bury his face in the dark haired man’s neck and breath in his smoothing scent.

“Technically I wouldn’t have gotten the license without Gon, and Hisoka threw that final fight,” he argued weakly, a hint of an exhausted laugh in his watery voice.

“Sure, but my other points are solid and you know it.” Chrollo wrapped his arms around his mate, hugging him tightly and carefully maneuvering them to lay down in the bed.

“I guess,” he sniffled.

“No, Kurapika you can be strong without killing yourself and you’ve got all of us, plus your friends, to help you get there.”

“You really think so?” Kurapika whispered, you’d think he had no idea how incredible he was by the sound of his voice.

“I know so,” Chrollo hummed, kissing the side of his head while he ran his fingers through the teen’s hair. “You should sleep, we can talk about this more in the morning.”

“Okay.”

“Start thinking about where you want your tattoo.”

“Okay.”

Kurapika was still wide awake hours after Chrollo had fallen asleep, the full moon shining through the windows. The conversation played on repeat through his head and his chest felt the weight of
the chain around his heart like an anvil strapped to his chest.

The chain had always been a symbol of his hatred, his anger. Not so long ago it had been a reassuring feeling to know his anger was so tangible and alive but now it felt like poison. He didn’t want to live like that anymore, he wasn’t even sure he could call that living. It was closer to just existing like a ghost.

His eyes looked to the moon as he sat up in bed, amazingly not waking the sleeping Chrollo. Looking out the window his eyes felt drawn to the forest. Not unlike the forest of his homeland, or the forest where he made his hatsu.

With an unsteady breath and a firm resolve, he placed his left hand over his heart and breathed some more, really feeling the chain for the first time in a long time. He pictured every curve and edge, every motivation for putting it there, knowing that what drove him almost a year ago was dead and gone.

He breathed out, then whispered, “Release.” The chain broke, a tinge of pain as it shattered and disappeared forever.

Kurapika was once and for all, truly, finally, free.

He laid back down, choked back a cry for his younger self and went to bed, the promise of a brighter future dancing in his dreams.

Chapter End Notes

Happy forth everyone!! Wow! Seventy chapters! I seriously can’t believe this story got so big that it called for this many chapters but Chrollo and Kurapikas relationship and the act of trying to bring them together is super complex so it deserves this much attention. Bye fun note Chrollo was originally supposed to get angry and yell at Kurapika in that ending bit but as I was writing it, it just didn’t work.
Knowing that this was still supposed to be a training trip, when Shalnark had gotten the team together to plan their approach to Razor he had included all three of the non-Spiders in an integral fashion.

Killua was consulted several times about what he had observed in regards to Razor’s team, but because they hadn’t played the dodgeball game he could only speculate on the abilities of Razor’s devils.

Teamwork had been at the top of everyone’s list of Razor’s strengths, except Gon who declared physical strength given Razor’s condition. Paku had pointed out that the devil’s were different sizes and probably had different ‘strengths’ in regards to their athletic abilities.

“He doesn’t talk to them outside of giving orders,” Kalluto finally pointed out, causing fourteen heads to turn to him. “The devils only understand their assigned sport and simple tasks, a limited number of them at that. That means they have limited intelligence and likely can’t strategize well.”

“Meaning Razor just powers through opponents,” Shalnark observed.

“Ano… Then we need to think of something surprising where they can’t react well?” Shizuku asked.

“Probably! And since there are a limited number who can play, we’ll need to plan for that.”

“You should count me out,” Pakunoda pointed out immediately. “I’m a Specialist and my hatsu wouldn’t be good for a game of dodgeball.”

Tsezguerra and his men shifted uncomfortably, surprise on their expressions as a group of class A criminals discussed a game plan for taking on Razor and capturing his card. They had not expected the Spiders to be this… Organized? The older Hunter had always envisioned a group of rowdy pirates that went into battle screaming and with swords drawn, nary a plan in place!

All of them shifted when the blonde man with the bowl cut looked to them.

“Well? What are your abilities? Anything useful?” he asked in a semi-sharp manner, as though he didn’t expect very much.

One of the men, a redhead, broke first under the scrutiny. “I can conjure a radar-like device,” he stated after a moment.

“Not dodgeball then,” Shalnark declared before turning to study the other three and finally pointed at Tsezguerra. “You seem like the strongest of your pack, so if we need one of you to play dodgeball, you’ll be it.”

“There’ll be a choice?” Rodriot asked as his shock began to fade.

“Yes, a number of sports are used in this competition. Dodgeball is the big one though and will determine either defeat or victory, but that doesn’t mean we can just throw those smaller games. We’re trying to build the core team for dodgeball and ensure they remain on that team. Everyone else can tackle the other sports.”
Shalnark moved back to the main group then and began assessing the rest of the troupe, quickly eliminating Franklin since although he was strong and had good aim, he was too slow to properly dodge.

Tsezguerra noticed Gon, Killua, and Kalluto were standing nearby, the silver-haired omega explaining the reasoning for the selection of the dodgeball team thus far since he seemed offended for the older team of Pro Hunters.

“How do you know these people?” he asked after a moment of thought.

Gon glanced up at him and blinked. “Well… Our pack leader kind of mated their pack leader and they took in our pack.”

Tsezguerra blinked. “Were they both alphas or was one a beta?”

“No! Kurapika, who was our pack leader, is an omega!”

And the world seemed even more off-balance than it had mere seconds before.

Killua felt his eye twitch as they approached Razor’s base a second time, this time with a team that he doubted the organizers of this game ever thought they’d need to deal with.

Tsezguerra looked like he was gaining an extra grey hair every second as the Spiders walked with his team, laughing and exchanging stories as the three boys were slowly drawn into the pack they had apparently been adopted into, two of them unwillingly.

The doctor-trainee who had apparently been adopted as well seemed thrilled at the view of the ocean they had and was talking loudly about volleyball and girls in bikinis. He seemed most familiar with the large beta with lots of scars whose name seemed to be Franklin, but seemed to be getting along well with the girl with dark hair and glasses. The pair were playing a form of eyeball tag where they’d try to sneak a glance at the other.

Franklin in turn nudged the blonde boy who seemed to be the main tactician and nodded at the pair. “She hasn’t forgotten their conversation or who he is even once since they were introduced,” the larger man whispered.

The blonde woman who seemed to act as the mother of the group also heard and gave the pair a long calculating look. She seemed to be coming to a decision then shrugged and started surreptitiously moving the boys away from the pair, letting them have the closest thing to privacy that they could currently manage.

Killua noticed and eyed the pair but sighed in defeat. It wasn’t like they could get any closer to the Spiders as things were.

Entering the lighthouse was rather embarrassing for the boys as the various ‘pirates’ recognized them from the last time.

“Hey, omega, ready to wrestle for real?” a large blob of a man yelled at Killua, his gaze turning lecherous as it skimmed over Killua’s slender form. “Don’t worry, I’ll even do you the honor of mating you when you lo-!”

A ball that Killua kicked slammed into the man’s head in that moment, knocking him out completely.

“Good shot, but I’m afraid it won’t count towards a win for your team,” Razor called as he
approached them yet again. “Ready for a second attempt?”

“Definitely!” Gon called in excitement as the pirates shifted and studied their new opponents.

“Why is that one guy covered in bandages?” one of the pirates murmured to a pirate who wore boxing gloves. “And he’s wearing boxing gloves… Think that’s your opponent?”

“That tall one with the piercings is familiar,” another of the pirates observed as the boxer moved forward, eyes on Bonolenov only to be intercepted by Barry of Tsezguerra’s team.

“If the sport is boxing, then I’m your opponent,” he announced.

For all who had previously been present for the first attempt at the sports challenge, the difference in quality between the previous team and the new one was immediately obvious. Barry defeated his opponent in boxing quickly and his win was followed by Rodriot in bowling and Kess in free throws.

The first major surprise was when Bonolenov stepped in for the fourth challenge, having already decided that his abilities were no good for the dodgeball game. He chose to take part in a game where the point was to keep the ball bouncing on your knee. With the exception of the Spiders, everyone balked when the bandages covering his body came away to show the holes that perforated his body.

“What the?!” Leorio yelped and Franklin grabbed the man’s collar to keep him from taking a step towards the Gyudondong warrior as the challenge began. “How is he… I’m not seeing things, am I? He really has holes all over his body, right? How is he alive?!”

Gon was gaping widely while Killua and Kalluto inspected the man’s body, quickly coming to the conclusion that the holes weren’t just cosmetic, they were intended for something.

“Hey, do you guys hear that?” Gon asked as he recovered and noticed the faint noise in the air.

“Hear what?” Killua asked before Pakunoda shoved cotton balls into the hands of each of the boys while Shalnark offered a bag of the puffballs to the rest of their team.

“Put these in, Bono’s whistle gets very disorienting,” the Specialist ordered.

The holey-Spider accepted the ball and watched the brief demonstration from the pirate he would be facing, listening to the description of the challenge before nodding.

“Understandable. So we may use nen to try to disrupt the other. This seems similar to a game children play.”

Bonolenov’s voice seemed strange, possessing a strange tremor to it and Killua was immediately cramming the cotton balls into his ears while Kalluto did likewise, then both turned to Gon and found the Enhancer was ignoring the cotton balls.

“Gon! Your ears!” Killua yelled angrily, causing Gon to jump before he finally crammed the cotton balls into his ears.

Bonolenov’s head turned slightly toward their group and when he received a thumbs-up from Shalnark, he nodded, knowing that the rest of the troupe and their pack were covered, even if Leorio looked incredulous about stuffing cotton in his ears.

The pirates definitely knew something was up, but they lacked a means to defend themselves. Thus
when Bonolenov began to gracefully bounce the ball on his knee, the air beginning to increase the flow over his hole-ridden body, they were unprepared for the whistle that began to build in the air.

More than half of the pirate crew were floored within a minute as Bono and his grimacing opponent bounced the balls on their knees. The pirate did surprisingly well even as he visibly grit his teeth and tried to cover his ears without throwing his balance off. Perhaps he would have lasted longer if Bono didn’t decide to just end it, increasing the speed of his movements and including what almost looked to be a ritual dance even while keeping the ball bouncing on his knee.

The piercing whistle that filled the air was barely muffled by the cotton balls and most of the Spiders and their pack fought grimaces as their hands attempted to cover their ears. Leorio did sink to the floor, looking sick and disoriented.

The pirates on the other hand, with the exception of Razor, were all on the floor, gasping and vomiting as the whistle blew more than a few of their ear drums. Even the ears of Bono’s opponent were bleeding as he tried to focus through the pain on his ball, but he was visibly sweating, like he was terrified of losing.

The challenge ended when what looked to be tribal armor and a spear materialized on Bonolenov’s body. The spear was hurled at his opponent and the pirate lost as he dropped his ball to try to dodge the weapon. Dodging did little good as the spear opened a large gash in the man’s side, rendering him unable to continue.

Bonolenov was still bouncing the ball on his knee when he rejoined the group, bandages back in place to muffle the whistle.

“What was that?” Gon demanded immediately. “You were making those noises and then that armor appeared! What nen type is that?”

“Conjuration,” Bono replied as he continued to bounce the ball while behind him, only two of the pirate crew were managing to regain their feet.

“But the armor came from your nen, wouldn’t that also be Transmutation like Killua and his electricity?”

Razor was looking over his devastated crew with an unreadable expression as the two who managed to regain their feet shared a look and began to hobble towards the door. For a moment it seemed he would let them go, but Pakunoda knew the glint that appeared in his eyes. This man was a murderer, much like them, and he was about to deal with his failed crew. Immediately she grabbed Killua and Kalluto’s shoulders, turning them away from the carnage that was about to occur.

“Transmutation and Conjuration are actually similar,” she explained in order to gain the attention of the boys. “They are viewed as neighboring types with some of the abilities seeming to cross lines, much like Machi with her strings. Despite being a Transmuter, she does in fact create strings that exist apart from her and are tangible. The main difference is the key point of the ability: is something being created from nen, or is the nen taking on the quality of something else, like with Killua’s electricity. He’s not actually making electricity, his nen is simulating it. But Bono did actually make-”

The sound of wet impacts cut off Pakunoda and despite being a hardened killer herself, she kept her hands on the boys and prevented them from turning around as Razor killed his former crew.

Everyone present already knew what this slaughter meant: there would be no more contests except
Shalnark was quick to wave their competitors into place, pausing only briefly to yell at Shizuku to let go of Leorio’s hand while Tsezguerra looked more than a little dumbfounded as they did a quick headcount when Razor created eight nen devils, seven of which were to act as his teammates in the dodgeball game. With Tsezguerra, the boys, Biscuit, Leorio, and Shizuku they currently had seven players, meaning they needed one additional player.

Pakunoda noticed the math problem as well and she glanced over those they had left, evaluating each person. She was neither fast nor strong, especially compared to Razor and his devils.

Franklin was plenty strong but not very fast. Besides, his way of fighting was pretty much just machine gun everything in his path and that wouldn’t work here.

Bonolenov had already competed and even if he hadn’t, she doubted dodgeball would go well with his powers and enhancements.

This left Shalnark and the blonde was obviously coming to a similar conclusion. He was stronger than Pakunoda, though not as strong as Franklin, and faster than them. But he lacked-

“Hey!” a shout came as the door to lighthouse was kicked open and Uvo lumbered into the room. “Hisoka is on the island and… Paku, why are you grinning like that?”

“Because, you’re just in time for a game of dodgeball if you’re interested in something to pass the time.”

“Dodgeball?” Uvo scratched his head in minor confusion.

“It’s a game kids often play. Might help you prepare for your kid!” Shalnark called, eager to get out of having to play.

Uvogin wasn’t stupid, but he was interested in whatever his future child might be playing and lumbered towards the square.

Razor stared at the man, his expression one of consternation. “I assume he was part of your party originally?”

“Yes, came here with us and temporarily separated. And your own rules state that we can have more than fifteen people in our party!” Shalnark called as Uvo entered the court.

Razor’s expression darkened slightly but he offered no further objections as the giant positioned himself at the back of the court, behind the other seven players. His first serve to the challenging team was merciless, his fist connecting with the ball with such strength that a shockwave blew through the room.

Gon yelped as he grabbed Kalluto and jumped back, Killua already on the other side of the path of the ball.

Leorio screamed before being shoved out of the way by a vacuum handle.

Tsezguerra froze in fear though he wasn’t even in the path of the ball.

The ball’s target, Uvo, just stared at the thing in distaste before his hand shot up and caught the thing, his form not budging at all despite the tremendous amount of energy the ball had contained.
Everyone stared in horror as Uvo grunted in disappointment, not realizing he had just taken Razor out of the game in that single moment.

“If my kid throws like this, then they better be a Transmuter like Machi!” the man declared angrily. “This is how you throw a ball!”

The shockwave as the Enhancer hurled the ball actually did knock his teammates and comrades off of their feet while most of the devils jumped to try to defend Razor from the deadly power of the ball. They were mostly successful even though their bodies were mostly destroyed by the force of the air-filled projectile, but the momentum of the ball still sent the mound skidding back, out of the court, and all the way to the wall behind them.

The whistle of the referee was the only noise to fill the silent gym for a good four minutes before Gon finally got over his shock.

“WOW! How’d you do that?” Gon yelled, forgetting that the game had been won without him even really getting to play while behind him Killua and Kalluto both exchanged a look to indicate that they both understood their father’s warning intimately now. Leorio on the other hand was still in shock.

“Top of the Enhancer field, kid!” Uvo declared proudly. “Made it my goal to be the strongest and defend the pack!”

A little over an hour later, Leorio was getting his beach getaway. The boys were playing with the beach ball while Pakunoda and Shalnark listened to Uvo’s explanation of why he had shown up when he did.

“Hisoka came up to me, asking where Chrollo was. Told him that he was on a trip with Kurapika, giving them alone time. Walked off and said he’d ask around when I didn’t know where they were.”

Shal sighed heavily before glancing towards where Leorio was attempting to teach Shizuku beach volleyball. Killua hurled the ball at the man at his request and the doctor-in-training missed it and ended up getting knocked into the sand. Shizuku was smiling slightly.

“We’re working on hand-eye coordination next!” Franklin yelled to his charge as the man was helped to his feet by Shizuku. “Should we call danchou, let him know?”

“Probably already knows,” Paku pointed out. “But you can let him know when you return from this ‘game’. Tell them to be on the look-out since Hisoka is relentless. He’ll want his fight.”
Gon couldn’t help the happy smile as he got to make a sand castle with Killua and Kalluto. Gon couldn’t remember a time where he got to hang out with boys his age, just playing around. It was a lot of fun!

Bisky-chama was actually letting them enjoy a little break, normally she’d find a way to use this time to train them. Gon kinda wanted to use the break to catch up with Leorio but he looked like he was having a lot of fun talking with the Spider with the glasses so he didn’t want to interfere in the budding relationship.

Although beach volleyball had been a lot of fun while it lasted.

“Please let go of me!” The pleading voice caught the attention of most of the group. Biscuit was the first to take a few steps towards the sound of struggling to look around a corner. Gon followed close behind to see a slim, grey haired boy being roughly dragged off the beach. “No! I am mated, let go of me!”

“You’ve obviously been abandoned baby, don’t worry I’ll keep you safe!” The man looked at the grey haired omega so lustfully that it made Gon furious. Instantly he was reminded of all the frustration he had felt while chasing down the Spiders to save Kurapika.

He sprang forward before anyone else could collect themselves, leaping at the alpha trying to assault the random omega and kicking him square in the head.

“Thatta boy!” Uvogin’s voice boomed out encouragingly as the alpha went flying and the Omega stumbled out of the way before falling on his butt. He looked up at Gon with surprise.

Kyo sat where he fell, watching the small alpha boy chase off his attacker. He didn’t know if he should be appreciative just yet though, the boy had a huge group of people and one of them could still come after him.

“Are you okay?” Kyo snapped out of his thoughts to look up at a small blonde girl with long flowing pig tails.
“Um... Yes?” Kyo whispered, pulling his arms close to his chest. Hisoka has taken him along just like he asked and already he was regretting it. Of course the moment they entered this weird game Hisoka dropped him off in this area and said to wait for him. So far he had to run and hide from fifteen alphas! This last one made sixteen and he’d trapped Kyo on the beach before grabbing him.

Pakunoda looked over the omega with suspicion, he couldn’t be completely weak if he’d managed to get into this game but he did not give off any aura of power at all! On a whim Pakunoda looked to the man who was still running off into the distance, the moment she looked to him he suddenly began to stumble and then just collapsed. The rest of the group seemed distracted so she decided to go check it out.

“Why didn’t you just fight him off?” Killua glared down at the vaguely familiar omega, something about him pulled at something in his mind.

“Fight him off?” Kyo pouted.

“Well you’re in Greed Island, so you should have been able to at least land a hit!” Killua crossed his arms as Gon tried to calm him down.

“That’s true, you should have defended yourself,” Biscuit laid a calming hand on the random Omega’s arm.

“Bu-but, the facility said omegas should never harm an alpha!” Kyo yelled, feeling frustrated that he was once again in a situation he knew nothing about! Why were these people so concerned and . . . Angry? The white haired omega boy looked so upset!

Everyone gathered around the grey haired omega froze. The same concerned question rang through all of their heads: a facility omega?! How did he get here?!

No one seemed like they knew what to say to the boy so Biscuit stepped up and crouched next to the omega.

“Hey, it’s okay. What’s your name?” she asked sweetly. Her mind burned to know how this facility omega managed to escape, learn nen, and get to Greed Island all by himself!

“It’s Kyo,” the boy whispered, feeling out of his depth.
“How did you get here Kyo?”

“He said something about being mated, are you trying to run away from your mate?” Gon asked softly. “We can help you.”

“Oh! No no no!” Kyo waved his hands frantically. They seemed to have gotten the wrong idea. “My alphas are wonderful... Kinda. They taught me nen, and they’ve been very sweet ever since buying me. He just had something to take care of so he left me here for now, he’ll be back for me!”

“Alphas?” Biscuit raises a brow. Double bonding was very rare indeed!

“Out of the way!” Leorio yelled as he finally managed to run back after grabbing his medical kit. The group parted for him and he approached the omega cautiously. “Hey, I’m a doctor. Would you mind if I checked you over for injuries?”

Kyo began to shake, years of memories of glorified doctors poking at his body rushing back.

“No! Stay away!” Kyo jumped up and tried to back away in fear.

Leorio was shocked by the reaction.

“What the hell is his problem?” Killua hissed. He really didn’t know why but he didn’t like this omega. He was everything that Killua fought against, a stereotype!

“Doctors are mean! They hurt us!” Kyo yelled and continued to back up only to find two giant men blocking his path.

“It’s okay, he just wants to make sure you’re okay!” Uvogin tried to be reassuring but when the color drained from the little omega’s face he knew he’d failed.

“Okay! Everyone back up! You’re scaring him,” Biscuit ordered and they did as she said clearing
the way for Kalluto to finally get a look at the boy.

“Oh!” he gasped and everyone turned to him. “It’s you!”

“You know him?” Franklin turned to the newest child that had been adopted into the troupe. Truthfully if they kept going at this rate, danchou just might end up with those twelve children he wanted.

“Yeah, that’s Illumi’s and Hisoka’s mate,” how calmly Kalluto said that did not match the god smacked reactions of the group.

“WHAT?!” Everyone yelled in unison, looking back at the meek looking tiny boy who was still shaking.

“Although he looks really different now.” Kalluto approached his elder brother’s mate and put out a hand. “We didn’t have time to meet last time. I’m Kalluto, Illumi’s little brother.”

Kyo looked over the smaller boy in the kimono and realized he did remember him from when he first arrived on the mountain.

“It’s good to finally officially meet you!” Kyo felt instant relief and shook the boy’s hand enthusiastically.

Killua now knew exactly why he didn’t like this omega, he was the proof that his brother wanted to . . . He couldn’t even think of such a horrible thing!

“He doesn’t look anything like Killua!” Gon exclaimed suddenly. Shalnark suddenly remembered that little detail that brought Kalluto to them. He looked over the grey haired boy with scrutiny.

He wore completely different colors than Killua, not to mention a totally different style, skin tight jeans that were high waisted. A long sleeved fuzzy red sweater tucked into the jeans and his hair was notably darker. Half of his hair was tied back in cornrows and the other half was so curly he reminded Shalnark of Shirley Temple. His obviously new pair of glasses obscured his face enough that you had to really look to see the resemblance to Killua, plus his green eyes that were enhanced by the glasses drew a lot of attention.
“Mother thought I should change my look,” Kyo mumbled, curling into himself self-consciously. “She said I should come into my own . . . ?” He continued as he curled up even more. “Hisoka said he liked it,” he finished with a hushed whisper.

“You look wonderful,” Biscuit tried to reassure Kyo, feeling a little lost on how to help. She had never dealt with a facility omega before. Never thought she’d get the chance to meet one.

“Yeah! It’s very stylish!” Uvogin tried as Franklin nodded sagely behind him.

“Why would Hisoka leave him by himself?”

“I don’t know.”

“I mean he’s so weak.”

“Can’t even defend himself.” Kyo hung his head sadly. He had thought he was getting better but apparently he hadn’t.

“I wouldn’t say that,” a woman's voice called out as she re-entered the group. She pointed a thumb across the beach and announced, “he killed him.”

“What?” The group looked over to the prone man on the sand in shock then back at the little omega boy.

“Bu-but!” Kyo waves his hands frantically. “I haven’t even made a hatsu yet! I couldn’t have!”

“Well then I have no idea how that man could have suddenly died from monoxide poisoning.” Pakunoda raised a brow at the omega as his face morphed into something like surprise and guilt.

“Oh . . .” Kyo bit his lip and darted his eyes around. Not liking how everyone was staring at him. “I-I didn’t mean to hurt anyone! I just learned how monoxide works a few days ago and I must have- I don’t know . . .”
“You must be a Transmuter. You probably just reacted instinctively to the danger,” Pakunoda told the boy, placing her hand on his shoulder to confirm her theory and she was right on the money. He’d lashed out with his nen when the alpha had grabbed him, someone should really teach him how to control that sooner rather than later.

“Kyo~?” The group froze again when the familiar voice called out. The group instinctually placed themselves in front of the children and omegas protectively. Biscuit huffed in annoyance, having stopped wearing her scent masking deodorant since these people did not stigmatize her. Kalluto and Killua were also pretty annoyed by it.

Kyo gave everyone in the group a start, and a few of them a freaking heart attack when he ignored the protective circle of the group and went bounding for the red head.

“HISOKA!” Kyo took a flying leap at his alpha and hugged him around the neck.

You could hear a few jaws hit the sand when Hisoka genuinely smiled and held the boy tenderly like he was something precious.

Now Pakunoda would never claim to have the same sense for things that Machi did, but in this moment she would bet everything she had that Hisoka had no idea how he felt about the omega he had mated.

“Did you kill someone~?” Hisoka asked with actual happiness in his eyes as he leaned down to be face to face with the small boy.

“I-I’m sorr-“

“I’m so proud of you! Your first kill!” Hisoka ruffled his hair before sweeping him up into his arms. “Time to go home Blossom, Chrollo isn’t here and I promised Kikyo that I’d have you home before your lessons.” Hisoka finally focused on the group he had been content to ignore and licked his lips at them just to make them shudder.

“Oh! Wait,” Kyo rapped on the red head’s arm before focusing on Kalluto. “I don’t know if you’ve met up with your brother Killua yet, but Alluka told me to tell him that she misses him!” Killua couldn’t get anymore astounded at this time.
“See you all soon,” Hisoka promised with a wink as he carried the omega away.

Most had their doubts about letting the perverted clown just leave with the omega but what could they do? It seemed the omega consented completely, god knows how!

“Well that was the strangest thing I’ve ever witnessed,” Killua mumbled in shock. Everyone had to agree.

Kurapika hummed happily, borderline hugging the pair of scarlet eyes he and Chrollo had just stolen. They were almost done! One last heist and Kurapika would have all the pieces of his people back, he could finally put the entire horrible thing behind him.

“You’ve been doing really well this month,” Chrollo spoke up. The alpha had been on cloud nine, after their fight their relationship clicked into something deeper, stronger, and all around more understanding. It was everything Chrollo had ever dreamed of and even more.

“Thanks, you’re surprisingly a great nen trainer,” Kurapika teased.

“Oh! You are in for it when we get home!” Chrollo laughed. Kurapika joined in.

Over the last month Chrollo had been dedicated to helping Kurapika up his power levels so he wouldn’t have to rely on killing himself to fight. Because of the massive amount of skills he has stolen it’s always interesting to fight against him too. At this point they have sparred multitude times, Kurapika even winning a few matches. Chrollo now completely understood what his mate was capable of and he was impressed.

“Do you think our house is built yet?” Kurapika shifted a bit, causing a bit of tingling pain in his thigh. Tattoos hurt a lot more than he thought they would.

“Probably not, we can stay at the onsen this time around. It will probably take more than a month.”
“Well at least I can check in and see how the new omegas are doing, I hope they are acclimating well,” Kurapika said.

“I’m sure Fanaka has been taking good care of them,” Chrollo assured him.

“I just wish we didn’t have to dodge Hisoka, I could have stayed and helped them a bit more,” Kurapika sighed. Hisoka apparently showed up on Greed Island looking for Chrollo, they heard about it when everyone got back from helping Gon and Killua. Chrollo didn’t feel like abiding Hisoka’s fight lust though so they decided to just continue their trip. But now Kurapika’s heat was once again around the corner and they wanted to check on Nobunaga, Machi, and the new omegas.

“Well, we wouldn’t want Hisoka to find the Gyudondong,” Chrollo glanced over to see Kurapika lightly running his fingers over the cloth covering his freshly inked tattoo. “Don’t pick at it Kurapika, you’ll scar it.”

“I’m not, it just feels funny when I touch it though.”

“That’s because it’s numb,” Chrollo chuckled as they pulled into the village. Quite a few people stopped to wave, Kurapika could easily spot one of the new omegas because she jumped a foot in the air when the car passed before a few of the other villagers worked to calm her down. It seemed everyone was taking good care of them.

“Kura-honey! Chrollo!” Fanaka-Bennu came running from the house the moment they parked. “You and me are now on the same cycle! Double heats woo-hoo!”

Chrollo raised a brow and connected eyes with Bonolenov, the fear in his eyes told him that this was not a good thing.

“Make sure you don’t let Kurapika wander too close to Fana’s nest, omegas get very territorial in heat, they could attack each other,” Bonolenov whispered to Chrollo the moment he was close enough. That did not sound good, in fact it sounded awful.

“Good to know,”
After two days Fanaka’s heat started and Kurapika could feel he only had maybe an hour before he would be in a lusting craze. So he excused himself after Chrollo beat him in Mancala to take his birth control.

“I’ll be back, just getting my birth control.”

“Good idea,” Chrollo told him, putting away the board and marbles.

Kurapika felt dizzy as he walked to the kitchen, so dizzy in fact that he didn’t care that he was only wearing his underwear and Chrollo’s shirt. His legs were completely bare, showing off the large black tattoo on his right thigh.

Kurapika wandered into the kitchen, grabbing a cup and filling it with water before opening the top cabinet and reaching up for his bottle of pills on his tippy toes.

Nobunaga stopped short when he entered the kitchen and felt his head spin as all the blood in his brain rushed downward as he spotted danchou’s sexy mate in the kitchen. Only wearing danchou’s shirt for god sakes! It was riding up as he reached for something on the top shelf.

The only thing that kept him from saying something suggestive was the fact that he was wearing a pink Lolita dress. To be rebuffed in a dress would be the single most embarrassing thing in the world to Nobunaga.

The blonde managed to get whatever he was reaching for, squinted at it for a moment before unscrewing the top and tapping two pills in his palm. When he turned to throw the pills in his mouth Nobunaga saw it. The spider tattoo on his thigh with the number four in the center.

It enraged Nubonaga that the stupid omega was now officially a troupe member. Now he was going to have to deal with it all the time! Every heist it would be there, complaining about morality and telling them not to kill. Every mission it would just suck the fun out of being part of this pack! And now they even had to take care of its pack as well! This omega was more trouble than he was worth.

“So danchou finally branded you, eh?” Nobunaga hissed, the omega paused and glared at him. “Does that mean we all finally get a turn with you?”
Kurapika unconsciously set the pills down as his eyes flashed red. He grabbed up the water and gulped it down, then hurled the glass at Nobunaga.

“Make sure you clean up Topknot,” he told the samurai as he stomped back to his room, completely forgetting that he did not actually take the birth control pills.

When he got back to his room Chrollo attacked him mate and pulled him into bed, sure his mate had taken care of himself.

Meanwhile back in the kitchen Nobunaga grumbled and washed out the glass before turning his attention back to the pills.

The label said a bunch of huge words that he didn’t know so he shrugged and just threw the bottle and the unused pills away.

“Stupid omegas,” Nobunaga grumbled as he headed to bed.
The early morning sunlight poured through the window and onto the large soft bed that Kurapika occupied. Turning, the blonde snuggled deeper into the blankets, purring as he hugged a pillow. He felt… good today. Happy. Relaxed even though Chrollo had once again proven to be an early riser and was already gone.

Kurapika dimly remembered waking for a moment when his mate rose, saying that he was going to try to get him some of the char sui buns he knew Kurapika loved.

Feet passed near the door of the room and Kurapika glanced at it when the aroma of coffee hit his nose only to wrinkle it a bit as the unappealing scent of Nobunaga also passed.

The promise of char sui and coffee caused Kurapika to rise from the bed, becoming aware as he did that the sheets and blankets really needed a good cleaning. His bag was nearby and after a moment of consideration, he grabbed a pair of khaki capris and a dark green shirt then ran to take a very necessary shower before dressing.

Chrollo wasn’t in the kitchen when he arrived but Fanaka-bennu and Bonolenov were both present, Bonolenov nursing a small cut on his shoulder while Fanaka wore a bright smile.

“Kurapika! Chrollo was trying to find you some strange sounding buns that aren’t in the village and left in the car about an hour ago to buy some in the next town over!” Fanaka gushed/explained when she saw him looking around. “According to him, you were begging for them in your sleep last night!”

Kurapika blushed, uncertain of how to respond to that while Bono snorted.

“Danchou is a smart man, if his mate wants something right after heat, he gets it!”

For some reason Kurapika didn’t want anything other than coffee and the char sui buns that Chrollo had apparently run out to get. Even Fanaka’s offer of those fluffy baked cakes that he loved didn’t appeal.

Taking his mug of coffee with him, Kurapika walked to a window and glanced outside. Uvo was out there with Gon while Biscuit was working with Killua and Kalluto. The large group had returned from Greed Island several weeks ago with Gon telling stories about how Uvogin had defeated a very strong opponent single-handedly while the rest of them had been surprised by the aforementioned opponent’s strength.

They had stayed on the island for another two weeks before leaving when they had managed to defeat the game. That had happened because Feitan and Phinks had come across a trio that had been identified as ‘the Bombers’ who terrorized other players to get cards to try to win the game. The trio had been planning to attack the boys once the ‘large, scary one’ was gone.

Kurapika made sure NOT to ask what happened to the men, but he knew their cards were used to fill out Gon’s book.

Setting down his mug once he finished, Kurapika decided to head out to the omega waterfall. Machi seemed to have headed there earlier for tea to help with morning sickness. She was about three months pregnant now and was beginning to have a small baby bump. Hopefully some of the
new omegas that were rescued from the traffickers would be there as well.

Some of the villagers called out to him and waved when he passed them in the street and an omega girl he had met previously fell into step beside him since she was heading to the waterfall as well. They talked as they walked, Kurapika told her about his joining the troupe and she told him about how the new omegas were faring. Several of them had been pretty beat down, but they were getting lots of support and one of them who had been forcibly marked before being sold to traffickers by that alpha was already being courted by one of the more soft-spoken alphas in the village.

She pointed out the pair as they passed and Kurapika saw a blushing alpha offering several flowers to an equally blushing but rather shy omega. Her neck had a nasty scar.

“Did she try to cut off the mark?” Kurapika asked.

“Yes, attempted to do it just a week ago when she realized we weren’t going to sell her or force her into an alpha’s bed. Said she wanted to be free to make her own choice and had been hoping that cutting off the mark would do that.”

Kurapika swallowed, sorrow for the girl’s situation rising in his chest. Omegas had to be very careful since they could only be marked once in their lives that he knew of. Maybe there was a way to free an omega from an unwanted mating somewhere in the world, but Kurapika didn’t know of it.

The waterfall area was warm as usual and Machi was seated at the edge of the water, her feet dipped into the warm water as a pot of tea was being brewed. Several omegas that Kurapika recognized as being freed from the traffickers were trying to take the cups to serve the tea.

“They’re so used to being made to serve that they practically fight to do it to have something familiar,” Machi explained to him as he toed off his own shoes and settled next to her.

Kurapika watched the omegas for a moment before the person brewing the tea checked what looked to be a list and pointed at just one of the omegas, the others being grabbed and pulled away by other omegas that were trying to draw them into other activities.

“I saw Gon training with Uvo on the way out,” Kurapika stated.

“They’ve been doing that daily. If Uvo didn’t respect Chrollo so much, he’d probably be trying to adopt that kid.”

Kurapika smiled, happy that they were getting along so well. “Good, Gon could have far worse role models. Hisoka almost seemed like he wanted to fill in that role for a while.”

Both of them shuddered at the horrific thought.

“So where are that boy’s parents? We got a good idea of how the Zoldycks are through Killua and Kalluto. I don’t know which had it worse: Killua who saw what was wrong or Kalluto who didn’t.”

“I don’t know and Gon doesn’t seem to either. From what I understand, he was abandoned on Whale Island as an infant.”

Machi’s eyes narrowed slightly. “And his father’s name is Ging Freecs?”

“I believe so.”
The seamstress humphed in agitation. “I know of a Ging Freecs, he’s a Three Star Hunter that is also Boar of the elite group of Hunters known as the Zodiacs.”

“I knew about the abandonment but not why. I just accepted him while we were going through the Hunter Exam and it felt natural to view him as my cub.”

The tea was being passed around then and both of them accepted their cups from the omega that was serving them. Twenty minutes later they were both headed back to the onsen, Kurapika hoping that Chrollo was back with the char sui buns. Unfortunately the car was still gone but they were greeted by the rest of the troupe plus the new additions.

Uvo grinned when they came in. “Feeling better?” he asked Machi, focusing on her automatically. “Fanaka offered to make those apple cinnamon muffins you like, I thanked her and asked her to do so since the boys looked interested.”

“Were you guys at the waterfall?” Killua asked as Biscuit and Kalluto turned to them as well. “It’s really great there!”

“We wer-”

“Man! Killua and Kalluto keep talking about the waterfall but I can’t go there! Don’t the alphas have a special place?” Gon asked, focusing on Bonolenov.

Bono grinned at the exuberant kid. “Sure do, a cave! Alphas only. The betas also have their own special place by the river. Each group has their own treat too. The omegas have their tea while alphas and betas each have their own blend that is specific for them.”

“Do you get to try the other teas?” Gon asked after a moment.

“Once a year when we have a festival of sharing. Each group shares their tea with the others. They’re very different and I know of some alphas that like the taste of the other teas more than the alpha blend even if it doesn’t do anything for them.”

“Probably because it’s something different,” Kurapika pointed out before a crash sounded from a front room and a shriek sounded.

“NOBUNAGA! Kitchen, now!” Fanaka’s voice shouted. “Bono, come help me!”

Bonolenov was on his feet immediately, running towards the front while Nobunaga came sulking back to the kitchen down the hall. He was in a yellow dress that day which clashed horribly with his skin tone.

“Don’t know why I can’t hit on that one! It acts like a proper omega!” the samurai griped as he entered the kitchen and moved to check on the muffins in the stove automatically.

Kurapika glanced down the hall and saw that Fanaka was comforting the omega who had tried to cut off her unwanted mark. Bono was talking to the alpha whose gentle expression from earlier had dissolved into a look of rage cut with sorrow. He looked torn between storming back to the kitchen and trying to help comfort the upset young woman.

“What did you do?” Kurapika demanded as he headed towards the coffee pot, certain he was going to need it in a few minutes.

“Talked to an omega the way they’re meant to! And that enabler alpha got mad and threw the teapot!”
Kurapika sighed even as his opinion of the alpha Bonolenov was talking to rose spectacularly.

“Least the omega knew its place! It looked shocked and scared when that other alpha acted like that.”

“Because she’s not used to someone defending her!” Kurapika snarled. “Your attitude is just as horrible as ever! You don’t see a person at all!”

“I see a person! A person that’s meant to serve and please an alpha! It’s gender roles!”

“It’s messed up! I doubt you like being forced to dress up and do chores, what makes you think that anyone else likes it?”

“There’s a difference! Omegas look pretty and cute, they should wear things like this!”

“Many aren’t comfortable like that, I certainly wasn’t!” Kurapika felt anger rushing through his veins as well as something else. Something felt strange but Kurapika ignored it at that moment.

Nobunaga huffed. “It shouldn’t matter! Beta women wear things like this all the time to look nice, omegas should do the same!”

“And how many beta women have you managed to court? Probably just as many omegas: zero. Your thoughts are more backwards and ugly than you are in that dress! They drive away any possible relationships because no one wants to deal with trash like you!”

The rest of the room had been watching the back and forth as though it were a tennis match, all watching as both men grew more upset as the arguing continued.

The troupe all knew that Nobunaga was a secret romantic at heart who did believe in true love. He didn’t act like it, but he did look for connections and tried to date, not understanding why he continuously drove the beta women he knew away. He had thought an omega wouldn’t be able to say ‘no’ and would come to love him rapidly, which was why he was so quick to become frustrated with Kurapika. Having his failure to form a romantic relationship thrown in his face was a horrible blow for the samurai.

Half the room rose when Nobunaga brought up his hand, intent to punch Kurapika obvious. Then there was a shift in the air, a change of some sort, and the adult alphas except Nobunaga all roared. Uvo jumped over the table to grab Nobunaga’s hand in a very firm grip as Phinks shifted himself between the pair, shielding Kurapika.

“Hey! What are you doing! He doesn’t even have nen currently!” Kurapika argued even as Phinks gently herded him back, the man’s expression showing his own confusion.

“We know but… We can’t stand the thought of him hitting or touching you right now,” Phinks tried to explain as Uvo also seemed confused.

“Kurapika is quite capable of defending himself,” a deep voice stated and all heads turned to see Chrollo had entered the room with a large fragrant box in hand. But he did look concerned and gave Nobunaga a dark look before the samurai huffed and let his arm go limp, signaling he wasn’t going to fight. Uvo stared at him for a moment before letting go but kept himself firmly planted between his old friend and Kurapika.

Kurapika glanced at the box and felt his mouth water more than a little, but something seemed wrong. “Why is everyone acting weird?”
No one was able to say but Chrollo stepped up next to his mate, handing him the box of baked goods even as he took a deep breath of Kurapika’s new scent. Unlike heat, this scent wasn’t sweet. It was far more like milk and fresh baked bread. Intoxicating in a new way altogether.

Confusion continued until a minute later when Bonolenov returned to the kitchen. Upon entering the kitchen, he took one breath then glanced at Kurapika and Chrollo, confusion on his face.

“I thought you had decided to wait a few years before starting a family?”

“We did, we want to enjoy our time together and build a possible second career for Kurapika when he does think it’s time,” Chrollo explained.

Bonolenov continued to glance between the pair, eyebrows raised. “Awkward.”

“What is?” Kurapika asked as he opened the box of buns and took one before setting it on the table, letting the boys each grab one of the buns.

Bono was spared from explaining when Fanaka bustled in, heading straight for the teapots when she froze and turned to stare at Kurapika, a large smile on her face. “Oh Kurapika! Congratulations!”

“For what?!” Kurapika demanded, suspicious and scared at the same time.

“Honey, you’re pregnant.”

Kurapika felt his mouth go slack as he froze, certain he hadn’t heard that right. He’d taken his birth control, there was no way… No, he hadn’t this time… Nobunaga had annoyed him and he’d drank the water but he didn’t recall putting the pills in his mouth!

“But… but…”

The world felt distant in that moment and Chrollo’s arms were his anchor, and then Kurapika saw his mate’s face torn between joy, disbelief, and concern.

“Guess we have some plans to make, especially in regards to Hisoka and the scarlet eyes,” Chrollo stated as he warred with his emotions and instincts.
Under water screams and an exhale through the nose

Chapter by Boozombie

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kurapika could actually feel the world getting further away from him, a ringing in his ears started up and got louder with each rapid thump of his heart. He could only hear himself as what felt like his mind being ripped from the plains of existence worsened.

His own breath, coming harshly. His own heart beat, each beat faster than the last. And the persistent ringing that was beginning to make him dizzy and sick.

Then all at once he come crashing back down to earth, all auditory noise crashing against him like a wave of congratulations.

“I think I need some air,” Kurapika mumbled with a blank face as he dropped his food, uncaring as it rolled under the table.

Chrollo was startled by the blank expression on his mate’s face. He had been concerned, yes, but the excitement had quickly overwhelmed it with fantasies of his first child. Now he had also come crashing back into reality and he remembered that Kurapika should have been able to choose when they had a child. How could this have happened? They had been so careful!

Chrollo finally regained himself enough to try and call out for Kurapika so they could talk about this, but Kurapika was already softly closing the door.

“Shit,” Chrollo whispered. This was amazing! And awful! Horribly incredible, and excruciatingly terrifying! “I’m going to be a father, how does one be a father?” He asked mostly to himself and then more seriously asked the room. “How do you be a father when your mate is angry about becoming a mother?!?”

“Um…” Fanaka-bennu had seen Chrollo in a variety of emotions before but she had never before seen him go from incredibly delighted to petrified in such quick succession! It concerned her greatly. She wanted to run after Kurapika, worried about the distressing blank expression he had sported but Chrollo seemed to need attention as well.
“Fana,” Machi called, already heading towards the door. “The men can deal with danchou, I have a feeling Kurapika is going to need us.”

Fana looked to her mate and he nodded, silently telling her that he had this. She nodded back and rushed out with Machi, Biscuit and Killua already ahead of them.

Chrollo was now trying to plan the next 18 years in his head but he didn’t have enough information! Would this child cause a rift in his relationship with Kurapika? Would they be having an alpha or an omega? He could probably handle a young alpha, he was one so he knew the problems a young alpha went through in puberty. But an omega? Oh god! Kurapika spent his puberty with a magic earring in! They were going to be lost!

They’re going to be terrible parents! When he talked about kids with Kurapika in the beginning it never seemed this paralyzing!

“Hey!” Uvogin’s ear destroying yell cut through his thoughts and he blinked in confusion then looked up at the man, realizing that somehow he had ended up on the floor. How in the world did that happen?

“Danchou alright?” Feitan asked with concern.

“. . .Yeah. . . I think,” he told them, his voice far more calm than he felt. This was his worst nightmare: unplanned anything! They didn’t even have their home built yet and Kurapika- he should go after Kurapika! This was throwing him through a loop and he actually wanted kids now!

Chrollo began to get up and the room exploded with questions on where he thought he was going.

“I have to talk to Kurapika!”

“No!” Bonolenov commanded gripping his leader shoulder and pulling him harshly into one of the kitchen chairs. “You can’t go after Kurapika like this, you’ll only freak him out more.”

Chrollo opened his mouth to argue but quickly snapped it shut when he saw the wisdom in those words.
“You’re right,” Chrollo let his head fall on the table and let out a groan. “What am I to do?”

“Not understand, danchou want kid.” Feitan leaned into Phinks, not really understanding what the problem was. “What wrong?”

“Kurapika didn’t want kids yet, Chrollo was trying to respect that,” Bonolenov explained as he thought on what to do. He almost wanted to bring Chrollo to the alpha cave, the tea there helped to balance an alpha’s mind and instincts to allow one to think straight. But the betas wouldn’t be able to follow and it didn’t seem fair to leave them out.

“Just take him to your cave Bono,” Pakunoda finally spoke, her hand was on his back so she probably saw his entire thought process. Wonderful.

“We’re going to the cave?” Gon asked, just a bit of excitement in his eyes. Surprisingly he kept looking to Chrollo with concern, he was a good alpha. Very kind and very caring even at his young age.

“I guess we are.”

“Wait! I’ve been banned from the cave until my punishment is up!” Nobunaga complained loudly. Somehow he seemed louder in that screaming yellow dress.

“Let’s definitely go to the cave,” Gon nodded more determined than he had been before. Nobunaga huffed and crossed his arms, upset that he’d be left out of the conversation concerning Chrollo’s child.

“I don’t understand what the problem is, little brat should be proud to bear your child,” Nobunaga hissed under his breath. Somewhere along the way in his punishment he’d learned, mostly, what things to keep to himself.

Chrollo was docily led by his fellow alphas to the cave in the opposite direction of the omega waterfall. The curiosity of this never before seen cave managed to ebb away his fears and concerns for a moment. But he could still feel his heart racing when they hit the tree line and began to head into the forest.
Each step Kurapika took away from the onsen came faster than the last until he was running at breakneck speed to the waterfall.

A few of the village omegas tried to call out to him in greeting but he ran right past them. Kurapika felt the need to scream, but he didn’t, he couldn’t! This was a good thing, right? This was his and Chrollo’s first child and he didn’t want Chrollo to think this changed anything between them or what they wanted for their future, but dear god was he not ready for this!

The waterfall came into view and luckily the only person around was Rei, making tea as always and he was thankful for that. Kurapika knew he was crying for reasons he couldn’t fathom. On a level Kurapika was incredibly happy, on lonely nights he had often dreamed of children but on a much deeper level he felt completely distraught!

The moment Kurapika hit the grass he kicked off his shoes mid-run and swan dived into the pool of water.

“KURAPIKA!” He heard Rei shout in worry before he was below the warm water where he was safe from all the noise that assaulted him. And then he was screaming.

He screamed and screamed until he ran out of air, the water bubbling and the distorted sound vibrating around him.

When all of the air had vacated his lungs and the tears had washed away, Kurapika burst up out of the water and gasped for breath.

“Kurapika!” Killua voice rung out and Kurapika immediately wanted to go back under the water.

“Fuck!” Kurapika yelled out and slammed his head back into the water to scream again.

Arms encircled his waist and Kurapika just went limp and allowed whoever held him to pull him to the edge of the water. He could smell Fanaka-Bennu’s calming wildflower pheromones and he relaxed even further into her embrace, allowing her to hug him securely to her chest as she began to brush his wet hair out of his face.
“What’s the matter with him?” Rei asked and Kurapika glanced around when even more comforting pheromones began to fill the air, making it light and dizzying. The omegas he passed on the trail had gotten to the waterfall and noticed his distress. Instinctively everyone present was trying to help him.

Killua’s arms joined into the tight hug as Biscuit moved to explain the situation to the others.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do,” Kurapika mumbled, feeling blissfully safe as everyone looked at him with concern and understanding. They moved in to better surround him with the scent of safety and care. It wasn’t the first time Kurapika felt the serene sense of home that he’d only felt when he was back with his clan, but right then he was so incredibly thankful for this village.

“It’s going to be okay,” Fana whispered.

“How? Are we even sure that jerk didn’t mess with your medication?!” Killua hissed and Kurapika jerked as the accusation.

“No! Chrollo would never!” Kurapika yelled at the young omega. “Besides why now? Just a few heats ago I was so out of my mind I tried to refuse the pills, if he wanted to he could have just said he couldn’t get me to take them!”

Killua seemed shocked at the admission and quickly settled down.

“I forgot my medication, Nobunaga may have distracted me but this is my- my fault,” Kurapika curled even closer to Fana. No one questioned why he brought up Nobunaga, Kurapika assumed they could all put the pieces together themselves. Machi laid a tender hand on his shoulder and tried her best to make him feel better even if she didn’t have the same ability to calm someone with her scent.

A few of the omegas around gave him some slight encouragement but none of it made him feel better.

“I can’t do this,” Kurapika whispered in a stricken tone. His hand reaching up to take Kuilla’s and squeezing.
“Of course you can,” Fanaka said. “You will be a great mother!”

“You can do it Kurapika!”

“Yeah! You will do just fine.”

“I can’t!” Kurapika shouted, wrestling his way out of Fana’s arms. “I’m not ready!” Kurapika cried out and smacked the water with his fists like a child. “I can’t be ready, I don’t know how to be a mom!”

“You think I’m ready?” Machi spoke up, trying to reach for him before she just got into the water with him.

“Yes! Because you chose to be a mom! You planned for this!”

“Kurapika, I’m terrified!” Machi raised her voice, shocking Kurapika who had gotten used to Machi’s somber personality. She took a breath and laid her hands on his shoulders. “I’m so scared every morning I wake up, yes I planned for this child but I’m so afraid. I don’t know how to be a mom either, I don’t know what I’m doing, or– or . . .” She trailed off, looking so lost and uncertain before a serenity came over her. “But I know it’s going to be okay.”

“How?”

“Well I’m not alone, am I?” She quirked up a lip and motioned her head to the gathering of village omegas around the pool. All of them watching with watery eyes, seemingly only just holding themselves back from entering the water to offer comfort. In front of them was Killua, a look of determination on his face. Fanaka-Bennu, looking at him with the kind of motherly love he’d forgotten how much he loved and missed in his life. And Biscuit, a new friend but the support in her teary eyes made Kurapika feel just a tad bit better. “And neither are you.”

“We’re all here for you!” One of the village omegas called. Kurapika recognized the voice of Rei, who had become something of a fun ‘aunt’ with her gentle wisdom and sweet nature.

“I can babysit wherever you go on missions!” Killua offered.
“And I’m a great teacher, you can ask Gon and Killua, I’ll help out whenever you need,” Biscuit put forward.

“And, of course, you can always rely on me,” Fanaka finished off after each omega surrounding the pool got a chance to offer their help and services to Kurapika. He guessed the old saying was very true in that moment: it takes a village.

Then Kurapika’s mind went to those that weren’t there, the troupe, Gon and Leorio. . . Chrollo. All of them would be there for him.

“Are you ready to come out of the pool?” Machi asked kindly. Kurapika frowned, he really didn’t want to leave his small area of calm. Machi noticed this and continued. “You remember what I told you here before? Just because you’re a mother, that doesn’t mean you aren’t you anymore. You’re still strong Kurapika.”

Kurapika nodded, feeling a little weepy from the kind words being offered up to him as Machi gently led him out of the water. He couldn’t believe he once thought of her as a she-demon.

“I’m going to go get him some dry cloths,” someone called when Kurapika shivered. But it wasn’t from the cold, it was from to tears of relief and joy trickling down his cheek. Maybe everything would actually turn out okay?

“Oh,” Kyo looked up from his spot at the table to see Illumi had walked into the empty room. Kyo hadn’t expected to see Illumi today, he’d honestly thought he was still in the torture chamber. “I thought you’d be out with Hisoka, tracking down that Troupe leader.”

Kyo felt a little put off to be spoken to so normally by his alpha who had always talked to him like an animal, but he replied readily.

“Hisoka was heading somewhere really dangerous next and I had lessons, he said he’d collect me again in a few days,” Kyo mumbled, feeling odd. This was probably the most pleasant conversation he’d ever had with Illumi.

Illumi made a sound of acknowledgment and stood around a little awkwardly for a moment. Kyo
tried to focus on the chemical chain of sugar he was memorizing and added absentmindedly, “I’m actually glad to have a break, I get the feeling that he wants someone to try and kill him from the way he talks to others. Sometimes I don’t know how we can stand him.”

In reaction to his words the most startling thing happened: Illumi laughed. Nothing dramatic, just a small exhale through the nose that was barely noticeable unless, like Kyo, you paid wrapped attention to everything he does.

Illumi left right after, leaving Kyo stunned and overjoyed. The alpha probably didn’t even realize the incredible leap their relationship just took.

Chapter End Notes

Somehow both serenechaos and I had a few days free and managed to put out chapters right after the other like we use too. Sigh—— if only it could stay like this. Lol hope you guys liked it and your excited for what’s to come.
Bonolenov seemed to relax the moment that the mouth of the cave came into view.

He brought the group of alphas to a pause just inside the cave and stripped off his bandages casually as well as his gloves and boots, leaving him only in his boxers.

“Strip down to just your undergarments,” he instructed the group as he settled his things in one of the many baskets that lined the walls of the cave. “You’ll really don't want them inside.”

“Why?” the young alpha that Chrollo had essentially adopted when he mated Kurapika asked. “Is this another hot spring?”

“Close,” Bono admitted as Uvo shrugged and yanked off his tank top and tossed it into a basket. Chrollo seemed to be blinking in confusion before he finally began to undress.

Phinks seemed to not care and removed his own clothes easily. “So do the omegas have a private spring as well?”

“The omegas selected a hot waterfall to meet at that creates a warm pool for them,” Bono explained. “Alphas and betas are not allowed, unless the beta is a pregnant female. The tea the omegas make is excellent for morning sickness.”

“What about betas?” Gon demanded as everyone finished stripping to just their underwear.

“They have their own spot and tea as well. It has warm but not hot water from what I understand,” Bono explained and Chrollo began to realize why this village had no issues with equality. Every group had their own special thing and place, sharing the rest of the village.

Bono led the group deeper into the cave then, passing several light curtains. The air got significantly more humid and warm as they went, then Chrollo noticed that Gon seemed to be surprised by something.

“Something wrong?” he asked and the boy glanced at him.

“Why is there still light?”

The man felt his eyebrows rise then turned his head as Phinks and Uvo did the same. The boy was surprisingly observant! There was no immediately apparent light source and the cave had turned several times, so there was no light from the entrance! No cracks in the ceiling, no mirrors reflecting light in, nothing!

Bonolenov chuckled. “Luminous moss, it grows all over this cave and creates constant light! Very convenient when we were scouting out a place for alphas to meet.”

“Wow! This is so cool!”

Another turn and Chrollo thoroughly agreed with the boy’s sentiment as the cave widened into a cavern. Steam from a raised central pool permeated the air, creating a sauna and hot water slowly rolled down the side of the basin-like pool, filling several smaller pools that were between ankle and knee-deep.
Several alphas, all in either their underwear or their swimsuits, lounged in the area. Several sat in the water, looking very relaxed.

“Don’t go in the far pool or the one that’s to the left of the basin,” Bono stated, indicating the two pools. “The underground stream that feeds the main basin also feeds those and they’re too hot to go in without getting cooked.”

“Then what’s he doing?” Gon asked as he pointed to one alpha that seemed to be dealing with a pot of some sort in one of the pools.

“Cooking,” Bono stated nonchalantly. “Brewing tea or maybe even brought a pot of soup or something to share.”

Chrollo stared at the pot for a moment then glanced around the room. He really couldn’t see how all of this was meant to help him calm down. He was going to be a father and Kurapika wasn’t ready and they weren’t in any way prepared!

Groaning, he sat down, only then realizing that they were in an ankle deep pool.

“Danchou?” Uvo asked before Chrollo let himself fall back. “You ok?”

“Kurapika is pregnant when he isn’t yet ready and we don’t have a house yet, any plans, and haven’t been able to even have a job with him as part of the troupe!” the raven haired alpha stated, his tone screaming that he was less than pleased.

Half of the alphas in the cave sauna looked over to them, several smothering what looked like congratulations that were on the tips of their tongues.

“Least Hisoka doesn’t know where to find you guys,” Phinks stated and Chrollo shot up in that moment.

How could he have forgotten about Hisoka, especially now! He’d be coming after them, wanting his fight and if Chrollo refused…

The thought of fighting the psycho clown was daunting, especially with his baby on the way. Chrollo wanted to be there for the birth, to hold them in their first moments of life. Hisoka might rob him of that, either by killing him if he didn’t plan for the fight or by killing Kurapika.

But… Blowing out a breath, Chrollo sighed as he realized that he and Kurapika were going to need to keep moving, at least until the baby was born. He wanted to see his child.

“So you made Kurapika number four?” Phinks asked, a grin on his face. “Great idea! He already fits in!”

“But if he has a baby…” Gon pointed out.

“He can bring the kid with him! Machi can too!” Phinks declared. “They don’t have to participate in the mission, we’d all be happy with them just being there! And having a cute pair of kids around would be awesome!”

“In those rundown crumbling buildings that we tracked you guys to?” Gon asked and everyone with eyebrows felt them rise.

“Gon, how many time did you manage to track the troupe or Kurapika and me to a base?” Chrollo asked, doing his best to sound like a slightly concerned parent. This was an issue in several ways,
the first of which being that a pair of kids had managed to track them so how difficult would it be
for Hisoka to do it? The second issue was that two of his adopted children actually had tried to
follow and engage a group of murderous thieves (completely ignoring the fact that he led that
group).

“Uhh… At least three times…” Gon stated as he looked to think really hard. “We usually just
followed the really weird thefts such as candy stores being cleared of their inventories. Killua said
it was ‘too evil’ of a crime for anyone else to have committed.”

The alphas stared at the boy before Uvo threw his head back with a howl of laughter and let
himself fall into the water next to Chrollo. Phinks was also laughing while Bono grinned and
Chrollo chuckled.

“Danchou, you might need to be careful the next time you try to spoil Kurapika before his heat!”
Uvo declared as he fought for his breath. “Clear out another few candy shops and normal people
might see a pattern.”

“You were the one to rob those shops,” Chrollo pointed out as he tried to get himself under control
but found he was still smiling. “I said to get him some sweets while I got other supplies he would
have wanted or needed.”

“So it really was for Kurapika when he was in heat?” the innocent boy asked. “You weren’t just
eating them?”

Phinks stepped in then. “Kid, danchou has a special jacket that he wears when the troupe meets. He
doesn’t let anyone else touch it, much less wear it. Kurapika gets fixated on that coat during heat
and Chrollo gives it to him!”

“Nobunaga is in such hot water right now because of trying to drug Kurapika so he would sleep
with danchou before they mated,” Bono added and the boy’s eyebrows hit his hairline. “There
were rough spots, but Chrollo learned where he was wrong.”

“You should have seen ‘em in that museum!” Uvo called out. “They were actually smiling and
enjoying each other’s company even before Chrollo realized they’d be a good match!”

Chrollo blinked as his gaze shifted to each of the alphas in his troupe as they regaled the young boy
with incidents and stories of him and Kurapika slowly coming together. His many stumbles and the
learning that he and Kurapika did together. Somehow, hearing those little stories on what had led
him to where he currently sat made the situation seem not as bad.

He had made mistakes and Kurapika hadn’t been happy at first, but they had worked things
through. They had found happiness and love, a deeper type than they ever would have had if his
initial plans had come to fruition.

Sometimes plans needed to be remade as you went and learned, that was a lesson he should know
well by now after courting Kurapika. They would grow and learn together during this. And
definitely take some childcare classes. Kurapika might be fine, but Chrollo could admit he only had
a foggy idea on how to change a diaper.

When a mug of tea was handed to him several minutes later, Chrollo could almost say he was calm
again. Their house was not even half finished but they had time, nine months since Kurapika had
just been impregnated. They could easily get the troupe to assist with collecting the last of the
Scarlet eyes and then be done, maybe even pull another heist or two before Machi and Kurapika
were both out of the game for a while. Until then...
He mentally tracked down where that training baby doll was that Pakunoda had gotten for Kurapika and decided that that would be a good starting point. He could learn to change a diaper, swaddle, bathe, and burp a baby with that thing!

Kurapika needed to clear his head. Even knowing that he’d have the support of every omega in the village, he felt a need to be alone at that particular moment.

Luckily, no one bothered him when he got up and slowly walked away from the waterfall after drinking about three cups of tea. All could sense his need for a few minutes of silence.

The village was lively as he slowly walked down the street, not glancing at stalls as he slowly made his way from the back streets to the main avenue of the village. Small but quaint shops were spread along this road leading to the onsen that Fanaka-bennu ran and Kurapika paused at what was once a large empty lot that was now being rebuilt into a yard and walkway, his eyes turning to what was supposed to one day be the house where he and Chrollo would raise their children. One day was coming far sooner than expected, it seemed.

The builders were setting beams in place, building an expansive building. The first floor would be Kurapika’s bookstore which would also double as a library for the villagers and include extra rooms for teaching classes, making it the first unofficial school in the tiny village. The upstairs would be their living quarters and would include bedrooms for future children plus a number of guestrooms, playrooms, and two heat rooms in addition to several rooms with no assigned use.

Kurapika had balked when the village builders had shown them the plans, insisting they didn’t need a mansion. It had turned into a long discussion between Chrollo and him that had lasted through the night as Chrollo pointed out that he wanted them to have a library as well as room for the entire troupe to visit, including the boys.

Kurapika in turn pointed out that Machi and Uvo were having their own house built in the village, a regular sized one, and the rest of the troupe could stay at the onsen.

This had led to a discussion of how many books Chrollo owned, the answer was enough to stock a small library without there being any duplicates of any one title. This led to discussions on what they would read to their children at bedtime which turned to schools and the realization that there weren’t any in the Gyudondong village.

In the end, they did decide on a floor plan that allowed a few rooms to serve as a school and Kurapika relented in allowing the second floor to be as large as the first simply so it wouldn’t look too odd.

Now Kurapika stared at the building that was being built. A building he would be staying in permanently far sooner than he had ever anticipated.

He’d need to hire people to help with the upkeep of the shop/library/school. Few of the Gyudondong could read but they were beginning to see how important it was, meaning that Kurapika would probably be looking for assistants and teachers from outside of the village.

It would be a long search to find people who would be capable of fitting into the village and wouldn’t mind working for an omega. Kurapika would sooner do all the work himself than bring that sort of prejudice into this village.

The blonde’s feet slowly took him into the building and Kurapika could already see a grand floor
plan coming together. A reading area to the right, maybe a small coffee bar next to it, and classrooms for the school would be to the left, just past the front desk.

“Hey! Congrats!” one of the builders called as he passed by Kurapika, causing most of the builders present to also turn. “Got one on the way myself and knowing they’ll have a place like this to learn at is definitely helping my mate!”

“Oh!” Kurapika felt his eyes widen as several of the other builders cheered. “Thank you?”

“Hah! Teach my kid to read and I’ll be thanking you! It’s hard to do anything in this big world without some sort of education! Can’t even be a Hunter it seems!” the alpha replied. “Luckily you don’t need any fancy schooling to be a carpenter, so you can bet that we’ll make this place the star of the village!”

The other carpenters and builders called their agreements as did the sole electrician in the village, a female omega who looked the type to not take any sass about her gender. Word was that she had broken the arm of her first instructor while learning her trade because he had dared to make a pass at her. Kurapika knew she had been rescued from the traffickers and that she had been more than ready to stay after hearing about the village from the children. Since her rescue, she’d been fixing the electricity around the town and soon every house would have it and not just the onsen and shops.

“Every child and adult that wants will learn how to read at the very least,” Kurapika promised and knew that he meant it. Perhaps it was a good thing that Chrollo wanted all this space, it seemed they were going to need it!

Several minutes later Kurapika was walking towards the onsen, feeling significantly better. He would definitely have purpose here and this child wasn’t going to mean his life was over.

Absently his hand came up and gently rubbed his flat stomach as he thought of his baby. The toys and games they would play, eventually teaching them to read and helping them find books they liked. They could have trips as a family, go to museums without the intent of scoping them out to rob.

An all too familiar cry touched his ears when he entered the onsen and Kurapika felt horror creep up his spine as he moved towards the kitchen where the sound seemed to be coming from.

Chrollo stood by a pot with a bottle in hand, Fanaka-bennu and a matronly looking omega next to her, calling directions.

“Make sure it’s not too hot!”

“Are you sure they’re hungry? Maybe you should try a diaper?”

“Watch the child! Don’t get it too close to the pot! They might grab it!”

Chrollo seemed to be testing the temperature of a bottle of milk on his arm, the plastic baby under one arm and he jumped away from the stove while still trying to test the bottle, his foot catching on a very familiar pink care bag before he slipped and tossed the bottle aside, clutching the “baby” with both hands as he went down. If the baby had been real, it would have been a good save. As it was, Kurapika was staring at his mate who was flat on his back, the plastic baby doll held safely above him as the thing continued to scream.

“Chrollo… do you need a hand?” Kurapika asked as he took a step into the kitchen.
“Kurapika! I never realized how bad this thing was!” Chrollo practically cried. “I’ve been trying and trying and it keeps crying! It doesn’t want the pacifier, diapers aren’t working, and feeding is strange! Fanaka and her mother insisted that I needed to learn to fix an actual bottle and I can’t seem to get the temperature right and it kept crying after so I tried again and-”

“Did you try burping?” Kurapika asked, not sure how to respond otherwise.

Chrollo blinked at him owlishly before bringing the doll to his shoulder and firmly patting its back. It took a minute and then a small noise came from the “baby”, an artificial burp, and the crying stopped.

“Do you need a break?” Kurapika asked as Fanaka-bennu and what was apparently her mother moved to the counter, back to their dinner preparations.

“No! You had your turn and it’s mine now!” Chrollo declared as he clutched the doll to his chest, a slightly manic look in his eyes. “I’ll learn to be as good of a parent as you long before our baby comes!”

Kurapika already knew it was going to be a very long night.
Chrollo and Uvogin glared at each other from across the table top, both of their hands were up where they could both see them.

“What’s the wager?” Chrollo asked deeply, determined to win this round.

“Normal stakes, loser has to get the next bout of cravings,” Uvogin rumbled as he wiggled his fingers to keep them ready. Feitan and Phinks stood to the side with their breaths held. Phinks bet Uvogin would win, he had an extra two months of mental prep on danchou. Feitan bet on danchou since he was always a good bet.

“And,” Feitan raised an arm and watched the two men tense like a Mexican standoff. “Go!”

Chrollo and Uvogin grabbed their diapers from the table and quickly grabbed the random animal Feitan and Phinks had captured for this competition. They began to force the struggling animals into the diapers, making sure to complete each step perfectly.

The men were like lightning, baby powder puffing out like an explosion. While Uvogin was going faster, his diapering skills were a bit sloppy. Chrollo took a few extra seconds to make sure his diapered animal looked perfect.

“And time!” Fanaka yelled from the head of the table. She had agreed to be the referee because, in her own words, “that sounds too hilarious to miss!”

Both men put their hands up, panting.

“Who won!?” Uvogin asked Fanaka. He had a month of practice on Chrollo, he just had to have won!

Fanaka looked over the two upset animals, Uvogin’s fox hissed at her but she paid it no mind. The diaper was crooked but it was snug and he used the perfect amount of powder.
Chrollo’s stray dog whined in discomfort and Fanaka frowned. The diaper looked perfect but then she stuck a finger into the waistband and found that it was too tight. Plus not enough powder.

“Uvogin wins!” Fanaka declared. Uvogin raised his arms triumphantly as Chrollo deflated. This diaper business was harder than it looked.

“Haha! I get to sleep in the next time Machi wants something at 3am!” Uvogin celebrated with Phinks while Feitan grumpy handed over his bet to Phinks.

“Danchou need practice!” Feitan complained, he’d never bet on his boss before and lost, he didn’t like the feeling.

“I know,” Chrollo sighed.

“Do you want another lesson?” Fanaka asked kindly as she cleaned up the extra baby powder from the table.

“Yes please, at this rate I won’t be ready in two years let alone nine months,” Chrollo sighed again. Kurapika had gone out for a walk since the plastic baby doll made him cringe and only a few minutes after Fanaka had offered to include Chrollo in the baby care lessons she had been giving to Uvogin, so the doll had been turned off.

Somehow the two had began a little competition on who could go the fastest, which had led to Fanaka telling them it didn't matter how fast it was done if it wasn’t done right. Then Feitan and Phinks has come in and said they should try living creatures since their babies won’t stay perfectly still. And it just kinda spiraled off from there.

“Don’t worry danchou! I’ve never known a subject that you can’t master!” Uvogin grinned while Fanaka instructed him to fix the crooked pin in the baby’s (fox’s, it was a fox) diaper.

Chrollo didn’t know what else to do but let out his own pretend baby’s diaper a bit. The dog whined again and nuzzled into Chrollo's hand when he succeeded in loosening the diaper. Chrollo looked down at the dirty animal and after a moment began to wonder how long it had been a stray and if kids should be raised with a pet of some kind. There weren’t many animals in the desert to keep as a pet so Chrollo didn’t know.
“Do you think we should get a dog? For the kids,” Chrollo asked absentmindedly as he scratched
the dog behind the ears.

“Considering you two will be traveling a lot, it might be a good idea once they are older,” Fanaka
answered, knowing that if Chrollo got a dog now she’d be the one actually getting a dog. She did
not want a dog.

“You’re right, can we see if anyone in town would like a dog? It feels wrong to just let him go back
to being a stray after feeding him.” Fanaka nodded and smiled a bit, Kurapika’s effect on Chrollo
was obvious in every little thing he did now. A year ago she wouldn’t dream of seeing Chrollo
trying to find a home for stray dog.

Now they just needed to set Nobunaga straight, deal with Hisoka, and get Chrollo and Uvogin
ready to be fathers! Why did it feel like she had forgotten something?

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Kurapika had a little content smile as he walked down the small forest trail, a thermos filled with
tea tucked under his arm. Kurapika had expected a very long talk with Chrollo after the
announcement that he was pregnant, having to tell him that he needed to learn how to be a dad. But
Chrollo has already discovered that for himself, Kurapika didn’t know why he was so surprised,
Chrollo was always one step ahead.

The walk was doing him some good, clearing his head from Chrollo’s crying baby doll that he
insisted Kurapika not touch and giving him some much needed alone time. He’d need to go back
soon, Killua and Gon were going to continue their journey, this time with Phinks and Feitan there
to guide and protect them. Somehow Kalluto had convinced Killua to let him tag along as well.
Biscuit was heading out to do her own thing and Chrollo wanted to finish the hunt for the Scarlet
eyes.

It seemed like a dream that they almost had all of the Scarlet eyes. Soon a chapter of his life would
be complete, it was relieving to be honest.

Kurapika rubbed a hand over his still flat stomach, now a new chapter was about to begin. It was a
surprise, yes, but a baby... A child! After a day of adjustment Kurapika was beginning to actually
feel excited. Somethings will be a struggle but he was sure between the large found-family he had
supporting him and Chrollo, they’d find a way.
The forest trail was incredibly relaxing and soon Kurapika felt his muscles fully relax after being woken by that infuriating plastic demon baby! Feeling good, Kurapika took a moment to pour himself a cup of tea in the lid of his thermos. It was as he took his first sip that he felt it.

An aura, powerful and fierce moving just into his range of senses before flickering away. Someone was getting close and had just hidden themselves with Zetsu. Two months ago Kurapika wouldn’t have noticed it but Chrollo had insisted that he needed to increase his range of sensitivity.

Kurapika forced his body not to tense up in preparation for a fight, he followed Chrollo’s advice and behaved like he hadn’t noticed in order to fully gauge the situation before provoking a fight. It was surprising how often Chrollo came into a situation not wanting a fight but ready and willing if his would-be attackers do, in fact, attack.

Listening closely, Kurapika stepped forward like nothing was wrong, hearing the faint sound of footsteps through the trees. Whoever these people were, they were failing at sneaking up on him. Or maybe he’d seriously leveled up after Chrollo’s boot camp training methods.

They were obviously Nen users from the use of Zetsu, which meant they could be Hunters. No one should be coming after the Phantom Troupe because they were Hunters themselves now so that option was out. Could be a revenge hit, Chrollo wasn’t exactly a saint. There were probably a lot of people like Kurapika going years back that wanted Chrollo and the Troupe dead.

The intruders were getting closer and Kurapika could now tell there were three. Two of them weren’t using Zetsu, which is just insulting! It’s like they sensed him but then at the same time didn’t care that an omega had sensed them. Only one of the three was giving him any respect and they hadn’t even come face to face yet!

“Are you going to come out or should I just finish my walk?” Kurapika demanded into the open air as he dropped the thermos uncaringly and placed his hands inconspicuously on his hidden swords.

“So the omega has a little skill,” a gruff voice spoke as his would be ambushers stepped out of the tree line. Kurapika was not impressed honestly. They were definitely Hunters, Blacklist ones if he were to wager a guess. Blacklist hunters always seemed to be a tad more on the arrogant side than others.

Kurapika didn’t comment on his mockery, only sized the three up. The one that spoke was a large man, not like Uvogin, no this man was large in the waist. Fat and scarred, he was also dirty. Really the man wasn’t doing himself any favors as an unattached Alpha.
The man behind him and to the left was imp-like in his scrawniness, his face was ugly with two crescent shaped eyes, large nose, and a too large and creepy smile rivaling Hisoka’s. He and the last of the ambushers were betas.

The last, behind and to the right, was a female with huge lips like a fish. Actually pretty much everything about her reminded Kurapika of a fish from her clipped ears that looked like fins, to her small beady eyes.

“Would you like to tell me why you’re here?” Kurapika asked conversationally since these people didn’t scare him in the least.

“Not even a flinch!” The fat alpha laughed, ignoring Kurapika. Again very annoying!

“To be expected from the infamous Phantom Troupe leader’s mate!” The impish beta sounded like he screamed all day long, his voice was so hoarse it hurt Kurapika’s ears.

“Are you three hunting my mate by chance? Because you won’t be getting anything from the Hunter Association.” Kurapika watched their faces to see they didn’t twitch at his announcement. So they weren’t here on official Hunter business then.

“Oh honey, we're here for your sweet ass,” the fish women sneered, Kurapika became irritated from her crude choice of words. She was almost as bad as Nobunaga, actually probably as bad.

That announcement narrowed down the options of why they were here. It could still be revenge, coming after the mate of the Phantom Troupe was a good way to get revenge but Kurapika doubted anyone believed Chrollo cared about his mate considering the stereotypes on omegas.

“With no backup?” Kurapika asked, letting some of his annoyance leak into his voice. Maybe a lot of omegas weren’t battle trained but Kurapika expected pro Hunters to at least do their research. He had gotten a Hunter License on his first try! He would have thought that warranted at least five people.

The impish man laughed like Kurapika had cracked a world class joke, the fish woman and fat man soon joined in.
“As entertaining as this is, Prince Tserriednich has waited long enough for you. So come with us now and we won’t have to hurt you,” the fat man grinned sadistically.

Prince Tserriednich. . . Kurapika could have sworn he’d heard that name before. It struck a cord but it seemed very unimportant, even with the title Prince. His confusion must have shown on his face because all three of them began to look irritated.

“You were promised to Prince Tserriednich by the Phantom Troupe!” the Fish women snapped. Was he? Chrollo never promised him to anyone, just set up an auction. . . Oh the auction! He must have been one of the people in the auction. That made sense, Chrollo said some rockstar had still been hung up on him so maybe this prince was too.

“We’re here to bring you to him,” the fat man grinned cruelly but faltered when he noticed how unflapped Kurapika was.

“We’re going to drag you to his feet!” The impish man repeated, losing his smile for the first time. They really didn’t like that Kurapika didn’t seem to be afraid of them.

“Well, you can try,” Kurapika challenged as his swords slid into view. He was a little satisfied by their surprised looks, even with research no one would know that Kurapika had officially switched to his swords. Not that his chains were gone, they were just. . . Different. “You’re lucky I’m not with the troupe,” Kurapika smirked at the three intruders. “I’ll actually let you live.”

Kurapika threw his left sword at the fat man, gauging his reaction time. Surprisingly he reacted fast to the improvised projectile, jumping out of the way. As the sword embedded into a tree, Kurapika threw out one of his chains and wrapped it around the hilt. He pulled his body forward just as fast, landing sideways on the tree.

Kurapika yanked out the sword and slashed at the wide eyed fish woman.

The impish man reacted fast, pulling out some kind of enhanced cloth and blocking the blow. Still in the air, balanced on his sword, Kurapika kicked off and back flipped through the air before landing ten feet away from the three startled Hunters.

Kurapika quickly ran through his options here. Holy Chain would be a detriment in a three on one fight. Chrollo had suggested sacrificing five minutes of his Nen in order to keep it as powerful as it was with Emperor Time. So if he got hit and needed to use it Kurapika would be powerless for five
minutes.

So no Holy Chain. Dowsing chain was forever his most useful chain, Kurapika had it out and waiting in case any of the Hunters had a projectile, he could counter.

The impish man was the first to react when Kurapika landed, Kurapika already knew exactly what he’d be doing to counter the Nen soaked cloth the man had morphed into a broadsword. It’s too bad Chrollo wasn’t here, he may have liked the ability.

Raising his Dowsing chain, Kurapika let it whip around the sword and as the sword came down, the chain flung Kurapika up in the air faster than he would have been able to move himself, taking advantage of his lightweight body. The move had been Chrollo’s idea, he’d stated that using the chain only to block was limiting its capabilities.

Kurapika again took Chrollo’s training to heart and didn’t counter attack the Impish man, instead he spun midair and lashed out with his chains to slash with his right sword at the fat man. At the same moment Kurapika used the movement to throw his left sword at the fish woman discreetly.

The fish woman cried out in pain and surprise, Kurapika smirked with pride that his trick had worked. The fat man was ready for his strike though. Out of the three, the fish woman seemed to be the least battle ready so far.

The fat man pulled a club from his back and blocked Kurapika’s blow, but Kurapika could feel the club crack a bit under his power. The man’s Nen was weak.

Kurapika leaped back before any of the three could make a counter attack.

He paused with his sword ready, eyeing his other sword which was still in the fish woman’s shoulder.

No one spoke as the three eyed him. The surprise was gone, now they were just angry.

Kurapika knew he needed to end this soon before Chrollo came looking for him. The man would definitely kill the assailants, what with the added protectiveness with the baby and all.
It was time to bring out the new and improved Chain Jail then. Kurapika’s chain whipped out elegantly from his right hand, wrapping around his hand gripping the sword and binding him to it. The chain ended its binding with the sharp tip pressing against his wrist, ready to strike. The chain began to leak poison down the tip of the sword.

The poison was not lethal, just a minor paralysis poison. Kurapika now had five minutes to land a blow before he became the one the poison affected. It was a risk but it was the only way to keep his power up to where it was with Emperor Time.

Still no one spoke as they felt Kurapika gearing up to fight once again.

“Bring it on, little omega!” The fat man growled as his club flared with Nen. It would have been impressive if Kurapika had never seen Uvogin fight.

Kurapika jumped sideways to avoid the powerful hit, unfortunately the fish woman had finally decided to join the fight. Kurapika had to change direction mid leap in order to avoid an assault of tiny water bubbles the fish woman spat out of her mouth and into their impromptu battlefield.

He jumped upward and immediately grunted in surprise when something wound around his ankle and pulled him back to earth.

Kurapika instinctively protected his stomach from the crash before rolling on his back and flipping himself back to his feet.

“I see why the Prince wants this one, it's feisty,” the impish man laughed, snapping his Nen cloth. Kurapika realized then that the Imp-man was the Nen User that had used Zetsu. Kurapika might just leave him relatively unharmed.

“All omegas are worthless little sex dolls,” the fish woman growled, pulling out Kurapika’s sword and throwing it on the ground as she slashed her hand forward, flinging the spit bubbles at Kurapika.

Kurapika hit the dirt, he didn’t know what those spitballs did but he didn’t want to find out. The fish woman waved her hand to clear a path for the fat man to charge forward with his club.

Kurapika rolled until he was on his stomach and jumped up like a cat, whipping out his Dowsing
chain to wrap around the fat man’s feet and trip him.

In his distraction, a Nen cloth wrapped around his arm and then began to drag him towards the imp-man.

“Shit!” Kurapika cursed as he tried to twist out of the cloth. With his full attention on the cloth as it was he didn’t see the club coming down before it was too late to avoid. He didn’t account for how fast the fat man would get up to attack again!

Kurapika reacted on autopilot, later he would credit some kind of omegan instinct to protect his young, he twisted on to his stomach. His arms wrapped protectively around his midsection even as his Nen fortified around his stomach leaving his back completely unprotected.

Kurapika spasmed as he grunted in pain, he was pretty sure a few ribs broke with that hit.

“Oh my, it’s pregnant!” He heard the fish woman laugh like it was ridiculous that a mated omega was pregnant.

The announcement managed to distract the imp-man long enough for Kurapika to latch onto the Nen cloth and yanked the man off his feet. He landed close enough to Kurapika that he was able to lash out with his arm still chained to his sword, slashing into his arm.

Instantly the imp-man went completely limp. The five minutes restarted for his Chain Jail when he didn’t call the chain off.

Kurapika gave a quick moment to mourn the loss of instant, consequence free, healing before leaping to his feet once again, ignoring the pain of his ribs.

The two other assailants looked shocked that the imp-man wasn’t getting up from such a small wound.

“Yeah, I’m pregnant,” Kurapika declared with an uncaring glare despite his injured back. “And now you’ve pissed me off, so prepare yourselves.” Kurapika raised his poisoned sword and shifted back into a battle stance.
The fat man’s gaze shifted from his limp companion to the omega. This should have been easy, sure the omega had been a Hunter but it was an omega! They were an alpha and two beta pro Hunters, taking down an omega should have taken no time at all, even a trained one!

Kurapika launched himself forward, whipping out his Dowsing chain in a windmill movement. The spitballs still floating in the air blew back at the fish woman and fat man. The fat man was definitely better than he looked, considering he managed to dodge all of the balls of spit.

The fish woman was not as skilled, she cried out in pain when her own balls of disgusting spit hit her skin. Acidic stream rose from her as she writhed in pain. With the fat man backed up and the fish woman unable to fight back, Kurapika shot forward to cut his blade down her unprotected back.

His timer reset once again.

“So want to give up?” Kurapika grinned maliciously. Oh damn wow, maybe Chrollo was rubbing off on him too. He didn’t remember ever smiling maliciously before mating.

“I will crush you! No omega can defeat an alpha!” The fat man growled as he raised his cracked club and charged at Kurapika. His anger was his undoing.

Kurapika had used En on his Chains around the man’s feet in an intricate web. The moment he touched the invisible chain they wrapped around him like a fly caught by the spider.

“Damn it, I really am turning into Chrollo,” Kurapika berated himself for his weird dramatic way of using his chains in the end. “Alright let’s end this.” Kurapika stabbed his poisoned sword into the man’s shoulder to keep him still before calling forward the new and improved Judgement chain.

The chain gracefully reached across the battlefield to the sword Kurapika hadn't bothered to pick up. The sword was quickly brought back to his hand before the chain wrapped around his hand and morphed into a second blade from the back of the hilt.

Kurapika watched with pride as small chains wrapped around both sides of the sword until it reached the two tips.
Once the process was finished, it having such a long warm up time added to his power, Kurapika thrust one end in the fat man’s heart and the other in his own.

The fat man gasped in surprise but Kurapika didn’t even blink. “First condition: we will never attack each other again.” The fat man’s eyes widened, feeling the small chain wrapping around his heart and the tip press threateningly against his heart. “Second condition: we will never speak of each other, any breaking of these rules will end in death. Who ever breaks the rule first dies unless I remove the conditions.”

With those final words Kurapika pulled the sword out of both chests and moved on to the fish woman for the next set of conditions.

Too bad he’ll never be able to tell Chrollo of his first victory with his new and improved powers.

Chrollo raised a concerned brow when Kurapika came back two hours late and mid healing his ribs. He was by his side in two steps, checking over him for any damage especially near his stomach.

“What happened?” Chrollo demanded with worry. “Are you okay?!”

“Oleander.” Chrollo immediately stopped asking Kurapika questions. When they had reworked Kurapika's hatsu to include his Judgement Chain to be able to backfire on him they had worked up some code words in case Kurapika couldn’t talk about something that could get him killed.

Oleander was a flower that meant ‘caution’, making it perfect and meaningful.

“Alright, but you aren’t hurt right?”

Kurapika gave a sly smile. “Insects can't hurt a spider, right?”

Chrollo couldn't help but belt out laughing as well. His mate was a badass, and Chrollo loved it.
Righteous Massacre and Gon is Gon!

Chapter by Serenechaos

Kyo stared out of the window of the large car, mesmerized by the passing landscape. He was still adjusting to life outside of the factory in some ways, among them was the vast landscapes and how they changed. Every hill, lake, and clearing was different, every flower begged for his attention.

He had been getting used to the terrain at home, the forest and mountain proving a good starting point but the brief excursions he had with his red headed alpha were allowing him to see more of the immense world. It was far bigger than he ever would have believed, than the factory ever let him believe. His lessons there were limited to the factory and the house of his future alpha.

Kyo’s hands fisted as a city finally came into view, bunching up the material of his green silk dress for a brief moment before relaxing. Kikyo sat next to him today.

Hisoka was on one of his excursions again and had said he couldn’t come with him. Apparently wherever he was going today was not safe for him to allow Kyo to be alone for any amount of time. Kikyo had volunteered to take him on an excursion instead.

“We will need to stay very close together,” Kikyo explained as she checked her makeup in a small mirror then glanced at him and offered a small smile. “This city is renowned as a playground for the wealthy but that doesn’t mean an unmated alpha won’t attempt something untoward, even with a mated omega.”

Kyo nodded as his eyes glanced towards Kikyo, she was truly lovely without her mask and bandages and it was obvious where Illumi’s coloring came from. Hardly a wrinkle anywhere on her face though he knew that she was in her late 40’s. Her bustle gown had been left at the mansion and she had opted for a formal looking kimono instead, her mark apparent to all.

Kyo had been confused when Kikyo had requested that he wear a dress, even suggesting the one he currently wore since it brought out the color of his eyes, but as the car entered the city limits and began to slow down, he realized why.

There were several omegas on this street, all in dresses or very revealing clothing, and all collared and leashed. Kyo had expected to be collared and leashed when he was bought but now the sight of those things made him itch. He watched in horror as a rather fat and unattractive alpha dragged an omega in little more than a mini-skirt down the street to a brothel. Kyo knew it was a brothel because of the sign over it. The omega was crying and trying to pull away, a mark on her shoulder showing her to already be mated.

“I paid your alpha good money for you, bitch! Stop fighting!”

“Please! I’m pregnant!”

“Won’t be for long! Ain’t no room in my place for any brats.”

Kyo went rigid as he stared after the pair as they disappeared into the building, no one attempting to help the omega.

“That’s is considered to be one of the most high class brothels in the city,” Kikyo stated as she followed his eyes as the car stopped. “The owner likes to buy mated omegas and offer them to his customers. He believes that if the omega cannot be pleasured by his customers that they will be
able to focus completely on pleasuring the customers.”

“Why did he say that that omega wouldn’t be pregnant for long?”

“Because he sterilizes them.”

Kyo’s horror was immediate and he turned to stare at Kikyo as the woman opened the door of the car and signaled for him to follow her.

“But…”

“There are alphas that don’t want children, but they do want omegas. As long as they have the money, they can buy as many omegas as they please and then sell them again when they grow bored of them, regardless of whether they have had children, been marked, or are currently pregnant.”

Kyo felt his blood go cold as they slowly walked down the street, taking care to stay as close to Kikyo as he could and longing for her large, intimidating alpha to be there.

“Why would you show me this?!” Kyo demanded, even as he felt fear rise at the thought of Illumi or Hisoka discarding him. Was this a warning to him?

“So you can understand the world!” Kikyo replied, lowering her voice and glaring at an alpha who came too close, a lecherous look on his face that turned to surprise as he backed up a step.

“So you can understand why I’m as ashamed of Illumi as I am and was surprised and impressed by Hisoka. Illumi showed how little he thought of you, that he would discard you as well if you didn’t live up to his expectations. Even if he didn’t initially want you, Hisoka has accepted and won’t abandon you. He understands what a mate is and wanted someone strong, that could take care of themselves and stand up to him.”

“And yet he didn’t take me with him today,” Kyo pointed out.

Kikyo caught his hand and drew him into an alley. “Hisoka went somewhere where omega infanticide has been practiced to such an extreme that there might only be one in an entire village. Alphas will form groups in order to snatch omegas, even mated ones, in order to share them. That is the hell that is Andia. He wouldn’t have been able to focus on his search as you are now.”

“As I am?”

“Weak, dependent. He will not abandon you, but he doesn’t want to have to defend you at all times.”

“I’ve been training, I’m stronger.”

“But you’re still terrified of disappointing anyone, of disobeying an alpha. You’ve gotten better, but I believe you need a goal to fight for. You’re not a docile pet, Kyo. You’ve proven that over and over, as you’ve disobeyed, as you’ve refused orders, as you’ve learned with tutors.”

Kikyo stopped by a door and the beta guard glanced at them before stepping aside, allowing them to enter the building.

The building was dingy, causing Kyo to instantly feel as though his skin was crawling. Cries of pain reached his ears immediately and loud music. There were several omegas in the hall, all in states of undress and all looked to be uncomfortable. They looked towards Kikyo and Kyo with
blank eyes that lacked all hope and Kyo’s heart ached for them.

“This is the reality forced on many omegas,” Kikyo stated quietly. “They are not allowed to have their own dreams, not even the children that you were told to expect in the factory. Instead they are forced to serve alphas as slaves and pets, never knowing freedom or the joys which you are learning. There are some groups that are trying to free them, but they can only do so much.”

Kikyo took Kyo’s hand and guided him further down the hall and up a flight of stairs. The pounding music and smell of smoke assaulted Kyo’s senses and he barely managed to keep himself from gagging. They were on a small balcony overlooking a large room that was filled with alphas and a few betas. The alphas shouted and hooted, laughing and cheering as an omega on stage was…

Kyo turned his eyes away from the vulgar display of what was happening to the poor omega that he had seen being dragged on a leash. What was happening to her was nothing short of vile and he could see why the owner expected her to soon lose her baby.

“Those groups will never win, not when the minds and beliefs about omegas still stand. They will be taught to another generation and this abuse will continue.” Kikyo was whispering but Kyo still heard her despite the noise in the room. “Those omegas in the back hall will probably die in the next year or two, either by being beaten to death or if they get sick and the owner throws them out on the street. Sterilized, scarred, and dying. They’ll starve.”

Kyo knew the truth in those words, that no matter what he hoped would happen would probably not happen.

“Unless someone does something,” he finally stated, receiving a nod and a slight smile from Kikyo.

“Unless someone pulls this out at the roots. Helping the victims only goes so far, you must attack the root of the problem. Much like you did to that alpha on Greed Island.”

Kyo’s eyes widened in realization, as he felt bile rise in his throat. Then his eyes glanced at the floor below them again. If these alphas were all gone, then the omegas in the back hall could leave. They might have a chance before they were scarred and before the woman on the stage lost her baby. And the alphas couldn’t do it again to another group of omegas. But it was still killing!

“How many lives have they destroyed? How many omegas have they killed?” Kikyo asked him quietly.

A cry drew Kyo’s eyes to the stage and he saw the woman was bleeding from a gash on her arm.

“You don’t have to kill the innocent, just the guilty. You can choose your targets.” Kikyo’s voice was sinful honey and in that moment Kyo remembered all the times he’d been beaten. All the times he and the other omegas in the factory had been powerless to stop what was happening to them. All the tears he had witnessed as young omegas were torn down and beaten into submission, as he had been beaten into accepting what alphas wanted.

But that wasn’t how things were meant to be, how they were supposed to be! He could be happy, he could be smart. And he could definitely be strong!

“Remember what you felt when that alpha tried to take you by force,” Kikyo urged, already knowing what Kyo’s decision was and he remembered that surge with his nen. He could do it again!
But he couldn’t just kill them all immediately, he needed to give it time so they wouldn’t be suspected.

The silk dress that Kikyo had urged him to wear was shorter than anything he had ever worn before, it fit into the club setting easily and he looked like just another server as he walked through the mass of hooting alphas, enduring smacks to his butt and being pawed at as he surreptitiously touched the drinks of every alpha and beta there, a simple shift was all it took to turn the ethanol in their cups into methanol, deadly methanol.

The first groans of alphas had not begun when he delivered a shot hard whiskey on the rocks to the owner, a smile on his face that was authentic as the man accepted the drink and took several deep gulps without a thought or care.

“The plans for the palace seem to be public if one looks, but even a cursory examination indicates that something is off due to the exterior not matching the present day appearance of the palace,” Chrollo explained as he settled next to Kurapika, passing him a chocolate pastry and some coffee.

Only a week into pregnancy and Kurapika had already developed a sweet tooth. It was going to be interesting when he began to get cravings.

“I’ve noticed,” Kurapika stated as he compared the floor plan that was readily available online with pictures of the palace. “These look like they were the original floor plan of the palace from 200 years ago before the palace was enlarged and renovated. That was also when the kings of Kakin started having so many children.”

“Which is why I called Chairman Netero and reported that Prince Tserriednich was attempting to have you kidnapped,” Chrollo admitted with a small grin. “He seemed to take personal offense and sent these.”

Chrollo spread a number of papers out next to the floor plan, showing the updated floor plan of the palace.

Kurapika turned his attention to the papers also, noting that the old plans did fit with the current day palace except with several wings added, likely meant to ensure that each queen would have a hall that she would share with her children. Kurapika also noted that each of the halls had a room that was shaded and seemed to be unknown to whoever drew the map.

“Did Netero say where he got this?”

“Servants mostly, collected for several years now. This is the hall of rooms designated to belong to the First Queen.” Chrollo pointed at a particular hall that was the closest to the quarters of the king. “The shaded areas are rumored to be private harem rooms for the Princes regardless of whether they are alphas, betas, or omegas. This hall has two harems, one for First Prince Benjamin and the other is for Fourth Prince Tserriednich. No one knows how many people are present in either room due to no one being allowed to enter. There is even a private hall and garden meant for the omegas that maids and gardeners clean at certain hours, but they are not to see or speak to any of the consorts. Food is even served communally in the garden for the consorts of the Princes. No windows look out on it.”

“Consorts?” Kurapika asked.

“A prince who is an omega can have betas or alphas for consorts. If their prince becomes the king, then they could easily become queens or consorts,” Chrollo explained. “Tserriednich is known to
have had a number of omegas delivered to him over the years and several of them are suspected to have survived several months.”

Kurapika shivered slightly, Chrollo having told him about Tserriednich at this point, and that there had been no deal reached between them to deliver Kurapika. Chrollo had cancelled the auction hours before it was meant to close.

Kurapika had been able to tell Chrollo what had happened with only one sentence that had not included any mention of his would-be assailants and kidnappers: Someone named Tserriednich wanted him.

They were now planning to visit the prince soon, but not for revenge or demands that he cease. It was because he held the last of the Scarlet eyes that they needed for Kurapika to finally lay his people to rest. They both agreed that they wanted this finished before Kurapika got too far along in his pregnancy.

“We can’t go immediately, he would expect that with your reputation.” Kurapika gave Chrollo a meaningful look.

Chrollo returned it. “But we will need to do this within the next two months, three at the latest. The good news is that we know what your route of entry will be.”

“And no one would suspect a pregnant omega. The only issue is the guards inside the palace, especially since I would likely need to leave the harem to find the eyes.”

Now a lopsided grin crossed the alpha’s face. “Well, the good prince is expecting a visit from a bandit. It would be rude to disappoint him after making him wait several months!” Then Chrollo’s face turned serious. “Until then, I believe that we should start moving again, especially if those Hunters were able to track you here. We can start at a private library I know of that is owned by a fanatic creationist. He has a tendency to buy or steal artifacts of civilizations that didn’t practice his religion so he can have them destroyed every so often in a mass burning. And according to the Hunter website, he sponsored an archeological dig for the past five years that finally turned up a lot of treasure.”

Phinks didn’t know how Shalnark and Paku had managed to stand being around the kids for months, it just highlighted how tough the pair were.

Just a week after departing from the Gyudondong village and the number of incidents that had occurred was staggering.

1. Gon wanted to find his father, Ging Freecs. Phinks wanted to knock the guy into next week. Their group had agreed to find the guy and they had ended up meeting the Vice Chairman of the Hunters, Pariston Hill.

2. Upon realizing that this guy had been instrumental in the revoking of Kurapika’s license, Gon and Killua decided to make the man’s life miserable. Feitan and Kalluto had helped. Phinks was not an innocent party.

3. Pariston Hill was now dyed pink and had a shaved bald.

4. Phinks wasn’t sure how, but Pariston Hill had gotten the boys sugar and caffeine high. Add their nen into the mix and the resulting hurricane had taken the trio through four cities as they screamed, shouted, and threw a collection of paintballs, water balloons, and silly string, all provided by a
certain suit wearing man that was now bald and dyed pink.

5. They had caught the boys as they were destroying a jewelry store, screaming that the owner deserved to be robbed over some comments he had made in the past about Killua. Phinks managed the capture Kalluto and Killua, tucking one under each arm as Feitan struggled with Gon.

6. The owner of the jewelry store had started screaming at Phinks, demanding to know why he let his omega children run rampant instead of sending them to a facility to learn to be “proper omegas”. Then he’s recognized Gon and Killua and started yelling that the pair owed him thousands for a bonding ring that was stolen from him. By someone that sounded more like a chainsaw wielding madman than Franklin since he was the one to pick up Kurapika’s bonding ring for Chrollo. Phinks would likely never know how he was able to knock down what was left of the building as he left considering that both of his arms were full of squirming omega children, but the scream of the man that he didn’t have insurance was all the sweeter.

And the latest of the travesties: just walking on the street, things seeming to be somewhat sane for once, they had been approached by a bunch of omega traffickers that wanted to buy Killua and Kalluto from them, or in the words of the traffickers, “Take those things off your hands,” trying to make it sound like they were doing them a service.

Killing those guys had been satisfying after a frustrating week, unfortunately Gon was less than pleased and that was what led to where they were now.

Knowing they needed help, Phinks and Feitan had agreed to go to someone that the boys did seem to respect.

Pakunoda’s house was a modern design with a vegetable garden on the side and the boy’s blinked at the place as they approached and it occurred to Phinks as he knocked that they had never visited Pakunoda at home, not since they semi-permanently left Ryuuseigai. Paku went back the most often to help the elders.

After a minute the door was opened and Phinks blinked down at an effeminate man with short black hair and a smooth face.

“Hi miss!” Gon declared. “Is Paku here?”

“Paku? Yes, who are you guys?” The voice of the guy was more feminine than Phinks or Feitan expected and they quickly came to understand what this was.

“We’ve known Paku since she was a he,” Phinks replied as he settled a hand on Gon’s shoulder to hopefully keep him from doing anything surprising.

“Paku was a ‘he’?” the boy asked, obviously not quite making the correlation.

“Yes, she was. And I’m not female anymore young man,” the person before them stated, tone flat and daring to be challenged. They were surprised when the boy shrugged.

“Paku is still Paku!” Gon declared in a sage tone. “Who are you?”

The transitioned man blinked at the kid for a moment before a small smile appeared. “I’m going to assume that you’re Gon. Paku has told me a lot about you. I’m Sean by the way, you can come in. Paku is in the shower.”
Kyo chewed on his lip as he kept turning back to make sure the four cars were still following them. After every beta and alpha had dropped dead, Kyo had suddenly been struck with the realization that just killing these creeps wouldn’t free the abused omegas.

All of them had huddled up in a corner and Kyo knew they’d stay that way until new alphas and betas came and took them away to an equally horrible situation. Kyo hadn’t known what to do with them, the Zoldyck mansion was definitely big enough for all of them but he doubted Kikyo and her alpha wanted to take in fifteen scared and helpless omegas.

Luckily Kikyo hadn't planned on leaving them all alone, just moments after the alpha and beta creeps died the butlers were coming through the doors and gathering up the omegas. Kikyo even had the forethought to have only omega butlers on this mission so the newly freed omegas weren’t too afraid.

They had loaded the crying girls and boys up in a fleet of cars so quickly no one had even had the time to question what was happening. A butler was in each car to make sure none of them did anything to harm themselves.

“They will be fine,” Kikyo assured Kyo as she reapplied her bandage and mask. “The town at the base of the mountain was the original home of the Zoldycks, the town is one of the few places in the world that omegas are treated like people.”

“Where will they stay?” Kyo asked with concern. After going through the change of being a brainwashed pet to freethinking human being himself, Kyo knew it wasn’t an easy adjustment. They would need time and a lot of care and attention, especially after what he saw happening on that stage. He shuddered just remembering it.

“Our ancestral home mostly just collects dust now, I have the butlers cleaning it up for them to move in, a few of the butlers’ families live in the town and they’ve volunteered to help out,” Kikyo explained as she patted Kyo on the knee. “They’ll get those omegas help, training, an education, and the like.”

“Oh,” Kyo smiled softly, feeling proud of the family he had mated into. What other family would do this much for people they didn’t even know? “Do you think that girl will lose the baby?” Kyo asked after a moment, he didn’t want her to lose the child.
“Hiromi is in her car, he has medical training. He'll do everything possible to make sure she doesn’t,” Kikyo said as she glanced back at the fleet of cars as well. “Now then, it's important that you understand your role as a Zoldyck assassin.”

Kyo nodded meekly before shaking his head and straightening his shoulders. He nodded again with determination and strength, Kikyo smiled proudly.

“You will be able to choose your own jobs, any jobs that fit your set of skills will be presented to you, along with how much they are paying.” Kikyo checked her mask in a mirror, before leveling Kyo with a serious stare. “A portion of the money goes to the family and the rest is yours to do with as you wish. If you want to pay to take down a facility, possibly the one you came from, then you are free to do so.”

“I can hire the rest of you to do jobs?”

“Yes, depending on what the job is will adjust the price, although family members do get a discount depending on who you ask. Illumi and Milluki almost never do things less than full price but myself and Silva would knock off half for you.” Kikyo brushed a bit of Kyo’s hair behind his ear.

“So you would help me take out my facility?” Kyo asked with a real plan beginning to form in his head. He had thought of the others he had left behind when he’d been sold regularly. Now he thought about all the children, the omegas he once shared a cell with, the babies... He could save them.

Kikyo hesitated, she wanted to agree immediately but a facility could have close to a hundred omegas or more at any given time. The town couldn’t take that many in without the world noticing. Not to mention there wouldn't be enough room in the old Zoldyck mansion for all of them, plus they didn’t have the resources or the seclusion to detox that many simultaneously while keeping them safe.

They would need to find a place that is written off by the rest of the world so no one is watching it. Someplace secluded, isolated, with enough people to take them in and help them back onto their feet.

Kikyo knew just the place.
“Of course we’d help, but first I’ll need to make a few arrangements,” as she spoke Kikyo was already dialing a number she never thought she’d have the occasion to use.

Kyo didn’t speak as he watched Kikyo wait for whoever she was calling to pick up.

Kikyo smirked when the call was answered with a deep growl of, “Speak.”

“Hello, Chrollo Lucifer.”

Chrollo had set his phone to speaker when he answered the call. He was driving and figured Kurapika would like to be included, the number was unknown and that normally meant it was a job for the Phantom Trope.

“Hello, Chrollo Lucifer,” a feminine voice spoke and Kurapika felt like he recognized the voice.

“Who is this?” Chrollo asked with a raised brow, his eyes on the road as he drove.

“My name is Kikyo Zoldyck.” Kurapika’s eyes widened and he glanced at Chrollo to see he had shifted into his ‘serious business’ face. “I’ve heard a little rumor that you are now enlightened on the subject of omegas after finding yourself chosen by a strong and free omega.”

Chrollo’s eyes shifted to the phone for a moment before he pulled over to the side of the road, turning the car off. Kurapika and Chrollo shared a look of bewilderment before turning back to the phone.

“You heard correctly,” he answered stiffly, trying to figure out how that was Mrs Zoldyck’s concern.

“What is it to you?” Kurapika asked, making his presence known.
“Oh! How wonderful, I assume you are Kurapika? I have to thank you, you traded yourself for my boy. Should you ever need a favor from the Zoldyck all you need to do is ask, we owe you.” Kurapika and Chrollo shared another look. That was quite the offer. Kurapika never thought the Zoldyck would care that much about a random omega that helped Killua.

“Um, thank you. . .?” Kurapika murmured.

“Well yes, Kurapika is amazing, perfect, and deserves any and all recognition you wish to give him, you still haven’t told us what we owe the pleasure of this call,” Chrollo spoke as he took Kurapika’s hand. Kurapika blushes a bit at the praise.

“It’s so good to hear more happy and respectful mated pairs,” Kikyo spoke over the receiver, sighing happily. “Alright, the reason for my call is I believe we have a common problem.”

“And what would this problem be?” Chrollo smirked, getting the feeling that this call was a very good thing indeed.

“Too many rescued omegas and not enough room.” Kurapika snapped his head over to Chrollo. They had actually just been talking about that little problem. They had done their best for the omegas they rescued from the traffickers. They had been floating around the idea of raiding facilities and ambushing traffickers in their down time but the question of where to put the omegas kept coming up.

The village was small and even with each and everyone of the villagers being willing to open their homes to any freed omegas, there simply wasn’t enough room.

“What do you suggest?” Kurapika asked.

“Well I think we’ve all forgotten the obvious here, haven’t we?” Kikyo sounded like she was smirking on the other side of the call. “What place is large, secluded, and written off by the world?”

“Ryuuseigai,” Chrollo answered, feeling a little embarrassed he hadn’t thought of it earlier.

“Exactly, and it comes with the little bonus of helping your people see the light like you have.” Chrollo smiled, that was an excellent point.
“I believe we have come to an agreement, we shall be in touch.” Chrollo didn’t hesitate to end the call. It would seem Ryuuseigai was about to become yet another safe haven. Good, no home town of Chrollo’s would continue to treat omegas like less. Ryuuseigai is better than that.

Chrollo and Kurapika dropped out of the vent, landing soundlessly inside the secret library. Books and priceless artifacts lined every single shelf of the enormous space.

“Seriously, anyone burning books for any reason is just being a dick,” Kurapika hissed.

“I agree, all this knowledge is wasted on that man,” Chrollo growled. Honestly he can’t fathom why he hadn’t targeted this man before. The act of burning books was vile, he should have never been allowed near any of this information!

“We can sell the relics to museums, maybe even some private collectors that loan out to public venues. Everyone should be allowed to see these.” Kurapika ran his fingers over a dusty, old statue.

“Definitely, you’ll have first pick of the books for our library of course,” Chrollo added in as he began to move items to the middle of the floor so he could wrap it all up in his Fun Fun cloth.

Kurapika and Chrollo worked quietly for a time, both lost in their plans for the future. Kurapika wanted to go back to Ryuuseigai now, to help people learn the truth of omegas before they started bringing in hundreds of abused and brainwashed omegas. Plus they needed some semblance of structure. A school, a hospital, maybe a military so Chrollo wouldn’t be so busy every time they went there.

Kurapika planned to talk to Leorio about the hospital, maybe bring in Biscuit for some Nen training courses. She would also be able to recommend more Nen instructors.

It was a lot to do, but if Ryuusaigai was to be a safe haven before the omegas reentered the world then it would need all that work.
“You really think the people will change?” Kurapika asked absentmindedly as they finished up moving all the books and moved onto the artifacts.

Chrollo didn’t need to ask what Kurapika was talking about, he knew Kurapika meant Ryuuseigai.

“If it’s you, then I do. You changed our minds, why not the city too?” Kurapika smiled back at Chrollo, feeling a swell of love for the man that believed in him so thoroughly.

“Hey,” Kurapika called and waited for Chrollo to turn and look at him with a cocked eyebrow. “I love you.”

Chrollo grinned boyishly. “I love you too,” he whispered as he closed the distance to his mate. He pecked Kurapika’s lips as he pulled him into a hug.

Illumi sat glaring at his mother's new favorite pet. He’d always planned for his mother to get attached to the omega he bought but he thought she’d do it because he was so like Killua. But no! No, he was the favorite for completely different reasons.

His mother and Kyo were almost never apart anymore, she only left him alone when Hisoka was around. The thought that she trusted Hisoka more than her own son was agitating to Illumi.

“Illumi you should have seen Kyo today!” his mother gushed as she poured Kyo a cup of tea. “He poisoned an entire room in less than ten minutes! He will make a lot of money with his Hatsu and ability to move through a room quietly.”

Illumi stayed quiet, hardening his glare on Kyo. The boy’s shoulders hunched and he frowned sadly. Illumi didn’t feel bad for letting Kyo know how much he was beginning to dislike him, even if his stomach felt like it was in knots.

“Illumi don’t glare at your mate!” His mother snapped. “Kyo has become very respected, the butlers prefer him more than you, so you best show him some respect if you want any of the butlers to take you seriously. You don’t want to end up like Milluki do you?”
Illumi growled. That was pretty much the worst threat his mother could issue. Milluki was a joke to the butlers. They'd never openly show it but they thought of him as an overgrown child constantly having a tantrum. Illumi definitely didn’t want that.

“Whatever,” Illumi whispered coldly as he got up to leave the room. He paused just before closing the door. It really was impressive that Kyo managed to kill that many people so fast. “Good job on the mission,” he told the surprised omega before leaving the room.
A week had passed since the call from Kikyo Zoldyck. Kurapika and Chrollo were trying to come up with a plan for Ryuuseigai, one that didn’t involve bringing a large number of abused and beaten people to a place where the abuse might continue.

Chrollo had been quick to point out that there were a large number of alphas in the city of trash, probably sent there from times when omegas weren’t property and rich landlords were trying to cut down on the competition for omegas.

Kurapika was somewhat surprised when Chrollo had insisted that they go to Pakunoda to help with making a plan of action, but considering her abilities, she probably would have the best insight.

Neither had expected to see Netero on the street where Pakunoda’s house was apparently situated.

“Ah! Chrollo, Kurapika!” The Chairman declared jovially when they had stepped out of their car. “So this must be Pakunoda’s house! I’ll admit I was having a bit of trouble finding the place.”

Kurapika’s eyebrows rose as he glanced down the street and realized that there were maybe four or five houses total on this particular road.

“Chairman Netero,” Chrollo greeted in turn, eyes sharp. “Do you have business with Paku or the troupe?”

“Oh no, no!” the elderly man waved off the question as he headed for the door to the house. “I want to see young Gon and Killua!”

“They’re here?” Kurapika asked.

Netero’s eyes seemed to twinkle a bit. “For several days from what I understand. I feel they may have already convinced your other troupe members to not have children after a recent incident.”

Kurapika went still for a moment before he marched towards the door, moving around Netero so he could knock.

A minute later the door was opened by a harried looking Feitan, for once wearing a regular plain black t-shirt instead of his cloak. He looked insanely happy and relieved to see Kurapika.

“Understand why not want twelve kids,” the man stated as he moved to the side to allow the omega to enter then narrowed his eyes at Netero. “Why here?”

“To discuss the incident that happened between Gon, Killua, and Kalluto against Pariston.”

Feitan seized Netero’s arm and dragged the man into the house. It was the fastest change of opinion that Chrollo had ever witnessed in Feitan.

Kurapika had already lined the boys up by the time they caught up with him, Gon looking cowed and even Killua had bowed his head slightly as Kurapika demanded to know what they had done to cause Feitan and Phinks so much trouble and warrant a visit from Chairman Netero.

The Chairman stepped up. “They managed to dye the vice-Chairman pink and shaved him bald. His retaliation caused them to destroy a number of anti-omega shops, most of which were
uninsured.”

Kurapika froze, blinking, wondering how such a thing had happened and wondering about the sheer cost it would take to get the boys out of trouble.

“So I’ve come to award Gon and Killua their first stars!” Netero continued with a large grin. “I’ve never seen Pariston Hill look so silly!”

Kurapika recognized the name immediately and any anger he may have felt left his face.

“It was perfect revenge on the man who had Kurapika’s Hunter license revoked! That one always is trying his best to look well put together and we had a Zodiac meeting later that day! Cluck and Botobai actually went running to get cameras when they saw him!” Netero continued. “Naturally all charges have been dropped and the owners of the establishments have been found at fault for antagonizing two Hunters and causing the situation. Kalluto has been cleared as well.”

As Netero pulled out two new licenses, Kurapika felt both pride and envy as he watched the man check the numbers then hand them to Killua and Gon respectively.

“We’re really One Star Hunters?!” Gon exclaimed as he stared at his new license. “YES! This is the first step to make Killua the Chairman!”

“GON!” the silverette yelled as Netero chuckled.

“He’d likely make an excellent Chairman in a few years! The good news is that you’ll be unlikely to need to fight Pariston over it.”

Gon turned towards Netero with a bright expression. “You mean you believe he could be the next Chairman?”

“An omega was the Chairman when I was born!” Netero announced. “I saw her fight once and that is what caused me to want to become a Hunter as well!”

“There hasn’t been an omega Chairman for almost 200 years!” Kurapika declared instantly.

“168 years in fact! But I’ve been 100 for a fair portion of it!” Then the elderly man focused on Kalluto. “I know that you will turn 12 in another two years, so I would like to invite you to take the Hunter Exam when you do. This world needs more plucky omegas!”

Kalluto blinked at the man for a moment then nodded as Pakunoda finally entered the room. She blinked in surprise at the presence of Netero before nodding to Chrollo and Kurapika.

“I wasn’t expecting you for another couple of hours and was expecting to be able to send Feitan and Phinks out for a shopping trip with the boys.”

“WHAT?!” Gon demanded as Phinks groaned at the table where he was nursing a beer.

Killua glanced between them. “What is this about?”

“Your mother suggested we try to set up Ryuuseigai as a safe haven for freed omegas,” Kurapika stated, causing Killua to blanch.

“My mom?!”

Pakunoda sighed before signaling that they may as well continue.
“We need to change their mindset,” Chrollo emphasized. “Make them see what treasures omegas are. Once that happens then things will probably go very well.”

“So it’s leading up to that point that we need to worry about,” Kurapika observed. “We need to change opinions BEFORE bringing omegas there or else there will be alphas attempting to take advantage.”

Pakunoda reached into her fridge and pulled out a beer as well, passing one to Feitan and Chrollo. Netero opted for soda with the boys and then the woman froze when she got to Kurapika.

“I have water, soda, juice?” she offered uncertainty.

“Water please,” Kurapika replied as he sat at the table as well, Phinks scrambling to offer his seat only to realize that there were two other chairs available when Kurapika opted for one of those instead.

“I could have supplies sent,” Netero offered as the group settled in. “Help with the upkeep of the omegas.”

“That might make things worse. The people of Ryuuseigai might not view omegas as people if they are getting paid to take them in. It would undermine the credo of Ryuuseigai about rejecting no one.”

“But the place needs a lot of work and a major overhaul. Get things running well so that they are better prepared when the omegas are brought to them.” Kurapika sat back after offering that tidbit.

Phinks glanced around at the people in the room. “Why not send in a bunch of unbroken omegas to fix the place up?”

Most heads in the room turned towards the Enhancer and the man looked almost embarrassed. “I mean, that’s how we learned that things were wrong. We met Kurapika and he straightened us out eventually. Send in a team of omegas that won’t take crap to fix up Ryuuseigai and they’re going to see the light a lot sooner.”

Chrollo’s eyes widened at the plan, knowing it was a good one. If they just sent in a number of broken omegas without preparing the people, things would be unlikely to improve. But if they sent in a number of omegas that could help build a solid infrastructure, then value would be given to omegas.

“Phinks, you’re a genius!” the alpha declared.

Netero chuckled in turn. “I happen to know a number of omegas in hiding that might be willing to help.”

“Then we should set up a meeting with them,” Kurapika decided. “Make a plan and definitely involve the troupe since they know Ryuuseigai best.”

Pakunoda nodded. “So did you invite Netero to help with this plan?” she asked after a moment.

“Nope! I just made Gon and Killua One Star Hunters!”

The woman blinked for a long moment before steepling her fingers. “You made two 13-year old boys our superiors?”
Kyo squeezed the hand of the woman he had saved over a week ago from that horrible omega club. Her baby had been saved and she had been moved into one of the best rooms of the house with a large soft bed and a number of warm fuzzy blankets.

Her mate had been tracked down by the butlers and they had reported several days ago that the alpha had already bought another omega and that this was the third time he had used an omega and discarded them when he grew bored.

The news had sent Kikyo into a rage, screaming that if someone hadn’t even attempted to get to know someone or fall in love, only used them for sex, then of course they’d get bored! Mating and marriage was supposed to be FAR deeper than just sex!

Zeno and Kyo had visited the man quietly just yesterday and today they had delivered a new omega to the former Zoldyck mansion. The alpha would never be taking another omega as a sex doll again.

Most of the omegas in the house were in terrible shape and needed medical attention badly. They had been forced to have sex over and over, contracted STDs that were never treated, beaten on a near daily basis, and not fed more than a mere bowl of soup each day to keep them “thin and attractive”.

“It’ll be alright,” he promised quietly. “You’ll find a good mate soon, one that will treasure you.”

“How?” the omega squeaked after a long moment, speaking for the first time since Kyo had arrived. “I’m marked and was sold again! I’m pregnant and…”

“You don’t have to be, marked that is,” Kyo stated gently as his eyes flitted to the door where Alluka smiled brightly next to Gotoh and Canary. He’d had to bargain quite a bit to get her out for a day to come to the omega house. Kikyo and Silva had relented with conditions after hearing his wish.

The omega flinched slightly when she smelled that Alluka was an alpha before calming upon seeing she was a child. Then her shaking started again when she saw black eyes and a dark mouth.

“Do you want to try again? To find a new alpha?” Kyo whispered into the ear of the woman, keeping his tone even and she nodded after a long moment. “Nanika, would you please remove her mark?”

“Kay.” was the haunting reply as Alluka’s body took a step forward and gently brushed her fingers over the mark on the woman’s neck. A small ‘pop’ sounded in the room and then the skin on the woman’s neck was clear and unmarked. She was free.

Alluka awoke after a moment and smiled brightly at the woman who touched her neck in shock. “Kyo! Pat my head!”

Kyo laughed as he not only patted Alluka on the head but picked her up into a hug as well.

There were several more butlers in the halls, all taking examining the condition of the omegas that Kyo had asked Nanika to heal. It pleased him that his thought on her being able to heal was proven right.

Butlers saw them out to the car and into the vehicle, careful to ensure that Alluka was not seen by anyone outside of the mansion. Even the windows of the vehicle had been carefully darkened for this trip.
Maybe this successful trip would be enough to convince Kikyo and Silva to let Alluka out of her cage for good? Kyo wanted to think it would, but he’d also heard of what happened when Alluka’s abilities were misused.

She deserved better than to be locked up by her own family because of a dangerous ability that even they were wary of. An ability she couldn’t control at all.

“Alluka, can anyone help you?” he whispered to himself after a minute as the thoughts began to turn in his head.

“Alluka, give me a hug!” Alluka called out and Kyo absently did so.

What could he do for her? How could he help her? He didn’t know anyone outside of the family and he knew that the family had figured out how dangerous Alluka’s ability was because several butlers had made greed driven requests.

“Alluka, say you love me!”

“You know I do, Alluka. You never need to ask. How do I save you? Is there anyone that can make sure your abilities are not misused?”

Kyo didn’t even realize he’d said that out loud until the voice of Nanika stated, “’kay… Killua can.”

Kyo turned sharply to see Nanika was out yet again, smiling at him with that black smile. “Nanika will listen to Killua before all others and grant his wishes first.”
“Okay, I think I’m ready,” Kurapika straightened his clipboard and pens. Chrollo and him had decided that they needed to thoroughly vet each and every person they sent to Ryuuseigai.

Ryuuseigai was mostly a secret concerning its location, so they needed to be careful about who they brought there. Especially if they were going to bring in hundreds of abused omegas.

“Danchou! You’re really going to let this omega ruin Ryuuseigai too?!?” Nobunaga complained loudly only for Fanaka to give him a hard glare and he immediately backed off with a grumble.

“Don’t you have chores to do?” Kurapika griped at the alpha, smiling a bit when Nobunaga grabbed up a broom and left the room, pink ribbons flowing in his wake.

“Send in the first applicant?” Chrollo suggested from his relaxed position next to Kurapika at the kitchen table.

Kurapika had set up an incredibly organized set up for their interviews with stacks of post it notes, a lovely list of questions, and a group of pens and pencils organized by color and size.

Chrollo had set up nothing, this was his city and he didn’t need more than his own mind to determine if someone was right to help it.

“Yes,” Kurapika straightened a few papers and took a breather. “Yeah, I’m ready.”

“Send in the first Fanaka!” Chrollo nodded to her and she grinned as she headed out to grab the first of the omega hunters Chairman Netero had sent over. If hired they’d be told of the secrets of the town they were in, most of the omegas in the small hidden village were over at the waterfall so the outsiders wouldn’t know until Chrollo and Kurapika were sure they were trustworthy.

Fana came back surprisingly leading Biscuit.
“Biscuit?” Kurapika perked up, the candidates were already looking great! “You should have called, you don’t need to interview!”

Chrollo smiled at the blonde short omega. “That’s true, you’ve already proven you can handle yourself, and we know you can be trusted with the knowledge of Ryuuseigai.”

“Well, I didn’t want to rely on a new friendship, this is serious business,” Biscuit nodded sagely. “And I’d be proud to take part in this noble project! I never thought I’d say I admire the Phantom Troupe but, well life is wild, isn’t it?”

Kurapika grinned, he could agree with that sentiment. A year ago he was taking his Hunter exam and planning to hunt down his future mate and the father of his child, life was freaking crazy.

“That it is,” Kurapika nodded and glanced at Chrollo to see he gave his nod of approval. “Well Biscuit, we’d be happy to have you be apart of this project.”

“Yay!” She jumped excitedly.

“We’ll see you in Ryuuseigai in a month alright?” Kurapika confirmed as he passed over a booklet of information he had put together full of everything the team would need to know. Where the city was, what was expected of them, how to handle the citizens, and so on.

“Yes, I’m very excited!” Biscuit really was, this was a chance to really help the omegas of the world. Biscuit never thought she’d have a chance like this.

“Good!” Kurapika waved the girl out and signaled for Fanaka to bring in the next applicant.

The next three omegas were actually from Gyudondond, two had been born in the city, the last was one of the omegas he had saved from traffickers. Her history was actually pretty interesting, she had learned her trade of being an electrician by fighting for it only to be captured by traffickers. Once saved by Kurapika she had decided she liked the village, liked that she didn’t have to fight so hard to be respected, so she decided to stay.

Kurapika and Chrollo approved two of them. One of the omegas from the village had never left the village before and Kurapika was worried the culture shock would be too much. Anyone that hadn’t lived through the prejudice of the outside world before would have too hard of a time to do any
“Alright, that’s three! It’s going better than expected,” Kurapika nodded happily after giving Maria, the electrician, her information booklet.

“Yes, this is going well and we haven’t even gotten to most of the omega hunters,” Chrollo agreed, feeling good about this arrangement. “Next Fanaka,” Chrollo called.

Fana led in a tall man, he had perfectly combed black hair and just had an air of someone that doesn’t take any shit.

Kurapika wasn’t sure if he always went around exposing his omega scent or if he just did it for this interview but he smelled like a sweet river spring.

“Hello,” he gave a curt bow. “I am Knov, a Two Star Hunter and an omega. Netero gave me the details on what you planned for this project and I’d be honored to contribute.”

Kurapika nodded, his eyes glancing behind Knov and then clearing his throat. “Well I have several questions,” Kurapika stated.

“Of course,”

“First of all, who is that?” Kurapika pointed to a disheveled and insane looking girl hiding behind the door and oozing out a hostile aura. The aura seemed to scream “Knov is the best omega in the world and if you don’t think so I’ll murder you.”

“Oh yes, her.” He looked back at the girl, rather unconcerned. “That is Palm, she’s my pupil and an alpha that is determined to be my mate someday. She won’t harm anyone.”

“Ah,” Chrollo nodded, interested in the odd relationship and then let Kurapika proceed. He would lead this but it seemed counterproductive to lead when they were doing this to empower omegas.

“Alright then, I shall ignore her,” Kurapika looked over his questions. “Why do you believe you would be helpful in this project?”
Knov let his Nen flare and opened what looked to be a portal in the floor, pulling out several bottles of water. “As you can see my Nen would be useful in the transportation of necessities, and I’m also an omega that has been placed in charge of many young alphas. I know how to not back down in a way that makes someone rethink what they know of our gender.”

“Those are both good reasons.” Kurapika wrote down a little note about Knov and his Nen ability. “Why should we trust you?”

Knov thought for a moment. “For my entire life I’ve had to hide, and even when I got strong enough to keep myself safe, I’ve had to deal with a world that believed me to be born a slave. I could only affect change on a case by case basis, teach young alphas that I’m strong not despite being an omega, but because I’m a human. I want to make a difference, I want to help all the poor souls I know are going through hell right now!” Knov raised his chin and stood a little taller. “I would be proud to help create a place that wouldn’t just keep a few of us safe, but where we could all be safe and maybe just change the world for the better. Even just a little bit.”

Kurapika grinned at his impassioned speech, he didn’t even need to look at Chrollo to know this man was definitely the kind of omega they wanted on this project.

“Welcome to the team!” Chrollo grinned as well, allowing Kurapika to hand over one of the information booklets to the man.

“Looking forward to it!” Knov looked relieved, if not very excited.

The girl, Palm, ran in and hugged the omegan man around the waist. “You did it!” She cheered, her aura now that of sunshine and rainbows.

Knov bowed and began to back out. “I’ll try to leave her behind, she’ll normally stalk me but I will do my best.” He took the girl’s arm and dragged her out.

“Thank you,” Kurapika laughed but inwardly didn’t think it was such a bad thing if she tagged along. Seeing an alpha care that much about what an omega thinks can sometimes change minds.

“Fanaka, can you send in the next?”
The next omega to walk in surprised Kurapika with his appearance. He had a hostile face and a retro pompadour on his head that made him look like a high school punk.

“Hey,” he pursed his lips in a rather disrespectful manner before bowing with a perfectly straight back into the shape of a large ‘L’. “My name is Knuckle Bine, I am a One Star Beast Hunter, I wish very much to help other omegas!”

Kurapika was a little stunned by the incredibly loud voice the man used to talk. Kurapika noted down his name and underlined passionate several times.

“Hello, Knuckle,” Kurapika nodded and waited for the young man to right himself. Kurapika looked him up and down, taking in his hard edged eyes and all white outfit. He looked like someone that would react much the same that Kurapika had with the citizens of Ryuuseigai and Kurapika already knew that wouldn’t work. “Can you tell me a little bit about how you deal with prejudice in your daily life?” Kurapika asked.

Knuckle paused, his lips twisting into something mean looking before he took a breath and seemed to calm down.

“I don’t hide my gender, not since I learned to knock someone out and keep my head on a swivel. I wear it like a badge of honor, in my life I had to fight to gain the respect of my friends and other Hunters,” he began. “When I meet someone new I expect the prejudice but I do not allow it, if someone wants to treat me like less than they can expect a fight from me.”

“And how exactly do you fight for your respect?” Chrollo asked, specifically concerned that this odd punk might beat more than a few of his citizens to a pulp.

“I always try for a calm and rational conversation but if that doesn’t work my Hatsu is confusing and complex and will normally force someone to admit that I am worthy of respect.” Kurapika nodded with a hint of surprise that his first instinct was a rational conversation but who was he to judge? He was mated to the world's greatest criminal and had a ridiculously strict moral compass.

“And you are a-?”

“Emitter,” he stated calmly and confidently like that wasn’t the biggest surprise of the century. Chrollo eyes even widened slightly. “I realize I don’t come off as one but that is the Nen I have.”
“And what is your Hatsu?” Kurapika asked because now he was curious on how complex he had actually made his power.

“It’s a lending and nen debt interest system. Once I land a hit I begin lending my aura to my opponent. Interest is added and until they return all of it by hitting me they can’t cause me any damage and vice versa. The stronger the hit the more aura that is exchanged,” Knuckle then began to talk about the interest rate, Kurapika felt like he was in a math lesson and he really didn’t expect such a math centered Hatsu from this young punk. “If the amount of aura lent exceeds my opponent’s total aura they go bankrupt and they are forced into Zetsu for 30 days. I’ve found that no alpha can deny me respect when I’ve taken their Nen for an entire month.”

“That is actually very impressive, it must have taken a lot of work to create something like that,” Chrollo praised, already thinking on how his understanding of banking and interest rates could help set up a real economic system in Ryuusaigai.

“Thank you,” Knuckle stood a little straighter.

“Well you seem like you’d be a great addition to the team, I just have one concern,” Kurapika pushed his notes away.

“You must mean my mate,” Knuckle replied.

“Yes, sadly being mated can cause some friction, I’ve experienced it myself. Can you tell us about your mate?” Mates normally didn’t separate for long periods of time so if some unknown alpha was going to be coming along, Kurapika wanted to make sure he represented what they were trying to achieve.

“Shoot is strong but he’s afraid of everything, he’s often afraid of taking opportunities when in a fight. We’re a good match because he gets caught up in his head and I am very impulsive. He actually coached me for several hours on what to say for this interview.”

“So a punk omega and a scaredy-cat alpha?” Chrollo chuckled good naturedly.

“Well we are excited for you and Shoot to join us then,” Kurapika cut in when it looked like Knuckle was going to argue with Chrollo’s wording.
“Really?” Knuckle actually smiled and it transformed his face boyishly. “Thank you!”

“No, thank you,” Kurapika handed the boy his booklet, the last of the omegan city rehabilitation team was officially picked.

“See ya in a month!” He left the kitchen grinning.

“I guess that means we should head out,” Chrollo stood and extended a hand to Kurapika to help him up.

“Thank goodness we won’t have to worry about heats for awhile,” Kurapika sighed as he got up from his chair.

“Yeah, that would really be a nuisance. Good thing neither of us will become sex crazed, helpless, idiots this month.”

“I can’t believe he turned into a sex crazed, helpless idiot,” Kurapika sighed in the kitchen of the Ryuuseigai Spider base. Chrollo was locked in the heat room with a picture of Kurapika and a couple days worth of water and food. Kurapika offered to bring food up to him but Chrollo denied it because he was afraid he’d knock down the door to attack Kurapika.

When Chrollo's rut began they had both been confused, they had assumed his rut would cool down. When they had called Bonolenov he had laughed for a solid three minutes before assuring them his rut would come as scheduled until Kurapika was closer to giving birth.

The team of omegas they put together should be arriving at any time. Kurapika was anxious to officially begin changing the city for the better. It would be a lot of intense work and with Hisoka chasing them, the two couldn’t stay for all of it.

“I’m gonna have to talk to the council myself, aren’t I?” Kurapika mumbled miserably. He knew the point was to get them to respect omegas but he really didn’t want to deal with them, especially because he was randomly craving blueberries and pickles and there wasn’t any! “Baby, you have some odd tastes.” Kurapika lightly rubbed a hand over his still flat belly.
A loud crash came from upstairs followed by a moan and a grunt, so Kurapika decided it was time to get started. The council understood that Chrollo and him were bringing in a team to help revitalize the city, but Kurapika wanted to remind them that the team was mostly omegas and they were here to help the citizens as much as the city and they were not to be disrespected.

Kurapika didn’t think it would go well.

Kurapika didn’t care to leave the incredibly comfortable maternity clothes Chrollo had given him, so he began his trek in a pair of grey sweatpants and a soft t-shirt with little handprints and footprints on the belly.

The walk was short and Chrollo’s threat from the last time they were there seemed to still be in effect because not one citizen tried to tell him to go back inside. Although he was also pregnant and he doubted anyone wanted to mess with a powerful alpha's pregnant mate. No matter how insulting that was, Kurapika was a little happy for it since it meant he got to the council building with no interruptions.

Kurapika didn’t bother knocking and opened the door to enter the large room, five heads turned to him and once again Kurapika couldn’t believe that only one of them was over 40, the youngest was younger than Chrollo. How the hell are these people qualified to be in charge?

“Oh, Chrollo’s mate, we thought you’d be with him since he’s in rut,” the eldest of the council spoke first, he was only 53. Kurapika believed his name was Suburo.

“Well no, because I am pregnant and it would be very uncomfortable to be trapped with a hormonal alpha for two to three days. Now I came around because I wanted to make sure you all understand that mine and Chrollo’s team will be coming today, and Chrollo has given them complete authority over the city.”

One or two of the alphas scoffed at him before one of them decided to ignore everything Kurapika said in order to insult him.

“An omega should be with its mate during rut, pregnant or not,” he hissed at Kurapika, looking at him like he had failed life.

Kurapika just gave him a flat look. He was tired, his feet hurt, Chrollo wasn’t here to make his day
feel better, and he still didn’t have any blueberries and pickles. He was not in the mood.

“Maybe Chrollo just has issues with pregnant sex, it’s not for everyone,” the youngest of the council grinned as he slid up closer to Kurapika.

Kurapika leveled a harsh glare at the alpha but he didn’t back away. The alpha just kept getting closer and Kurapika would be damned if he backed away. He was Kurapika Kuruta and pregnant or not, he never backed down from a challenge.

“Maybe it’s out here because of a little sexual frustration,” the sleavy alpha wrapped an arm around Kurapika’s waist. He allowed it for a moment, waiting to see just how far this creep would do so Kurapika could determine just what type of lesson to deal out. “Huh cutie? Are you frustrated?” The hand started creeping lower, fingers ghosting over his butt. “I can help you with tha-“

Kurapika grabbed the offending hand and twisted it around until any more pressure would break it. He bent back the man’s wrist and locked it so he couldn’t move.

“That’s enough,” Kurapika commanded with a strong voice, taking charge of the room and knowing he had everyone’s attention now that the alpha was whimpering in pain. “I am first and foremost a strong and powerful person, the fact that I am an omega does not give you or anyone else the right to treat me like something to be used. Now I gave you a very simple instruction, to treat me and my team with respect, but instead this idiot decided to come on to me while my mate is indisposed. This is your first warning, all of you. Behave like this again an-“

“What?!” The man whose hand he was almost breaking snapped. “What? You’ll tell Chrollo on us, huh? Little whore will run to it’s alpha!”

Kurapika glared down at the man as he let scarlet over take his vision. “You do this again to me or any omega and Chrollo will be the least of your worries.” Kurapika kept his glare even as he felt some small amusement when the four alphas backed away slightly. “I can handle all five of you at a month pregnant, and I could beat you at nine. Do not test me.”

Kurapika shoved the alpha away from him and watched him whimper on the sandy floor holding his probably sprained arm.

The sound of crowds gathering noisily pulled Kurapika’s attention and he knew his team had
“Does everyone remember what I said?” Kurapika asked with a stern look and at least two of the alphas nodded desperately. So there seemed to be an improvement already. “Then let’s go greet the team.” Kurapika gave them a smile, mostly just to bare his teeth in warning.

Kurapika didn’t wait to see if they’d follow, just turned and headed for the city entrance. He had to flash his scarlet eyes at a few people just to get them to back off, it surprised people enough to get them to back off two out of three times he did it.

Kurapika smiled when he spotted Biscuit leading the group of seven into the city, behind her Maria and the other Gyudondond resident stood, looking over the city that they never would have been able to see in any other circumstances. Knuckle stood off to the side with his arms crossed and seemingly making some kind of power pose, all with a pony tailed alpha slightly hidden behind him. Knov was observing the city and the murmuring city as Palm for some reason went to find a corner to hide behind and glare at everyone that came close to Knov.

“Welcome!” Kurapika called to the group, they turned to him and a few waved, Knuckle and Knov just gave a nod of respect. Kurapika had put Biscuit in charge so she was the one to step forward to greet him for the group.

“Kurapika! We are all so excited, and I heard Gon and Killua were going to be coming as well!” Biscuit beamed with her normally adorable cheeriness.

“Yes! They are making a stop because apparently they met someone to add to the group.” Kurapika told them as everyone shifted a little restlessly from how a massive group of people were just staring at them. “So I want to introduce you all to the council who help run the town and then I’ll show you all to the base.” Kurapika moved to turn but stopped. “Also, just a warning but the upstairs is off limits right now because Chrollo went into rut.”

“Noted.” Knov nodded decisively.

Kurapika gestured for the council to step forward.

“This is the team that will be helping the city, Biscuit is in charge, so if you have any questions or concerns go to her. If you try to go to Palm,” he pointed to the creepy girl, peeking from behind a large chuck of old brick that seemed to have fallen off a building. “Or Shoot,” he pointed to the
wary alpha behind Knuckle. “I have given Knuckle permission to humiliate any of you in a fight.”

The group of five alphas grumbled and the citizens looked confused but they didn’t seem like they were willing to be the target of Kurapika’s wrath. Suburo actually looked interested in what was happening although the idiot that Kurapika sprained the arm of looked like he was about to do something stupid.

He walked past Kurapika straight towards Biscuit and Kurapika didn’t care to stop him. If he wanted to get his ass kicked then that wasn’t Kurapika problem, he got fair warning.

“Well at least one of you looks like a real omega. This one is actually really cute,” the idiot slid up close to Biscuit and reached for her skirt. “How about you and I find a private little cor-GAH!” Biscuit threw an uppercut into the man’s jaw and the entire crowd backed away in fear as the man flew over a wall.

Everyone’s eyes turned back to Biscuit as she cracked her knuckles and smirked. “Let’s get to work!”

“I’m in love,” Suburo whispered in a small and trembling voice as Kurapika indicated for the group to follow him back to the base.

“Good luck.” Kurapika whispered back to him with a chuckle. “Took Chrollo about two months to even get me to consider him.”

This was already turning out to be a very interesting mission.
Chrollo groaned as he forced his eyes open, his brain long trained to wake up fast in case there was danger nearby. The sight of the heat room was both welcome and horribly disappointing: true he’d stocked the room with a large number of squishy pillows that were fun to hug (among other things), but he had been so certain that Kurapika’s pregnancy would keep him from going nuts!

He knew that his little spitfire was fine, but some instinctual part of him was irritated to know that he would continue to have ruts while the other was pregnant and Hisoka was on the loose!

Limbs stiff, Chrollo worked his way into a sitting position then tried to stand only to find out how difficult it was to stand on the very squishy padded floor when he fell and decided it was fine to just crawl to the door.

Kurapika wasn’t in the room but his scent was recent, the bed newly made. Light pouring through the window indicated it was still early morning and the thief finally tried standing again, catching his balance easily even if his legs felt a bit unstable.

Grabbing a pair of casual jeans and a dark blue shirt, the alpha wandered into the bathroom and took a badly needed shower before heading downstairs.

Kurapika was glowing.

Chrollo stared at his lovely mate as he set a plate of waffles on the large table then moved automatically as Kurapika glanced up at him, a smile on his face. Chrollo’s arms wrapped around him gently as he pressed their lips together lovingly.

“I missed you,” he murmured gently. “You were right to want to wait a few years for children, especially if it meant being without you for several days.”

Kurapika was blushing and then his eyes shifted to the table, drawing Chrollo’s eyes as well.

They had an audience, he knew most of the faces, either through knowing them most of his life, knowing them for several months, or meeting them in the recent interviews. There was one stranger with long hair that he didn’t recognize. All were staring at them, some with adoring/teary/lovey dovey eyes (Biscuit), some with begrudging acceptance (Killua), and most with amusement.

“So what’s been happening?” Chrollo asked after a moment when a feeling that could almost be called embarrassment wore off.

“Well, there were seven beatdowns,” the omega named Knuckle began to list. “Some of the council have been welcoming, some needed their heads knocked. And several alphas didn’t realize or want to accept that ‘no’ is a perfectly good answer to their advances.”

“We got a map of the territory of Ryuuseigai yesterday morning and have been trying to organize a plan for the infrastructure of the city as well as get an idea for what the resources are. As it turns out, there are six oaseses and wells to draw water, meaning a good aquifer is beneath the city. If the land in those areas are irrigated and tended to, then Ryuuseigai could have some farmland and the region is good for year round harvests.” Knov pointed to a map that Chrollo now noticed was on the table. “The refuse can be sorted to help find fertilizer ingredients.”
“Then there’s the nearby mountains and hills of the Badlands. Those look great for gems!” Biscuit seemed as bubbly as ever and very happy to discuss jewels.

“Power will be an issue, the infrastructure for that is more than a little shoddy and there aren’t many here with skills in laying lines!”

“What if you—”

Chrollo soon found himself forgotten as the omegas began forming their plans again.

“We’ll be presenting these proposals to the council,” Kurapika informed him as he took a waffle and poured a generous amount of syrup and blueberries over the thing, causing Chrollo’s mouth to water. “These plans will require a lot of effort and clean up for the people here, especially around the oasis areas. We visited those yesterday after finding them on the map and found that most of them are overrun with garbage.”

“We can offer food in return for work,” Chrollo replied, knowing exactly how to get the people of Ryuuseigai to help. “Could the garbage be used as a source of income?”

The new long-haired omega glanced at him, turning away from the conversation for a long moment to shrug. “Some of it could, especially metals. People also will sometimes toss out items they believe are worthless but have significant value if you fix them up a bit or know who to present them to.”

Chrollo nodded to the man. “Thank you…?”

“Kite.”

“You’re the one that Gon, Killua, and Kalluto met and brought here?”

“Yes!” Phinks declared from the other side of the man. “This was our savior after parting ways with Paku! He actually got them to obey him!” Feitan sat on Phinks’s other side and nodded emphatically in agreement.

“Kite is really strong and knowledgeable and says he knows my dad!” Gon called out and every Troupe member bristled before semi-accusing eyes looked to Kite.

The omega shrugged though there was a slight uplift of his lips on one side of his face. “I may know him, but I made it clear that I have no idea of where he is.” Brown eyes focused on Kurapika in particular. “Nor am I going to help him find the guy.”

Chrollo felt Kurapika relax a bit as they group returned to planning and Chrollo leaned close to Kurapika.

“These guys seem to have things under control, so we should probably leave in a few hours.”

Kurapika glanced at him then nodded slightly before his eyes wandered towards Gon and Killua, watching them talk and eat enthusiastically. They would be safe here for now.

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Kurapika balanced easily on the roof, watching the private courtyard far below. A number of omegas, betas, and even a few alphas in the loose gowns that designated them as consorts of the Kakin Royal Family milled around. Several of them looked to be exercising, others were laughing as they ate a light meal from a buffet table that had been set up for them.
In a few minutes a bell would sound to indicate that their time in the courtyard was over and the lot of them should head inside. Based on the patterns that Kurapika had observed over the last week, there was roughly a ten minute gap between when the last of the consorts entered the private halls and the servants came out to clean the area and collect the remains of the meal.

“Do you feel ready for this?” Chrollo asked quietly as Kurapika adjusted the shoulder of his dress, mentally cursing whoever had come up with this code of dress.

“Definitely. Besides, wait any longer and this would be a lot more obvious!” Kurapika cupped his stomach then. He was three months pregnant now and his baby bump was finally forming.

Chrollo’s own hand joined Kurapika’s, lightly caressing the place where their baby grew. He liked to believe that the faint movements he sometimes felt through his sensitive fingers were fetal movements.

“I’ll be just a call away if you need any help,” Chrollo promised as they glanced at the garden again and saw the consorts were still milling around. “The mannequins we set up with the Order Stamp won’t need any directing after the initial command.”

“I know,” Kurapika replied. “But I want to get these pairs personally.”

Chrollo smiled. “Don’t think I’m trying to stop you, you’ve trained me well enough to know better than that! But if you see something in there like a Gyudondong corpse, then call me. You’ll have your hands full enough with the eyes.”

Kurapika nodded, knowing that there was a very real possibility that based on Tserriednich’s preferences that there was a distinct possibility that the corpse of one of the several dozen missing from the tribe may be down there. Those people had gone missing before the tribe was relocated by the Troupe and had never been heard from since. The troupe had promised to return their corpses if they found them dead or to guide them to the village if by some miracle they were alive. Needless to say, Kurapika had agreed to uphold that promise without reservations when he heard it.

A pleasant sounding chime sounded from the courtyard and Kurapika took a deep breath as he turned his attention once more to the courtyard below them.

The various consorts were disappearing into the doors surrounding the courtyard and Kurapika watched the door he would need to take as the three consorts of First Prince Benjamin disappeared through it. All three were “proper” omegas, mostly quiet, but all physically powerful. The First Prince seemed to value tradition as well as physical fitness and his omega consorts reflected that, all being well trained in hand to hand combat and weaponry. They also seemed to have nen.

As the last of the consorts disappeared, Kurapika rose and moved to jump to the courtyard but was stopped by Chrollo’s hand grabbing his, his mate’s eyes sending him one final message to be careful.

Nodding, the blonde jumped and landed lightly next to the door to the private corridor for the consorts going to the wing of the First Queen. Opening the door, Kurapika slipped into the palace quietly.

The hall was plain but nice, the floor of unmarked white marble tiles and the walls white with crown molding where the wall and ceiling meet. A few mirrors, a vase with a single flower, and lights were the only decorations.

Kurapika’s feet carried him into the hall as his mind raced through the various blueprints and
designs he and Chrollo had managed to gather in the last few months. Former servants and consorts occasionally spoke some of the palace lay out, so they had managed to piece together a what to expect and had scouted the palace several times, Chrollo using his teleportation ability to confirm the location of the Fourth Prince’s harem rooms.

Up a flight of stairs and the floors were now hardwood and carpeted, muffling what little noise his feet made as Kurapika moved towards the far door, one that looked to have not been opened for quite a while. He was proven correct when the hinges faintly squeaked.

The harem room was simple and consisted of several lounges, a bare white room with a white bed just visible through one of the doors and an odd odor hung in the air, something very unpleasant.

Crinkling his nose slightly, Kurapika located the main door that would lead to the Prince’s private hall and stationed himself by the door, listening.

The signal was loud, brash, and utterly unmistakable as Chrollo’s deep voice shouted out, amplified by a simple speaker: “Dance on the palace!”

Kurapika waited for a long moment, almost a minute before he moved as surprised shouts echoed and voices called for others to come to windows. Chrollo had initially wanted the order to be “Break the palace” but that changed when they had witnessed what the mannequins did to an abandoned building. “Dance” was suggested by Kurapika and the destruction had still been impressive as the mannequins began ballroom dancing with each other, knocking down walls and smashing things, but it also got attention just as capably.

Pushing the door open slightly, Kurapika spared only a glance at the betas and low-ranking alpha servants that were staring out of the window before moving quickly up the hall, his nose catching a VERY unpleasant scent of a high-ranking alpha coming from one room in particular.

He failed to notice a single alpha maid who turned at the scent of a pregnant omega and recognized the beautiful omega from a picture that the Prince had that was slipping into the Prince’s chamber. The woman sighed in sorrow, knowing the Prince’s habits. Tserriednich had an unnatural fixation on blood and gore, not even omegas that were pregnant with his own offspring were immune. She knew for a fact that the four times Tserriednich had impregnated an omega, he had killed them soon after and preserved the infants, his own children, in displays for his ghastly collection.

The maid fought the urge to try to go after the omega, to save him from what was likely about to happen, especially if the Prince had summoned him out of the harem but knew it would be futile. She couldn’t help him escape and if she tried, her own family would be in danger. Instead she turned her attention back to the courtyard where confused and increasingly frustrated guards were attempting to stop a bunch of dolls that had partnered up and were dancing a waltz. The dolls refused to stop for anything: people, bushes, benches, or walls!

Kurapika glanced around the room he found himself in and began to check the cupboards and the other doors, hoping to find the eyes. Information on the Prince and his supposed collection was thin and there was no possible information on where the macabre items were.

A minute passed as Kurapika searched and then his attention began to zero in on a door that was slightly concealed by a tapestry. Moving towards the door, he twisted the knob sharply and found it to be locked.

Chrollo had insisted that Kurapika learn several tricks in the last several months, one of them was lockpicking in case he was caught and his nen was bound for some reason. Luckily he had brought a lockpick set with him since a few locked doors were to be expected.
Withdrawing the pick from his pocket, Kurapika inserted the devices into the lock and found that locating the tumbler of the lock was surprisingly easy. Why would this guy use such an elementary level lock to guard his collection?

As the door swung open, Kurapika automatically knew where this prince spent most of his time, the room reeked of an alpha! The smell was unpleasant, reminding him of the smell of old blood and rotting flesh and… ink?

Disturbing decorations came into view very suddenly and Kurapika knew in that moment where a number of the missing Gyudondong had met their fate. Their corpses were posed, large slices in their flesh pulled back to reveal the layers of skin, muscle, bone, and other tissues. Some looked to have been completely skinned, their hides tacked to the walls while their organs floated in embalming fluid.

Nails digging into his skin, Kurapika took a breath then stepped further into the room, determined to find the final pairs of the eyes of his people.

The macabre display continued through the room, a litany of pain and depravity that featured people, many whose faces were frozen in permanent expressions of fear or worse, resignation. The Gyudondong were some of the few exceptions, their faces twisted in fury, warriors to the end who refused to give up, even with their dying breaths.

“We’ll return you to your people as well,” Kurapika quietly promised one as he passed them, this one a young woman, barely more than a girl, whose entire abdomen had been torn open.

A throne came into sight after a minute, one carved so it appeared to be constructed from bones and skulls. Preserved organs lined the wall on either side of it with the bodies of two men, one on either side, also on display. Four of the preserving jars also held babies, Kurapika had to study them for a moment to recognize them for what they were. It was here that he found the five last pairs of scarlet eyes and…

“Paio!” Kurapika gasped, horrified as he recognized the head that floated in the jar behind the throne. But how?! Chrollo had been candid with him, assured him that they had not taken anything but the eyes of his people! He needed to know what happened.

“The Gyudondong are here,” he stated, the small radio he held sending the message straight to Chrollo.

“I’ll be there in a minute,” was the response.

“And Paio.”

“WHAT?!?” The surprise in Chrollo’s voice combined with his tone assured Kurapika that his mate hadn’t even known this was a possibility.

“So you knew that boy?” a voice asked, smooth and deep like Chrollo’s could be, but lacking the gentle timber that had developed in the thief’s voice whenever he spoke around Kurapika.

Turning, the very unattractive visage of Prince Tserriednich came into view as the man gracefully moved through the morbid museum. Perhaps he would have been handsome if his twisted nature didn’t show so plainly on his face.

The man stepped up to Kurapika, a smirk on his face as his eyes roved over Kurapika’s neck and finally rested on his concealed mark. “Tell me, what made you decide on that bandit? Did you seduce him, making him mark you in the middle of that auction?”
“How did you get Pairo’s head?” Kurapika sharply demanded, knowing his eyes had shifted automatically to scarlet.

“Such a beautiful color, not like that boy’s at all.”

“He was alive when you got him?”

“Yes, I wanted to see scarlet eyes and sent men to try to collect two or three Kuruta for my collection. Then word of the massacre came and I thought I had lost my chance only for my men to return with a single, small boy. Maimed, but a Kuruta. The troupe didn’t care to chase down every Kuruta it seemed, and he told us he hid in a place where he and his friend used to go, hoping the other would come back and find him.”

Kurapika felt himself go pale as the prince began to circle him. If he had gone back after hearing of the massacre would he have found Pairo before all of this happened? Would he have been alive today?!

“The boy was weak though, a maimed alpha. Not much to play with.”

Pairo had been maimed while saving Kurapika from a fall. The village had viewed Pairo as the epitome of how an alpha should act and everyone was certain that they would one day mate, especially with how Kurapika had been so determined to get Pairo medical help.

“He refused to cry or scream, even as the bones in his legs and arms were smashed and crushed, one centimeter at a time.”

Rage began to bloom in Kurapika’s heart as the man cheerfully confessed a torture that made what the troupe had done pale in comparison.

“When he died although his eyes were scarlet, I found that I much preferred his head intact since the scarlet was so dim. Thankfully you don’t seem to share that trait, but I wonder about your offspring? I imagine they probably have plain eyes like my own, but they would still probably make a wonderful addition to my collection and would be set right by my own. Maybe people will think it is one of mine as well?”

Tserriednich’s fingers almost lovingly caressed several of the jars of preserved fetuses and Kurapika’s rage and heart went cold at the admission. This… monster… had done this to his own children? And now wanted Kurapika’s baby…?

Red filled Kurapika’s vision, heat exploding into his veins as his hands found the short swords gifted to him by Pakunoda for his mating. Wrathful hormones filled the air and the growl he unleashed actually caused the prince to pause and a brief flash of fear entered his eyes before Kurapika’s own mind went blank.

Chrollo landed in the room of the private collection of Prince Tserriednich in time to hear his mate give a roar and he rushed toward the noise even as instinct assured him that he should run the other way. Kurapika was practically surrounded in a red aura of wrath as he attacked the man in front of him, swords opening large gashes in his side as the man attempted to stumble back. Kurapika was faster though, and quite enraged. His follow up swing took off both of the man’s hands and the one that followed saw his feet removed.

Realizing that Kurapika was about to slowly mince this man into pieces, Chrollo finally rushed forward, determined to try to do something to calm him down, ensure his mate was fine with this when not in a blind rage.
Tserriednich lost another piece of his arms, roughly three or four centimeters each before Chrollo managed to grab Kurapika’s arms, pulling him tightly against his chest and humming softly to try to calm him. Kurapika twisted and screamed but didn’t attempt to strike him for a minute as the prince blinked up at them.

Kurapika’s eyes were still scarlet and he was still trying to fight Chrollo a bit when the alpha turned him around so they could face each other.

“What happened?” Chrollo asked as he tried to soothe Kurapika’s obvious fear and anger. “What did he do?”

“Pairo… and our baby,” Kurapika managed to reply after a moment. “He survived but got caught and tortured and this monster wants to display our baby…” Tears were forming in Kurapika’s eyes as Chrollo’s own glanced at the throne, finding the offensive jars that even caused his stomach to drop and go cold. “Pairo is in this room, torn to pieces! We… we have to bring him home…”

“We will,” Chrollo stated firmly, his voice deep. “We will not leave anything. But what do you want to do about that? Do you honestly wish to kill him?” His head nodded towards Tserriednich who was attempting to crawl away from the pair on his bleeding stumps.

“He threatened our baby.” Kurapika’s voice was firm and harsh, his mind already made up.

“Do you want me to…?” Chrollo let the question hang between them. This would actually be Kurapika’s first kill if he went through with it and he would rather his mate not feel any guilt for this later.

“No, I’ll do it.”

Chrollo nodded, knowing not to argue at this point. “He will likely bleed out before much longer, so try to make this fast.”

“Oh come now! Where is the beauty in a fast death?” the prince demanded as he realized the truth in Chrollo’s words. “Make me suffer! Make me worthy of art that would stand beside the pieces of my collection!” The last words were hissed in a twisted delight but had the effect of causing Kurapika to go cold.

Eyes now their usual grey, the Kuruta approached the man without the venom and fire he had once held. The disappointment in the prince’s face was apparent as Kurapika raised his hand and made a single swing, cleanly cutting through the despicable man’s neck.

Chrollo nodded as he wrapped an arm around Kurapika’s waist as he cancelled the Order Stamp, causing all the mannequins surrounding and in the palace to drop. The Fun Fun cloth appeared instead and within seconds the gallery was empty of everything, including the corpse of Tserriednich. The Gyudondong could have the body since they believed in punishments even after death.

“I’m sure Machi won’t mind helping to put these people back together for burial,” Chrollo promised gently as Kurapika turned and buried his head in his neck.

“You didn’t kill everyone,” he said after a long moment. “You didn’t kill the one person I was angriest at you for.”

Kyo glanced down at the forest surrounding the Zoldyck estate and felt pleased with himself. The
breeze felt cool and wonderful on his skin and he felt good today, powerful.

This was the first time he had ever climbed the entirety of Mount Kukuroo but he was pleased. He might not be the fastest or strongest, but he was far better than he ever thought he would be.

Construction in Ryuuseigai was going well, Kikyo even sending several butlers to assist and make reports on when the place would finally be ready. Those reports included status updates on Kalluto and Killua.

Staring at his phone, a plan already forming, Kyo knew he would need to act fast if he wished to save Alluka. If Killua could keep her safe, stop her from granting wishes, then she needed to be with him. Surprisingly, Zeno had recognized what he was plotting and had given him this number.

Typing in the number on the keypad, Kyo felt momentary guilt as well as excitement rise in him. Feelings he had come to accept and even enjoy a bit when it came to the excitement. He enjoyed being sneaky and this plan would be quite sneaky for him.

“Hello?” a confused voice asked when the phone was answered.

“Killua, this is Kyo,” he began as he checked once more to ensure that no one should be able to hear him. “I’m calling about Alluka.”

Kurapika felt a sad smile tug at his lips as he walked towards the construction site around the nearest oasis in Ryuuseigai. The clearing of the garbage had gone well and then Kite had suggested establishing a recycling plant to breakdown much of the plastic and metal garbage into other items that could be used.

He was officially four months pregnant and Chrollo was going through rut. They had headed here with the intent of trying to get Machi to help put the bodies of Gyudondong and Pairo back together, but she was seven months pregnant now and going slow. They would need to leave soon and she promised to have the bodies delivered to the Gyudondong village.

A light breeze blew a few strands of his hair into Kurapika’s face, but he found himself lighter than he’d felt for many years. At peace. The Kuruta eyes would soon be delivered back to the ruins of the village in Lukso and he would be able to bury Pairo.

Kurapika paused to help some children that were trying to pull a large canvas of garbage that had gotten caught towards a designated dump spot, pointing out pieces that they could take to the fledgling recycling center for extra income. The trio of children, two alphas and a beta, all grinned and thanked him before pushing forward again. Alphas and betas alike down the street watched the scene, many now smiling.

“We’ll have more of them here soon,” Kurapika heard one of the alphas murmur to his neighbor. “Less than ten have already gotten this place into better shape, what would a couple dozen do?”

“More than a couple dozen, have you seen how happy Chrollo is? And how the elder is mooning over that really cute omega in the pink?”

“The children are definitely doing better,” yet another said. “Not trying to steal as often and are working hard. Like when my sister was around…”

“Where did all of our omegas go?!” someone suddenly declared as Kurapika finally saw Knov as the man exited one of his portals, a line of children and some adults following him as they grabbed
boxes stuffed with valuables that had been found mixed in with the garbage.

One of Knov’s associates, a man named Morel, had been assisting them with selling these items and buying supplies for the city.

“Kurapika,” Knov greeted as the pregnant omega approached. “Several reports have been sent that Hisoka was seen near Fullaton. They believe he is headed this way.”

“Thanks,” Kurapika replied, instantly uncomfortable. Dodging Hisoka was proving trickier than he had anticipated.

“I would suggest using one of my doors when you and Chrollo leave. I have a large number of places that you could easily travel to.”

“That would be very appreciated.” Kurapika’s hand automatically went to his now more noticeable baby bump and Knov nodded. “Where is Palm?”

“Probably back at the base, she’s very talented at cooking,” Knov replied, causing Kurapika’s eyebrows to rise. “It’s not that strange for an alpha to cook.”

“No, it’s not. Chrollo is very good at cooking as well. One of the things he insisted we do after we mated was to sign up for a cooking class so we could learn to make something together. But I didn’t see her at the base earlier.”

“Then she may be getting ingredients. She believes fully in sustenance being important for the body and the mind.”

“What about-”

“KURAPIKA!” Knuckle’s yell cut the blonde off as he charged towards them, cell phone in hand. “Palm just called from the base, Chrollo just broke out of the heat room!”

“What?” Kurapika asked, not quite sure what that could mean for a long moment until he realized something important: his sex crazed and likely sexually frustrated and starved mate had broken out and was likely coming after him!

“How long ago was this?!” Kurapika demanded as his eyes glanced to Knov’s tunnel/door.

“Five minutes ago!”

“Five?!?”

“Well we didn’t know right away where you were and had to find you,” Shoot explained quietly, eyes not really looking at Kurapika and he stepped behind Knuckle after a brief moment.

Kurapika stared at the pair for a moment then turned sharply, fully intent to jump into Knov’s tunnel/door when a strong pair of arms wrapped around him. There was no other warning, no cries, growls, or even a scent of a highly aroused alpha. One moment Kurapika was preparing to run from his sexually charged mate and the next he was being cuddled by said mate.

Chrollo moaned and rubbed his face against Kurapika’s neck, hands wandering down until they rested lightly on his belly then began to rub the area.

Kurapika turned slowly and Chrollo continued to cuddle him gently, lovingly. He seemed content and happy in that moment, uncaring of the stares he was receiving as the people of his home
watched the pair with mounting envy, watching how happy and content their great hero seemed to
be with an omega that he seemed to authentically be in love with, especially if the stories of how
he had done some embarrassing things such as wearing a dress to win the other over were true. He
was unaware of a shift in thought at that moment that came to many of the alphas that watched
them and then glanced at the mated pair that had come with the omega team.

They saw the happiness that both pairs had, the love between them. And they wanted that as well.
Killua's mind weighed heavy as his little group slowly travel back towards the Gyudondong village. He hadn’t mentioned the strange phone call he had gotten to anyone but Gon so far.

Gon, in classic fashion, had been ecstatic at the possibility of adding another Zoldyck to their growing group. But Killua was more worried about how Kalluto and the troupe would react to the addition of his little sister.

Kalluto would probably spout the same nonsense his mother did when Alluka came up in conversation: She is a monster, possessed and cursed, needing to be locked away. Killua was anxious that the troupe might feel the same. He didn’t know when their opinions began to matter but they did, it also didn’t help that they had become pseudo-caretakers. If they rejected Alluka like his biological family did then Killua would have to leave them and he didn’t want that, and he didn’t think they would let him anyway.

“Unusually quiet,” Feitan suddenly spoke and Killua looked to him to see the beta was eyeing him in suspicion.

“You’re right,” Phinks glared down at him. “He’s planning something.”

“What? Me? Never,” Killua couldn't help teasing the two. It wasn’t his fault that it was hilarious to watch them slowly go insane. He was fairly sure Feitan had dismembered him in his dreams multiple times.

“Killua’s just got a lot on his mind!” Gon defended his friend with a stern look at their glorified babysitters. Gon would prefer Uvo out of anyone in the troupe to watch over them, not like they needed watching over by the way. He could actually teach Gon some amazing tricks with his Nen.

“Sure,” Phinks didn’t let his eyes stray from the three troublemaking children, they had proven to be more than a handful.

Killua went back to gazing out of the train window trying to decide what he should do. Kyo, an omega that somehow managed to be mated to both his brother and Hisoka, had called out of nowhere.
It had surprised Killua of course, even though he knew that Alluka and Kyo had gotten close, how Killua had no idea. But Kyo and Alluka were apparently closer than he thought because the other omega had apparently wanted to plan a jailbreak for his younger sister!

They had discussed in detail how they’d do it but he’d need help if he wanted to succeed in freeing the young girl. If possible Kalluto would be of great help, again that was definitely a long shot.

Kyo had been able to convince his mother into allowing Alluka into the town surrounding his childhood home, Kyo would bring Alluka out again and Killua would snatch the girl. First things first though, he’d have to talk to Kurapika and Chrollo. He needed to explain the situation before Kalluto could poison their opinions of the girl.

With a resigned sigh Killua realized they were only a days travel away from Gyudondon and he needed to contact Kurapika to let him know that they needed to talk.

Killua pulled out his phone and sent the message with his heart beating faster than he’d realized. In only a few minutes Kurapika messaged back, letting him know they’d meet up in the morning once they arrived at their destination.

Kurapika had grieved Pairo for six years, he had cried many times for his childhood best friend but it felt different to actually have a body. Of course Kurapika had come to terms with the loss of the brown haired boy but still the grief was there as he stared down at his newly reconstructed body.

After his talk with Killua, Chrollo and him would head off to Lukso with all the eyes and Pairo’s body to finally lay his clan to rest.

Stitches lined his body, and Kurapika didn’t want to leave his friend but he didn’t want to talk to Killua about whatever he needed with his dead friend in the room. Kurapika wouldn't be able to focus on anything in that situation.

Kurapika left the cold room in the small morgue in the village. It was largely unused, it was disheartening that the missing Gyudondon they had returned home plus Pairo were the largest number of bodies that had ever been in this room at one time. As he left the building that served as both a morgue and a medical clinic, Kurapika glanced towards the largest tree just outside the
village. The body of the prince he’d killed would hang there until he rotted away, apparently forcing his soul to guard the village and watch their happiness to atone for his sins.

Kurapika expected to feel terrible after killing someone, but he truly didn’t. The world was better off without that monster. Also no one threatened his child, no one.

With a hand on his belly Kurapika walked towards Fana’s humble home and business, he would have had the talk at his own home but the top floors weren’t done yet. And it was awkward to talk in an empty building, Kurapika couldn’t wait time move all of Chrollo’s books into their library.

He passed by the soon-to-be-home and rubbed his belly. “You are going to have a very happy childhood,” Kurapika promised the life inside him.

Kurapika walked into the onsen not exactly happy, the grief was still there but he was content. Honestly he felt rather somber but in a way that wasn’t exactly bad, a lot of changes were happening in his life. A lot of new revelations and endings, so of course Kurapika felt a tad somber.

Chrollo was talking quietly with Fanaka and Bonolenov when he entered, his face having a light blush. Kurapika assumed they were teasing him for the story they heard of him escaping during his rut to purr and cuddle Kurapika bare assed naked in the middle of his hometown.

Kurapika briefly wondered where Nobunaga was but then he heard the telltale ruckus that came before Killua or Gon arrived anywhere.

The excitement Kurapika felt was a nice reprieve from the enshrining of Pairo in his memories that he was doing.

Kurapika turned to greet the two right as Gon threw open the door and ran for his blonde friend.

“KURAPIKA!” Gon slowed down before barreling into the pregnant male and then threw his arms around his legs.

“Hi Gon,” Kurapika pat his head, chuckling a bit at the over excited greeting. They had just seen each other not even that long ago. He looked over to a rather despondent looking Killua and gave him a small smile. “Hey Killua, do you want to talk now? We can go to the waterfall for privacy if
you want?"

Killua looked like he was thinking about it as he stepped out of the way for Kalluto, Phinks, and Feitan to step into the house.

“No, I want to talk to you... And Chrollo,” it sounded like he bit out that last part. Chrollo looked up at that, he understood that Killua had something important to talk to Kurapika about, but he didn’t expect that the white haired boy would be including him.

“I guess this is pretty serious?” Kurapika asked as he naturally moved to the private room on reserve for Troupe meetings.

Chrollo got up, walking away red faced from a giggling Fana who was in the process of waving over Phinks and Feitan to tell them the tale as well. His face got ever more red as Gon and Kalluto also joined to hear the embarrassing story.

“Come on Killua, Gon will tell you about it later,” Kurapika motioned for the boy to follow him when he looked intrigued by the instant giggling that started up at the table.

“Yes please hear it later, preferably when I am not around.” Chrollo walked faster to leave the room filled with light teasing on his behalf.

Kurapika just chuckled. He honestly thought it was kinda cute, Chrollo turned into a touch starved puppy. What’s not to love?

Killua nodded and walked ahead, Kurapika shut the door. He nodded for Killua to take a seat while Chrollo helped him to sit down as well. It was becoming hard to maneuver himself onto the soft pillow seats.

Chrollo followed him down to the pillows and immediately took the hot tea pot on the center of the table to pour everyone a cup of tea. Chrollo must have had Fana bring the pot in. How she knew to bring in three cups Kurapika didn’t know. The woman seemed to just know things a lot of the time, so he didn’t dwell on the extra cup.

“Okay Kil, what is this favor?” Kurapika had been surprised to receive the text from Killua saying he had a favor he needed to talk to him about, but he was mostly glad Killua was truly beginning to
trust him again.

“Well,” Killua scratched his neck, playing with his fingers around his cup of tea. He took a sip, seemingly trying to delay his admission. “It’s my-“ he stopped himself, taking a breath. “It’s my sister,“

“Your sister? You never mentioned a sister before?” Kurapika spoke in a very questioning tone.

“Well you waited for close to a year to mention you were an omega so I guess we're even,” Killua huffed defensively.

Kurapika shrugged, because it was true. He couldn’t judge Killua for not being truthful when he hadn’t either.

“Touché,” he motioned for Killua to continue.

“My sister has a . . . gift, and it can be scary so my parents have locked her away. Kyo, Hisoka and Illumi’s mate, well he also wants to free her so he called me and we made a plan to get her out.” Killua paused taking a breath seemingly to calm himself. Kurapika and Chrollo weren’t giving away anything so he didn’t know how they were taking this. “So I was hoping you would help me,” he finished uncertainty.

“What kind of gift?” Was Chrollo’s first question. It had to be bad if the Zoldycks locked her away instead of putting it to use.

“She has something else living in her body, it grants wishes if you fill three requests,” Killua explained the bare bones. It took a lot of thinking to decide to actually tell them, he was giving a lot of trust here. The Phantom Troupe could use his sister greedily but he had decided to trust they wouldn’t.

“That doesn’t sound very bad,” Kurapika added.

“It isn’t if you manage to grant the requests, but if you don’t it will kill you and sometimes the people close to you as well. The more greedy and selfish the last wish, the bigger the requests are,“ Killua found Chrollo's eyes to be far too calculating for him so he looked down. “My parents tested her gift and it killed a lot of people, now she’s locked away. Considered a monster by the rest of
our family, they treat her like the world treats omegas! Calling her ‘it’, dehumanizing her for
something she can’t control!” Killua spat all this out with disgust.

That hit a nerve for Kurapika, thinking of this young girl being held prisoner by her family.

“They even refuse to acknowledge that she isn’t a boy,” Killua added for good measure. Hoping
that telling them of all her heartache will make them want to help her more.

“Is her gift dangerous?” Chrollo asked, weighing the risks of helping the young girl. If someone
was to point to an example of how much Chrollo had changed since meeting Kurapika, this would
be the number one example. He didn’t even think once about using the girl for his own gain.

“Not if you understand her abilities and don’t use them selfishly. I know everything about Nanika,
the thing living inside her, I can keep it from harming anyone.” In fact he planned to wish for her to
only grant his own wishes so no one can use her ever again.

“What are the limits on wishes? Can she do anything?” Kurapika asked, his mind on the omega
girl that tried to claw out her neck to get rid of her mating mark.

“Nanika can do anything, but where it really excels is healing. Nanika really is very kind, the
kindest! Whenever she heals it resets her requests, instead of asking for organs she goes back to
pats on the head.”

“Good to know,” Chrollo muttered thinking he already had everything he could ever wish for. He
took Kurapika’s hand and squeezed his mate’s hand. Kurapika knew what it meant.

“Looks like we are getting closer to that 12 children mark you wanted,” Kurapika sighed. “When
do we leave?”

Killua’s face lit up with relief.

“As soon as possible, we don’t have a lot of time,” Chrollo looked over to Kurapika in concern.
They had planned to head off to give his clan a proper burial. He knew it was weighing on
Kurapika’s mind now that they had all the eyes plus Pairo’s body.
“Okay,” Kurapika nodded without a moment of hesitation. When Chrollo squeezed his hand as if to ask ‘are you sure?’ Kurapika just smiled and whispered. “My people can wait, they are gone, Alluka is alive and cannot.”

“Alright,” Chrollo smiled, a little giddy to meet the latest in their gaggle of children under their care. Fate really was giving him all the children he desired, even if they mostly aren’t natural born children of his. “We leave tonight.”

Gon didn’t really understand why the story Fanaka was giggling through was so funny but Phinks, Feitan, and Kalluto seemed to be finding enjoyment in it all so he was alright with being confused.

“Fanaka, how come you’ve never had kids?” Phinks asked after the conversation lapsed into talking about how the three boys that ran the two spiders ragged. “Not that I blame you for not, I don’t think I want kids after this experience.”

Fanaka just laughed. “Oh I love kids, although I don’t really care to have any myself,” Fanaka hugged Bonolenov’s arm. “The cherry on top of what a wonderful mate Bonolenov is was the fact that he also didn’t want kids of his own!”

“Plus there are really enough kids to take care of already, and all of them aren’t even here yet,” Phinks groaned. In just a few short months there were going to be babies, and then crazy, insane toddlers. Then, considering this group, more Nen wielding preteens!

“And just imagine the trouble a kid born from Chrollo and Kurapika will cause!” Fanaka laughed.

“I’m more worried about a baby inheriting Uvo’s pipes, that kid could potentially kill the entire village.”

“Headache coming,” Feitan groaned.

“You’re telling me,” Phinks dropped his arm over his partner’s shoulders to rub his back lovingly.
“We can’t be that bad,” Kalluto grumbled along with Gon.

Before anyone could assure them that they certainly were *that* bad the other returned from their talk and so the conversation ended.

“So?” Feitan asked curiously. Killua had been surprisingly secretive about what he needed to discuss with the leaders of their pack.

“We are heading out immediately, to go rescue Alluka Zoldyck,” Kurapika announced with a grin.

“What?!” Kalluto immediately stood in shock. “You’re going to release that monster?!”

“She isn’t a monster!” Killua screamed at his little brother, all the bonding they had done meant nothing if he couldn’t accept Alluka.

“*He* is a monster!” Kalluto slammed his fist down. “That thing murdered all the butlers! Killed dozens!”

“ALLUKA IS A GIRL! And none of that’s her fault, that’s because of people misusing Nanika!” Killua argued beginning to really become angry. Gon situated himself between the two, trying to get them to calm down.

“Why do you always defend Alluka?!” Kalluto questioned his normally expressionless face had shifted into a snarl. “Why do you continue to care about that thing more than me!”

The room went quiet at the unintended admission from the youngest omega. His face went blank as he realized what he said.

“I... I-I didn’t mean that!”

“Kalluto,” Killua whispered as he stepped forward towards his younger brother.

“No! It’s stupid,” Kalluto crossed his arms, cutting himself off from his brother and the rest that
were staring. “It’s stupid that I’m jealous of Alluka, but you only ever played with her and you always avoided me!” Kalluto couldn't look at his brother. “Was there something wrong with me?"

Killua let his jaw drop as he saw something he never thought he would: Kalluto teared up.

“Kalluto, I-I never meant to avoid you. . . . I was avoiding mother,” the excuse felt rather weak now with Kalluto's eyes welling up as he stared at his shoes. “Look, Kalluto how do you think Alluka feels? She’s been locked up, alone and without anyone for years now!”

“You still left me out, always.”

Killua gulped and for some reason he immediately searched out Kurapika's eyes, silently asking what to do. He hadn't expected this reaction from Kalluto, and he certainly didn’t expect that the boy had been jealous and hurt. The older omega whispered one word ‘apologize’ with a kind smile.

“I’m sorry Kalluto, I shouldn’t have left you out,” Killua shuffled forward, walking a knife edge across the chasm of space between him and his brother. “I never meant to make you feel like there was something wrong with you, but you’re my little brother. You have to believe that I care about you, just as much as Alluka, and spending time with you these last few weeks. . . Well you’ve become someone I wouldn’t exclude ever again.”

Kalluto sniffled, wiped at his eyes before he dared to glance up at his elder brother. “Really?” He asked softly.

“Really Kalluto,”

In a split second Kalluto launched himself at him, knocking Killua on the ground in order to tackle him into a hug. Gon immediately felt left out and jumped into the dog pile.

“I love you too Kalluto!” Gon yelled as he squeezed the two Zoldycks so tight they both lost their breaths.

“Gon! You’re choking them!” Kurapika fretted over the three children with a slightly stilted smile.
Chrollo considered Kurapika silently as the situation stopped being so tense. He was obviously upset about something and Chrollo knew exactly what it was. He had been reminiscing about his childhood since he saw Pairo’s head in that jar. He wasn’t exactly sad but he definitely wasn’t happy either. Chrollo wished he could make him happy.

“So can we go save Alluka now?” Killua asked as soon as he was able to wrestle Gon off of him. “We won’t exclude you, in fact we can all play together!”

“Yes!” Kalluto gave a soft smile, happy to finally have the confirmation of a real relationship with Killua. “Let’s go get her!”

Chrollo raised a brow when Kurapika backed out with a quiet murmur that he was going to pack, barely a smile on his face.

He really was acting odd.

____________________________________________________________________

Kyo considered the bag he was thinking to pack for Alluka only to realize if he packed her a bag mother Kikyo would definitely catch on. Her or Illumi, although the alpha tended to just ignore Kyo most of the time nowadays.

Kyo sighed before shaking out the thought of his ice cold mate, of course his mind went to his wayward mate next. Thoughts of Hisoka, who had gotten so caught up in his search for his ultimate fight he’d forgotten his promise to take Kyo with him, it made him so upset.

He shook those thoughts away too, he had to focus on Alluka at the moment. He had hoped to pack a bag for her but it looked like he wouldn’t be able to. He was sure Killua and the Phantom Troupe would get Alluka new clothes but he wanted to help as well.

With how things are between the Zoldyck family and anything to do with Alluka, he doubted he’d see her any time soon. That’s why he wanted to do something for her now, something that will let her remember him in the time they’d be apart.

In a way Kyo regretted arranging this escape plan, he wanted to keep Alluka to himself but he also knew she deserved to see the world! She deserved to be happy every single day!
Kyo moved to his dresser and looked over the selection of jewelry that had been placed in his room. He’d never touched any of it before but now he considered the items.

The locket was the first to grab his eye, he opened it and took in the two places for a photo. The silver design didn’t really fit Alluka but it did give him an idea for a gift to Hisoka and Illumi. Putting that idea away for now Kyo kept looking through the untouched jewelry until he spotted a long chain with a large jewel cut into the shape of a skull.

It definitely looked like Alluka’s style! Kyo picked it up and gently settled it into his pocket just as his door opened.

“Kyo, are you ready to go?” Kyo jumped and turned to see Kikyo walking in. Alluka ran in after her, clinging to his pant leg.

“Big brother Kyo! I heard we’re all going to town today!”

“All?” Kyo nervously looked to Kikyo. He felt his eyebrow twitch as the woman gave him a placating smile.

“Well yes, you’ve been so busy with those omegas we saved we haven’t had time to really bond lately. So I’ll be joining in on your day out today,” Kikyo explained. “Won’t that be fun?”

Kyo hesitated, trying to smile even though internally he was freaking out! This was the day Alluka would be spirited away by Killua, how were they supposed to succeed in this plan with Kikyo’s sharp eyes on all of them?!

But he couldn’t say no, she would know something fishy was going on.

“Of course,” Kyo gritted out, forcing a smile that showed all his teeth.

“Alright then let’s go!”
Kyo didn’t even get to send a message warning Killua! Before he knew it Kikyo was bullying Illumi into the car, Alluka already sat on his lap. Illumi wouldn't even look at Kyo, he sat with his arms crossed with a bitter look.

“Why am I being forced to go?” Illumi snapped the moment the butler helped Kikyo into the car. Kyo’s personal butler and another got into the front and the car began to cruise down the road.

“Because you and Kyo should enjoy some time out together, family time! And no better time to prepare for my future grandchildren than on a day out on the town with Alluka,” Kikyo hummed sweetly.

“Mother!”

“Kikyo!”

Kyo could believe that his plan had somehow turned into a surprise date with his ice-hearted mate!

“What? Once he realizes how amazing you are he will want to make a million mini versions of you!” Kikyo has officially lapsed into the phase of every mother’s life where her mind was occupied by the thought of grandchildren.

“Please mother,” Illumi sighed as he kept his eyes fixed to the view of passing trees. “I already regret buying him, don't make it worse.” Kyo slumped his shoulders as he hugged Alluka close. He had said those words quiet enough that Kikyo couldn't hear but Kyo heard it all. Why did Illumi hate him so?

“I’m glad,” Alluka whispered to Kyo, squeezing him back. “And he will someday.”

“Thanks Alluka,” Kyo pet her head with a sad smile. If only Illumi didn’t have such disdain for his existence then the loss of Alluka wouldn’t hit so hard.

Kikyo made idle conversation with Kyo, purposefully ignoring Alluka. She may have accepted Alluka now that Kyo had some control over her abilities but she still disliked the child, thought her a monster. So she was ignored.
Illumi refused to be drawn into the conversation, only saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ if he was spoken directly to.

Soon enough the stifling car ride ended and they all began to disembark.

Killua had been waiting where he knew the butlers would park the car, hiding in the shadows anxiously for the moment he’d finally see his sister again. When the black car pulled up he only barely managed to remind himself he couldn’t be seen by the butlers.

Killua almost squealed when he witnessed Kyo himself step out with Alluka bundled in his arms. And then mother came out after him, Killua felt his heart freeze and then shatter when Illumi followed. How in the world did things just get vastly more complicated?!

This was supposed to be simple, Kyo would make his butler slightly sick, Chrollo would make sure he didn’t leave the bathroom while Killua grabbed Alluka. Kurapika, Gon, and Kalluto were here to ensure everything went smoothly.

Now they’d have to tear up the script! Form a whole new plan on the fly! Killua caught Kyo’s eye as he nonchalantly looked around. Killua gave him a look that asked what they were supposed to do now.

Kyo subtly pointed to the bathroom as he mouthed three words: “bait and switch”. He hoped Killua would understand what he meant, the younger omega had said he would bring Kalluto so if they can get Alluka alone then they could switch them!

Killua gave a stiff nod, seemingly getting the message. He watched Killua pull out his phone and dial someone as Kikyo called his attention away.

“Yes, coming!” Kyo set Alluka down and took her hand so they could hurry forward. He’d give Killua a little time to regroup before finding an excuse to send Alluka into a bathroom alone.

“Kyo, did I see-“

“Shh,” Kyo smiled down at her when she tried to question about who she saw sneaking in the
shadows. “Let’s just enjoy this time we have together.”

Alluka looked confused but eventually forgot about it as they moved through shops like a little family, a severely dysfunctional family, but a family.

“Tell Kalluto we need him to change himself to look like Alluka and switch places,” Killua spoke quickly to Kurapika. He had to change where Chrollo was hiding, change his job completely actually. Get Kalluto to sneak into a bathroom ahead of the group while signaling to Kyo to send in Alluka.

Then they would need Gon and Kurapika to be the distraction so his mother or Illumi wouldn’t notice anything was wrong.

“Got it.”

Killua really was glad he hadn’t come alone, if he had he would potentially have to face his mother and Illumi alone.

Kyo worried his lip as Kikyo looked through the clothing on display, chatting away.

“Mother, we have personal tailors why would we need to get anything in this shop?” Illumi sneered at the clothing available.

“Oh calm down, it’s fun to do something different every once and awhile,” Kikyo laughed as she grabbed a frilly pink number and held it up against Kyo’s chast. “And wouldn’t this just look adorable on Kyo?”

For the first time in the trip Illumi actually looked at Kyo. Objectively yes the dress would look cute on Kyo but he couldn’t say that! Kyo would get it into his head that he was more than just a way to have children with Hisoka, so Illumi rolled his eyes heavenward and said, “whatever.”

Kyo sighed, what had he been expecting honestly? That Illumi would suddenly call him cute, that their relationship problems would just be solved with a visit to town?
“Kyo look at this dress! Can I get it?” Alluka squealed, calling his attention from his mate. Kyo chuckled when Alluka held up a frilly purple dress, decked out in ribbons and lace on the edges.

This perfectly solved his problem of not being able to pack a bag for Alluka.

“Yeah, I got paid for that job I pulled so why don’t you pick out as many pretty things as you want!” Kyo told her and she immediately whirled away to grab up every item that caught her eye.

“What a waste of money,” Illumi sighed as he watched the girl as well. “It’s not like she has anywhere to wear them.”

“Well,” Kyo tried to come up with a response when he noticed Kalluto sneaking past towards the bathroom. Kyo felt his heart relocate to his throat, Illumi could see him at any moment! “Hey look at this!” Kyo grabbed his arm without thinking and pulled him over to a jewelry display.

The display had a set of antique lockets, Kyo just began babbling any thought in his head to distract the man.

“I was thinking of getting one for you and Hisoka! So you both can carry a picture of me and each other with you, you know because you two travel around a lot. Of course I’d have one too! I-it wouldn’t have a picture of me though, j-just you and Hisoka because I’m going to be doing jobs too so I’ll be traveling as well!” Kyo felt his face heat up but he could see Kalluto from the corner of his eye still and Illumi was trying to pull away. Kyo dug in his nails and forced Illumi to look back at the lockets. “It would be, like a matching set maybe? Or we could go with something like this so we aren’t all matchy, I know how you and Hisoka enjoy your independence.”

Kyo stopped talking as Illumi ripped his arm away harshly, Kalluto slid into the bathroom. “Don’t get me a locket,” was all Illumi had to say before he walked away.

Kyo breathed a sigh of relief as Alluka finished picking out her clothing and raced back to him. Kyo felt annoyed enough at Illumi that when he looked over once again, Kyo swiped up three lockets and the clothes Alluka was carrying and marched purposefully to the check out.

“Oh lockets,” Kikyo awed over the three pieces of jewelry. “Very romantic.”

Kyo smiled, looking a little smug to Illumi. He wasn’t going to let the ice prince into stopping him
from doing what he wanted. He could wear the locket or not, Kyo was still going to buy it.

“Kyo, I have to go to the bathroom,” Alluka tugged at his pant leg, Kyo could have cried hallelujah for her wonderful timing and she didn’t even know what was going on!

“Okay sweetheart, let me pay for these and then I’ll take you,” Kyo happily gave his very own credit card over to the cashier and waited patiently for her to fold and bag all the clothes, then hand it all back to him. “Okay let’s go.”

Kyo waved away Kikyo’s offer to come with, assuring her he could help the girl in the bathroom by himself. She seemed to have her attention caught by something outside the window and quickly gave up her argument.

Free of Kikyo’s eyes on him, Kyo quickly shuffled Alluka into the bathroom with their shopping bags.

The moment he closed the door he called out for Kalluto only for a man in a dark coat to pop out of hiding with the young Zoldyck.

“Are you Chrollo?” Kyo asked hesitantly.

“I am,” he nodded. So this was the man Hisoka wished to fight.

“Are you strong?” Kyo couldn’t help but ask, even as Alluka got that look like she was going to start uncontrollably making requests.

The dark coated man smirked. “Worried for Hisoka?” Kyo blushed because he’d been seen through so easily. “It’s weird to say, but it seems he’s a lucky man. I should congratulate him.”

Kyo blushed deeper before clearing his throat and getting back on task. He bent down to Alluka’s level to look her in the eye. “Alluka, sweetheart?” He called for her to snap her out of request mode. She’d be able to ignore the urge for a minute, maybe longer but that’s all he needed. He trusted Killua told them how to handle her requests and wishes.
“Yes?”

“This is Killua’s pack alpha,” Kyo gestured to Chrollo. “His name is Chrollo Lucifer, and he’s going to take you to Killua!” Kyo explained to her. “And your brother here is going to make sure you get far away before they notice you’re gone, okay?”

“We’re going to go be with Killua?!” Alluka’s eyes grew large and incredibly happy.

“Well you are, I’m going to stay here,” Kyo broke the news as gently as he could.

“Wait! No, but you have to come with us! I want to stay with you, and be with Killua!” Alluka cried.

“Sweetheart, please I have to stay here but you. . . You should go see the world! You should go be a kid and have a happy life.” Kyo pet her head as he reached into his pocket and pulled out the necklace he’d grabbed for her. He settled it around her neck and straightened it for her. “And this isn’t goodbye, once I start traveling I’ll come visit you!”

“You promise?” Alluka sniffled as she tugged in his sleeve.

“I promise,” Kyo kissed her forehead and pushed her towards Chrollo. “Now say hello.”

Alluka looked up at Chrollo nervously. “Um... hello,” she whispered before suddenly her attitude changed completely. Standing a little taller and just a little braver. “Chrollo! Pick me up!”

Chrollo seemed surprised but picked the girl up a tad awkwardly.

“Chrollo! Pat my head!” Chrollo did as she asked and she giggled happily. “Chrollo! Say hello to me!”

“Hello Alluka, it’s very nice to meet you,” Chrollo spoke in a soft and silky tone to the girl. He did not back away when her face and scent changed, in fact he looked intrigued by it, like the situation of Alluka’s shared body was fascinating to him. “So this is Nanika,” he hummed. “So I guess I get to make a wish.”
“Yes, try to make it small so her requests don’t get harder to accomplish,” Kyo warned.

“Hm,” Chrollo adjusted his hold on the girl as he thought. “Then I wish for you to enjoy your life as a member of my pack.”

“Kay” Nanika spoke trance-like before her face went back to normal and she came back to her senses. Alluka grinned and hugged Chrollo around the neck with a giggle. “I like you!”

“I’m glad, shall we go?” Kyo smiled, sure the man would treat the girl right, even with his fearsome reputation.

“Let’s go!”

Chrollo motioned for Kyo to hand over the bags of clothes, which he did gladly. He watched in amazement as the man summoned a book from thin air and it opened to a seemingly random page.

“Nice meeting you, please make sure Kalluto is returned to us shortly. We would miss him,”

“I’ll take care of him,” Kyo assured.

Chrollo smirked again before he teleported away, appearing on the other side of the small window in the bathroom.

“Why didn’t he just do that with you?” Kyo asked, thinking of how he embarrassed himself with Illumi earlier.

“He has to have seen the space he is transporting to before he does it, and that window was too small to see the whole room,” Kalluto explained as he took out some strips of paper.

“So he snuck in too?” Kyo asked rhetorically, he couldn’t believe he hadn’t seen someone like that come through the store.
“I can only hope to sneak as well as him some day,” Kyo looked back over only to find himself looking at the image of Alluka, he was a perfect replica of the girl. “Think they will notice the lack of shopping bags?”

“I’ll just say I handed them off to one of the butlers,” Kyo waved away the concern. It’s not like Illumi paid any attention to him anyway.

Stuffing the bag of lockets into his pocket, Kyo held out a hand to Kalluto.

“Let’s go,”

Kikyo ran out of the store, she would know that head of stock white hair anywhere. She could spot her child from a mile away!

She looked left and right frantically, she’d seen her Killua, and just when she needed him too. As heir it was time he began training to take over the family.

It took a moment for her to notice Illumi was following. He was a ways behind her but he was definitely following.

She sped up and turned a corner and there he was! Her Killua!

“Killua!”

Killua felt his face go white at that call, he knew instantly it was his mother. He didn’t want to turn around, he truly regretted sending Kurapika off to meet with Chrollo and lead him back to them, they were going to be caught now!

Killua turned slowly and felt an odd sting in his forehead when he thought of trying to fight his mother back.

Some kind of cowardly scream, a part of himself he hated, said to run away. Leave his friends and siblings behind.
“Mother,” Killua tried to glare. For some reason thinking of fighting his mother caused him to lose all ability to look tough, he could only think of getting as far away as possible!

“Killua! You’re back, good!” Kikyo moved to step forward only for Killua to jump back. “We finally have Illumi under control so now you can get started on learning to take over, just like your father!”

Killua face drained even more. No, he didn’t want to run the family!

“No, I-I-,”

“Illumi this rebellious act needs to stop, you are going to run the family business. All this,” she indicated his entire being. “Needs to stop!”

Illumi caught up with his mother and witnessed Killua in the flesh.

“Yes, you should come home,” Illumi added.

“But . . . That mountain isn’t my home!” Gon was his home, Kurapika was his home, the Phantom Troupe was his home! Thoughts of teasing Phinks and Feitan, laughing with the whole group, playing with Gon, and finally building a relationship with Killua, it all invaded his mind as the stinging pain in his forehead got worse.

“Killua this is ridiculous!” His mother yelled.

“Yes, come back now.”

Killua looked to Illumi and he couldn’t even form a single word against him. His aura seemed to attack Killua, something inside him telling him just to yield, do what they say.

“Oh-“ he almost took a step forward, almost agreed, almost gave up the life he had built when he saw her. Chrollo was holding her and Kurapika’s hands, he saw the way her face lit up when she
saw him and he knew.

He knew that if he gave up now Alluka would never be free and happy, she still needed him.

It was Alluka who broke the flood gate. Killua cradled the burning spot in his forehead as every person that needed him, loved him for who he was flashed across his thoughts.

Gon and Alluka were all he could think of as he began picking at the skin over the agonizing pain in the center of his forehead.

“No! No, I don’t want to run the family!” Killua growled, his own aura building around him. Every happy moment and wonderful feeling being free of his family has allowed him urged him on. “I don’t want to kill people, I want to make my own choices!” Killua looked up at his mother and Illumi between his fingers, blood beginning to drip from his forehead from the way he was searching for whatever was causing that burning feeling. With a fantasy of finally being able to see Alluka run free alongside him, Gon, Kurapika, and Kalluto in his head and all the things he still wanted to do Killua grabbed hold of the thing holding him back and screamed, “I WANT TO BE FREE!” He yanked out a needle from his forehead, throwing it away from him as far as he could.

Blood splattered on his ground, and he glared at his mother's shocked face. Illumi just looked annoyed.

Kurapika and Chrollo had stopped just behind the enraged women, now in battle stances as Kurapika held Alluka tight to protect her.

“Killua that’s enough! You are going to run the family business and that’s final! Nothing you do will change that, EVER!” His mother screamed at him and finally Killua didn’t feel scared.

His gave his mother a dark look before he looked behind her shoulder to the scared face of Alluka.

“Alluka! May I speak with Nanika?” His mother gasped and turned around quickly, Nanika’s blank, black eyed face took over immediately at the sound of Killua’s request. Illumi’s eyes widened and he looked between them, for once not knowing what to do now that his needle had been removed. Killua smirked. “If I ever become the head of the Zoldyck family, I want you to kill me Nanika.”
“'Kay.”
Kurapika and Chrollo glanced at the four children that they were sharing their cabin with despite the four having their own. Gon was being his normal bright self, drawing Alluka into their games easily. Kalluto still seemed a bit suspicious of Alluka, but he remained mostly quiet about his misgivings as he played cards with the other three. Killua was actually smiling and seemed to think that all was right with the world.

Alluka was new to them and the girl was not at all what one would expect a Zoldyck child to be like. She was sweet and innocent, utterly untrained in combat, and didn’t like to see others getting hurt. She had actually given Killua a reprimand when he had focused too much on her and Kalluto had looked a bit downtrodden for a moment. She also seemed sad about leaving Kyo behind.

Kurapika watched them, joy at the sight of the happy faces of the children in front of them before a feeling of guilt washed over him, as Gon and Killua were momentarily replaced be two boys that were very different yet very similar.

“I need some air,” he declared suddenly as he stood, the motion taking a bit of effort due to his changing body. Chrollo stood as well, automatically steadying him but understood that Kurapika needed some time when he glanced into his mate’s eyes.

“If you’re not back in time for dinner, I’ll come looking,” the older man promised, giving the blonde a good four hours.

Kurapika squeezed Chrollo’s hand in reply and slowly made his way out of the cabin. The kids watched him go before Gon spoke up.

“Kurapika’s been acting weird. Do you know why?” The boy’s large eyes focused on Chrollo.

The alpha glanced at the door for a long moment then sighed. “You know about what the troupe did to the Kuruta?”

Three of the kids nodded. Alluka just blinked.

“Kurapika’s been acting weird. Do you know why?” The boy’s large eyes focused on Chrollo.

The alpha glanced at the door for a long moment then sighed. “You know about what the troupe did to the Kuruta?”

Three of the kids nodded. Alluka just blinked.

“One boy escaped, his childhood friend.”

“So Kurapika got to see his friend again?!” Gon asked immediately before his eyebrows drew together. “Then why does he seem sad?”

It really wasn’t his place to discuss this, but Chrollo knew that Kurapika needed a hand or two. Having the kids understand rather than asking questions would hopefully be easier on him.

“We went to collect the last of the Scarlet eyes from this very bad man,” Chrollo explained, his own guilt catching him for a moment. “He had collected several pairs of eyes but had also caught Kurapika’s childhood friend, a boy named Pairo.”

The kids were all staring at him, several of them confused.

“He tortured Pairo horribly in order to force his eyes to become Scarlet then tore him to pieces, all of which he preserved and added to his ‘collection.’ He was very smug when he told Kurapika about this, and how Pairo had remained adamant that Kurapika would find and rescue him.”
“Collection?!” Killua demanded while Gon looked chilled and Alluka blinked, not understanding.

“People that he tortured. He took a number of Gyudondong prisoner and tortured them as well, doing a number of horrible things to them and many other people. Machi was able to identify the parts of many of them and restore their bodies at least somewhat for burial. But she found every part of Pairo, kept in preserving fluid, and was able to put him back together. He’s in the morgue right now, being kept on ice. Kurapika and I will be taking him and the eyes back to Lukso for burial when we return to the village.”

By then the corpses of the Gyudondong and all of the foul prince’s other victims would have been laid to rest. The village had decided to give all of them burial rites, including the four infants. Several of the omegas had been especially disturbed about the babies being killed like that and had performed posthumous adoptions before burying them, hoping to release the souls of the children so they might be born anew.

Gon turned his head towards the cards, eyes sad for his friend while Killua looked to be gritting his teeth. Alluka grabbed her brother’s arm and gave it a squeeze while Kalluto looked to have closed his eyes, head slightly bowed.

“I already sent Paku to search the area and surrounding villages, hoping to find other survivors we may have missed. She’s only reported back in the negative.”

The kids were silent for a moment longer before Alluka focused on Gon. Seeing this, Killua grabbed his sister’s hand automatically and rushed her into the hallway.

Kikyo howled and sobbed as she rushed to her mate. She had been so certain that she was about to have her precious Killua back! He looked like he had been about to agree with her demands, to comply and return with her! And then he had yanked that horrifying needle out of his head!

Kikyo had been certain that she’d been raising children that were promising assassins, her focus turning to Killua when he was small due to how skilled he seemed to be. How cold and fierce. That Illumi focused on him as well seemed a sign that he would be a great assassin!

But that needle!

She had retrieved it after Killua left, knowing what it was even before seeing it clearly. One of Illumi’s control needles.

When had her eldest become so depraved as to believe that he could plant needles into his siblings? She was certain Milluki didn’t have one, so did that just leave her darling omega children, Killua and Kalluto? And why hadn’t he attempted to place a needle on Alluka in order to keep that thing under control?

More importantly, how much of Killua’s talent was truly Killua? Had he always objected to killing and Illumi planted a needle to force him? She had thought he was just going through a phase, that he would grow out of it and face his destiny soon enough. She and Silva had even agreed that if Killua decided to take Gon as his mate that they would have no objections!

How could she have missed so much, especially seeing how she was their mother?!

When Kyo had caught up to them, unsurprisingly without Alluka, Kikyo had grabbed him and hustled them both to a car, ordering Illumi to walk back to the compound. Seeing how his nen was sealed and she requested Gotoh to follow him, she doubted he would attempt to run off.
How could she ever even consider allowing Illumi out of punishment at this point, ever allow him his nen back? He might plant a needle in adorable Kyo’s head to force him to act more like he wanted or more like Killua. If he hadn’t already placed a needle in Kalluto’s head, it would only be a matter of time and he might try to force one on Killua again, except take it farther than he apparently had!

Silva had caught her when she rushed to him, listened to her babbling as she pressed the needle into his hand. He seemed surprised for a long moment but as she calmed, he seated her gently on his favorite couch.

“Kikyo, I knew about this needle,” Silva stated once she was no longer babbling and Kikyo’s eyes went wide.

“But… but…”

“I ordered Illumi to plant it so Killua would run from fights he didn’t think he could win. He was supposed to have removed it almost two years ago! At least he claimed that he did, acknowledging that an assassin can’t run from a fight that they don’t think they can win.”

If Killua knew…

“Did Killua know? Did Illumi force him to do things?!” Kikyo demanded.

“I don’t know,” Silva admitted before glaring down at the needle. “But considering all that has happened, he probably did. Meaning Killua has been poisoned towards this business.”

Kikyo felt her heart stop with the realization that her favorite son, the one who looked so much like his father and with such potential, truly didn’t want anything to do with this life. She also realized where this left them.

“Dear, what are we going to do?” she asked after a long moment. “I don’t want Kalluto or Killua anywhere near Illumi ever again.”

“Killua wants his freedom, I say we let him have it as long as he keeps control of that thing in Alluka. As for Kalluto, while promising, he may be better off with them.”

“Then what of the heir to the family? I would sooner kill Illumi than let him become the head of the family! And Milluki…”

Neither of them needed any further reminder of their beta son.

“We’re not too old, so we might be able to have another child. Possibly the daughter you always wanted?” Silva suggested after a moment then both looked up when a throat near them was cleared.

Zeno gave his son a slight smirk at the mild surprise in his cat-like eyes, he enjoyed proving he could still surprise him. “Before you two start discussing this too far, I might have a suggestion,” he stated with a wry grin.

“Suggestion?” Silva asked as he folded his arms. “Are you going to tell me you had other children dad?”

“No, just that the practices of the Zoldycks are as such: the head of the family will always be a Zoldyck. However, you seem to forget that one doesn’t need to be a Zoldyck at birth to be a Zoldyck.”
Both Silva and Kikyo were silent for a second as Zeno let the idea sink in.

“Kyo became a Zoldyck the moment Illumi mated him, and you’ve seen the assassin he is quickly becoming. He’s talented, charming, and unassuming. Given a few years and he will be one of the best the family has ever had the joy of calling one of our own. He can control Alluka and he seems to have Killua’s support. Most importantly, he will take control of Illumi one day and not allow him to ever plant a needle on another family member again.”

Kurapika was shivering slightly. The final car of the train wasn’t really meant for passengers and thus was not heated, but it did sport a beautiful view of the valley the train was passing. Spring had come and the trees were erupting with small green leaves but the air was still cool. He’d be 19 soon and all he could think of was the small body that awaited burial in the Gyudondong village.

Pairo... Kurapika knew that they had been very similar to Gon and Killua, with him being the brave and brash one while Pairo had been more cautious but cheerful.

A coat was settled over his shoulders, one he recognized immediately Chrollo’s long coat, and he pulled the thing tightly around himself.

“I said I’d come find you if you weren’t back in time for dinner,” Chrollo stated as he began to guide Kurapika from the room. “We’ll be meeting up with the kids in the dining car.”

“Be prepared to fight Killua over the dessert menu, he’ll want to order at least one of everything.” That had been the highlight of most trips and occasions when Kurapika had eaten with his small pack.

“If he eats a good dinner and is sharing those with everyone at the table, I might consider it,” Chrollo replied. “We’ve all had a big day and Alluka may appreciate a treat. What about you? Any cravings?”

Honestly Kurapika had been too distracted to think of such things for a while, now that he thought on it though, he was craving blueberries. And chocolate. And cherry pie.

“I think I might be fighting Killua for possession of the dessert menu,” he replied after a moment before gasping. It had only been small, but he could have sworn that he just felt his baby kick!

“Kurapika?” Chrollo asked, concerned only for Kurapika to grab his mate’s hand and set it on his stomach.

“I felt movement,” he offered in explanation, causing the alpha to freeze as he focused intently on Kurapika’s belly where their baby grew. “There! They moved again!”

Chrollo felt for the movement, not certain if he was truly feeling anything with his fingers, but he smiled nonetheless. “I wish I could feel.”

“Soon enough,” Kurapika promised in reply and Chrollo’s heart froze for a second as he remembered almost exactly this scene from a dream months before. They weren’t in their house, Kurapika wasn’t cooking or wearing only an apron, but it seemed even more perfect. This was real.

Chrollo’s hand stayed on Kurapika’s belly for a few minutes more before he gently guided him towards the dining car where a rather interesting scene was playing out. The kids were there, and so were what looked to be three omega traffickers who had tried to brashly grab Killua and Kalluto. All three were on the floor, noses bloody, teeth broken, and more than a few broken bones.
People were looking a bit uncomfortable though the server perked up when Alluka ran straight to Chrollo when he and Kurapika appeared.

“Sir, your children knocked out those men!”

“I see,” Chrollo replied shortly before looking to Killua as he petted Alluka’s hair then passed her to Kurapika. “Explain.”

“They tried to grab Kalluto and me.”

“Very well. Next time toss them from the train, it’ll mean less clean up for the train employees.” Chrollo pulled out a chair for Kurapika then and assisted him in sitting while the server gawked.

“Sir, your omega children… Were very inappropriate!”

“For stopping their own attempted kidnapping?” Chrollo shot back, his eyes narrow while the kids sat at the table, Kalluto sitting primly next to Kurapika while Gon, Killua, and Alluka sat on the other side of the table. “They are intelligent and capable, unlike those lowlifes. Unless you believe they should have just allowed themselves to be taken?”

The server sputtered for a few minutes before excusing herself, another server taking over soon after while guards came to remove the traffickers. The train stopped briefly during the meal and Chrollo saw the three men get shoved off the train, still unconscious.

The night passed quickly and then the next day when they boarded an airship for most of what remained of the return trip to the Gyudondong village. Alluka grew on them rapidly, proving herself a cheerful child that loved to laugh and play, especially now that she could do it outside of an opulent cage. Chrollo could easily see her living a happy and relatively normal life in the village, but someone would need to teach her to defend herself. It was obvious her ability wasn’t a nen ability held by Alluka herself, but rather by the being inside her, Nanika.

“Phinks and Feitan should still be in the village,” Chrollo informed the group as they loaded into the most ridiculous car he had ever driven to date: a minivan. It was the only thing big enough to hold all of them! If they had more children then he might actually have to learn to drive a bus! “They’ll be in charge of you guys again while Kurapika and I run an errand. Try to avoid Pariston and if you can’t, then try to wreck only businesses that discriminate against omegas if you can’t wreck his house.”

Kurapika barked out a laugh as he settled in the front passenger seat and buckled up. “And if you’re caught, Gon and Killua are to take full responsibility and present their Hunter licenses.”

Chrollo grinned as he settled next to Kurapika then glanced back as the four children in the back called their acknowledgement. Alluka was laughing and ogling at the scenery outside of the window while Kalluto was pointing out something or another. Killua and Gon were discussing something and were trying to draw the other two into the discussion. Kurapika lowered the back of his seat a little so he could rest and Chrollo smiled. This was his family now along with the troupe.

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Kurapika hadn’t been feeling well when they had arrived in the Gyudondong village and Chrollo had hastily taken him into the onsen. It was fine by Killua, especially since it gave him time to show Alluka around along with Kalluto and Gon.

“Down that path is the omega-only area,” Kalluto stated as he indicated the footpath that cut through a field. “It’s a beautiful waterfall area.”
“It sounds so pretty!” Alluka declared. “Can I see it?”

“Omegas only,” Kalluto reminded.

Gon cut in automatically. “Alphas have their own area also: a hot spring cave! The walls glow and it’s really warm there, even in the winter!”

“And there are other waterfalls if you want to see one,” Kalluto admitted.

“That sounds great! I want to see one, right Killua?” Alluka turned to her older brother to find him staring at a building. “Killua?”

“Sorry, would you guys mind if we stopped in there?” the former assassin asked as he indicated the building.

“Why?” Gon asked.

“It’s the morgue,” Kalluto stated flatly. “Idiot, Killua wants to see Kurapika’s friend.”

“Oh, I want to do that too!” Gon nodded then stopped and grabbed a wildflower that grew by the side of the road. “We may not have met him, but he meant a lot to Kurapika.”

Each of the other three grabbed a flower as well before heading to the building. Due to knowing who they were connected to, no one attempted to stop them when they entered the cold room of the morgue to find the one body that now occupied the space.

Killua didn’t know what he had expected, but the smallish alpha had not been it. He was dressed in a red version of Kurapika’s discarded Kuruta robes that must have been recently made by Machi, his brown hair combed. Tape held the eyelids shut. The seams where his limbs had been sewn back together were still evident even though Machi had done an excellent job in putting the boy back together and had he been alive, Pairo would only have had faint scars.

Killua settled his flower by Pairo’s hand as the other three children stared at the body. “So this was Kurapika’s friend.”

“He looks like he would have been nice,” Gon admitted in a somber tone.

“Killua, hold my hand,” Alluka requested and Killua absently grabbed her hand, knowing this might be upsetting for her. Kalluto took her other hand as well.

“This has to be killing Kurapika inside!” Killua declared.

“Killua, hug me!”

Now Killua drew both his sister and Kalluto in for a hug, turning her head so she wouldn’t see the body. “He thought he was just going to bring the eyes home to his people, and what does he find? That some psychopath tortured his friend to death after he escaped the troupe!”

“We know! But what can he do?” Gon asked. “If we don’t let him take Pairo back, to finally say goodbye, then… What?”

“I DON’T KNOW!” Killua roared.

“Killua, apologize!”

“I’m sorry Alluka, it’s just this entire thing! Kurapika shouldn’t have to do this! I wish…” I wish
that we could give him something of his past back!"

Chills ran up Killua’s spine as he suddenly took in the situation. He had just fulfilled three requests and made a wish… Kalluto realized it too and jumped back, eyes wide as Alluka’s head turned, black eyes showing that Nanika was in control.

“Kay…”

All three boys were frozen as the girl turned and took a shaking step towards the table where the body lay. Knowing fingers peeled off the tape and unseeing Scarlet eyes seemed to fill the room with a dim glow.

“Nen after death…” Kalluto murmured before a brilliant light filled the room.

“DANCHOU!!!” Nobunaga screamed as he rushed to the kitchen where Chrollo was playing nurse for Kurapika, offering him a cold glass of water. “Somethings wrong at the clinic! It looks like the place is covered in some sort of white fire!”

“FIRE?!” Kurapika yelped, surging to his feet, illness forgotten. “Pairo!”

Both men rushed from the room and out of the building, heading straight for the clinic.

The entire village had come to a stop, every man, woman, and child staring at the building that appeared to be ablaze but not with fire…

“Alluka!” Chrollo realized, causing both men to try to run a little faster.

The light went out right as they reached the building, the day seeming to return to normal as people throughout the village blinked. Then the doors were shoved open and a bewildered medic stared out at them.

“Are we alive?” he asked after a moment and Kurapika didn’t deign to answer, instead stepping past the man and moving into the building.

The clinic was silent as Chrollo followed Kurapika towards the back, the few patients seemed shocked by whatever had just happened. Then the door to the morgue opened as Kalluto charged out, eyes wide before stopping in front of them.

“We… had an accident,” the boy tried to explain, though he himself looked shocked and confused.

“An accident?” Kurapika demanded. “As in an Alluka accident?”

“Yes.” The response was blunt and Kurapika sighed before turning his eyes to the door.

“Was anyone hurt?” Chrollo asked next.

“No.”

“Then it can’t be too bad.”

“I beg to differ,” the young omega objected. “But we believe that Kurapika should deal with this.”

The blonde stepped towards the door automatically then and shoved it open. Nothing seemed out of place, Gon and Killua looked a bit shocked and Alluka was curled up in Killua’s arms, looking
like she was taking a nap. There were several flowers next to Pairo.

“Care to explain what happened?” Kurapika asked as he moved into the room, causing both boys to jump.

“Kurapika?!” they chorused, Killua in particular looking a bit guilty.

“Yes Kurapika, now what are you up to? Don’t tell me that you made a wish to give Pairo a few flowers—”

A weak cough rose from the body of his friend and Kurapika froze, a chill going down his body as he turned his attention to the boy on the table. Three shaking steps had him standing next to the table and he jumped when another cough rose from Pairo’s lips before the closed eyelids of his best friend slowly rose.

“K-ku-ra-pika?” The voice was thin, dry, and weak as eyes struggled to focus on him.

“Pairo?” Kurapika asked as he began to shake.

A small smile appeared on the dry lips as brown eyes continued to blink up at him. “Told him you’d come.
“CHROLLO!” Kurapika screamed as Pairo’s eyes slid shut once again, seemingly falling into a deep sleep. Kurapika couldn't believe what just happened.

“What did they do?!” Chrollo ran into the room and stopped dead when he saw his mate’s tear strewn face. He let his eyes fall to his hand, holding his dead friend’s tightly. Then he looked to the dead boy only to see his chest rising and falling steadily. “Oh my god, did she...?”

Kurapika nodded with panic and wonder.

“Get Leorio here, now.”

“O-okay,” Chrollo snapped open his phone as Kurapika just stared at Pairo’s sleeping form, just amazing, crying, laughing, and sobbing all at once. He could see a million emotions flashing across his face.

“Danchou?” Franklin picked up immediately, curious why his boss was calling.

“We need Leario in Gydongdon as soon as possible, today if you can. Do you think he could take a small sabbatical?” Chrollo sighed as he stepped closer to Kurapika and took his other hand.

“What’s happening?” Franklin asked, now very concerned. “Is someone hurt?”

“No, maybe the opposite. I can’t explain over the phone, you have to see for yourselves. Just bring Leorio,” Chrollo snapped the phone shut and looked to Kurapika. “Let’s bring him somewhere warm, okay?” He spoke to him very gently.

“Okay,” Kurapika went to pick him up only for Chrollo to beat him to it.

“You’re still pregnant, no miracle in the world is going to allow me to let you strain yourself right now,” Chrollo tried to lighten the mood, and Kurapika gave a watery laugh, nodding in agreement.
“As for you two,” Chrollo looked over to Gon and Killua who were still shocked still. “Bring your sister to her room, get some lunch in you and we will talk about how this happened later. I think today is going to be rather long.”

Fanaka had dropped an entire tray of glassware when they had walked in with the previously dead boy. Of course then she had morphed into a fretting mother over his sleeping form moments later. She had Chrollo lay him down in one of the empty rooms and then all any of them could do was stare.

Pairo was really alive, Kurapika didn’t let his eyes leave the boy for fear that he’d be dead again if he did. He still had faint scars lining his body from being sewn back together, he had bags forming under his eyes, and he looked pale even with blood pumping through him again but otherwise he hadn’t changed at all.

Everyone else glanced at Kurapika with worry as they noticed something he didn’t seem to. Pairo hadn’t magically grown to the same age as Kurapika, he was still the age he was in death.

They all just watched the boy sleep until eventually night fell and Leorio was rushing in the doors of the onsen with Franklin on his heels.

“What’s going on?” Leorio asked frantically, Bonolenov just sighed and silently showed him to the room with the reanimated boy.

“Meet Pairo, the previously dead childhood friend of Kurapika’s,” Bonolenov told them as they both froze in shock as well. “I’ll put on a pot of tea.”

Leorio’s face took on a sort of reverence, he was Kurapika’s current best friend when not counting Chrollo so he had heard of Pairo before. This was some kind of miracle.

“Leorio,” Kurapika called him with tired, red rimmed eyes. “There’s no one I trust more to look over him, please tell me he’s alright.”

“Okay,” Leorio shouldered his medical bag and took the spot Fanaka vacated for him. “He’s has been dead, what, six years?” Leorio asked as he got into doctor mode.
“Maybe five depending on how long he was tortured,” Chrollo replied when Kurapika didn’t. Kurapika’s fingers clenched, it was hard knowing he had been tormented in his last moments but now he would have to live with that, those memories would hang on him for hopefully a very long life. It was somehow worse for Kurapika to stomach.

“I’m guessing his body was kept in preservatives?” Leorio gulped as he felt the stiffness in Pairo’s every muscle. It was worse that the worst coma patient, Pairo had basically awoken from a super coma. The chemicals would have to be purged from his body, lots of exercise would help but it would all be a struggle.

“Well?” Kurapika finally asked when Leorio didn’t say a word.

Leorio sighed, straightening his glasses. “I’m not going to lie, his body is in rough shape. He has advanced rigamortis, no surprise after coming back from the dead.” Leorio placed his stethoscope on Pairo’s chest and listened to the weak beating of his heart. “I recommend lots of water, I don’t want him drinking anything else before all the preservatives have been washed from his system. Trips to the hot spring will be good for him as well, help him to sweat out those chemicals, and someone should massage his muscles multiple times a day to work out the build up of lactic acids. This will be an uphill battle, his nerves are going to be extra sensitive to pain but he won’t be able to move right for a long time. He should be exercising several times a day as well. Short walks with a lot of support.”

Fanaka wrote everything down with a determined look on her face, Kurapika was too shocked to really grasp everything Leorio was saying. He still couldn’t believe this was real.

Chrollo gave Fanaka a nod of thanks for being so diligent in this situation.

“Anything else?” Fanaka asked as she already began outlining a daily health plan for the reanimated boy.

“His body is going to be purging a lot of bad fluid, he’ll be sick a lot for the first few weeks so keep meals light but nutritional. Porridge, chicken soup, bread soaked in broth,” Leorio listed off a few things. “Teas would be good as well, and be careful because his immune system is going to be very weak for a long time. I don’t want anyone with so much as a sniffle within ten feet of this child.”

“Chicken soup?” Kurapika looked up at Leorio, finally seeming to come out of his trance. “He can
“eat chicken soup?”

“Um yes?” Leorio raised a brow, not knowing the significance of chicken soup to the Kuruta clan. “His jaw will feel stiff so he’ll have a hard time chewing so maybe make it more broth than soup.”

Chrollo smiled at Kurapika’s starstruck face and reached over to take his hand.

“Want me to go get you the ingredients? You can welcome him back with your special soup,” Chrollo offered. This was an amazing thing to Chrollo, he had been racking his brain for a way to help Kurapika through this time of grief. It was perfect, Kurapika could now have at least one part of his childhood back now. He wouldn’t be as sad anymore.

“Would you?” Kurapika asked with uncertainty. He didn’t want to leave Pairo’s side for a moment, even the thought of leaving to cook him food felt wrong.

“Of course,” Chrollo got up and looked to Leorio. “Can you stay here for awhile? It would make us feel better if you were here to watch over him,”

“Yes, I’ll stay as long as I can,” Leorio assured them as he continued his physical of the boy, just making sure everything was alright. Aside from the effects of being dead he seemed to be perfectly fine, Machi had even reconnected every vein and nerve perfectly when she needn’t do so for a body they thought they were to bury.

Chrollo got up and headed for the door after giving Kurapika a kiss on the head, he’d arrange for their things to be brought into this room so Kurapika could get some sleep. He knew Kurapika well enough to know he wouldn’t be sleeping away from the boy.

Chrollo felt like the universe was on his side, he was slowly getting all the children and family he’d ever wanted. He had found the love of his life and their relationship only seemed to become more and more solid. And now his mate had a piece of his childhood back.

“Pairo,” the considering sound of Nubonaga’s voice drew Chrollo’s attention. Nubonaga was looking into the room from the outside, his outfit today a short kimono that showed off his hairy legs. Chrollo doubted Kurapika had noticed it yet but each time they had stopped in the little village Nobunaga had been better behaved than the time before.
Chrollo had even witnessed Nubonaga being rather gentlemanly to a few of the omegas in the village.

“What was that Nobunaga?”

“Just that name. I’ve heard Kurapika say it before,” Nubonaga murmured. “Remember on that first day when he got sick and I tried to kiss him?”

Chrollo narrowed his eyes but nodded.

“Well while delirious he called out that name, do you think they were lined up to be mates when they were young?” Chrollo looked back in the room as well and was astounded by Nobunaga’s observation. That had completely gone over Chrollo’s head. “Now Kurapika is almost seven years older, pregnant and mated, has me wondering how the little alpha will feel about you.”

Chrollo froze as Nobunaga shrugged it away and went back to cleaning the hallways. But Chrollo felt something sick swirl in his gut from Nobunaga’s words. That boy had likely watched the Troupe and Chrollo himself murder his family, torture them mercilessly. How could he have forgotten that little tidbit once again?

If Kurapika had been so bent on revenge with only seeing the aftermath of the troupe’s sin then how would this boy feel about them all? Especially considering he may have been Kurapika’s original mate-to-be.

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Illumi could feel the difference in the air when he was let out of his session with grandfather for dinner. He knew his mother would have to scramble to choose a new heir but everything felt much too calm. It was like she had already come to a conclusion.

He entered the dining room and witnessed something he never thought he would. Someone else was sitting on the right of his father, someone that wasn’t Killua. In the heir’s seat on the right hand of the family leader sat Kyo.

Less surprising but still odd was that Hisoka had been dragged back for dinner tonight as well.
“What’s going on?” Illumi asked as he was sat on Kyo’s right.

His mother ignored him, and his father just told him to wait for Milluki and grandfather to join them.

“I’m sorry Kyo, I just almost had them a few times and forgot!” Hisoka was so preoccupied pouting and begging for Kyo to forgive him for forgetting to take him along that he didn’t even seem to notice Illumi had joined them.

“Well I met them so maybe you should have come and gotten me!” Kyo lorded the information that he’d missed the Troupe leader by a day just to be a little mean. Illumi could see that Hisoka liked it.

“Oh Illumi!” Kyo turned and noticed Illumi was sitting next to him. “I have your present ready! Your mother had to help me get a good picture of Hisoka but I hope you like it!”

Kyo held out a silver colored locket, with little gems in a swirl pattern like a hypnotic eye, at the center sat a sapphire. Illumi glared down at it before picking it up like it was a piece of trash. He looked inside to find a picture of Hisoka sleeping with a smile with his head resting against the bark of a tree and Kyo smiling up at him like he took the picture himself.

“This is-“

“I know right?” Hisoka stopped him from calling it cringe worthy by calling his attention to show off the gold locket hanging from his neck. It was simple in its design originally but it looked like Kyo himself had carved a spade, club, heart, and clover around the little ruby in the center. It made Illumi wonder if the swirling on his own had been there before Kyo bought them. “Aren't they awful?” Hisoka giggled.

“Then why are you wearing it?” Illumi glared at the redhead.

Hisoka just shrugged as he opened the locket and gazed in with a little content smile. Illumi snatched the locket and yanked Hisoka halfway over the table.
He looked down at a picture of himself explaining Nen to Kyo. Unlike his locket, Hisoka’s only
had one place for a photo so it had them both in it. In the picture Kyo was glaring up in a tired
manner at Illumi and Illumi had been so into his explanation that he looked like a teacher with a
finger waving around and his eyes closed in a snobbish look.

“When did someone take this?” Illumi asked in astonishment.

Hisoka shrugged again as he took the locket back and straightened it against his chest. Illumi
looked down at his own locket, giving the inanimate object the stink eye. Then he glanced at Kyo,
wearing a plain rose gold locket with a white diamond in the center, who gave him a big eyed look
of hope and unconditional love pouring from every muscle of his body.

Illumi didn’t know what to do with this omega, Hisoka was easy to handle. Even with all his chaos
Illumi knew what Hisoka was going to do next most of the time but Kyo, what the hell was he
supposed to do with this silver haired boy?

Milluki and grandfather walked in then, saving Illumi from having to put on the locket, instead he
pocketed it as everyone stopped looking at him expectantly.

“Good, everyone is here!” Kikyo smiled giddily at her children and Hisoka. “We have big news for
everyone today!”

“Is this about Killua refusing to take over the family again?” Milluki asked in a grouchy tone as he
looked around for the food.

“Yes, we,” she motioned to Silvia, herself, and Zeno. “Have decided on the new heir to the
Zoldyck family.”

“You’re actually giving up on Killua?” Milluki actually sounded surprised his mother was finally
giving up on Killua, but who would take over? He knew his mother would never give it to him, a
beta had never run the family ever before. His first guess would be Illumi, he was the eldest but the
way she was ignoring his existence made it clear he would not be the next heir.

“Yes, unfortunately Killua wished for the monster to kill him should he take over the business, so
we are forced to choose another.”
“Personally, I think our new heir is more suited to this role than Killua. Killua was talented but I never saw that fire or passion from him,” Zeno added as if to assure the member they were about to announce that he wasn’t just a second choice.

“Who are you picking? And why has Hisoka been dragged back?” Illumi would assume he was still in the torture chamber undergoing a new kind of torment his mother created if somehow she picked Hisoka.

“Hisoka is apart of this family now, and the next head of the family’s mate. From now on he shall be included in such discussions.”

“So you are picking Illumi?!” Milluki couldn't believe this! Illumi would be the heir once again, just like it was before Killua was born.

“No,” Kikyo glared at her eldest son. “It will never be Illumi, he has proven to us all once and for all that he is no leader.”

Illumi didn’t show how upset this made him, really what could he have done that was so bad to make his mother say that? One little needle meant to keep Killua safe and suddenly he was the bad guy?!

“Then who?” Illumi demanded, knowing exactly who it was but he needed his mother to say it in order to believe it. Hisoka only had one other mate.

“You’re really pickin-“

“Kyo will be the next heir of the Zoldyck family,” Silva finally cut through the chaos as everyone began to figure it out.

“What?!”

Kurapika was absently rubbing sage between his fingers hours later when Leorio finished checking
every inch of Pairo’s body.

“Leorio?” Kurapika called.

“Yes?” He sat down at the table tiredly, the others were apparently having a discussion about something serious in another room so they were alone for the first time in a long time.

“Well something occurred to me a little while ago: how are Pairo’s legs?” Kurapika asked as he threw seemingly random things in a pot.

“Hmm? What do you mean? They seemed fine besides the stiffness,” Leorio told him, curious on why he’d ask about his legs specifically.

“Well, Pairo had an accident when we were young. I don’t think I’ve told anyone about it before but he was partially blind and his legs were weak, did Alluka heal that too?”

“I can’t speak for his eyes, that will have to wait until he wakes. He’ll probably sleep for awhile yet. As for his legs maybe Alluka fixed them, or Machi unknowingly fixed them because I found nothing wrong with them.” Leorio popped a carrot into his mouth as he spoke.

“I’m so glad,” Kurapika smiled sadly down at his hands. “That was the whole reason I left the village, to find a doctor to help Pairo. He... He got injured because of me, by saving me.”

Chrollo stayed perfectly hidden in the shadows and absorbed the information he just learned. He was at an impasse, if Pairo had been slightly blinded he most likely never saw any of the Troupe members well enough to recognize them.

He could just never tell the boy, let them be a big happy family that never reminded Kurapika about that horrible mistake ever again but... Did Chrollo really want to lie to him? If he wanted Pairo to join his family, his pack, then he’d have to be honest. That was how this family functioned.

Chrollo didn’t know what he was going to do when he finally opened his eyes again.
With no real answer Chrollo went back to the few Troupe members plus Fanaka gathered for a meeting on what they were to do about Pairo, to tell them what he had learned.
The smell of food welcomed Pairo back to the world of the living and he held still, terrified of whatever new torture that his captor may have come up with and wary that the man may do his semi-normal routine of offering food. If he gave Pairo anything then it meant he was going to try some new form of torture but if he didn’t then he would talk about how it didn’t cause as much mess in the preserving jars if those he killed hadn’t eaten for several days.

A minute later and Pairo was certain that he was smelling soup, chicken soup at that. Tserriednich never had chicken soup, it was a commoner food in his opinion… Was it Fara then? That beta maid had snuck him food more than once and-

No, Kurapika had come! Pairo’s mind remembered his brief moment of consciousness as his nose recognized the smell of chicken soup! Specifically, the chicken soup of the Kuruta!

Wait a second… Pairo knew that the rest of their clan was dead and Kurapika, though possessing many talents, wasn’t a good cook. If he had made this soup…

The shudder that ran through Pairo’s body caused another coughing fit and his muscles seized, causing him to curl in on himself. A familiar scent came to his nose and hands were on him, hands he knew but still he panicked.

“Pairo, Pairo! It’s alright!” A voice declared as the hands moved to help, not hurt. “Please calm down.”

Cautiously, Pairo opened his weak eyes and when he saw blonde hair he almost freaked out again. But the scent was of an omega, one he knew well. Having learned to trust his nose rather than his eyes years before, Pairo forced himself to calm down.

“Kurapika?” His voice cracked and then he coughed again.

Gentle but firm hands helped him sit up, back against a pillow and either a headboard or a wall. A glass was pressed against his lips and Pairo welcomed the water but still choked as he tried to swallow. His body felt stiff and strange.

“Yes, it’s me Pairo.” The voice sounded equally joyful and sad. “You’ll be feeling weak for a while as your body gets rid of the toxins. Would you like some soup?”

Toxins? When had he been poisoned? It wasn’t exactly surprising but he was certain that that evil person that had tortured him would kill him using a method far worse than toxins.

“How did you find me?” he asked, even as he tried to review the last memories he had. That vile prince’s omega/slave, Oliba, was pregnant and they had been dragged in front of a throne. The young woman had begun weeping, screaming about babies in jars and that man had… Said he wanted to put her baby in a jar as well. He’d objected as the woman was grabbed and held down and the sadist began teasing her with a short knife. The sound of cloth being cut and her scream had pushed Pairo over the edge and…
“I went to the palace, not knowing you were there…” Kurapika’s words hit his ears. “I swear, if I’d known I would have been there far sooner.”

“What about Oliba and her baby? He was trying to…” Coughing cut off Pairo’s question as he tried to recall anything beyond the moment when Oliba had screamed. Anything at all! But there was nothing, not until he woke for that brief moment to find Kurapika was finally there.

“Oliba?”

“That man was trying to cut out her baby and put it in a jar!”

Unseen by Pairo, Kurapika closed his eyes in silent sorrow. This Oliba had likely been dead now for over five years and her baby was more than likely to be one of the four in those jars.

“I didn’t see anyone else, not alive at least,” Kurapika replied after a long moment and he felt Pairo’s grief even as he picked up the bowl of soup that mostly contained broth. “Tserriednich, the one who tortured you, is also dead. You can be assured that he will never do this to anyone else.”

Pairo finally seemed to relax and Kurapika stirred the soup a bit.

“You really need to eat something,” Kurapika finally stated. “The doctor said to go very light right now so I made our clan’s chicken soup.”

Internally Pairo gulped, knowing there was no avoiding what was about to happen. Still, Kurapika would have put a lot of effort into this so even though he knew Kurapika’s history when it came to cooking, as his friend raised the spoon to his lips, he parted them without complaint.

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Pairo had seemed thoroughly surprised by the soup. Despite him not saying it, Kurapika had seen how hesitant his friend was and how he braced himself when the spoon was brought to his mouth. The surprise that followed was also unspoken but seen by the other as he continued to slowly feed his childhood best friend, taking moments to gently wipe his chin since he was having difficulty swallowing.

They managed to get almost two-thirds of the way through the bowl, Pairo barely managing to swallow some of the very finely minced vegetables, when the younger began to slump, his energy obviously spent to the point where he couldn’t even finish the bowl of soup. Kurapika had gently aided him in lying back down and covered him with the blanket, Pairo falling asleep within seconds.

Taking the bowl and the water glass, Kurapika left the room several minutes later to deliver the items to the kitchen.

“Yes, I did straighten out his legs,” Machi’s voice floated out of the kitchen, reaching Kurapika’s ears as he approached the door. “They had been shattered and so poorly reset that it would be surprising if he was able to walk at all. I straightened them out, rebreaking them in more than a few places in order to stitch them together correctly.”

“Why?” Leorio’s voice was soft.

Kurapika was in the doorway and saw Machi shrug a bit before her hand went down to her stomach, seven months pregnant and she still looked rather small. “I guess… as an apology?”

Leorio’s voice and tone were still soft. “Thanks, I know that Kurapika will appreciate this. It’ll also
“Did you check his eyes?” Kurapika asked as he moved into the kitchen and Machi shook her head as he settled the dishes into the sink. “Thanks.”

“No problem. Future patch ups will be given the regular troupe member discount rather than being free.” The woman’s matter-of-fact tone almost drew a laugh from Kurapika but did get one from Leorio.

“Charging your packmates? Isn’t that a little harsh?”

“No, with the exception of Hisoka, I don’t charge packmates or troupe members even a third of what others have to pay.”

Leorio chuckled in a manner that screamed to Kurapika to he was barely biting back a loud outburst and he was quick to grab Leorio’s shoulder and turn the man to face him.

“Pairo woke up briefly and drank some water and ate some of the soup. He’s asleep again.”

Leorio nodded immediately. “Alright, try to make sure that he starts moving soon. I know he’ll be weak for several days, but since Machi repaired his legs it would probably be best if he gets moving soon. His eyes should probably wait a few weeks, at least until he is well on the mend. That’ll likely take an operation to fix and he wouldn’t survive it right now.”

“Alright,” Kurapika replied even as he felt a slow smile spread across his face. He’d be able to keep his promise to Pairo, heal him and show him the world now. And this village was a good place to start, especially with Pairo’s first introduction to other people being Tserriednich and his lackeys.

Chrollo ambled into the kitchen a minute later, a wonderful smelling box in hand and Kurapika’s stomach reminded him of his own hunger. He had been so focused on Pairo that he hadn’t eaten much at all today or yesterday!

“The bakery in the next village didn’t have any char sui today, but they did have some red bean buns and lemon ones,” Chrollo stated as he settled the box on the counter. “Kurapika, I think we may need to talk about what to do.”

Tearing his eyes away from the box, Kurapika raised an eyebrow. “Do?”

“We’re still trying to avoid Hisoka and I know you don’t want to leave Pairo. He isn’t fit to travel and—” Chrollo’s phone went off and he paused to grab it and reject the call without checking who was calling. “He needs you right now, I accept that. So perhaps—” The phone went off yet again and Chrollo once again rejected the call.

“Are you saying that you want me to stay here?” Kurapika asked as he realized what Chrollo was alluding to.

“You can help your friend adjust, let him know things will be alright. You’ll probably also want privacy for a certain conversation…” Everyone shifted then, well aware that explaining that Pairo had in fact been dead for a while would likely be upsetting. “Then you can introduce him to the rest of the kids and start planning which room the baby’s nursery will be. Begin decorating. I’ll go and collect the books and bookshelves—”

Yet again the phone rang and this time Chrollo was irritated to the point where he answered the phone automatically with a venomous, “What?!”
“CHROLLO!” a voice wailed and the alpha’s spine straightened as he recognized the voice of the youngest elder in Ryuuseigai. “We really need help! You have to come immediately! They’ve all gone insane!”

“What happened? Raiders? The mafia?” Chrollo barked, his tone deepening into the commanding voice he used when he needed to assert order.

“The alphas have gone insane! They are forming parties with the intent of tracking down all of the omegas they say have been kidnapped! The betas aren’t helping anything, just pointing out that the non-submissive omegas have done a lot of good and those infernal omegas are producing maps on where nearby facilities are, the ones where the omegas taken from Ryuuseigai are likely being sold to! They’re also mapping out where brothels are and omega clubs! You need to come back quick!”

“The troupe can be there in a few days to assist the raids,” Chrollo promised, having switched the phone to speaker after hearing that the alphas of Ryuuseigai had gone insane. Kurapika and Machi both looked pleased while Leorio looked confused for several minutes.

“NO! Don’t feed this insanity! We need order back, not a couple hundred omegas thrown in!”

“We shall lead the raids!” Chrollo promised, earning a despairing sound from the elder before he shut off the phone.

“Looks like you’ll be doing more than picking up some bookshelves and books,” Kurapika stated as the smile on his face softened. “If Pairo…”

“You’ll be leading raids soon enough, and likely with the boys right behind you,” Chrollo promised before looking to Machi. “Think I could borrow Uvo for a few days?”

“He’d be a moping mess if you didn’t. Gon is likely to be the moping mess now, he asked Uvo to train an hour ago.”

“That reminds me, we didn’t have that talk with the boys on what happened.” Chrollo looked thoughtful for a minute. “I’m sure that the both of you will be more than capable of handling the talk and figuring out what happened.”

Kurapika chuckled dryly. “I might have some difficulty being harsh right now.”

“I won’t,” Machi pointed out before turning and grabbing a lemon bun from the box.

Chrollo departed several hours later with Uvo, Gon openly moping about only having a single training session with the giant. Leorio and Franklin departed the next morning after giving Pairo a once over. There wasn’t much that Leorio could currently do, but he did what he could.

Kurapika was reviewing the notes Fanaka-bennu had made that morning soon after Leorio had left. Pairo had woken several times, each time Kurapika had been there and had given him water and either a thin soup or porridge. Fanaka had done her best to help give the porridge flavor with some spices and berries, but they had gone back to plain when Pairo had thrown up. The yellowish tinge of the expelled porridge had caused all of them to remember that there were a lot of chemicals that his body was working to get rid of.

Currently Phinks and Feitan were grinning as they watched the boys receive their talk from Machi.

“So let me get this straight,” the woman stated as she glared at the three defendants, all currently
bound to their chairs by her strings. “You went to the morgue just to see Pairo and place some flowers and while there, Alluka’s powers activated right after Killua wished that Kurapika could have something of his past back?”

“Yes!” Gon declared, nodding emphatically while Killua and Kalluto were more sedate.

“I didn’t even know she could do something like that!” Killua threw in.

Phinks snorted. “Kid, you were acting suspicious for days! Probably planning this the moment you got a call asking to rescue your sister!”

“Distant,” Feitan called out in agreement.

Machi stared at the kids then sighed. She was no Paku, but she could feel that the kids were being honest. “You need to be more discreet and careful,” she ordered the three. “Luckily no one saw what happened or there would be a lot of people trying to get to Alluka right now. Who is still unconscious might I add!”

The boys winced, Gon looking to Kurapika for support but found that he was trying not to watch the scene.

Kalluto blinked at the woman as he glanced around the room. Thus far whenever the troupe deemed that any of them needed punishment, it usually started with a lecture and then either a training session or chores, a far cry from the torture chambers his mother had favored.

Fanaka-bennu was checking ingredients for later meals, Nobunaga doing the dishes from breakfast, and neither of them spoke up as the boys were being lectured.

“Seeing how it was an accident, I think we can drop this for now. But all three of you will be helping to care for Pairo and Alluka until they are both on their feet!” Machi’s tone dared the boys to object and she received no dissent. Her strings released them seconds later.

Gon groaned and stretched while Killua stood immediately and headed for the door.

“Brother?” Kalluto called after him.

Killua paused at the door. “I’m going to check on Alluka. I need to apologize when she wakes up. This really wasn’t your fault so how about you have some fun instead?”

“What?”

“We could train!” Gon volunteered.

“Or you could help Kurapika with Pairo,” Fanaka pointed out. “He’s been caring for him round the clock for days now, even sleeping in that room.”

“Ok, so what do we do?”

“That won’t be necessary,” Kurapika objected. “Pairo is only awake for a few minutes at a time right now.”

“It will be, especially if you take him to the alpha cave,” Fanaka shot back. “He can’t walk yet and needs someone to carry him.”

“But Kurapika can’t go to the alpha cave!” Gon declared.
“He can, he received a special allowance from the alphas in the village,” the Gyudondong woman explained. “It is given to omegas that are caring for sick children, ones that a sauna visit would help. And Paipo has a lot that he needs to sweat out.”

Kurapika blinked in surprise. “Thank you, but how does anyone know?”

“After the way that building glowed? The entire village was watching when you and Chrollo came out, carrying a formerly dead child that had been restored to life! Luckily, most believe that it is a miracle bestowed on you by the Divines, thanking you and Chrollo for saving our people so many times, returning those we lost, and killing the new Guard.”

‘Guard’ still seemed like such a strange title to give a person like Tserriednich, but the venom with which the villagers spoke the word left no doubt that it was an insult. Every Guard was an enemy that had wronged the village and was now serving penance. They would never be referred to by name ever again, just as ‘Guard’. Another belief of the Gyudondong: a name gave form and power, even after the body had rotted away. Without a name or burial rites, the ‘Guards’ would truly be trapped for eternity, guarding the village until their sins were formally forgiven. That didn’t happen often.

“So... Do we make an appointment or have an appointed time when we can visit?” Kurapika asked uncomfortably.

“You received permission, so you make a request for a time. So give it a few days once Paipo can be awake for longer than a few minutes.”

Kurapika nodded and stood to return to the room that Paipo slept in only to have a list shoved into his hands. “What-?”

“I need you to get these for me from the market!” Fanaka told him brightly. “Kalluto can sit by Paipo while you’re away and if he wakes up, then he can call someone.”

“But-”

“Being inside too much isn’t healthy!” Fanaka-bennu continued as she guided Kurapika to the front of the onsen, grabbing a light jacket for him as they went. “A little fresh air will do you good! Now hurry on!”

The door was shut firmly behind Kurapika and he stared at it for a long moment before sighing and walking towards the market. He did need to stretch his legs a little.

Paipo slept most of that day, waking halfway through the afternoon and he got a bit of information on where they were at that time. The Kuruta had known of the Gyudondong, even if they hadn’t interacted much. Hearing that they were in the Gyudondong village had eased Paipo’s mind a bit.

“Who are the others that visit?” Paipo asked suddenly when Kurapika was certain that he was beginning to settle.

“Some boys are that I met while traveling as well as Fanaka-bennu, she owns the place where we’re staying right now.”

“She’s an omega, right? I’ll need to thank her, especially considering that she’s allowing us to stay here while pregnant.”

Of course Paipo had picked up on the scent of pregnancy and a lump formed in Kurapika’s throat.
“She’s not… Fanaka-bennu isn’t pregnant,” Kurapika almost whispered, terrified of what Pairo’s response to the news he was about to receive would be.

“Then who is?” Pairo began and Kurapika leaned forward, ensuring he was within the range that he remembered the other could see clearly. Pairo blinked several times in confusion as he stared at his childhood best friend, someone who could have possibly been more than that one day.

“Kurapika… Why are you…?”

“Older?” Kurapika cut in as a sad smile touched his face. “Because I didn’t know where you were or that you survived the attack on the village. It’s been six years and I thought everyone was… Then I met someone and…”

Pairo was shocked still for a long moment. Six years? YEARS?! He could have sworn that it had only been a few weeks at most! How could this…?

“A… coma?” he asked after a long moment as he fished for the right word and Kurapika shook his head, knowing it would be best to be truthful. “Then…”

“He killed you,” Kurapika explained. “Preserved your remains. I found you like that and killed him. A friend put your body back together for burial and someone else… She gave you life again.”

“You’re not making sense!” Pairo declared as he tried to sit up and felt it as his body protested the movement. Kurapika’s hands were there also, his entire frame was far larger than Pairo remembered, far larger than he could have possibly grown in just a few weeks. He was as large as an adult!

“Please calm down!” Kurapika begged as he tried to push Pairo back onto the bed. “Your legs were fixed when Machi stitched you back together but you’re not well yet! The preservatives are still there and your body needs rest!”

Exertion tired Pairo out within seconds and he panted on the bed, a sweat already forming that Kurapika wiped away with a most rag before settling him back into bed. His best friend… An adult…

“Did anyone else make it?” Pairo demanded softly. Surely if he escaped then someone else had to as well!

“No.” The word crushed Pairo’s thin hope. “It seems to just be me and you. Chrollo did send someone to try to find other survivors but they haven’t found anyone.”

“I doubt they’d tell people who they were.”

“The one he sent wouldn’t need them to talk,” Kurapika answered. “Chrollo is the one who guided me to this village and helped…”

“He’s the one, isn’t he?” Pairo fought to keep the betrayal out of his voice, feeling his heart break slightly. “The one you met?”

“Yes,” Kurapika admitted. “He helped me bring you here and asked one of his packmates to prepare you for burial when this happened.”

Pairo settled down slightly, feeling no need to ask Kurapika if he loved this person. He could hear it in his voice. “How did you find me?”

“We were trying to collect the scarlet eyes,” Kurapika replied. “They were stolen when our people
were killed. Chrollo was trying to steal them back for me and when I found out-"

“You probably bit his head off and demanded to be the one to do it.”

As usual, Pairo seemed to know Kurapika so well.

“What happens now?”

“You rest,” Kurapika replied as he pulled the blanket up to cover Pairo’s form. “You grow stronger
and recover. We’ll get your eyes fixed soon and then we’ll have the world to see, as a pack. Gon
and Killua are both your age, Kalluto and Alluka are a bit younger but I believe you will like them
all.”

Pairo’s sleep was restless that night, his memories replaying all that he knew had happened. He
couldn’t remember the moment that he’d been killed but his memories stopped short right as
Tserriednich had turned towards him when he’d gotten angry for the sake of Oliba. That must have
been it: the moment before he died and then Oliba was probably killed shortly after.

More than once those memories had caused him to wake up, terrified, only to realize that he was in
that village and that his best friend, grown, mated, and pregnant, slept nearby.

Pairo was hurt knowing his friend whom he had loved had moved on, even as he admitted that it
was what he would have wanted him to do. He had actually been dead so they wouldn’t have been
able to be together anyway. Now he wasn’t but… Kurapika was an adult. More than once the boy
found himself fighting tears.

The next day was rainy and there was not much sun. Pairo heard the sounds of other people, kids
especially, running around the building. He ate and then feigned sleep, not feeling up for talking.
Kurapika was dragged away at some point in the afternoon for some reason and someone else was
sent in to sit with him.

Pairo didn’t know their name, but he knew the person was an omega even if he couldn’t see them.
Not feeling up for talking, he decided to continue pretending to sleep.

“I know you’re awake.” The voice was androgynous and Pairo wasn’t sure if the person was male
or female. “Kurapika knows as well but feels you need time. But it’s upsetting for him that you’re
not talking.”

Pairo fistèd his hands, the stiffness in them reminding him of how his body was still recovering.
The omega didn’t speak again and Pairo was left to his thoughts. He was angry about a number of
things, hurt beyond belief. But was any of it actually Kurapika’s fault? Pairo wanted to blame him,
but he wasn’t the source of his pain.

Dinner came and Pairo admitted that he wasn’t making things better by not speaking. Things were
what they were and Kurapika wanted them to remain friends at least, as off as the situation might
seem.

“Kurapika, when will I be able to walk?” Pairo asked when he heard the other turning down some
blankets.

“We could try to get you walking again tomorrow but you’ll need a lot of assistance for a while.
Machi had to break your bones to repair your legs and her strings need a bit of time to help the
tissues to fully set. Also, there is a special cave in this village meant specifically for alphas. I got
permission to take you there and we arranged for the visit tomorrow. It’ll get you some fresh air.”
“A cave?” Pairo asked in confusion.

“Yes, there are a number of hot pools there, making it a natural sauna. Gon, Killua, and Kalluto will be coming as well.”

Killua agreed to come because Alluka woke up briefly for meals that day though she fell back to sleep almost immediately each time. Kurapika hadn’t even gotten the opportunity to thank her and Nanika.

“I see, that sounds interesting.”

“You’ll be able to see it and go there regularly soon,” Kurapika promised as they both bedded down for the night.

Birds woke Pairo the next morning and he was moderately surprised that the window was open already despite that it had been raining the day before. Kurapika must have opened the window, knowing how he liked to listen to the birds in the morning.

Breakfast came in the form of porridge with crushed berries added and then several boys entered the room, one of them was the omega from the other day.

“I’ll carry him, Kurapika!” one of the boys stated with a very enthusiastic tone.

“I’m sure that Phinks could do it if we asked-” Kurapika began but the boy cut him off.

“Nah! Let’s just make it the five of us! Besides, Phinks and Feitan were discussing taking a bath in the onsen just a few minutes ago.”

Another boy, an omega but not the one from the previous day, added, “I think they need about a month away from us after the run around we’ve been putting them through.”

Pairo felt his lips quirk slightly as he listened to the conversation and then the alpha was beside his bed. “Hi, I’m Gon! Nice to meet’cha! Kurapika used to talk about you every so often and we all know he’s glad you’re back!”

“Hi?” Pairo responded.

“If you can sit up then I can give you a piggy-back ride to the cave! It’s really cool there, there’s this fungus on the walls that glows to make light and the water makes you feel really good! Fana even gave us a pot of the alpha tea to warm up in one of the pools!” Gon’s chattering was surprising yet at the same time soothing as he prattled on about various things as Kurapika helped Pairo sit up then used a cloth to help bind Pairo to Gon’s back, knowing the boy didn’t have the strength needed to hold on.

The trek to the cave was strange for Pairo, there hadn’t been any other kids around his and Kurapika’s age in the Kuruta village so he wasn’t used to there being more than just the two of them. Gon was talking near continuously about travels, adventures, and the surroundings of the village. Another of the boys was throwing in points of his own.

“Wait until you’re better and your eyes get fixed up! Chrollo was asking about doctors for that before he left so he’ll probably have it done as soon as you’re stronger!” Gon continued on. “Then you can go on trips with us, learn nen, and eat all kinds of food! We’re required to have at least one of the adults with us, but most of them are actually nice and fun to have around! Especially Uvo! But not Machi, she likes to tie us up and lecture us when we do something wrong.”
“She’s not bad, just responsible,” the voice of the omega from the previous day cut in. “If you hadn’t made such poor choices then she wouldn’t have done that.”

“Poor choices? When have I made-”

“Hisoka,” the other boy responded and Pairo could feel Gon’s head hang. “Pariston, the jewelry store, the flour incident-”

“Flour incident?” Kurapika asked.

“Biscuit-sama was attempting to teach us to make these cookies she believed were cute in the shape of little animals. Gon mixed up flour and cornstarch.”

“They look the same!”

“Sounds as bad as I was when I started cooking!” Kurapika replied with a laugh. “But how was that a poor choice and not an honest accident?”

“We pointed it out to him immediately and he used it anyway.”

Pairo wasn’t sure what cornstarch was, but he found himself biting back a laugh. Things seemed a little better already if these were to be his companions.

Their arrival at the cave was more felt than seen for Pairo as the warmth of the sun was replaced by cool shade. He was less than comfortable as he was undressed except for his underwear and then settled back on Gon’s back, but the heat that he began to feel as they moved through the cave seemed wonderful and inviting.

Phinks sank into the onsen pool next to Feitan and sighed loudly as the heat helped to soothe his nerves. Beside him the beta groaned as he rubbed his own shoulders before sliding over to Phinks’s side.

“Nobunaga right, Danchou freeing omegas,” Feitan stated.

Phinks grunted. “I don’t think any of us mind, Ryuuseigai deserves better and omegas will likely do them good. Think danchou will have any trouble organizing the groups?”

“No, Uvo there too. And Kurapika’s team. Chrollo make more effective.”

Neither of the lovers noticed a certain red headed clown that was sitting in a nearby tree who happened to overhear all that was said.

With a perverse giggle over getting a solid location, Hisoka leaped from his tree and ran full tilt through the village, dodging children and people alike as he rushed back towards where a certain luxury car idled.

Kyo’s grey hair shined slightly in the late-morning sun where he and the two butlers, one of them also his finances tutor, waited Hisoka’s return. The butlers were shocked when Hisoka paused by the car long enough to shove the two of them into the back and then grabbed up Kyo and leaped into the front seat and starting the car.

“Master Zoldyck! This is highly inappropriate for you and your mat-”

Kyo shut the window divider between the front and the back in that moment, pleased to see Hisoka
so eager. A second later his heart leaped into his throat as Hisoka took off in the vehicle, driving exactly the way a person would expect a maniac clown to drive.

“You found hi- OH GOD!” Kyo exclaimed as he clamped onto Hisoka’s arm and forced him to turn just enough so they wouldn’t strike a small tree. “If you’re going to drive then at least try to pretend to know how!”

Hisoka laughed, loving the backbone that Kyo was developing. It was far more pleasant to have a mate that would oppose and tease him than one that would sit in docile silence!

“But Kyo~o!” He sang/teased as the car bounced over a hill. “I just got a solid lead and we need to hurry!”

“Rushing off is what made you miss them the last time!” Kyo pointed out with a small grin. “Even Illumi saw them!”

“Ah yes! Maybe I should have stayed an extra day, would you have been the one to punish me?” It was the strangest suggestion that Kyo had ever heard. “Strapped me down and had your way with me by any chance?”

Kyo blushed brightly at the words, mainly because he did understand them. He’d been taught at the facility that his alpha might want bondage and tie him up, but it had never even been suggested that the opposite might be true!

“Maybe I should,” Kyo stated after a long moment. “Tie you up and tease you about how Chrollo visited that day, saying he was ready and I had to send him away due to you being naughty.”

The red head almost looked to twist with ecstasy and for a fleeting moment, Kyo could have sworn his mate had an erection. The moment passed and Hisoka was just giggling in delight as the car finally hit the main road and turned, speeding down it towards a location that Kyo didn’t know.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this took so long. As many of you know, I’m still in school and will hopefully be graduating soon with my Masters. Naturally that means Finals are just around the quarter (FUN!).
Chrollo guarded the back of the slow moving line of sniffling omegas. He’d tried to soothe them when he’d run across some of his citizens already coming back from a raid on the nearest omega facility but they didn’t seem to believe that they were free now.

Some of them kept trying to escape, which Chrollo would be fine with because they weren’t prisoners but this was a desert and they could die if they ran off recklessly. The closest facility was apparently quite small, specializing in personalizing omegas for a client that wants their omega to have a specific personality. Most were raised from early childhood but the few that tried to escape seemed to be just recently captured.

Again, none of them believed that they weren’t being marched to their deaths and/or some horrible fate.

“Wh-where are they taking us?” One young girl whispered to a hollow eyed boy in the back of the line. The boy seemed to walk with a limp, Chrollo could tell his joints had been pulled out of their sockets over and over again. Idly Chrollo wondered what sick rich alpha wanted this done to the boy and for what purpose? He was beautiful too. The facility must have been VERY high end, all of the sixteen omegas were extremely attractive.

“I don’t know,” the boy responded in a wooden voice, all of the emotion gone from his face and voice. He was like a doll.

The girl sniffled and Chrollo turned his attention to her. Her eyes looked a bit dull and her hair a bit ratted and stained. He assumed they had been dying her hair when the raiding party had taken her away from that awful place. They could wash that out as soon as they got to the city.

“We aren’t going to hurt any of you,” Chrollo tried to reassure them but they both flinched away from him. Chrollo winged himself too, he truly missed Kurapika in times like this. His mate was extremely good with getting others to trust him and calm down. He’d done a wonderful job with the omegas they rescued in Gyodondong.

“We should escape,” the little girl whispered to the boy in a voice she thought he wouldn’t overhear.
“I wouldn’t recommend that, the desert is cruel,” Chrollo told them and the girl squeaked in horror that he had heard her. “You’ll understand as soon as we get to the city.”

The boy shook slightly, holding the girl’s hand tighter as he tried to walk faster to get away from Chrollo. He worried over the boy’s joints with him walking that fast, he’d warn him against overworking himself but he knew that would only freak out the duo more.

Chrollo looked over the other fourteen omegas, about six were a group that seemed to all be going to the same place, some royal families had paid for the facility to raise a group of smart and docile options for their heirs. They’d apparently planned to auction them to the families that participated in just under a month. All six of them were completely different in looks to give a range of options to the alphas at the auction.

The last eight were a group made up of omegas brought to the facility by alphas that found someone that looked like their fantasy and paid for the facility to force them to have the personality that matched that fantasy.

Chrollo was surprised that the ragtag group of alphas that went to rescue them had thought to gather the records of all previous sales. Chrollo would pass them out to the troupe and the Zoldycks and pay a fixed amount for any of these sold omegas to be tracked down and rescued as well.

Eventually the city came into view and the omegas grew restless and the smell of fear spiked in the air.

“No!” One of the boys from the group that had been captured later in their lives screamed and fell to his knees to cry. He sobbed into his hands as he mumbled something about how he should have listened to his mother, he should have stayed hidden.

The group of alphas had no idea what to do with this sobbing thing so Chrollo flipped open his phone and found Biscuit’s number. She and the other omegas were better equipped to deal with this anyway.

The freed omegas closed ranks around the crying omega as Chrollo quickly explained the situation to Biscuit and where the group was.

Chrollo would have to make sure that an omega came on these raids from now on, they simply
knew nothing about omegas and couldn’t calm them the way Fanaka, Biscuit, Kurapika, and other omegas could.

“Biscuit and Kite are on their way,” Chrollo told the bewildered group of alphas. They all breathed a sigh of relief that they wouldn’t have to drag the newest residents of Ryuuseigai back to the city by force just to show them that they were free. It would defeat the purpose!

They waited five minutes in the bristling sun, watching the desert closely to make sure no one got any funny ideas about attacking the group.

“Chrollo!” The chipper voice of Biscuit cut through the misery filled cries. Her scent wafted over the entire group, Chrollo knew she was doing it on purpose to calm the crying omegas.

They all looked up and stared at the smiling woman in wonder and confusion.

“Biscuit, it’s good to see you,” Chrollo have her a respectful nod.

“And you as well, how is Kurapika?”

“He’s doing well considering the pregnancy is causing his mobility to take a downturn,” Chrollo answered politely.

“Well that’s to be expected!” Biscuit smiled before turning her attention to the sixteen frightened omegas all huddled in the group, hugging each other. Kite had now caught up and was looking over the group as well. “Okay, Chrollo we need everyone to back up. There are too many alphas surrounding them!”

“Back up everyone!” Chrollo called even if he needn’t bother, they were already following Biscuit’s command. She really had a way with the citizens, the woman hadn’t even been in the city very long but she already seemed to be in charge.

Biscuit turned to the huddled group and let her smile turn gentle as she approached them.

“Hello there,” she called kindly. “My name is Biscuit and I’m so happy you are all here!”
“What’s happening? What do you people want!??” One slightly older girl cried, a spark of life still in her eyes. She seemed angry, angry at the world as a whole.

“We want to help,” Kite cut in, bending down to their level on the ground. “My name is Kite and we are members of a group turning that city,” he pointed to Ryuusaigai in the distance. “Into a sanctuary for rescued omegas.”

“A sanctuary?” The young girl with her hair half dyed black, the other half was her natural red.

“Yes, a safe place!” Biscuit grinned at the girl. “These alphas here wanted to help you so they brought you to us, would you all like to come to your new homes? Maybe take a bath and get some food?”

The group murmured among themselves, some excited over the thought of a bath, some suspicious of the situation still.

“Look we ourselves are omegas, our group has worked very hard on creating a safe place for omegas like you to be free and be happy. You are free now, if you don’t wish to stay you do not have to, but would you be willing to follow us and just get some rest and a meal?” Kite asked hoping to at least get them out of the hot sun. “If you still wish to leave then tomorrow we can arrange passage to wherever you wish.”

“You’d send us home? I could see my parents again?!” The omega that had fallen to his knees asked.

“Of course, we aren’t keeping you captive.”

“How do we know we can trust you?” The angry girl growled.

“You don’t,” Kite told them. “You are free now so you’ll have to think about your options like free individuals and decide for yourselves.”

The group whispered back and forth for a moment before a few began to stand, the rest following in varying amounts of trust of the situation.
“Okay,” the angry girl, who seemed to be their leader, whispered.

“Alright! Let’s get you all inside!” Biscuit took the girls hand and began leading them to the city with significantly less crying this time.

__________________________________________________________________________

“Okay one, two, three. One, two, three,” Kurapika instructed Pairo to slowly lift his legs up and down in the water while he sat along the edge of the heated pool. He was sweating a thick goo which Kalluto continuously wiped from his forehead with care. “You’re doing so well!”

“These exercises feel very patronizing,” Pairo mumbled as he began to feel a real strain in his still stiff muscles. He remembered some of the elderly in their clan doing something like this in the river when he was young.

“Well they are for senio- OW!” Killua glared at Kalluto who threw a dirty cloth at him in the middle of his sentence.

“Don’t discourage him brother,” Kalluto glared right back.

“I wasn’t trying to,” Killua grumbled. Kalluto has been rather protective of Pairo, he kept volunteering to be the one to watch over him and take care of little things. If Killua didn’t know any better, he’d say his little brother was experiencing his first crush but that brought up the question: why Pairo of all people?

“It’s okay, I know I’m weak,” Pairo tried to smile to settle the two siblings. In his mind he cursed his own weakness, if he wasn’t so weak could he have escaped the prince? Could he have held out until Kurapika found him? Maybe then they wouldn’t have this gap between them. Maybe his own weakness was the reason Kurapika was now mated to someone else.

“You aren’t weak,” Kurapika told the boy gently, not noticing the way Kalluto kept fidgeting like he wanted to be the one to cheer Pairo up. “You are just sick right now, once you’re better we can teach you Nen and you’ll be strong again.”
Pairo didn't respond, just followed Kalluto’s instruction to take a rest from the exercises. He frowned and stared at the fuzzy vision of his hands, still feeling that frustration that he wasn’t just better. No matter what he did, he was still partially blind and stuck at 12 years old.

“When’s Chrollo coming back?” Paio flinched when the energetic alpha Gon asked Kurapika.

“I don’t know, I assume soon. The citizens got it in their heads to start raiding facilities before Biscuit and the others were ready to house that many omegas,” Kurapika relayed the information so naturally that Paio couldn’t deny that his friend’s life really had moved on. He was doing big things, him and his mate working to help lots of people. It made Paio upset at himself for being upset that his friend had lived on and gotten over his actual death. “So he’ll have to help set up some kind of system to rehabilitate the omegas they rescued, maybe call up some back up, and make sure any of the few that still hang onto prejudice won’t cause any problems.”

“Are you two still going to go bury the eyes?” That gave Kurapika pause. The plan had been to leave almost immediately but with Paio miraculously back in his life it seemed wrong to lay his people to rest without Paio by his side to grieve.

“I think we will wait until Paio is stronger, of course if that’s what you want,” Kurapika placed a hand on Paio’s thin shoulder.

“I... Yeah, I’d like to be there “ Paio answered immediately. This was their people they were talking about, of course he wanted to help bury them. “So Chr- your mate will be coming?”

“Yeah?” Kurapika hadn't thought Chrollo wouldn't come, he knew Chrollo was always looking for a way to give penance for his crimes against the Kuruta.

“Well good, considering it’s his fault-OW! Kalluto stop hitting me!” Killua yelled at his brother in growing frustration.

“What was his fault?” Paio looked to the fuzzy figures of Kalluto and Killua. It seemed like Killua was about to say something that the others didn’t want him to know.

Kurapika bit his lip, he knew eventually he’d have to tell Paio the truth about the troupe and Chrollo but for now he just wanted Paio to remain calm so he could get better. They’d cross that bridge when they came to it.
“It’s nothing for you to worry about,” Kurapika forced a smile into his voice. “All you need to care about is getting stronger.”

“Yes, get strong enough to climb a mountain,” Kalluto added on, earning a strange look from Kurapika and Killua.

“Wow Kalluto, if you got anymore obvious you’d be telling him how to win over mother,” Killua smirked at his little brother, enjoying seeing the younger omega blush. He’d have to ask later why Kalluto had developed such a crush so quickly. But for now . . . the teasing Killua would get out of this would be epic.

“Killua!” Kalluto hissed, punching Killua in the arm.

“What are you two talking about?” Pairo looked towards the blurry figures, he could swear they had been talking about him but they were whispering to low for him too here.

“Nothing!” Kalluto shouted.

“Killua stop teasing your brother,” Kurapika broke up the small skuffle, also planning to ask Kalluto about the origins of this odd crush as soon as they were alone. Kalluto squirmed under the look Kurapika was giving him, his blush becoming even more.

“What did I miss?” Gon tilted his head in confusion as the tension thickened in the cave.

“Nothing, I think it’s time we head back,” Kurapika smiled as he patted Gon on the head. He looked over at Pairo who had been looking more and more fatigued as time went on. “Pairo’s tired, we can come back tomorrow.”

“Luckily we had the forethought to section off a few buildings near the oasis earlier or else we’d have nowhere comfortable to put those omegas!” Biscuit sighed after a rather tough day. Those alphas just had to go for one of the special facilities! Half of the omegas saved are still children, some younger than eight and a few in their early teens. The other half are either broken and completely submissive or incredibly violent and angry.
Sure it’s a good thing that most are either young enough to still live a normal life or not broken yet in their minds, but it also makes everything vastly more complicated.

Knov and Knuckle were watching the young omegas for now as the elders settled in begrudgingly but Biscuit was very worried about one particular boy. He would definitely need some kind of physical rehab, if Biscuit had known the alphas were going to raid the facility she would have sent them off with some kind of cart for injured omegas like that boy.

They needed help: they couldn’t rebuild the city, get a real infrastructure set up, and rehabilitate a large group of omegas! At the very least the younger omegas seemed to be settling in fine, already small alpha and beta children were curiously inviting them to play.

“Yes I’m glad you had the forethought to do that,” Chrollo mumbled across the council’s meeting table. The sandy room had been hijacked by Biscuit and her team when they realized the council was still meeting here and making decisions without their approval. “I know this is happening faster than we expected but it can only be a good thing if the people are starting to realize the value of omegas.”

“That’s true,” Biscuit sighed. Besides the persistent heat and the still rather prevalent prejudice in Ryuuseigai she was actually enjoying living in the city. It was close to a good place to find rare gems, the people that were seeing the light were kinder than she expected, and she was very much enjoying the attention a particular council member was showering her with. “We should get more help though, a private tutor for the omegas, maybe a therapist, and definitely a guard.”

“I can ask Mrs Zoldyck for the first two but for a guard I think the best option is someone with the troupe,” Chrollo leaned back. He had someone in mind, the man was definitely improving but if he allowed him out of Gyodongdon would he just go back to his old ways?

“Oh yes maybe Franklin or Phinks?” Biscuit asked curiously.

“I was thinking someone a little more radical,” Chrollo grinned. This might actually help the man understand even a little more. He’d seen omegas that grew up loved and happy, now he’ll see the scarred blank slates that society wanted the world to believe was normal. This could backfire but it could also spark real change in Chrollo's wayward Spider. “I’m thinking Nobunaga.”

“What!?” Biscuit roared. “That fool who disrespects omegas every chance he gets?! Why him?”
“Because he has been getting better, and this may be the final push he needs,” Chrollo explained. “I want him to see the truth, how these young omegas have been enslaved. I don’t want him to see the painted up looks of omegas already brainwashed but the scars and tear stained faces of those that haven’t given up the fight just yet. Ordering him to guard them may just help him.”

Biscuit thought on it, mumbling arguments for and against this idea until she nodded sagely. “Okay, but I’m going to be watching him closely. If he so much as winks at one of them while they are recovering then I’ll be breaking his arms!”

“I have no objections,”

Chrollo and Biscuit finished up their meeting quickly after that decision. Biscuit managed to get Chrollo to engage in small talk by asking about how Kurapika was doing. He talked for a full ten minutes about the latest doctor appointment Leorio managed to do while Pairo was sleeping. Apparently the baby was growing beautifully although they decided to keep both genders a secret until birth.

Eventually Chrollo decided it was time to go, he got the alphas in the city to calm down by assuring them in time he’d give them all a part in bringing even more omegas to the city. He reminded the few members of the council that still fought against changes in the city that he was the one that truly paid the bills of this city and they’d do what he said. Everything seemed to be under control.

“Yes, they brought in about 16 more omegas.” The voice of his biggest problem at the moment caused Chrollo to pause on his way back to his car. “In addition to the others that makes more than twenty, so I think my pay should be doubl- no tripled!” Chrollo’s eyes narrowed as whoever was on the other side began to speak, apparently the council member didn’t like what that person had to say. “I’ve brought you many omegas over the years but it’s starting to become dangerous for me! People here are going crazy. . . They care about these things now!”

Chrollo began piecing it all together as he leaned against the wall just outside of his view. Omegas always did go missing surprisingly young in Ryuuseigai compared to the rest of the world, sometimes they were gone just days after birth. Someone must have been telling traffickers and somehow Chrollo had completely missed it. Missed that someone inside his own city was preying on the youth of his people!

“Chrollo is blocking me! He’s been influenced by that bitch omega he mated, I can’t be so open about the sales anymore,” the man whispered into the phone. Chrollo’s eyes narrowed even further at the insult shot at Kurapika, how dare he say that about Kurapika! “No, I know we haven’t had
any born in the city for awhile but these omegas they brought are the cream of the crop! Come on, I’ve been a loyal supplier for years! My family made you, can’t you just raise your pay?!”

Chrollo hummed as he suddenly became rather amused. Had he actually thought he could sell off Biscuit and the others to a trafficker? Not only would Kurapika kill him but none of the omegan team were weak, most were experienced Hunters with Nen. They would have killed him.

Chrollo felt he knew everything he needed to deal with this situation. He pushed himself from the wall he was leaning against and approached the arguing councilman silently.

“How a nice little side business you've discovered,” Chrollo whispered threateningly behind the man. What was his name again? Simon maybe, whatever it was didn't matter. He jumped a foot in the air, snapping his cellphone shut and turning around with a huge forced grin.

“Chrollo! What the heck are you doing in these parts?” The man cooed with forced cheer, Chrollo could see sweat beginning to form on his forehead.

“I was just passing by and I couldn’t help but overhear your little deal concerning some residents of Ryuuseigai,” Chrollo smiled pleasantly as he released his pheromones so forcefully they almost made an aura around them.

“Wel- um- it’s not what you think- it’s just- no one complained before! It was- you know! Getting rid of dead weight- WAIT!” He stuttered, trying to dig himself out of his own grave and there would be a grave. Then a light bulb went off above his head and he nervously twitched. “Do you want in on it?” He gasped and then began to babble nonsense so furiously it could bring down a tower. “Of course you do! I knew that bitch hadn’t ruined you! It’s a game right? Of course you got those omegas here for more revenue, I got rid of those omegas so fast almost none are being born here anymore! With your help we can do this right, maybe have the first omega breeding facility! And with your mate’s and your genes we will have a great start!”

Chrollo barely controlled himself from twisting the councilman’s neck as he once again insulted his mate and then even suggested using his child for breeding! It sickened Chrollo to the point he thought he’d actually lose his lunch.

“With all these omegas you’ve collected we can-“

“What?” Chrollo cut him off, his face dark. “We can do what? You should think on that answer, I
may just banish you if you don’t say what I believe you were going to say.”

“Ba-banishment?!?” Simon stuttered, his shoulders hunching. He looked small and pathetic to Chrollo, he couldn’t believe he’d allowed this worm to infect this city. Suddenly he stood straight, his eyes becoming angry. But his anger could never match the hellfire currently raging inside Chrollo’s mind. “BANISHMENT?! What the hell did I do that was so wrong, huh? HUH?!”

“You’ve used our people! Treated them like something to be bought and sold like cattle!” Chrollo finally began to show his righteous fury.

“They ARE ASSETS! Not people, assets to be bought and sold! I was taking care of this city, you think your Troupe was enough?!” He spat the words with such hatred that Chrollo knew the man had hated him for longer than the troupe had even existed.

Chrollo fists clenched and he snarled down again the little snake of a man. “They were children, some newly born. And each one of them deserved the same protection our motto promises!” Chrollo heaved in a breath, trying to hold back from murdering a Ryuuseigai citizen. “Do you even remember what this city stands for? ‘We will accept anything you leave here, but don’t take anything away from us.’ That is the pledge of this city and you’ve stomped all over it!” Chrollo sneered.

“How?! By getting rid of dead weight? Useless omega children? I had to keep this city fed somehow!” Simon sneered right on back.

“You took away their childhood, you took them away from their parents, you took more than your tiny mind can ever imagine away from this city!” Chrollo raised his fist before heaving a breath and lowering it. This man wasn’t worth it, he wasn’t worth anything. “I assume the fact that Ryuuseigai believed those lies about omegas was your doing?”

Chrollo was almost glad to have found the source of the prejudice. He’d found it strange for quite some time that every other isolated society had a healthy view of omegas, now he knew why. This man and those that came before him had been using the prejudice to sell omegas, they made sure omegas were hated in order to continue.

“And so what?!” He growled lowly.

Chrollo glared down at him. “You will leave,” he ordered solemnly.
“Wh-what?” The anger in the man disappeared as he found himself in shock.

“I said leave,” Chrollo snapped. “Be out of this city by nightfall or else, and never return. After tonight if I ever see you again you’ll never take another breath that isn’t accompanied with agony!”

The man flinched, opened his mouth to argue but then found himself some brains and thought better of it. He immediately turned tail and ran.

“Wait,” Chrollo suddenly called. Simon stopped and looked back at Chrollo hopefully. “I know you kept records, you will give them to me.” Chrollo wouldn’t allow anymore to be taken from his city. He’d hunt down every single omega sold from Ryuuseigai himself if he had to and if they were hurt or dead, well . . . Ryuuseigai would avenge its people.

The man once again looked like he’d argue but then finally saw the depths of Chrollo’s fury and nodded timidly before finally scurrying off.

All was silent in the dingy alleyway for a long while as Chrollo thought on what he’d just learned and done. He felt like a failure, he’d promised to protect Ryuusaigai and yet someone in his midst had been harming his home. He’d failed those omegas.

Chrollo was pulling out his phone before he could even rationalize why. He pressed the first number in his speed dial and waited, feeling an intense amount of conflicting emotions as he did.

“Hello?” The drowsy voice of Kurapika answered on the third ring.

“Kurapika,” Chrollo sighed, immediately feeling a weight lift off his chest.

“Chrollo!” Kurapika gasped with joy in his voice. “How’s everything going? Are you coming home soon?” Chrollo’s muscles relaxed and he smiled softly into the receiver.

“Yes, I’ll be home soon.”
“You sound upset, what's wrong?” Of course Kurapika would know something was off. He always knew.

“I’ve just had a rather challenging day, it’s nothing for you to stress about. I’ve handled it,” Chrollo chuckled sadly.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

“Yes,” Chrollo sighed, finally feeling normal again as he relayed everything to Kurapika.

Kalluto sat with Pairo as Kurapika talked on the phone, he’d silently waved him in as he got up. It was very late but Kurapika seemed so happy to hear from Chrollo that he was immediately up and awake. As for Kalluto, he might have been hanging around Pairo’s door after his bedtime.

Kalluto sat down beside the boy and contemplated. Pairo was very plain, he’d probably grow up to be very handsome though. Kalluto could already see that he had a strong chin and bright eyes even with the damage in them.

Kalluto watched Pairo sleep, he was getting better. Even now he was sleeping more peacefully and was not so stiff. He didn’t look like a dead body anymore. Kalluto focused in on his pale hand, he wanted to hold that hand.

He knew no one understood his feelings for Pairo but to Kalluto, Pairo was a dream come true. He felt he understood Pairo’s challenges and feelings better than anyone else here. They had both been left behind at one time, Kalluto understood that pain and he knew Pairo just may be the only one that could understand him as well.

Kalluto’s mind wandered to the days before Alluka resurrected Pairo, all the way to the first time he ever heard of the previously dead boy.

*Kurapika was obviously upset about something, everyone was on edge and not just because they were going to rescue Alluka right from under his mother's nose. Killua and Gon were too excited to get Alluka to think about asking Kurapika what was wrong so when Kurapika left the room Kalluto went after him.*
Kurapika wandered to his and Chrollo’s suite on the blimp. Kalluto managed to slip in before the door closed. He observed Kurapika stare out into the night for a full two minutes before speaking up. “What’s wrong?”

Kurapika jumped and turned around to see Kalluto by the door.

“Oh Kalluto, I didn’t hear you come in,” Kurapika tried to avoid what he asked but Kalluto just raised a brow. “It’s nothing really, I’ve just been thinking about someone very special lately.”

“Do you want to talk about it?” Kalluto asked as he moved closer and took a spot on the bed.

“It’s an old friend, he’s been on my mind lately,” Kurapika went back to gazing out the window. “It just hit me that I’ll never be able to repay him for everything he did for me.”

“What did he have on you?”

“It’s nothing like that,” Kurapika laughed sadly. “He saved my life when we were young,” Kurapika couldn’t hold it in anymore and began to speak of his old friend. Telling Kalluto all about the incident that caused Pairo to lose mobility in his legs and to go partially blind. He spoke of how the village proclaimed him the ultimate example of what an alpha should be, getting hurt in defense of an omega was the greatest sacrifice in Kuruta culture.

He told Kalluto how it was that day the village as a whole decided Kurapika and Pairo were a perfect match to be mates someday. Kalluto’s entire being was captivated as he learned about this kind, intelligent, incredible person.

Kalluto had often felt dread at the thought of trying to find an alpha like Chrollo, Gon, or Uvogin. Alphas like them were in short supply, even Kurapika had to work hard to change Chrollo for the better. But here Kurapika was talking about another amazing and enlightened alpha that wasn’t already attached to another.

“Where is he now?” Kalluto asked slyly. This friend must be around Kurapika’s age but that was fine! Chrollo and Kurapika have an age gap too.
“He’s dead.” Kalluto deflated in disappointment.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Kalluto mumbled as his image of the perfect alpha only got brighter now that he was officially unavailable.

Kurapika and him sat in silence for awhile after that before Chrollo came to find them and the moment ended.

Ever since then Kalluto could only imagine what Pairo would have been like until he’d built him up as some kind of fantasy mate that no one else could ever come close to.

And now . . . here he was, alive and mostly unattached, even closer in age. Kalluto smiled as he reached out his hand, stopping just before touching Pairo’s.

“I won’t give up, I’ll prove to you that I’m better for you than anyone,” Kalluto muttered as he softly fell asleep.
Simon’s records were handed off to Shoot with the order to pass them on to Chrollo. The idiot council seemed to think that the cowardly alpha would do as he demanded and he’d get a head start in case the other changed his mind about giving him until nightfall to get away.

He hadn’t counted on Knuckle being mere feet away and more than capable of understanding the records. The beating Simon received afterwards was one that had Knuckle yelling loudly what had happened while Shoot attempted to hold on to the records. The alpha ended up surrendering the documents to several people who claimed to be parents of kidnapped omegas.

In total, Simon barely made it out of Ryuuseigai alive as parents and sympathizers rallied and formed a lynch mob. He lost an arm in the assault.

Chrollo had made it a point to announce that he would pay for the rescue of each of the kidnapped omegas and would personally avenge any that were harmed or killed.

As he settled into his car, he thought on what else he needed to accomplish and he turned the car towards the underground base where his first rut since meeting Kurapika had occurred. Collecting those books and the shelves would be an excellent addition to the library.

As he guided the car carefully out of Ryuuseigai, he noticed another vehicle heading towards the city at breakneck speed. There was no road so Chrollo had no issue giving the vehicle and the seemingly demented driver plenty of space until he saw something that caused him to step heavily on the gas: Hisoka. The clown looked crazed!

Not wanting to fight yet, especially with Kurapika pregnant and their baby mere months away from being born, Chrollo kept the gas pedal fully pressed, the vehicle reaching speeds he had never attempted before as he ensured that he got away without the clown following.

It took an hour for Chrollo to calm down when he hadn’t seen even a suggestion of Hisoka’s car or being followed for him to calm down enough to remember that he needed to make a phone call.

Nobunaga was surprised when Kurapika had approached him looking solemn, even more so when the omega had handed him his cellphone.

“Chrollo wants to speak to you.”

The alpha’s eyes widened slightly and he brought the phone to his ear quickly. “Danchou?”

“Kurapika and I have agreed on a change in your punishment due to your changing behavior,” Chrollo stated. “You will return to Ryuuseigai to act as a guard for the omegas that have been rescued thus far.”

Nobunaga whooped in excitement and tore down the hall, the white lace on his yellow dress catching on the side of the door to his small room.

“NOBUNAGA!” Chrollo’s shout drew Nobunaga’s attention as he began to dig around for his old clothes in the closet. “This is an assignment, an extension of punishment since you are needed somewhere else. You will be answering to Biscuit and the omega team. Your job is to guard the
rescued omegas. That will mean keeping them from being kidnapped, killed, or hurt beyond whatever has happened to them thus far.”

“Yeah boss!” Nobunaga called as he grabbed his robe after finally finding it on a hanger rather than the floor where he had left it. It smelled better than he remembered.

“Remember that if you let even one of them get hurt or kidnapped, I will be the least of your problems. Biscuit will be there to mete out your punishment.”

That did give Nobunaga pause and then he shrugged off the threat. He knew that Biscuit was tough, but playing guard was a hell of a lot better than playing maid! Plus these would be omegas that he felt he could deal with, maybe find a pretty mate of his own!

He changed quickly into his old clothes and then returned the dress to the closet, not realizing that he put it on a hanger automatically.

Kurapika was at the door and quickly took back his phone before glancing at Nobunaga’s ankle. Nobunaga in turn realized that if the omega tried to release his nen then he would be having to kneel/crouch. With a notable baby bump.

“Would you mind if we did this in the kitchen where I can sit?” Kurapika asked.

Nobunaga shrugged in an uncomfortable manner, still not quite knowing how to act around the omega. He couldn’t say he liked him, but he wasn’t going to argue or make things difficult for the person carrying Chrollo’s first kid. Especially not with a rather evil looking Feitan peering out of a door just up the hall, Phinks undoubtedly behind him.

“Yeah, I’ll grab some food for the road,” Nobunaga agreed after a long moment, eager to just be done and gone.

“I do,” Feitan’s voice called out and the short man stepped into the hall and Kurapika attempted to wave him away.

“Chrollo said I was to do it when I felt he had been punished enough-”

“Still punished, going to Ryuuseigai as guard. Say when free,” Feitan insisted then gave Nobunaga a look of warning.

“Fine by me,” the samurai replied and didn’t oppose any further as Feitan crouched down and unlocked the shackle. The return of his nen was heavenly and in a heady moment, Nobunaga almost turned to Kurapika with the intent of challenging him to a rematch. And then Feitan gave him a “light” punch to the stomach, light being a subjective term.

Kurapika sighed in exasperation. “We’ve got soup in the kitchen if you want some for lunch before heading out.”

“ALLUKA’S AWAKE!!” Killua yelled, charging down the hall with a spring in his step. “Said she’s hungry!”

Kurapika smiled after the boy. “Soup’s on the stove, use a tray when you take some back to her!”

Phinks was in the hall a moment later right as Killua zipped past them once again, a steaming bowl of soup and a spoon on a small tray in his hands. “Great, soon enough there are going to be five of those running around.”
“It’s not like Alluka or Pairo would be like Gon and Killua,” Kurapika pointed out as he led the way to the kitchen.

“They will as soon as they learn nen!”

“I doubt it, Alluka is very sweet and Pairo was always very respectful.”

“Yeah, a sweet little girl who is finally free to run around after years of imprisonment and a kid who is about to regain his legs and eyes. They’ll be so easy to keep a handle on!” The sarcasm in Phinks’s voice was lost on no one while Kurapika reached for the ladle in order to fill a bowl with soup for Pairo, ensuring it was mostly broth.

Nobunaga reached for the bowl when Kurapika set it on a tray and got his hand slapped. “Ow, thought you said I could have some soup before going!”

“You can make your own bowl,” Kurapika replied sharply before pausing when he felt a slight shifting movement within his belly. The movements were slowly becoming more frequent and stronger and Kurapika rubbed his belly as a small smile spread over his face.

“Baby move?” Feitan asked, his hand almost coming up like he wanted to feel as well.

“Just a bit, nothing big yet. Chrollo hasn’t felt them move yet,” Kurapika replied and Feitan’s hand dropped automatically.

“Geez, six kids when you guys haven’t even know each other a year yet! Danchou is definitely going to get the 12 kids he wanted, maybe more,” Phinks declared with a grin.

Kurapika opened his mouth to voice his denial but found he couldn’t. Chrollo had in fact begun assigning minders for Gon and Killua when they mated and had accepted Kalluto very quickly. He had seemed thrilled to have Alluka with them and had not denied being the parent of Killua and Kalluto on the train when traffickers attempted to snatch them, instead voicing approval for them defending themselves. He had even assigned rooms for the kids in the house that was being built!

The statement gave Kurapika pause and he realized how correct Phinks was! Five kids with a sixth to be born in mere months! But this didn’t feel forced or unnatural like Kurapika had thought it would to have so many kids. It had just happened and each child just seemed to fit into their lives seamlessly.

Considering the family Chrollo had made with the Spiders, he realized that this was likely natural to him, to find a family in unrelated people coming together. It was still relatively new to Kurapika since he hadn’t made ties like this until the past year at the Hunter exam, but he liked it.

He was smiling as he left the kitchen, uncaring of the three sets of eyes following him.

“You guys coming back to Ryuuseigai too? Might find a nice omega to join you both and have some kids yourselves!” Nobunaga suggested and watched as Phinks blanched and Feitan paled.

“Enough kids here for anyone for a lifetime,” Phinks replied tightly. “B’ sides, Danchou would never forgive us if we left Kurapika alone while pregnant, especially with Hisoka on the loose. Add in five kids and he’d probably ream us if we left and Uvo would be helping him since Machi is also here.”

Nobunaga shrugged, deciding that it wasn’t his problem. But they were correct in that Danchou would probably want someone from the troupe to be near Kurapika that wasn’t pregnant themselves. Grabbing a bowl, he ladled out some of the thick beef soup and headed back to the
Alluka smiled happily as she stared out of the window at the view of a field leading up to the forest surrounding the village. Several kids were in the field, some playing what looked to be a game of tag while a few stood closer to the treeline and were throwing rocks.

Killua knew that the kids were throwing rocks at the rotting corpse of the prince that Kurapika had killed but knew that the body had been tied so high up that Alluka couldn’t see it. He instead settled the tray of soup in her lap.

Alluka turned slightly, exhaustion still evident in her movements and the bags under her eyes, but her smile was very bright. “It’s very pretty here brother.”

“It is, Gon and I are planning what places to show you first when you’re strong enough,” Killua replied as a soft smile pulsed at his lips. “And then there’s the rest of the world, Chrollo is more than happy to let us travel but he wants you to learn nen first. Luckily the troupe has at least one person in each of the five fields, sometimes more, so you will definitely have a teacher.”

“But I want brother to teach me!”

“And I will for the basics!” Killua promised. “Gon, Kalluto, and I will teach you and Pairo the basics, but we’re still just learning the other stuff. Besides, you might not be a Transmuter like I am. Kalluto for instance is a Manipulator.”

Alluka blew out her cheeks in a form of pout then reached for the spoon on the tray for the soup.

“Alluka, would you mind if I spoke to Nanika?” Killua asked after his sister took a few bites of the food.

Bright blue eyes shut for a moment and then Alluka shook her head. “Can’t. Nanika is still sleeping!”

Killua felt his eyebrows rise suddenly at the response. “Sleeping?”

“Yep! Before we went to sleep after your wish, Nanika told me that that wish was one made without greed, a pure wish, and it drained her more than any other wish ever has. She’ll be asleep for a long time.”

“How long?” Killua asked, wondering if this was a godsend or a prank by the devil itself.

“A long time, months or maybe a year. She’ll wake up eventually though!”

Months to a year. Killua would need to stay close constantly in order to wait for Nanika to awaken so he could make his next wish and permanently end Nanika’s requests: that no wishes other than his own be granted. The smile that crept over his face was one of joy, knowing that he’d need to keep Alluka close he had a number of people he trusted to not abuse Nanika’s power if she awoke during a brief absence.

Gon could be trusted with his plan, as could Kalluto. Kurapika might take a bit of convincing after the Pairo fiasco.

The heat and sun blazed, causing the sand to feel like burning embers if one didn’t lift their feet fast enough since most of the omegas didn’t have shoes. Water was regularly passed around and
several carts carried the injured and extremely young. What little space was left was to be shared by the other omegas as they tired.

Heather never took a turn in the carts, knowing already that one of the alphas would shove her out immediately when they got a good look at her. It had always been that way, ever since the facility had realized that she lacked any beauty and would never be able to sell her. No matter how cheaply they marketed her, the alphas that came to buy always looked towards the pretty omegas.

None of the omegas around her knew what was happening, it had just been a regular day at the facility when a wall had been blown in, the betas and alphas guarding them were slaughtered, and they’d all been freed from their cages and set on this march into the desert.

Several of the alphas and betas attempted to talk to them, promising they were going somewhere safe, somewhere without cages. The enormous alpha with the wild hair in particular grinned as he told them that they were being freed. None of the omegas were willing to go near him due to the violent strength they could smell on the man.

Heather had been preparing a reading lesson for a few of the most promising of the young omegas and had witnessed him literally tearing the guards limb from limb. One of those children walked next to her, tiny fingers grasping her hand.

Glancing down, Heather attempted to smile for the child. The child was very pretty after all, raven black hair and emerald eyes set against pale skin that promised she would be so beautiful in just a few years. These alphas would keep her alive and healthy, they could sell her. Heather wasn’t so lucky.

She knew her features better than anyone, she’d been ridiculed over them plenty even as she attempted to do as instructors said and tidy herself up, to make herself pretty. No amount of washing or brushing would make her dirty blonde hair shine it refused to stay in any style, instead falling in untameable curls around her head, framing her own greenish eyes. A putrid color she’d been told more than once, and her eyes wouldn’t allow contacts due to some sort of sensitivity. To make matters worse, a notable birthmark marred her right cheek. There had been talk for awhile about covering the mark with a tattoo when she came of age but when they realized she was unsellable, that plan had been abandoned.

The child beside her, Sasha was her name, tried to smile as well before her bare foot struck a rough and jagged rock and she went down. The tears were immediate and Heather tried to help Sasha up, to get her moving again before anyone noticed and decided to beat the child. She was nowhere near fast enough.

“Hey there, what’s the matter?” the giant alpha asked as he ambled over, causing the terrified omegas to scatter a bit and Heather found herself alone next to Sasha. She tried to open her mouth to speak, to dissuade the blow she knew was coming, but she was never fast enough it seemed. The giant crouched down next to Sasha and grabbed her foot, gently examining it.

“Hey, why don’t most of these guys have shoes?” he yelled out a minute later after examining the cut on Sasha’s foot then glancing around at the still omegas.

“Because that facility didn’t provide them and we didn’t think of that,” another alpha called over. “We can fit her in this wagon if she’s hurt!”

“Nevermind that, too little space and these people have been crushed enough as it is!”

Heather felt horror seize her, surely this alpha wasn’t thinking of killing Sasha to thin out their
numbers, was he?

She got her answer as the man seized the still sniffling girl under the arms and she shut her eyes, terrified of what was about to happen.

“Up we go! Horsey ride!”

Several gasps echoed and Heather opened her eyes to the uncanny sight of Sasha seated on the alpha’s shoulders as the man grinned. It almost looked like a picture that was shown to some of them on how alpha and beta children were to be raised along with their alpha parent. Sasha herself looked confused but grabbed the man’s hair as he began to walk up and down the line, then giggled a bit when he gave a small spin or a bounce.

Down the line, other omegas watched in fascination as the line began to move again while the other alphas and betas laughed.

“Practicing for your own kid, Uvo?” one of the women shouted.

“Sure am! Machi is certain we’ll be having a girl!”

Just practicing, nothing special Heater told herself as she began walking again, ignoring how several of the omegas in the line began to look hopeful as Uvo kept up his ‘horsey ride’ with Sasha for a few minutes then traded her for another kid on the wagons while her foot was tended. He slowly gave each kid a turn, even those capable of walking for the rest of the march that day and then the following day until they reached their destination.

The people that greeted them were a mix of alphas, betas, and a few omegas. Some were obviously parents who began demanding what facility they had come from, two of them running to check through the children when they heard the name “Nomin facility.”

“Hey!” one omega shouted as the pair fell upon the wagon containing the most children. “We realize your child was sold there according to those records, but would you calm down before you scare them!”

Heather blinked at the omega, her brows furrowing at his strange attitude and manner of dress. He probably would have been attractive if he dressed differently and didn’t style his hair in such a manner, but what surprised her was that the crowd of betas and alphas listened.

The pair blinked before the omega was beside them, one hand on each of their shoulders. “We’ll find them, I promise. How many five year olds were at that hell hole?”

The question was directed to the alpha that had been guiding the cart who thought for a moment. “Maybe six?”

Heather rolled her eyes, there were eight children of that age so why were they… Suspicion entered her being when she saw that the alpha, the male of the pair, had emerald green eyes and she felt herself freeze inside. No, they couldn’t be… No one wanted omega children, even pretty ones!

“Please Mr. Knuckle, our daughter was taken when she was mere hours old! I didn’t even get to hold her!” the alpha argued as the omega, Knuckle apparently, began to guide them away.

“We’ll examine them and see if your daughter is-”

A gasp and cry rang from the mother and she pulled away from him violently, causing several omegas to yelp as she raced towards another wagon, eyes on a single child, Sasha. The girl had
managed to work her way to the side of the wagon to see what was happening.

Tears were in the woman’s eyes as she lifted Sasha from the wagon. “My baby, my baby!”

“Do any of you know how old this girl was when she was brought to your facility?” the omega Knuckle yelled. “Was she a newborn?”

Little by little, the eyes of the omegas turned to Heather. At 25 years old, she was the oldest omega in the facility and they never anticipated her being sold. She had seen hundreds of omegas grow up and be sold, usually before they were 18 years old. She knew each of their faces and names though she knew she shouldn’t get attached, shouldn’t call them any name since their future alphas were supposed to be the ones to name them.

“Yes,” Heather forced out after a long suffocating moment. “She was only a day or two old. She’s the only five year old that was brought in that young.”

The omega nodded and called out to an alpha to make a note of that then nodded to the rest of omegas. “To all of you, I bid you welcome. Your new homes are ready and dinner is being made as we speak. I don’t doubt you all would like a bath and I’m happy to say that those have been prepared as well. If you’ll follow Knov, the omega with the way too serious expression, we’ll get you settled in. As for you little lady,” now the omega focused on a very confused Sasha who was being hugged by her alpha father. “Welcome home. Your parents have missed you.”

Heather felt her eyes narrow but knew better than to say anything even as her heart ached for Sasha. The girl was about to be sold again, she knew it. The hugs and tears of those people, it had to be a ploy. No one wanted an omega child. And no one would want an ugly omega.

She kept her head down during the walk through the city to where the omegas would be staying until they were sold, or in her case, likely for whatever remained of her life.
“Ugly!” The alpha screamed down at her as she stomped her boot against Heather’s bowed head. The alpha ignored her pleas for mercy. “You stupid, ugly, little cow! How many times have I told you to keep your head down!”

“I... I’m sorry,” Heather cried as blood began to smear over her forehead from the hair the alpha had ripped from her skull earlier. “I-“

“Stop your stuttering!” The alpha screamed as she raised her boot and struck her in the rib cage. “Does nothing stick in your brainless head?! Does all your energy go into that wild hair?” Heather screamed in pain, unable to breathe for a few moments after the kick. “Well? What do you have to say for yourself?!“

“I couldn’t see!” Heather sobbed, one of the stylists had suggested her wild hair might look more appealing if it was long. The result had caused her crazed locks to cover her eyes in such a way that made it hard to see with her head bent down. “I was just checking where I was going, please forgive me!”

“You couldn’t see?” The alpha laughed as she pulled a knife from her belt and bent down to pet the girl’s frizzy locks.

“Yes, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry,” Heather whimpered, her face was wet with tears and her lips trembled.

Suddenly and violently her curls were grabbed and her head yanked off the floor.

“I would sooner care to see you blindly walk off a cliff than see that hideous mark on your ugly face!” The alpha snarled at her, her fangs flashing at her and spit hitting her face. She could never unsee the hatred in those icy blue eyes.

“Please...” Heather whispered the broken plea through bloodied lips.

“The others think we can do something about how ugly you are, get something for our time raising
you but I don’t think so.” The alpha held the knife up threateningly to the young girl. “Who could ever want something like you? With your frizzy untamable hair, those puke colored eyes, and that mark. . . You’ll probably never leave here. . . So why should we even bother growing out your repulsive hair?”

“No!” Heather tried to struggle away from the woman. Her hair was the least of her grotesque traits, when they said that making it longer could give her a chance at a mate she had been so happy! If she took it away. . . She might never be sold. “Please don’t!”

“Next time remember to keep your head down,” the alpha hissed at her as she slammed Heather’s head to the floor with enough force to knock the wind from her lungs again. The world blacked out and everything felt like it was spinning too fast.

The sound of sawing through her hair made her sob quietly. Hair began to rain down over her body as the woman meticulously cut her hair, nicking her pale skin around her neck as she went.

Heather tried to raise her head to struggle only for the woman’s hand to grab her neck like one would hold a misbehaving cat. Her nails dug into her bleeding skin, cutting her more.

“KEEP. YOUR. HEAD. DOWN!” She snarled right into Heather’s ear. “No one wants to see your ugly face!”

Heather shot awake, falling out of her bed as she did. The moment was jarring and out of conditioned instinct, Heather immediately pointed her face to the floor. She took a panicked moment to make sure no one else was in the room before allowing her head to come up. She was ready at any moment to look down again, to hide her face inside the lions mane she called hair.

The room she had been placed in was small but far nicer than anything she had ever seen before. She was one of the unlucky few to be raised from only a few days old inside the facility. She had never felt something as soft as the bed in her room before.

Three days, that’s how long she had been here and already everyone else seemed to have lost all reason! The others she had come with were talking with some ‘therapist’, whatever that was, and now seemed to believe they really were free.

The ‘high omegas’, as the other facility omegas that arrived here before Heather’s group had begun to call the group of weirdly dressed omegas that ran this place, were encouraging them to ‘discover
themselves’.

Couldn’t everyone see this was some kind of complex trick?! Alphas and betas only ever wanted one thing from them. Period!

Heather wouldn’t fall into their trap, she wouldn’t go to the ‘group therapy’ the high omegas recommended, she wouldn’t fall for the image of happy children of all genders playing together, she wouldn’t trust their far too sweet words. She wouldn’t ever raise her face. She knew if any of them realized how ugly she was then she’d be dead, they’d know she was worthless.

A light knock sounded at her door and Heather snapped her eyes to the floor, moving her hair to hide the marked side of her face.

“Um. . . Yes?” Heather whispered for the knocker to come in.

The door opened and one of the younger omegas from her facility entered, he was probably close to 13 or so. The boy was a cute little thing, he had been all smiles since they arrived here. He was about the age she had been when one of their instructors cut off all her hair. It had grown past her shoulders now, she should probably cut it soon as not to obscure her vision again.

“Hey Heather!” Si, the young omega, called. “Bisky-chama says she wants to talk to you!”

Heather froze in horror, Biscuit was one of the high omegas. One of the omegas helping in this trick, Heather wasn’t sure who owned the pink ladened woman but she was sure that would be the alpha pulling all the strings in this operation.

“Oh. . .” Heather knew this was probably the end of the road for her. The woman would see her face and then kill her. Heather felt rather resigned to it, even looking forward to it even. Her only regret would be leaving the others to whatever horrors would eventually come for them. “Okay, where is she?” Heather asked as she kept her face to the floor.

“She’s out front yelling at the guard, he was hitting on Meridia again.” Heather nodded, knowing exactly where to go. Everyone had run ins with the guard so most mapped out how to avoid him, which meant knowing exactly where he was.

He had bugged every omega that was of age so far except for Heather. Heather was sure it was
because she was just too plain to notice but if he ever did try he’d surely kill her for her face the moment he saw her.

He was a strange man Heather had gathered from watching him, and she found she was always watching him when he was around. He acted how she’d expect an alpha to act and that was strangely comforting in this confusing and frightening situation. Yet at the same time he never went past some invisible line, yes he hit on the omegas, but he never tried to touch and his flirting seemed held back. Like he was dancing around what he really wanted to say for some unknown reason. Sometimes he’d say something a little too flirty and he’d flinch like he expected someone to hit him.

He was certainly a strange man, an alpha for sure, but he did take guarding the building very seriously.

Heather walked with her shoulder to the wall, her feet shuffling and her back hunched to further obscure her from view. Even if death was a welcoming thought she didn’t want to openly invite it.

Biscuit was indeed still yelling at the guard. Heather couldn’t believe this upside down place. Who were they trying to fool? This was obviously just an act, no alpha would take that from an omega for real.

“You made her feel very uncomfortable!” Biscuit shouted, stomping her foot and waving a clenched fist.

“I was just talking to her! It’s not like I touched her or invited her to my bed!” The guard yelled back at the small omega. “I don’t see what I did wrong!”

Nobunaga was about ready to pull out his hair. He’d been here three days and he was no closer to getting himself a mate. He’d always believed in love, dreamed about his own happy union. He’d thought this might give him a chance for it but Biscuit seemed to take offense to him even looking at one of the omegas! What was so wrong for him to be looking for love?!

“You- GAH!” Biscuit screamed at the sky. “Whatever! Just go do a patrol or something!”

“You- GAH!” Biscuit screamed at the sky. “Whatever! Just go do a patrol or something!”

“Fine!” The guard stomped away with that and Biscuit finally noticed Heather standing on the fringes of the fight. “Heather! Oh good, I wanted to speak with you!”
Heather flinched at the woman’s cheerful tone. It sounded so fake to her ears, it was like a fishing lure trying to draw her in but she knew there was a hook waiting for her.

Biscuit waited for the girl to acknowledge her in some way but she got nothing. The curly haired omega just continued to stand in her hunched state, her hair covering her face completely. Biscuit truly felt for the young woman, according to the records she had been in that hell hole the longest. Longer than any omega they had come across actually.

But Biscuit was also hopeful. The girl had shown that with the other facility omegas to be very smart and quick to put others first. If they worked with the girl she could be a valuable asset, she could really help all the omegas that would be getting help here, especially because she was older than the rest and had lived the same experience as them unlike Biscuit and her team.

“Well I’ve noticed you’ve been skipping your therapy meetings and the group activities,” Biscuit watched as the girl flinched and began to shake like she expected to be hit. She tried to release a calming scent but it only seemed to make the girl shake more. “Look, we think you could be very helpful to everyone else here, but you have to take care of yourself first. So I’ve scheduled extra meetings with the ther-

Heather had stopped listening as she began to calm a bit. Did they want her to teach the children to trust them? To obey? That had been the job they were transitioning her to at the facility too. Heather had enjoyed that job even if it was only a job they gave to undesirable omegas.

Biscuit grew a bit frustrated as she rattled on, she couldn’t even tell if the girl was listening with her hair in front of her face like that! Quickly Biscuit stepped forward into the girl’s space and drew her hand up to lift her sandy hair.

The girl squeaked in alarm, her pretty pale green eyes widened and her face flushed. Biscuit’s own eyes must have shown her surprise at the large mark on the girl’s right cheek.

Heather’s heart stopped as bright pink eyes focused on the mark on her cheek. She could see the surprise but didn’t think she could bear the disgust she knew would come, so as quickly as she could she jumped back and turned to run as far away as possible.

They’d kill her soon! She had been so close to any semblance of happiness too!

Tears pricked at her eyes as she stumbled back into the building, hearing Biscuit call out for her as
she went.

Biscuit cursed her impulsiveness, she knew she had made a grave mistake with Heather. Obviously she had some kind of hang up about her face, it was a shame though, she will be very pretty when she filled out. The girl looked starved.

Biscuit didn’t know how to fix the situation, the girl had panicked so much just from a glance at her face. She’d tried to stop her but in the end decided to allow her some time alone. She’d ask the others later for advice on how to continue.

Heather took random turns in order to hopefully lose anyone that would follow to end her. She didn’t really know why she was trying to prolong her own life, maybe she just didn’t want to feel the pain that would come before death.

She dropped into a random corner and hugged her knees, pressing her face into the corner as she quietly cried.

“I can’t believe it still,” the voice of an omega she knew from her facility filtered into the hallway. She cursed herself for picking a corner near one of the bogus group therapy sessions. Now she’d have to listen to the others being fooled. “Sometimes I just start crying, like it hits me! This is real.” *No it’s not!* Heather wanted to scream.

“I know, I feel the same way. When we first got here I was so scared but the longer I’m here the more I realize that I can actually have a life,” someone Heather didn’t know spoke up. “I realize every day that those facilities were wrong and evil, we aren’t toys. . . We’re people.”

*Even if that was true, how could you ever trust these people? Weren’t people the ones that sold us in the first place?* Heather thought as she allowed her tears to dry. Maybe it was people that were the problem, maybe she could just go to where there were no people.

“I have to get out of here,” Heather realized as she forced herself to stand. She’d grab a few things and then she could just go!

With a plan in mind and only a little time before someone came for her head, Heather ran back to her room.
Uvogin stood over the sweet girl named Sasha as she played with a few toys her parents had traded him for. He’d made the toys for his own daughter but he knew he could always make more.

Sasha's parents had been ecstatic when they realized one of the facilities they were raiding next should have their little girl. Luckily she was young enough that nothing too bad would have been done to her yet, everything would fade into a bad dream as she grew older. Already she was just like any other Ryuuseigai child, happily loved by her parents. Truly the influence of Chrollo and Kurapika on Ryuuseigai was extraordinary, before Chrollo took on the bills and debts of the city parents didn’t raise any children past the age of being able to defend themselves. Many of the citizens didn’t even know who their parents were, Uvogin sure didn’t and Chrollo didn’t either. It was only Chrollo's passion for family that encouraged the city to keep their families together.

And Kurapika. . . Well they were living through the change his presence brought this very moment.

Sasha was such a sweet child, Uvogin couldn't help but imagine his own little girl while watching her play along with her parents.

“Thank you for getting her back to us safely,” her beta mother sniffled up at Uvogin, she had begun crying tears of joy every time she so much as looked at her sweet child. Her mate held her tightly to his chest, a look of pure happiness in his face.

“If there is anything you ever need, just ask us. Nothing compares to having our little girl back,” he added. Uvogin could tell that he was going to be a very protective father considering he’d lost five years with the girl. “We rejected letting Simon take her from the moment she was born, I only wish we had been strong enough to speak up all those years ago.”

“Do not blame yerselves, we were all brainwashed by his ideals. It took the Phantom Troupe months to realize the truth as well,” Uvogin settled a gentle hand on his shoulder, the citizens already felt guilty enough for betraying their omegan citizens. No sense torturing themselves more.

“You’re right, we should just be happy that we are one of the lucky ones. We got her back,” his mate nodded as she cried. She pushed out of his arms and called for little Sasha, wishing to hold the girl.
“Mommy, why are you so sad?” Sasha laughed as she giggled in the loving embrace. Her father teared up at her words and fell to his knees to hold both girls in his arms.

“We’re just so happy you’re back baby,” he told her, his mate too emotional to say anything after being called mom. “And we will never let you go again.”

Uvogin grinned and decided it was time to go, Sasha was happy and the citizens were getting their families back. All was well. Sasha gave him a little wave as he turned to leave, Uvogin waved back as he happily ambled back to the Phantom Troupe headquarters.

Uvogin gave quick greetings to Knov and Knuckle and even Palm hiding behind the fridge as he walked through the building. He’d be leaving soon, Machi was getting close to birth and he wanted to be there. Plus with Hisoka on the move Uvogin didn’t feel right about leaving Machi and Kurapika undefended, even if they were both strong they were also now heavily pregnant.

When he reached the upstairs Uvogin spotted the intricate crib he had carved for Kurapika and Chrollo. The reminder of his and Machi’s secret surprise caused Uvogin’s already good mood to soar!

Kurapika and Fanaka had set up a wonderful surprise baby shower for Machi so they had decided to pay back that kindness by secretly setting up Kurapika and Chrollo’s nursery!

With that plan in mind Uvogin grabbed for his phone, one of the few material possessions he had, and dialed Chrollo’s number.

“Yes?” Chrollo answered on the second ring.

“Ey’ Danchou,” Uvogin greeted. “Raids are going smoothly and the transition has been going good as well. My kid’ll be born soon so I’m gonna come back to Gyodongdon, will you be around?”

“No, Kurapika had a craving for some chocolate you can only get in an isolated little town up north, so we’re heading that way. Hisoka has been getting close so we will probably stay away for a little while.”

“Kay’” Uvogin held in a joyous laugh at how well his plan was working out. He’d be able to sneak the crib into the village and help Machi set up everything else they had prepared!
Nothing was going to ruin this surprise!

Heather slumped in the corner of the last building before the gates of the city. Her mind was in a whirlwind, a constant push and pull of her anxieties.

On one hand if she didn’t leave she’d be killed, but on the other she’d be leaving everyone behind to whatever hell this place is trying to pretend it’s not. But then the idea that she could ever find a place to be happy was incredibly foolish of her, the universe itself seemed to hate her, and how dare she believe she had the skill enough to even live that hermit lifestyle!

She was basically choosing between dying of exposure while betraying everyone she knew or dying here for her ugly face.

Both were not good options, but at least dying of exposure would be her own choice, the only choice she’d ever have.

Nobunaga sulked as he patrolled the area for the fiftieth time since he got back to Ryuusaigai. If he didn’t know the city like the back of his hand then he certainly did now.

His frown only got deeper as he heard an omega he had been interested in giggling with a different alpha. In the last three days he had seen alpha after alpha begin courting several of the omegas.

They seemed to be pairing off rather quickly, or maybe it just seemed that way to Nobunaga because he couldn’t seem to find even one omega to like him back. It was beginning to really depress him, what if he never found anyone?

His sharp eyes took in the bent over figure of someone hiding in a dark alleyway and he tensed, recognizing one of the omegas Biscuit told him he was 100% not allowed to talk to. Apparently she was one of their worst cases and so they told him to stay away under threat of several broken bones.

She looked to be having some kind of struggle, hugging herself and crying into her knees, her hair
still covering her face. Nubonaga could faintly hear the sounds of her arguing to herself but in the end decided not to pay her any mind. His job wasn’t to coddle any teary eyed weaklings, especially one that would apparently break down if an alpha so much as spoke to them.

He began to walk away, for some reason keeping an eye on her as he began to leave the area. A bit of concern filled him as he noticed her begin to stumble for the gates, a pack in her hand indicating that she was running away.

He shook off the concern, it wasn’t his business. If she wanted to leave then she could!

It’s not like if she died out in the deserts Chrollo would . . . No he’d kill him for that. Well whatever! He’s just supposed to make sure no one attacks! He wasn’t told to be a freaking nanny!

She disappeared from sight just as Nobunaga remembered the reports of traffickers wandering just outside the gates.

“GOD DAMNIT!” Nobunaga broke into a run after the stupid girl. If she got captured or killed he’d be in so much trouble! Kurapika might actually kill him and Chrollo would never trust him again!

Heather at first stumbled but as she passed the gates she began to run, going as fast as she could away from this trap. She’d be free for real! Even if it’s just until the sun or some wild beast kills her, it’s still because she chose it. She wanted to die a free omega!

As she slowly left the city behind she began to lift her head, little by little seeing the night sky for the first time in her life. It was beautiful! So many lights and what she believed were stars shined all around her. For what could be the first time a genuine smile actually touched her lips. She was actually, truly, free!

And that made the situation she found herself in all the worse. She stopped dead when she cleared a hill and found herself looking at a small encampment. The heavy scent of alphas made her sick, and their eyes all snapping at her froze her stiff.

She knew even without seeing the cages that these people were not with the city, they were traffickers! The ones she had heard tales of from other omegas that had come to the facility older.
“No. . .” Heather whimpered as she moved to back away only for the loose sand to slip out from under her foot, causing her to fall. The group of alphas sitting around a small fire all began to get up and surround her as she began to feel her breath thin. Heather would take anything rather than to go back to the facility! No, no!

“No! Please no!” Heather fell into sobs as she tried to crawl away but her limbs felt like lead. She couldn’t breathe!

Nobunaga cursed under his breath when he couldn’t locate the girl the moment he cleared the gates. How was she so fast?! He followed her tracks in the sand as far as he could until he came to a hill then he heard it.

“No! Please no!” The cries of the girl gave him pause just before the panic. Was someone hurting her?! Damnit, if she even has a scratch on her he’d kill everyone, he was in so much trouble!

“Well lookie here!” A croning voice called, as Nobunaga climbed over the hill in zetsu. The omega was huddled in the center of the group, shaking and whimpering in fright. “Looks like this one realized its place and came crawling back to where it belongs!” The man, if you could call him that, laughed.

Nobunaga didn’t see what he had to laugh and seem so proud over, an omegan girl had accidentally walked into their camp and immediately fell down in a panic attack. It’s not like they took down and captured someone like Biscuit or Kurapika! Yet something about those words struck him, the feeling froze him enough to allow the scene to continue on a little longer.

The alpha grabbed the girl by her hair and dragged her up, she screamed and spasmed before just going limp in some sort of coping mechanism. Her eyes didn’t even seem to be focusing, like she had disassociated from the situation completely.

“Ah, damnit,” the man cursed as he got a look at her face. Nobunaga wondered what they saw to look so disappointed. “It’s too old, and that mark! No respectable place will pay enough to cover the cost of transporting her!” He threw her forcefully into the sand like she was a piece of trash.

Nobunaga got a look at her face then and he didn’t see anything wrong, sure the mark was noticeable but her real problem was how thin her face was. Did they not feed her in that facility?

“Even if we can’t sell it we can still have some fun!” Someone else called.
“Yeah, that’s what omegas are for! If we can’t sell it then it shouldn’t matter if we take a few turns with it,” another called.

Nobunaga now knew why those words had struck him so: those were almost exactly what he had once said to and about Kurapika . . . He had more in common with these filthy traffickers than any of his troupe and that was a devastating blow!

Heather couldn’t feel anything, her eyes took in the sand dunes and she could vaguely hear the alphas discussing what to do with her. Then they began talking about who would get to touch her first and she was completely knocked out of her limp state.

The facility was bad but to be touched over and over by these alphas was worse!

Heather jumped up and tried to crawl away, screaming and crying out for help even if she knew no one cared about the fate of an ugly omega.

“Shut that thing up!” Someone hissed. Heather glanced back in time to see a club coming down for her head. She squeaked and braced for the impact, knowing this was going to hurt but the pain never came.

When Heather peaked up she saw none other than the guard standing over her, his robe billowing in the soft night wind as he blocked the club with the sheath of his sword.

“You people make me sick,” the guard snarled at the traffickers. “You were going to hit her?! She was already down you filthy bastards!”

Heather felt something in her grow warm as for the first time in her life someone actually defended her. He was like the white knight from the story book she learned to read from.

“You!” The alpha guard’s black eyes looked down at her and Heather quickly hid her blushing face. “Good don't watch this, you shouldn’t have to see this.” Heather did as he said, squeezing her eyes shut. The sounds of screams of pain and cutting flesh made her cover her ears.

After what felt like hours a hand touched her shoulder and Heather jumped in shock before she
heard the soothing sounds of the guard’s voice.

“It’s okay, I didn’t mean to scare you but you need to get up. I have to take you back,” Heather was still in shock so she did as he said. She got up and allowed him to brush her off before he grabbed her wrist and began to walk her back towards the city. She didn’t fight it.

His hand felt really warm around her skin and Heather began to feel the hope of a happy mating that she had given up on a long time ago. But then she remembered her unfortunate face.

Even if the man had helped her that didn’t mean anything, and he was sure to regret it as soon as he got a look at her in the light. Plus it wasn’t like he had ever shown any interest in her before, like he had with almost everyone else.

Heather let her head drop even more, hiding her face and especially her quivering lip. She wouldn’t allow this to be the thing to finally break her to pieces.

And of course that was the sentiment she thought of as her foot hit a rock and she tripped.

Nobunaga turned quickly when he felt the girl begin to fall, he caught her hand to keep her steady and rolled his eyes heavenward. Dear lord! He wanted to just throw her over his shoulder from how slowly she was moving! Although Biscuit would be very upset if she witnessed that.

“How can you see through all that hair!” Heather tensed and grabbed at her hair. Would he cut it off with his sword?! No! she had finally grown it back out to a length she liked, please don’t take it away again!

Suddenly a hand grabbed her chin and her head was gently tipped up. Her eyes widened as she found herself looking up at him, but he didn’t back away and he wasn’t even surprised by her mark.

“Keep your head up so you can see!” He chided her. Heather was so surprised and touched by the words her mouth flapped open. He took his hand away and her head dropped an inch or two, causing her hair to fall in front of her eyes. He scoffed in apparent annoyance and Heather readied herself to be hit. “Your hair has a mind of its own, doesn’t it?” He muttered.

Nobunaga didn’t want her to trip again but he couldn’t carry her like a prisoner, he scratched his
head in confusion on how to proceed. He felt his topknot and then an idea came to him.

Heather got closer to crying every moment she waited for the man to harm her, tensing so much that she jumped again when he suddenly spoke after the long silence.

“Here, this should help,” Heather peaked up and watched as the man pulled the long ribbon that kept his hair up out of its tie and let his long straight hair fall around him.

He reached for her and then paused. He seemed to argue something with himself for a moment before breathing out another huff of annoyance and shook his head. Then he pulled the ribbon under her hair, around the back of her neck, brushing past her scars without any disgust. “This ribbon is pretty strong, I’ve had it most of my life and it’s always kept my hair out of my eyes, so it should be good,” he mumbled down at her. He didn’t seem to notice how close they were. He pulled the ribbon up, pushing back her hair and tied it into a bow on top of her head.

“There now everyone can see your pretty eyes,” he gave her a pure smile, flashing his teeth. He spun around and took her hand again to continue leading her back into the city.

Did he not realize that he had just flipped her entire world upside down?
Heather was still in shock when she returned to her room after the guard had saved her from the traffickers. He escorted to the omega area then let her enter the building on her own. She was aware that she passed two omegas and alphas that seemed to be courting, one of them being Biscuit but the pink omega did nothing more than nod at her as she passed.

No yelling, no shouts to look at the ground, no comments on her ugly face. Everything felt surreal, especially her hand that the guard had so casually held as he guided her back to the omega area. No one came to take her life that night as she settled into her room again and went to bed.

The harsh light of morning seemed to promise some return to normalcy when Heather woke the next morning, except her hair didn’t coil up and around to block her face. Blinking, her hand whipped back to feel her hair, terrified once again that it was gone only to find the ribbon that guard had used to tie it back. Tugging the ribbon free, she stared at it for a long moment.

The ribbon was not a pretty thing, far from it actually. It was old and more than a little beaten up, but it seemed strong.

Rising from bed, Heather’s hair formed the familiar halo around her head as she left the room and headed downstairs where breakfast was being served. At the facility she’d only been allowed a meal every so often and it usually consisted of the leftovers after the other omegas had eaten, so she still wasn’t used to joining a line and receiving an equal portion to everyone else.

The alpha that was helping to cook and serve the food looked more than a little rough and scary most days, but today she looked oddly pleasant with her hair well brushed and a smile in place.

“Good morning!” the woman, Palm if Heather remembered her name correctly, greeted each omega as she served breakfast. “Knov-sama said that the three berry oatmeal was wonderful today!”

Once again Heather felt like the world was off balance, Knov was one of the high omegas! Was this…?

Palm smiled pleasantly at Heather when her turn came and served her just as she had the omegas before. Heather was beginning to shake as she reached out to accept the bowl.

“We didn’t see you at meals yesterday. If you’re still hungry then please come and get seconds after everyone has had a serving.” Palm stated as she pressed the bowl into Heather’s hands.

Heather felt shock as she took the bowl and stepped back. Extra food? What was happening?! They… they had to be planning for this to be her last meal, that had to be it! They…

Moving to a table, Heather sat blankly and stared at her food. The oatmeal did smell wonderful and around her other omegas ate without complaint. Some were smiling, some looked shell-shocked, and there seemed to be more new faces mixed in.

Knowing this was probably her last meal, Heather began to eat as well and had to admit that this oatmeal tasted far better than anything she ever remembered eating. The facility usually just gave them a cold goop that barely had any taste. The kindest overseer she had ever encountered would
occasionally mix things into the food, dried fruit and sugar that gave it a pleasant semi-taste, but they had been stopped after getting caught trying to pass a bag of dried fruit to an omega. She’d never seen that man again after that.

Despite how good the food was, Heather barely ate half of the bowl as nerves and her stomach rebelled. She simply wasn’t used to eating so much and trying to do so now seemed impossible.

Rising, she took her bowl towards the washing area and rinsed out the extra oatmeal and the bowl, washing it before placing it on a rack.

The ribbon was still in her pocket and she knew she should give it back, she wouldn’t be needing it anymore.

Knowing the route of the guard meant finding him was easy and find him she did, enjoying a bit of shade before the sun got too high today. Already a few other omegas were exiting the building, some just wandering, some were kids meeting new friends, some meeting alphas. The guard watched them all with a strange look, like he were seeing them for the first time before his eyes turned to her as she approached.

Heather wasn’t sure what to say, nothing in her life had ever prepared her for trying to return something since omegas were never supposed to have anything. Instead her fingers clutched at the ribbon in her pocket and pulled it out, offering it back to the guard, her face turned to the ground.

The guard didn’t move, didn’t say anything and Heather searched her mind for what she was supposed to say.

“T-th-thank y-ou,” she forced out after a moment, not sure of anything else to say.

“It’s alright,” the guard replied, not accepting his ribbon back.

Heather kept her hand out, offering it to him. “Yo-ur… ribbon.”

“Keep it.”

“But-”

“You need it a lot more to keep your hair out of your pretty eyes,” the alpha replied and Heather took a step back, shocked at being told that any part of her was ‘pretty.’ Her unconscious step caused her to trip on a rock or something, she wasn’t sure what, and she began to fall.

“Careful there!” the guard declared as his hands came up and caught her arms, stopping her fall and helping Heather to regain her footing. The ribbon was taken from her hand and once again used to draw her hair back and tied in a slightly messy bow. “You can see better this way,” the guard explained after finishing. “Look better too.”

Heather felt a blush rise as her face turned to the ground automatically, but calloused fingers appeared under her chin and lifted her head so that she could once again see the guard’s face.

“Might want to head inside before you get too much sun,” the man stated before he began to walk away. “And try to stay in town if you go exploring again, more traffickers are appearing every day and I don’t think you want to see what the locals do to those that try to take or harm our fellows.”

Shaking set in after a moment as Heather watched the man continue on his patrol, nodding to other people and pausing to help up an omega child as he did. She was able to see this new world for the first time as well and Heather stared as omegas walked and talked, not locked in cages or ordered
to shut up. Children played, regardless of their gender.

Could it be real? Could they really be… free? WHAT WAS SHE THINKING?! Of course they weren’t! This had to be some sort of elaborate plot, some new scheme! A different type of facility but a facility nonetheless!

Moving back to the building, Heather felt chills run along her spine as she entered the building again then noticed Biscuit watching her. The woman said nothing, did nothing, but Heather remembered their short conversation yesterday. They weren’t going to kill her for her face, not yet at least, not if she proved useful. And the woman wanted her to go to the ‘therapy’ sessions.

They hadn’t hurt her thus far, or any of the other omegas. So maybe she should go along with this for now.

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Biscuit had seen the fragile omega, Heather, approach Nobunaga and had been about to blitzkrieg his ass until she had seen him catch the woman when she tripped. His actions seemed to not be sexually motivated and genuine, especially when he drew the woman’s hair back and tied it with the ribbon she had been offering him. A ribbon Biscuit recognized as the one he had returned without the previous night.

The man had explained last night that one of the omegas was exploring and got cornered by some traffickers that were scoping out the city. So was Heather the omega he had rescued? It seemed likely at the moment.

So how should she deal with this? Nobunaga was not-

Biscuit’s train of thought cut off abruptly when Heather paused in front of one of the rooms where group therapy was taking place, took a breath, and entered.

Every fiber of Biscuit’s body longed to rush into that room, or at least to peak in and see if Heather actually was joining the group. Had Nobunaga somehow convinced her to go to the group? He didn’t seem to do anything special, just exchanged a few words and tied her hair back with that old ribbon.

Was it the traffickers and Heather finally realized they weren’t the enemy? If so, then she probably felt the person she could trust most here would be Nobunaga. The samurai wasn’t being inappropriate with her, so maybe she should give them space or perhaps encourage the pair to talk a bit more, especially if it made Heather more willing to talk and open up?

Biscuit considered this plan then nodded to herself before attempting to peek into the room surreptitiously through the window on the door, spying how Heather had joined the group even if she didn’t seem ready to talk.

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The group therapy confused Heather. She wasn’t sure why she went each day considering that she didn’t speak, but she did listen.

Omegas spoke to each other, sharing their experiences. Some came from high grade facilities where they were being raised specifically to the particular tastes of certain alphas. One boy reported how his leg had been broken over and over due to his future alpha wanting him to have a permanent limp. His leg was being treated here and he hoped to be able to walk without pain soon.

Several omegas spoke about how this new environment scared them at first, not because of it being
new, but because it was so big!

“I literally spent my first few days wrapped in a blanket,” a girl with red hair and brown eyes confessed. “I refused to leave my room because it was so different from the cages. It still scares me to go outside, it feels like I could fall into the sky and it would swallow me!”

All of the omegas admitted to being afraid when the people of this place came for them, killing the guards and pulling them out of the cages only to march them away from the facilities that many had not been outside of for years.

When the group session ended Heather once again stood, having kept her silence for yet another day, and headed to the door. She was not surprised to find Biscuit there waiting for her. It seemed that the woman sought her out every day now and asked her to do some small task or another. They always involved a certain guard.

“They’re afraid of the guards! Nobunaga forgot his lunch again! Would you run this out to him?” Biscuit asked as she held up what looked like a medium sized box wrapped in a cloth.

Heather nodded quietly and Biscuit passed the box to her before turning and walking down the hallway towards the back exit. Around this time of day was when the woman left for several hours to do something that some of the omegas could only speculate on.

Glancing at a small clock, Heather realized that around this time the guard, Nobunaga, would be near the oasis. She didn’t know if she was allowed there normally but decided that it was probably allowed right now since she had a task to complete.

Leaving the building, she found the heat of the desert to be oppressing and drew in a heavy breath of the hot air, uncertain if she could truly breathe. Several breaths later she felt she could continue and began the trek towards the oasis.

“It feels like I could fall into the sky and it would swallow me!” The words echoed in Heather’s head as she walked up the street, dodging laughing children as they zipped around the buildings playing games. It seemed like such a preposterous thought, the sky swallowing someone!

But… Did she even know what the sky looked like?

Heather’s eyes slowly raised from the slight downward slant she maintained, trailing upward towards the sky that she now found herself curious of.

It was large and blue. So very blue. It was like the ocean she had once read about, except that it loomed above her, impossibly vast! Birds were occasionally present, but otherwise the sky was mostly unbroken from horizon to horizon, the buildings not even seeming to obscure it-

“Woah! Careful there!” a familiar voice declared and Heather felt a pair of hands catch her shoulders. Her eyes finally came down from the sky and she realized in her inattention that she had almost walked straight into Nobunaga!

Terror gripped her as she remembered what had happened the last time she had run into someone and Heather tucked into herself, eyes and face turning to the ground automatically.

“Hey, don’t do that! What were you looking at?” the man asked as he stepped back, obviously attempting to give her some space.

Heather didn’t answer as she held up the box for him to take.
“Oh, guess I forgot about that.” The box was accepted and Heather turned to leave but the guard called her back. “So what were you looking at? You looked like you’d never seen the sky before.”

An answer was expected, Heather could sense it. “I-I haven’t…”

“Oh…” Now the guard shifted in discomfort. “As in never?”

“No…”

Nobunaga shifted a bit. “Might want to look up at the sky tonight then. The stars are amazing out here, far from the city lights.”

Heather nodded but her chin was caught yet again and head angled up, her eyes meeting Nobunaga’s yet again. He didn’t look anywhere near as terrifying as she thought he would, black eyes meeting her own.

“Look up a bit more, you’ll get used to the sky and won’t run into people.”

Heather’s heart was beating as she headed back to the omega buildings. That man had seemed honestly surprised that she was not used to seeing the sky. But more importantly, he had told her that she would get used to it. They didn’t intend to take the sky from her, so possibly not kill her?

Heather did as the guard suggested that night and looked up at the sky and her breath caught at the sight of the stars she had read about. They shimmered so brightly, forming patterns so many patterns that she couldn’t even count them. She sat down absently on a bench, eyes drinking in the beauty above her.

“Really haven’t seen stars before, have you?” Nobunaga stood several feet away and had obviously been there for several minutes, causing Heather to yelp and turn her eyes down. “Hey! Don’t do that! You were actually smiling a moment there! I’ll leave if you want!”

Heather shook her head, but her voice failed her in that moment. She was embarrassed to have not noticed him.

“You know that people used to draw shapes in the stars called constellations?” the guard continued after a moment. “Used to know a few of them because some of the people here would point them out to the kids. It wasn’t much but…”

Nobunaga rubbed the back of his neck, unsure of what to do. Biscuit had rescinded her order to not speak to Heather, changing that to try to talk about the weather or other subjects she said were safe. The stars were never discussed but they seemed safe enough.

“...Were there any flowers...?” Heather whispered after a moment.

“Huh?”

“Flowers... I-I saw one once... A guard that was nice and would sometimes bring stuff from outside,” Heather explained. “He brought a flower in one day…”

Nobunaga felt his eyebrows beginning to rise even as he began to understand some of what happened in the facilities. So many of the omegas that were rescued shook when someone approached and they seemed surprised by the strangest things. Heather’s fixation on the sky was something he had begun to see in some of the other omegas and he heard angry mutterings from some of the alphas that were courting some of the less broken omegas about how they had not seen the sky in months or even years.
“I don’t recall any flowers,” he admitted after a moment. “I was always drawn to the stories of warriors and…” Heroes that fell in love.

“Oh…”

“Hey, come find me tomorrow after breakfast. I think I know of something you’ll like!”

Heather blinked after the guard as he walked away, uncertainty rising in her chest. He hadn’t given her a reason to distrust him yet, so…

When Heather woke the next morning, she found herself oddly eager to get moving and had quickly dressed in some of the clothes provided by this place before finding herself in front of a mirror, trying to fix her hair a bit. Sense returned to her and she stepped away, feeling foolish. No amount of primping would make her ugly face attractive.

She couldn’t have said what she ate for breakfast that day but for the first time she wasn’t scraping off extras into a bin, just rinsing and washing her plate.

Nobunaga was in his usual patrol place that morning and he almost jumped when he saw Heather exit the building and head towards him. Biscuit had agreed to let him have a few hours off and Knuckle was patrolling the area instead.

“Hey! Glad you came!” he greeted as Heather stopped before him. “Come on! Let’s go before it gets too hot!”

Heather nodded and trailed after him as he turned to lead the way and Nobunaga felt strange in that moment. He didn’t want to just lead in that moment, he wanted Heather next to him so he could see her face when they reached their destination. But she stopped when he did, maintaining a distance of exactly four steps behind him.

“Don’t do that! Look around, this is your home now! And I can point things out better if you’re next to me.”

Heather felt lost and terrified as she raised her eyes slightly but Nobunaga’s fingers came out quickly and tipped her head up.

They were out of the omega area, Heather could tell straight away. The streets here were slightly wider and full of people, several who gave her curious passing glances but there were no yells for her to lower her face. Stalls were scattered around and held a number of items, some being what looked like food or jewelry and Heather’s eyes roved hungrily over the stalls.

Nobunaga’s hand found her own and she jumped as he began to guide her down the street.

“This is one of the smaller market streets,” he explained as they walked past several stalls. “The main market area is a madhouse nowadaysanymore, but I suppose that’s because people actually have something to trade now.”

There were more people in this one area than Heather could say she had ever seen in her life and as her eyes continued to take in more stalls and wares, she also saw more people.

The walk took another thirty minutes and then the street seemed to clear a bit even as it grew wider. There were fewer people around and the birds seemed to be far more numerous. Shimmering heat disguised what they were headed towards and then Heather saw it clearly: an oasis, but not the one near the omega area. This one seemed to have a large number of animals, mostly birds, surrounding it. And there were flowers.
Heather stared in shock and awe as she was brought closer by Nobunaga, her bewildered eyes and fingers longing to get closer to the flowers, to touch them. And then they were there and Nobunaga had released her hand and was smiling brightly as she stared in disbelief of the flowers.

“This is the only oasis in Ryuuseigai where flowers naturally grow, though another three are being used for farming,” he explained as Heather moved towards a small flowering shrub. The pinkish flowers looked soft and nearby there were other plants where flowers grew in vibrant whites and yellows.

Heather’s hand shook as she finally touched one of the flowers, feeling the velvety petals under her fingers.

“They’re prettier than I remembered,” Heather admitted after a moment.

Nobunaga watched as Heather moved from plant to plant, touching the flowers and leaves with an expression of awe on her face. He was reminded of her expressions of surprise and wonder at just the sky and the stars and couldn’t help but find himself confused. Flowers were rare in Ryuuseigai, but the sky and the stars were impossible to miss.

“Heather… Would you mind if I asked a question?”

The omega glanced up at him, her green eyes momentarily vibrant before she lowered them a bit. “Yes.”

“What happened in that facility?”

The question caused Heather to freeze and she found herself raising her eyes in shock at the man’s question, but there was no indication that he was being anything other than authentic in his question. Knowing when someone was being honest had been the best way to distinguish the nicer guards and trainers from the nasty ones, Heather learned that lesson well, so she knew that Nobunaga was being honest when he continued.

“I mean… So many of you are suspicious of everything but you don’t jump even when surprised. The sky and stars are unfamiliar and… I don’t get what happened there. The way those facilities talk, it sounds almost like they seclude you in a small village to grow up and follow instincts to serve, but that wasn’t true, was it?”

Heather took a small shaking breath as she remembered the facility. The ‘rooms’ were essentially the cages and a few areas were clear and designated as ‘classrooms’ for the lessons of the omegas. And the facility said that they lived in a small village?

“T-the first ti-time I slept i-in a bed was here,” Heather began as she turned her head back to flowers. “We were… in cages. Everyday i-if we we-weren’t in classes to t-teach us t-to serve and care f-for children, we stayed i-in those cages. There w-were windows b-but we were n-never allowed near them…” Tears began to prickle at Heather’s eyes as more painful memories began to rise.

“They beat us every day if we m-made a s-single mistake, if we weren’t pretty enough, if we made a single n-noise or complaint. Some we-were stronger, refused to do a-as demanded and they were beaten more than the rest of us. Beaten until they wouldn’t look up, until they became docile and did as ordered. We did what they demanded so they wouldn’t hurt us but it never seemed to stop! They never stopped!”

The words poured out of Heather’s mouth as tears poured from her eyes, blurring her vision of the
beautiful flowers, and then Nobunaga was there, his own eyes wide.

“They said our alphas would beat us if we displeased them, so we needed to do everything we could to please them! And then they couldn’t sell me, I wasn’t pretty enough, so they kept beating me and then started making me teach the younger children. It was alright at first, reading and writing, then they wanted me to teach them to trust the guards and trainers so they would obey as well, hoping that the beatings would stop and…”

“Shh! Shh…” Nobunaga felt his heart breaking even as he pulled Heather to his chest as he watched her growing more upset with each second, even as he knew that she needed to expose these wounds. She needed an outlet and hadn’t been speaking in the therapy sessions, he heard Biscuit talk about that.

Nobunaga was no stranger to beatings, he had received and given them enough while young to know what could happen to someone that was continuously beaten. Thinking back, he began to recognize the signs he had ignored in the many omegas that had been rescued, the injuries some suffered from made it so they had to be carried or brought to Ryuuseigai in a cart.

In his head, the illusion that had been painted by society of the role of an omega finally broke as he held Heather, letting her cry for what was probably the first time in a very long time. The idea of pretty faces and bodies that happily served alphas finally met harsh reality and he realized that the eyes of many of those omegas looked dead even though they smiled and put on an act. They acted to try to avoid a beating or whatever they were threatened with away from public view, or even in full public view!

“It’s ok,” Nobunaga promised. “No one is going to hurt you and if someone threatens you, you come find me.”

Several hours later Nobunaga walked a silent Heather back to the omega area. He didn’t try to force her to stand next to him, but several times their hands brushed and he felt a bolt of pleasure when Heather didn’t pull her hand away from his.

“...So I think we should have a movie night,” Knuckle concluded and Biscuit snapped her attention back to him as Kite sat back and nodded.

“Any idea what kind of movie?” Knov asked. “We don’t want something that shows a weak omega being rescued by an alpha, it would completely defeat-”

A DVD being shoved under his nose by Knuckle caused Knov to cut off.

“The Republic of Padokea has maintained somewhat decent views of omegas and has a movie that I think would be perfect! It’s called Muran and is a story about an omega that joins the military disguised as an alpha and manages to win a huge victory for their country. Though they get exposed as an omega, they are also honored for their courage and strength!”

It did seem like a good movie, one to help inspire many of the omegas that were starting to find their feet. Several were already asking about getting jobs either in the recycling center or in the new gem mines and this might inspire them to go through with that plan or pursue another enterprise. A boy from the first facility who had had his leg broken over and over and his best friend, the leader of his semi-pack who was a girl whose hair was now completely red after the black dye had been washed out, were both talking to Knov about becoming Hunters.

“Sure, go ahead,” Biscuit stated and Knuckle cheered before rushing out, yelling about snacks and
such.

“What’s wrong?” Kite asked after ensuring that Knuckle and Shoot were both gone.

“Nobunaga.”

Kite adjusted his hat and waited.

“He’s… stopped even attempting to hit on the omegas after he showed Heather that oasis.”

“He had an epiphany.”

Biscuit’s eyebrows shot up and she stared at Kite.

“Come now, do you think we should have just let him walk out of here with one of the more fragile of the omegas? Though Heather doesn’t seem so fragile anymore, I followed them to make sure nothing happened.”

“And?”

“She finally spoke about what happened and he finally realized why omegas from facilities act the way they do. He doesn’t view us as defective anymore.”

The movie night happened two days later and during that time Nobunaga was watched like a hawk by Biscuit. She watched as he passed the omegas, not even attempting to flirt, only offering assistance when an omega tripped. He took no offense when they flinched, turned their heads away, or shuffled away from him, only noting that many seemed to do the same regardless of whoever it was.

Every day he brought Heather a flower or something small for her room. She had finally begun to speak in therapy sessions and that led many of the other omegas that had been holding out to begin to respond as well.

Some of the rescued omegas had never seen a movie and had not understood what to expect when it was announced that one would be shown. Those that had seen movies before had told them what a movie was, but all had been surprised when drinks, popcorn, and other snacks were provided.

Muran proved to be a good movie for many of the people and they watched, transfixed, some starry eyed, as it played.

Heather volunteered to help clean up afterwards when she saw Nobunaga start stacking chairs and folding tables. They worked quietly side by side for almost an hour before he had to depart to return to his normal guard rotation due to an exponential increase in the recent activity of omega kidnappers. Heather didn’t dare to ask what he did to them, finding she cared more for the fact that not a single omega was kidnapped or hurt, though several reported being grabbed and were rescued by the guard.

Nobunaga left after saying a quiet “Good night,” to her and passing her a single pink flower, one that Heather had found to be her favorite.

“Everyone else like the movie?” asked Sebast as they finished cleaning up the final pieces of the movie night, which was just a final check to ensure that all the bowls for the popcorn had been rinsed out.

His best friend, Junko, laughed as she stood beside him, giving him a bit of support since his one
leg was still weak after so many breaks. “Definitely! I want to see if these guys will let me learn to use a sword or martial arts now!”

“Considering most of them are Hunters, I doubt they’ll oppose,” another omega added. “Still want to be Hunters?”

“More than ever!” Junko declared vehemently. “If a few omegas can make all of this happen, imagine what more of us can accomplish! Finally kick down and burn all of those facilities and knock some sense into bastard alphas!”

“Oh come now, not all alphas are bad,” a pretty brunette pointed out as she wandered over to their group, brown eyes shining. “Miko has been wonderful and talks about the new mines where he works.”

“Angela is nice as well, she works at the recycling center,” a white haired girl added. “She’s always trying to make these things out of some of the scrap, like jewelry.”

“Agreed. Many of the alphas here seem fine, though a few are a bit… Pushy.”

Junko scoffed. “Sure, let an alpha bite your neck but that isn’t my bit!”

Most eyes shifted between the girl and Sebast then, noticing the way they had gotten closer in the weeks since they’d been here. Then the eyes shifted to Heather.

The woman blinked in surprise at being focused on and felt herself blush though she wasn’t sure why.

“Well? What about you Heather?” the brunette asked.

Heather was at a loss for words as she felt the flower in her hand again and glanced at it. “They’re very kind,” she said after a long moment.

“Pssh! Kind! Yeah, that one guard seems to be getting real close to you and you to him!” Junko declared loudly. “He was a damn creep when we got here and now you’re the only one he looks at! Doesn’t hit on anyone, even when he saved us when we were… Stargazing the other night.”

Heather glanced at Junko and Sebast, noting that the boy was blushing now and felt her lips twitch.

“Admit it, you’re comfortable together! And he seems to like you too!” Junko continued despite the shushing of the other omegas.

“I… I…”

“Anyway, we’ll head out. Night guys!” Junko called as she shifted and assisted Sebast in heading towards the door.

Heather watched them go even as memories of dreams she’d had when she was younger touched her but she shook them off quickly. She was an ugly omega! No one wanted-

Her train of thought was derailed when the brunette omega noticed the flower in her hand and focused on it. She had also been in Junko and Sebast’s group and had been here for quite a while.

“Did the guard give you that?” she asked when Heather saw her staring.

“Yes.”
“Your favorite color?”

“Yes…” Heather admitted.

“And he’s picked up on that without asking?” The brunette was smiling as Heather nodded. “You should share your dreams with him then.”

“Dreams?”

“Things you always wanted, even if they seem out of reach. The people here want us to be part of the community here, to help build this city. If you tell them what you can do, or want to do, then maybe they’ll help make it happen. Miko… He knows I like the gems he mines and he brings some to me. I don’t want to dig for them, but I loved seeing them cut and polished. I’m learning to do that now and they think I’ll be able to move out of here soon.”

“Move out?” Heather asked as the white haired omega echoed her.

“Yes, that’s their goal: that we learn to take care of ourselves and make our own decisions. Then we can move out into the city, find mates, and live as we please.” The smile the brunette wore was authentic yet scared. “It’s more than I ever thought I’d get, to be able to choose my mate, where I live, and make decisions for my future.”

Heather was haunted by the words as she walked back to her room, then found herself staring at her small collection of flowers. Things she wanted: a loving mate, children… And flowers. But could she leave this place with what she knew how to do? She’d been made to teach the young omegas to read, write, and do math. What could someone possibly do with that?

Nobunaga was at his usual spot the next morning as Heather walked out after breakfast, head turned down to the ground in thought. She was surprised when Nobunaga’s hand found her chin.

“You’re prettier when you don’t stare at the ground,” he reminded her.

“Will they let us leave this place?” she asked directly for once, needing to know the answer.

Nobunaga looked surprised. “Yeah, you’re not prisoners!”

“What if I wanted to go somewhere else? Somewhere where I could see flowers every day?”

“The oasis?”

“No… Somewhere green.”

“We could arrange something,” the alpha promised.

“What kind of work would I need to do?”

“What can you do?”

Heather’s eyes turned down again. “I wasn’t taught to do much, only teach the young omegas to read, write, and do math.”

“A teacher?” Nobunaga asked, eyebrows rising a bit before his face seemed to gain a small smile as he remembered hearing Kurapika discussing an issue with Fanaka.

“Is that an actual job?” Heather in turn asked, confusion on her face.
“Definitely, and I might know of the perfect place we could send you,” Nobunaga replied as he pulled out his phone.

Uvo grinned as he settled the crib into place then glanced around at the nursery. He had also made a rocking chair for Kurapika and it was settled near the window, Machi resting there currently after they had finished painting the room.

The baby room was yellow in color with a wooden dresser and changing table as well as the crib and rocking chair, Kortopi’s gift of diapers already settled next to the crib.

It was ready for a baby, regardless of the gender.
Kyo looked up strangely at Hisoka as he began to cackle madly, the man had been drawing on a mad for hours now and for some reason looked like he’d just cracked a code.

“What’s so funny?” Kyo asked from his bed, Hisoka had gotten them a hotel room for the night. Two separate beds... Kyo tried not to feel disappointed but... What omega didn’t want to sleep, and maybe more, with their mate?! Hisoka had never even tried to touch him, but his picture of Illumi got tons of use. Kyo was better than a candid picture!

“I’ve got it! I know exactly where Chrollo is going to be!” Hisoka kicked his feet and laughed harder.

Of course Chrollo! It was always about Chrollo, Killua, or Kurapika! Kyo was sick of hearing about them. Is this what jealousy felt like? A burning ache in his stomach that threatened to clench so hard he’d throw up?

No matter how hard Kyo tried to be the perfect mate to Hisoka and Illumi they both just never seemed to care! Why did they even buy him if they didn’t seem to want a third person in this arrangement?

Of course he knew why, and it wasn’t like Hisoka never gave him attention, but Kyo wanted more. So much more.

“What did you get?” Kyo pushed a smile on his face for the red headed half of his alphas and asked sweetly.

Hisoka shot up and jumped onto Kyo’s bed to lay next to him, holding out the map he had been scribbling on. Kyo looked over the lines and dots the alpha had drawn.

“Look! This is everywhere I’ve tracked Chrollo to, so you notice anything?” Hisoka was grinning like the cat that caught the canary.

“He spends a lot of time in these two places?” Kyo pointed to two different locations, one seemed
to be in the middle of a forest and the other in the middle of a desert, neither was a marked city or town.

“This here is a secret city called Ryuuseigai, the other is a little forest village. The most interesting thing is Chrollo goes back to this forest village more than Ryuuseigai where he is from. Suspicious don’t you think?” Hisoka had that glint in his eye that he got before he took that picture of Illumi and secluded himself to the bathroom.

“I guess?”

“I’ve been trying to find Chrollo’s private home for years now Kyo, and I think I’ve finally found it! Figures he lives in a forest, he always did like trees.”

“So then is he there now, are you finally going to get your fight?” Kyo asked to try and keep talking with Hisoka longer. He loved having those golden eyes on him.

“No, he’s somewhere north I think but I’m bored of following him around. I think I’ll just wait for him to get home.” Hisoka was grinning and now that he had said his piece he was getting up to get his picture of Illumi. Before Kyo could even protest the bathroom door was closing and the lock clicked in place.

His love life felt like it could be summed up in that sound.

“I’m sexier than a stupid picture dammit,” Kyo huffed and buried himself in his sheets to glare at the door. He could have at least left it open.

Heather felt the energy in the air the moment she woke up. The sound of multiple feet running around with urgency was almost deafening. What was going on?

She quickly threw on the first thing she could find, which happened to be a yellow dress she had made in a sewing class she had taken. Apparently Heather wasn’t the only omega here that didn’t know what she liked and so Biscuit had recruited citizens and other omegas to teach beginner classes on random little hobbies and activities. Heather had been hesitant to take one before but Nobunaga had been insistent that she should try to find things she liked to do.
After Nobunaga promised to talk to his boss (or was it his boss’s mate?), about letting her teach in a small forest village she didn’t remember the name of, the man had tried to ask what else she liked besides flowers. Heather had been at a loss, she really didn’t know. Apparently that rubbed Nobunaga the wrong way, now every day the man brought her to a different class. She’d already tried sword fighting (exhausting, and way to maybe bruises), jewelry making (kinda fun?), playing the harp (nope, those strings hurt!), sewing (fingers got a few holes now but very relaxing!), and whittling (no)! Heather couldn’t believe how many things there were to try!

Everyday she went to group therapy, talking with the others and laying out her guilt for having to tell the children to obey the facility guards and personnel. Opening up about how she’d never known anything else. Each day she said more than the last and it was actually making her feel better. As Biscuit had promised long ago, she’d set up private therapy meetings with a very proper man in a suit. She went to those as well, they promised if she got a clean bill of health that she could move.

The only thing that was weighing on Heather’s mind now was that when she moved she’d be leaving her- the guard behind. Nobunaga probably didn’t want an ugly omega like her, why would he follow her to the forest?

She looked in the mirror despite herself to check to see how the dress looked, she thought it was sewn a little crooked but Nobunaga had said she’d done great. It was plain, but he had liked it, that was enough for Heather.

Once the dress was reasonably straight on her shoulders, Heather took her precious ribbon and tied her hair back. Maybe she looked a little too plain? Would Nobunaga even see her in this outfit?

“Wow,” Heather shook the thought out of her head, she was so over her head here. Of course Nobunaga didn’t like her, he was just taking pity on her or something!

Even with that thought she did put her most recent flower behind her ear, pretending it wasn’t so she’d catch Nobunaga’s eye.

When she opened her door she remembered the weird energy full force. Everyone's doors were open, people running up and down the halls almost frantically. Omegas had been tasked with cleaning the walls, wiping down windows, and scrubbing the floors.

Heather stepped down the hallway, waving to different omegas she knew.
“Going to see Nobunaga Heather?” Junko popped her head out of her room with a wide grin on her face.

Heather blushed, the movie night running through her head. “Um, I-

“Have fun,” Junko interrupted her with a giggle and went back to cleaning her room.

“What is going on?” Heather whispered as she continued forward only to run into Carrie, the brunette omega that encouraged her to share her dreams with Nobunaga.

“Heather!” Carrie caught her by her shoulders. “Isn’t it exciting?”

“What is?”

“Haven’t you heard?”

“Um. . . No?” Heather felt very confused.

“Kurapika is coming to the city!” She squealed, looking incredibly excited but that didn’t clue Heather into why this mystery person warranted all this commotion.

“Who?”

“I always forget you didn’t start coming out of your shell until recently,” she sighed. “Kurapika is the one that made all this possible!” She waved her hand around the hallway. “He’s the one that gathered the high omegas and set them on the task of fixing the city and eventually saving all of us, everybody wants to thank him!”

“Oh, wow,” Heather breathed. So there had been someone above Biscuit just like Heather had thought. What would this alpha be like?
Heather imagined a super big, bulky man with pheromones so dominant it would make them all faint on contact. For a moment the old fear that this was all some elaborate trap bubbled up but now that Heather had heard more about the outside world she knew it wouldn’t make sense to do all this just to sell them off, so she crushed the thought.

“Go meet up with Nobunaga, I’m sure Kurapika doesn’t want us to have to give up anything,” Carrie smiled as she stepped past Heather and disappeared in the mayhem.

“Kurapika huh?” Heather’s mind stuck on the mystery alpha, wondering what he’d be like. Was he mean? No, he couldn’t be if he started a system to help omegas. Maybe everyone was cleaning up so much because they wanted to be his mate?

“I hear his mate worships the ground he walks on!” Someone whispered as Heather passed their door.

So he was mated and his omega worshiped him?

“Yeah! I heard his name is Chrollo, he always supports Kurapika and pampers him!” Heather’s mind conjured images of a pretty little omega, an ultimate omega, that followed after the alpha Kurapika and did everything he said.

Heather had been curious how real mated pairs behaved now that she got that the facilities had lied to them. So apparently omegas were supposed to be docile and loving but just not be beaten? Well that wasn’t hard for Heather to accept.

“I hear he got a Hunter license on his first try!” So he was strong, Heather already figured that.

“You know he doesn’t just have one omega, I hear he’s got a whole group that follows him around,” someone whispered.

“Doesn’t he travel around a lot?” Another whispered back.

“He lets them travel around as they please! They are safe because he helped train them!”
“Wow!”

“Yeah, I hear that’s why he has so many kids already.”

Heather nodded, taking in the information. He must be quite the alpha to be able to have a whole harem, maybe a few of the omegas here hoped he’d pick some of them to add to that harem.

Heather wasn’t one of them and she didn’t want to admit why, although Nobunaga unwillingly flashed through her head.

“Stop daydreaming Heather,” she spoke softly to herself. “It’s never going to happen for you.”

Heather continued onward, only realizing when she got outside that Nobunaga must have continued on his route when Heather didn’t meet him. Just how long had she been caught up listening to gossip?!

Heather walked faster to try and catch up with the man, knowing she was being silly but she didn’t want to lose any of the time she got to spend with Nobunaga!

The hustle and bustle of the city sheets as she exited the omega part of the city was still something Heather couldn't get used to. People walked with eyes up and forward but not really seeing. Heather found that many blocked out the world in that way people did with odd scents or strange noises. They were used to it and so stopped noticing.

Not Heather, not the freed omegas. You could spot them a mile away by the wide eyed look of wonder. No matter how long ago they had been freed they greeted every hour of the day with awe, Heather included.

She noticed every crack, every pretty bird, every strange hair style and clothing choice.

While noticing one of these normal, yet completely new things, Heather face planted right into someone’s back. She really needed to stop doing this, there was a limit to clumsiness right?!

Heather had gotten so used to running into people and them not even minding the slightest bit that
it was jarring to hear the low growl that reverberated in the air from who she had bumped into. It was like a slap to the face, or suddenly being dumped with cold water. One second she was semi confident that the people of Ryuusaigai were different, the next she was staring down a very irate alpha that looked like he wanted to beat Heather up in a way she was very used too.

“I-I’m so-re-ry” Heather stuttered out, automatically staring down at her shoes and hunching her shoulders.

“God it’s another stupid, empty headed omega!” The alpha growled down at her as he took a step towards her. “This city is going to hell because of unsightly, defective things like you!”

Heather whimpered, crouching into herself as she began to feel her breath thin, the beginning of what her therapist called a panic attack over taking her senses.

“At least those others are nice on the eyes,” he huffed at her, a snarl on his lips. Heather was near fainting, she couldn’t even hear what he said next. He took a lock of her hair and took a whiff of her scent, a smirk curving his lips as he spoke but Heather couldn't catch it. All she could hear was her own heart and the sound of rushing in her ear.

“Hey!” That sound Heather did catch. She would always hear the calming notes of Nobunaga’s voice, even when it was a harsh growl.

Heathers eyes snapped up to the man as he rushed the alpha in front of her. Once again he looked like an action hero to Heather, like that one from the movie they watched. He even wore the same style of clothing.

“What the hell do you think you are doing?!” Nobunaga snapped at the man, ripping him away from Heather. Almost naturally Nobunaga placed himself in front of the fragile girl, protecting her.

“I’m not doing anything!” The alpha yelled back at Nobunaga. “What’s so wrong with chatting up one of these stupid things? Isn’t that what they’re for?”

Heather jumped in shock at the furious sound Nobunaga made at the claim. It caused her to grab onto his robe and cling to his back, feeling comfortable and safe against his strong muscles. He smelled like the dark desert winds, just the barest hint of the forests at the edge of it, it was a lovely scent. A bit abrasive until you understood it better.
“She, not it!” Nobunaga snarled as he grabbed the man by his shirt. “You best remember you are in the minority in that thinking, if I ever catch you messing with one of the omegas again you can expect to be digging your own grave out in the deserts!” Nobunaga shoved the man away and took Heather’s hand, marching her away from the man. “For now you can look forward to a visit from Biscuit and the others!” He shouted back before officially dragging Heather away from the situation. “Hope he’s good at math.”

“Why would he need to know math?” Heather asked after a moment and then realized that she should probably thank him for coming to her rescue again. “Thank you.”

“Huh?” Nobunaga stopped dragging her once he felt himself calm down a bit. “Oh, no problem.” Nobunaga wasn’t really sure what had come over him but the moment he saw Heather’s scrunched up form his murderous rage at one of the citizens turned into something else, something protective and primal. When she’d clung onto his back he somehow gained the reason to not take action and let Biscuit and Knuckle deal with it. It seemed the omegas handled these situations much better than him. They managed to change opinions, Nobunaga would only scare Heather if he’d unleashed on that moronic fool. If it hadn’t been for Heather he was sure he would be burying the man at the moment.

“Um... Why math?” Heather asked again.

“Knuckle’s hatsu is very math based, it’s very confusing,” Nobunaga answered in a distracted manner. He didn’t like how Heather shriveled at the slightest confrontation. Sure he understood why she had trouble with that but he worried for the day he wasn’t around the corner to help her. When she left for Gyodondong she’d be alone! He can’t send her out in the world if she can’t stand up for herself!

“Hey!” Nobunaga turned around under a small awning and looked down at the small omega girl, snapping her out of whatever confused thoughts she was having. “If someone says something like that to you again, you should screw your face up like this,” Nobunaga twisted his lips into a snarl, pinched his eyebrows aggressively, staring intently down at the wiry omega. “And say: ‘scuse’ me ya bastard?!” You shouldn’t let them just walk on you like that!”

Nobunaga was still making his incredibly mean looking face that never failed to get enemies to run away when something world breaking happened: Heather laughed. Not loud, but for the life of him Nobunaga couldn't understand how everyone didn’t faint from pure joy at the sound of her heavenly giggles.

It was probably the most beautiful sound he’d ever heard in his life.
“You’re funny Nobunaga, stop making that face!” She shyly tucked a lock of hair behind her ear, making Nobunaga notice the flower he gave her yesterday in her hair and glanced to the ground, but didn’t turn her face down. She was getting better, bit by bit.

She continued on, a small smile on her face and Nobunaga followed like it was the most natural thing in the world. He quickly took up the spot at her side and began to tell her of the cooking class he’d arranged for her today.

About thirty minutes into their normal daily walk Heather began to talk, she seemed to be doing that a lot more lately.

“So I heard that your alpha is coming back to the city.” Heather didn’t actually know if Kurapika was his alpha but she assumed.

“Oh yeah, Danchao is stopping in with his mate to check on how things are going and on me,” he blushed in an uncomfortable manner for a moment.

“Why’s he checking on you?” Heather asked curiously.

“Well guarding you all is actually my punishment, it took me a long time to realize some things so I did some stupid stuff,” Nobunaga didn’t want to tell Heather that he used to think the same as those alphas that attacked her.

“Oh,” she nodded. “What’s he like?”

“My boss?” Nobunaga didn’t really like the idea of telling Heather about Chrollo. For some reason he felt annoyed that someone as great as him was on her mind.

“Yeah, I mean is he nice?”

“Um,” Nobunaga wouldn’t really describe Chrollo as nice but he was not mean. He was kind to those he cared about and those that they cared about but before meeting a Kurapika he treated anyone outside of that small circle of people like they were nothing. He wasn’t mean but he didn’t extend himself to be kind. In fact some (actually most) would call him cruel. “To his pack, the
people of Ryuuseigai, and Gyodondong he’s kind.”

Heather absorbed that information and felt a little more confident, Nobunaga had told her many times that she was now a citizen of Ryuuseigai, so he wouldn’t harm her then. She trusted Nobunaga’s word.

The day was nice, especially when Nobunaga joined in on the cooking lesson, allowing Heather to teach him a few beginners tricks. Afterwards they got to eat the cookies they had made together. His were a bit burnt but Heather’s were perfect as they had been taught to make them at the facility. But she never got to eat them before.

Once the sun began to dip and Nobunaga had to go on his nighttime patrol, the alpha walked her back to the entrance of the omega part of the city.

“I’ll send Biscuit to deal with that guy, but for tonight I think you should stay in this part of the city. Guys like him are dying out but they are still around,” Nobunaga told her seriously.

“Okay,” Heather gave a soft smile at her shoes before her head was tipped up again.

“And don’t hide your face, you’re much too pretty to do that.” Heather blushed profusely, fighting the urge to brush her finger through her hair to tame it.

“Okay, I better head in before the others worry,” Heather whispered.

“Yeah... Um... Here,” Nobunaga handed her the pretty blue flower he didn’t know the name of.

Heather’s eyes lit up and she took it tenderly, her cheeks colored and the light of the moon making her look like a fairy to the samurai.

“Thank you Nobunaga,” she spoke so softly he thought he’d imagined her voice in the cold desert air. “Goodnight.”

“Goodnight Heather,” he sighed as she turned and walked with eyes up into the building. He would really miss her when she left for Gyodondong but she’d be happier there and that was much more
Kurapika rubbed his belly as Chrollo jumped out of the front seat to open the car door for him. After a very quiet and constructive conversation, Kurapika had agreed that while pregnant it was okay to accept help, especially after his stomach got too big to even tie his own shoes.

Seven months pregnant was awful. Good thing they had so many kids already because Kurapika already didn’t want to do this again and he hadn’t even given birth yet!

Chrollo has timed their arrival perfectly, the sun was beginning to dip and they weren’t supposed to get in until tomorrow. Luckily this meant they avoided the crowd that normally took over the streets when they arrived.

“How are you feeling?” Chrollo asked as he took Kurapika’s hand and helped him stand.

“My ankles started swelling last night,” Kurapika sighed honestly, not mentioning the pain in his back from being in the car for two days.

He knew that this was necessary, in order to avoid Hisoka they had to keep moving. The man was on a warpath and it was proving hard to dodge him, but it was still hard on Kurapika’s body to be constantly shuffling around.

“That sucks, let’s get you to a nice bed,” Chrollo promised. Kurapika winced at the idea of laying down after sitting down in the car all day.

“Actually I’d love to get a status report from Biscuit and take a walk, sitting down doesn’t sound very relaxing at the moment.”

Chrollo frowned, leading his very pregnant mate into the city. He knew this was hard on him, being pregnant and trying to avoid Hisoka and it made Chrollo feel frustrated and sad that they couldn’t safely stay in one place.
“Okay, would you like me to come with you or . . . ?” Chrollo wanted to go on a moonlit walk with Kurapika, stay close and protect him but he also didn’t want Kurapika to feel smothered, especially after being with each other non stop.

“If you’re fine with it, I’d like to go alone. I’ll keep my phone on me just in case though,” Kurapika promised as he gave a gentle pat on the alpha’s arm.

“No worries my love,” Chrollo wasn’t surprised, it had been awhile since either of them had any alone time, Kurapika deserved some time to himself.

They arrived at the Troupe base in record time: slowest trek ever through town. Waddling was really killing Kurapika’s speed!

“Kurapika! Chrollo!” Biscuit greeted cheerily the moment they stepped through the door. Chrollo felt mildly surprised to find the once empty, and abandoned looking base now had rather nice looking furniture, wallpaper, and hung photographs. It would seem the group had gotten very comfortable here.

“You both are here early,” Kite commented as he steeped his tea cup while relaxing on a metal framed loveseat.

“Yes, we wanted to avoid the crowd. Where did this furniture come from?”

“Kite used recycled metals to make them, he taught a bunch of the citizens too. They’ve been making them for trade,” Knov told Chrollo as he automatically made Kurapika a cup of tea. “Knuckle is working on coming up with a stable and universal income system, we like the trade system but we think we can improve on it.”

“Good,” Chrollo nodded, he liked the improvements he had seen so far. The buildings didn’t look like they were crumpling and everything just seemed brighter and cleaner, even in the fading light.

Kurapika waddled over to Knov and took the cup with a nod of thanks, after a moment Knov brought another to Chrollo.

“How are the omegas doing?” Kurapika asked, rubbing a hand over his belly.
“They are healing better than we thought they would. Now that we have a lot that understand we’re trying to help them, the new arrivals don’t have such a long period of being afraid. The first group of omegas are gearing up to get their first jobs and move out into the city, a few even seems to be pretty far into healthy courting.”

“What about the one I heard about that instantly wanted to leave?” Kurapika asked, his expression all business.

“We found his family, they had been trying to use legal channels to get him back. We relocated them with the help of Madam Zoldyck to the town surrounding her family mountain, him and his family will be safe there and she set him up with a therapist. Apparently he’s training to be a gatekeeper now,” Biscuit reported with a happy smile. Kurapika couldn't help but feel joy that so many lives were getting back on track.

Chrollo cleared his throat and asked the burning question in his mind. “How is Nobunaga doing?”

Kurapika gave a hard look to Biscuit, worried about how the arrogant alpha was behaving as well. They expected exasperated sighs but instead they got sly smiles and excited looks.

“I’m happy to report that he has finally seen the light, he is actually the reason one of our toughest cases in on her way to a full recovery!”

Kurapika’s jaw dropped, he definitely didn’t expect that.

“Your toughest case?” Chrollo inquired curiously, feeling a happy bubble that Nobunaga, one of his oldest friends, was actually getting better.

“Yes, a young woman. She had been born in her facility and because of a rather prominent birthmark, had been told she was ugly her whole life. She was beaten harder and when she arrived was sure this was all a trap for weeks. We’re not sure when or how Nobunaga managed it but through him she began to trust in us and heal,” Kite had a content look on his face. “We called about her actually,”

“Oh, the one that wants to be a teacher in our library?” Kurapika asked, wide eyed still. He must be dreaming!
“That would be her,” Knuckle grinned as her pulled on his coat, seemingly heading out. “Never thought I’d say it but Nobunaga is a sweet alpha to her, they're a cute couple.”

“They’re courting?!” Kurapika gasped, internally screaming.

“I’ll have to congratulate him,” Chrollo was grinning wider than Kurapika had ever seen. He seemed very happy to hear his troupe member was entering a relationship.

“Seems that way to us, he brings her little flowers everyday, and she decorated her room with them,” Biscuit shrugged also putting on a coat.

“Ar-are you guys heading out?” Kurapika asked, feeling rather dizzy at this surprising turn of events.

“Yes, Nobunaga told us an alpha harassed one of the omegas earlier. He recognized him and told us where he lives, we’re going to teach him a lesson. Don’t wait up!” Biscuit and Knuckle left quickly after that.

“Where is Nobunaga? I want to talk to him,” Chrollo asked Kite before silence could settle around them.

“He’s on a patrol route, he should be near the north wall at this time of night,” Kite told him with a wave of his hand and took his book to begin reading.

“Thank you,” Chrollo turned to Kurapika and gave the blonde a smile. “Have fun on your walk, okay?”

“Okay, congratulate Nobunaga for me,” Kurapika smiled back and leaned up for a soft and sweet peck.

Kurapika sighed into the night air as he wandered the streets. He passed a few people here and there on occasion but no one seemed to recognize him in the dark without Chrollo. He also found that many people got so distracted by his belly that they forgot to look at his face.
It was nice to not be stared at for once, to just be a faceless person with no one paying attention. He passed a group around a fire pit, cooking up something that smelled nice. The fire pits had to be new, the last time Kurapika was here they seemed to engage in the cultural activity around dumpster fires. He wondered who had seen the activity and decided to have real fire pits built. It was a good idea.

Kurapika looked around a little more intently as he passed into the part of the city that now housed all the recovering omegas. It was very nice here, the buildings seemingly better put together and it would seem people had painted the walls! Signs of encouragement and artwork decorating everything. The city no longer seemed like an abandoned ghost town that some homeless clan was bedding down for the night in, now it felt like a real home.

Kurapika rounded a corner before seeing any of the recovering omegas. A girl only a little older than himself was sitting on a bench, her eyes fixated on a small flower in her hand. She had a soft, open look on her face. Her expression one of conflict, confusion, and happiness.

“Forget-me-nots,” Kurapika supplied, the girl jumping and snapping her head up to look at him in terror. The moment she spotted his bulging belly she calmed down.

“What?” She asked.

“The flower, it’s a Forget-me-not,” Kurapika told her as he moved slowly over to her and plopped himself down on the bench.

“Oh, I didn’t know it had a name,” she whispered, softly touching the blue petals.

“It has a meaning too,” Kurapika rubbed his belly pleasantly.

“A meaning?” Heather asked with a confused twist of her brow. She didn’t know this omega, she’d never seen him around before. She found it hard to believe that she wouldn’t have heard of a heavily pregnant omega getting brought to the city. He didn’t seem like he was just rescued, he smelled too happy, too content, too completely satisfied.

“Yes, all flowers have meanings. That one is pretty popular,” Kurapika pointed out to her, his eyes on the flower as well. “They imply true love, they are given in the hope that the one that receives them never forgets the person that gave them.”
Kurapika chuckled a bit when the girl immediately began to blush.

“Oh,” she gasped, a happy smile trying to fight its way onto her face. Then her smile turned sad. “He probably didn’t know that, I don’t think he’d give them to me if he’d known.”

“Why?” Kurapika asked with a twist of his brow.

“Well becaus-!” Heather squeaked when she finally looked up at the male omega’s face and found herself talking to an angel! Golden blonde hair, large and expressive grey eyes, and skin so smooth and pale it could be pure cream. She stuttered and gaped at the omega, embarrassment coloring her cheeks. She had seen a lot of prime omegas come and go from the facility before but this boy was like the holy grail, the perfect omega. “I-I’m not, no-not like-like you.”

“Not like me?” Kurapika didn’t understand what that meant at all.

“Not pretty,” Heather mumbled, falling into herself to not look at his angelic face any longer. What a great way to feel worse about yourself: talk to a mated and pregnant boy that was so beautiful that it simply wasn’t fair.

“What?!” Kurapika gaped right back at the girl. Sure she wasn’t a super model but she was very pretty! “You’re pretty,” Kurapika assured her quickly.

The girl seemed to huff in annoyance and shook her head, causing her wild curly hair to grow an inch, like it was somehow alive.

“Everyone keeps saying that but. . .” She sighed. “I know what I look like, he’s just a kind person. There’s no way he could like me. I’m plain, and quiet, and boring. I don’t even know what I like to do.”

“Well,” Kurapika wondered if this was how Fanaka felt when she talked to him like this, knowing something he didn’t about love and mates. “You’ll figure out you like a lot of things, you have your whole life for that.”

“I guess,” she muttered. “But that doesn’t fix my face.”
Kurapika looked at the girl thoughtfully. She showed signs of having just put on a lot of weight, in a good way. It was obvious she’d just gone from skin and bones to a healthy and natural weight. Her hair was a common color but that didn’t take away from how nicely it complemented her light olive skin tone. She had a sharp nose, almond shaped eyes, and thin lips, all of those features were not typically pretty by themselves but together on her oval face made up a lovely picture.

Her eyes were kind, a bright green color that reminded Kurapika of flowers in early spring, right before they bloom and their stems darken with age.

Kurapika eyes caught on the white ribbon holding her wild curls back and a realization hit him.

“What’s your name?” Heather looked up at the beautiful omega and gulped.

“Heather,”

“Transformative change,” Kurapika awed.

“Ex-excuse me?”

“Heather, it's a flower that means transformative change,” Kurapika hummed contently, rubbing against his belly with a little hiss when his baby kicked.

“I didn’t know heather was a flower,” she seemed to blush a bit at the thought of sharing a name with a flower.

“Heather is a common flower but that just means it’s resilient, they grow anywhere. Rocky, cold highlands. Hot, windy deserts... Lonely, traumatic omegan facilities.” Kurapika looked meaningfully down at the girl. “In all these places the heather flower grows vibrant and beautiful, because of this heather represents independence, good fortune, good luck, worthy of admiration, protection, and change.”

Heather blushed even more as the pregnant omega spoke like he was reading from a textbook! But he was also saying in a very roundabout way that he thought she was strong and beautiful... And worthy.
“I—I’m not that— not anything like that,” Heather whispered as she clenched at her knee with one hand, determined to hold her flower gently and fighting not to hurt it.

“Heather.” she looked up and Kurapika spotted the birthmark on her cheek that proved exactly who he had thought the girl was. The girl Nobunaga was courting. He had good taste, she was extremely cute in a pixie child kind of way. “Don’t let what people who didn’t give a shit about you define you, you are more than a birthmark. And I know it doesn’t mean much until you accept it. but you’re beautiful Heather, every bit of you.”

Heather didn’t get the time to say anything as the beautiful omega got up with a lot of difficulty and waved to someone Heather couldn't see through the dark night. He waddled away and before he was even ten feet away an alpha of a caliber Heather had never smelled before ran up to the pregnant omega.

“Need a hand?” He nuzzled into the omega’s golden hair, a happy hum reverberating in the air around him.

Heather couldn’t breath with the suffocating pheromones the alpha exuded. She watched in fascination as the alpha lovingly took the pregnant omega’s arm and helped him walk the rest of the way out of sight.

Heather sat, waiting for the stiffness caused by that alpha’s pheromones to lessen. Forcing her to live in the moment that an angel called her beautiful.

Maybe just once she could believe it?

__________________________________________________________

“Her name is Heather,” Kurapika whispered to Chrollo as they left the girl far beyond the range of normal hearing.

“What?”

“The girl Nobunaga is courting, her name is Heather!” Kurapika was full on laughing now and
Chrollo was right behind him.

“Transformative change, eh?” Chrollo laughed so hard he began to double over. “Boy did he need some heather!”

Kurapika barked out a laugh as well.

Chrollo calmed himself because he knew the best bombshell was coming.

“I asked him how he began courting,” Chrollo grinned devilishly.

Kurapika had a glint in his eye like he knew this would be good, and it was. “Oh?”

“And he doesn’t know.”

“What?” Kurapika felt the urge to double over again but had to hold himself back, he had too.

“He has no idea he’s courting!” Chrollo burst with laughter. “Only Nobunaga could start courting and have no idea it's happening!”

Kurapika pretty much died from laughter that night.

_________________________________________________________

Pairo wasn’t sure what woke him, it could have been many things. The shaking ground for one, or the bellowing laughter that set his hair on end, or the shouting that brought him back to a memory he didn’t want to remember.

Pairo felt fear strike his heart as he painfully forced himself to get up. He had to warn Fanaka! And get Kalluto and the others to safety!
He knew that laugh too well!

The murders of his clan, they had come for the Gyodondong!

Pairo was thankful that he could walk by himself now, even if just barely, and lucky Kurapika was gone when they struck again. He couldn’t fight them off seven months pregnant!

The ground shook again and Paio gasped into the front room, putting his hands out to try and find his way.

“Paio!?!” Fanaka’s voice grabbed his attention and he moved towards her.

“Fana! We have to run, they’re back!”

“Who’s back?”

“The murders of my clan! I can hear them laughing! Can’t you feel the shaking?”

If Paio could see the woman’s expression he would have seen the pain that flashed across it. Fanaka didn’t want to be the one to tell the boy that he was right and his best friend was mated to the leader. So instead she lied.

“Oh Paio you must have had a bad dream, that’s just Uvogin and Phinks sparring,”

“Oh,” Paio allowed himself to relax but not completely. It really had sounded like those people, those murderers that he’d never forgive. “I’m exhausted now.”

“Why don’t you go back to sleep and I’ll bring you some dinner?” Fanaka suggested, internally apologizing for lying to the boy. The next time Kurapika and Chrollo came back she would make sure they knew it was time to tell the boy.

“Okay,” he felt his way back to his room and Fanaka turned to go tell those boys to shut up, it wouldn’t be good if he pieced it together before Kurapika told him himself!
What a mess.
Machi hummed quietly as she placed the final stitches in the embroidered cat on the pink baby outfit she had made. This one was meant for her baby and she smiled at the adorable figure. She’d made a yellow one for Kurapika, the embroidered figure being of a puppy.

She’d made a number of outfits, knowing that with Hisoka on their tails, Kurapika and Chrollo hadn’t really had time to prepare for their baby or buy any clothes. As such, she and Uvo had set up the nursery themselves. It was similar to the nursery they had set up for their own child except the colors differed with her nursery being in pinks, purples, and a greyish-silver and Kurapika’s was in blue, white, and yellow.

Shifting forward, Machi managed to get to her feet and headed for the nursery with the intent to set the new outfit into the dresser.

Uvo was in the room, setting up a set of shelves and then began placing several decorative blocks on them. He glanced over at Machi as she settled the new outfits into the dresser then she turned towards the crib. The mattress was already dressed and ready and Machi reached in to fold up the blanket that was waiting for the owner to be born.

She paused after a moment and straightened up, her eyes turning to Uvo.

“The baby is coming.”

The teddy bear that was being situated turned into an unintentional bludgeoning device and knocked all of the other toys off of the shelves. “WHAT? NOW?!” The fear and excitement in his voice was palpable.

“No, in three days and about,” Machi cocked her head to the side and rubbed her swollen belly. “Five hours.”

Uvo looked to be reeling but nodded bent to grab the toys from the floor then settled them haphazardly on the shelves. “I’m going to call Kurapika as soon as I get this cleaned up!”
On the other hand, Heather was terrified of going. She was still entranced by the sky, how would she react to her entire environment changing? In being surrounded by flowers? And... in not seeing Nobunaga again?

Her eyes shifted to the alpha again and she felt a blush rise upon finding his eyes on her as well before she averted her eyes.

The area of town that they had traveled to was not the greatest, definitely not as new as the omega sector, but did seem to have been cleaned up recently. They seemed to be headed towards the largest building, one with two stories that was marked with a large spider over the door.

Nobunaga grabbed the door and held it open for her and she entered the building, slightly surprised by the decor inside. What didn’t surprise her was the dominating scent of a very strong alpha. It didn’t take more than a moment for Heather to place the scent as belonging to the alpha from the other night, the one that seemed to be mated to the angelic omega.

They moved a bit further into the base, into what appeared to be a sitting room and Heather was unsurprised to see the alpha and the very pregnant omega. What did surprise her was that the alpha seemed to be massaging the feet and ankles of his mate.

“Machi has always had this instinct that we’ve learned to trust. She’s rarely ever wrong,” the alpha, Kurapika, explained as the angelic omega, Chrollo she believed, settled a phone on a table near them. Both noticed Heather after a moment though they didn’t seem surprised or embarrassed.

“Nobunaga, I assume this is Heather?” the alpha rumbled, his voice soft and commanding attention and respect, yet he seemed to be trying to not intimidate any of them. She glanced at the angelic omega that looked ready to purr from pleasure as his foot massage continued.

“This was really not the scene she expected.

“Yeah, this is her, boss.”

Nobunaga confirmed her thoughts as to who this alpha was, not that she had any doubts.

“Would you mind telling us what your experience is with teaching, Heather?” the omega, Chrollo, asked.

It took a moment for Heather to gather herself, but not longer than that. Answering an alpha had been deeply ingrained into her in the facility.

“I taught... reading, writing, and math to the children,” she replied after a long moment.

“What level of math?” the alpha asked.

“Level?” Heather squeaked after a moment. “I-I didn’t know... there were levels.”

“What do you know?” the omega asked gently.

“Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division were the basic lessons. They were needed for a budget and other household duties...”

“So basic education,” the alpha supplied and turned to give his mate a soft smile when the boy gave a soft purr. It was such a simple but loving gesture, Heather could easily see why so many of the other omegas hoped to attract the attention of this alpha.
“Which is exactly what we need,” the omega stated, his eyes narrow from pleasure from the foot rub. “We’re building a school in the other village, it was established years before now but was quite literally a ground-up project with people who valued omegas. They’re good people, but most of them don’t know how to read. If you accept this position, then it would be expected that you’ll teach anyone who wishes to learn to read or attend classes. There are programs we can order to help you build lesson plans and we hope to bring in another couple of teachers in the future, they would teach higher grade levels.”

Heather nodded even as she considered what had been said. So, the shelter here wasn’t the first place this pair had set up?

The alpha, Kurapika, spoke again. “The village is a lot smaller than Ryuuseigai but still very safe. We’ll be headed there ourselves in a few hours and we’ve arranged for you to stay with a woman named Fanaka-bennu. She’s an omega as well.”

“So I’ll be traveling with you?” Heather didn’t know what to think of that. The thought of walking so many hours with these two made her sweat a bit.

“Actually,” now the omega was smiling. “I believe that it would be better for you to go with someone you’re familiar with. Nobunaga.”

Heather felt Nobunaga straighten up beside her.

“I want you to escort Heather to the Gyudondong village and then you’ll be finished.”

Nobunaga blinked for a moment. “Huh?”

“I believe you’ve finally learned, so you’re free to go where you please,” the omega stated, confusing Heather. Had Nobunaga not been free?

The grin on the man’s face was bright and he nodded.

“Have a safe trip you two. And Nobunaga,” the alpha called. “Uvo just called, Machi believes she’ll be giving birth in three days.”

“Alright! See you there boss!”

Heather nodded to the pair, understanding that they’d been given a vague dismissal, but still bowed to them. “Thank you Mr. Kurapika,” she stated respectfully as she nodded towards the alpha. “And you, Chrollo.” Now the bow was to the omega.

She didn’t notice the confused looks that the pair shared.

“Nobunaga, you can use our car;” the alpha called as he rose and handed the man a set of keys and Heather felt her eyebrows rise. “We’ve already made arrangements to get back to the Gyudondong village and I believe Ms Heather doesn’t have nen to help her get there.”

“Yeah! Forgot about that!” Nobunaga replied as he eagerly accepted the keys then turned to Heather. “We can head in the afternoon after you’ve packed and said your goodbyes, unless you’d prefer to leave tomorrow?”

Nobunaga looked to authentically be trying to ensure he didn’t rush or make Heather uncomfortable. From the couch, Kurapika sniffed and smiled as the samurai-wannabe escorted Heather out, talking about all the things they would see on the way to Gyudondong. Nobunaga didn’t smell so foul anymore, his scent had instead shifted to musky spice and running water.
Then concern struck. Heather’s scent was starting to pick up, the smell of wild flowers. Glancing
towards Chrollo, he saw that the man had not noticed.

“Chrollo, I think Heather is about to go into heat.”

“I’ll call Nobunaga, just to remind him that it would be taking advantage. I believe he’s learned
enough and cares enough for Heather to recognize that now.”

“You trust him.”

“With the exception of how he used to be around you, I trust everyone in the troupe. It is
something you’ll need to learn.”

“I trust most of them already, I trusted them with Gon and Killua,” Kurapika pointed out. “And
Franklin to train Leorio.”

“Then consider this a point for Nobunaga to prove himself to be trustworthy.”

Kurapika huffed then purred again as Chrollo’s fingers continued to massage his swollen feet and
ankles. The baby turned and kicked, drawing another smile from Kurapika as his hand rubbed at
the spot, joined shortly by Chrollo’s hand. They stayed there for several minutes, both feeling their
baby as it kicked at their hands.

Biscuit had been expecting for Heather to soon be sent out and when the woman had returned with
Nobunaga to the omega area, she was surprised to see several of the omegas she was closest to
already there, waiting to wish her well.

Junko, Carrie, and the others were all there, even little Sasha who had been scarce since being
returned to her parents. The girl was there with her mother, a beta that Sasha seemed to have gotten
her black hair from.

“You take care of yourself!” Carrie ordered while Sasha hugged her legs.

“Be sure to write!”

“Remember us!”

The group had even worked with several skilled jewelry makers to make several pieces of jewelry
for her, a simple necklace, earrings, and charm bracelet. The necklace and earrings had flower
ornaments set with a bright green stones as leaves that Carrie identified for her as peridot.

“Sasha insisted on them, said that they reminded her of your eyes. I find that I agree.”

The charm bracelet was a simple chain that contained a charm crafted by each of her new friends
and ranged from simple cut stones to flowers to birds. She promised them over and over that she’d
wear it every day.

Noon came and they all had lunch then went to Heather’s room to help her pack, all noting that
Nobunaga was absent and not pushing at all for Heather to hurry up. They packed her few
possessions slowly, gathering the wilting flowers from the small vase that Nobunaga brought for
the flowers he gave her, and packed her clothes with the few items that had decorated her room into
a bag that was provided.

Nobunaga arrived in the mid-afternoon with a car, right as another group of newly rescued omegas
were guided into the omega area. There was a blonde alpha and a raven beta that Nobunaga apparently knew guiding in the group and he approached them easily.

Heather and her friends watched silently as the omegas shook and glanced around in terror, even as other omegas came out to calm them.

“Can’t believe that was us just a few weeks ago,” Sebast stated as he watched one of the omegas, a girl who looked to be in her teens, suddenly broke down when a man and woman came over and checked her for a mark. They apparently found it.

“Looks like another family just got reunited,” Heather said as she felt a smile cross her face as the parents gathered the girl up, hugging her between them. “That makes five families?”

“Seven, two others went back to their families outside of Ryuuseigai,” Junko corrected, her face turning sour. “One of those families already contacted here for help, traffickers apparently broke in inside of a week and kidnapped their kid again. Kite went out to track them less than a day ago and believes he’s found the new facility they were sold to. They promised that I’ll be able to go help with this mission but Sebast needs a few more weeks.”

Heather nodded. “I suppose those two will probably be helping?” she asked, nodding towards Nobunaga’s two friends.

“Phinks and Feitan? Yeah, most likely. They’ve been pretty active in this. Seems they like knocking off those asshole-guards that like to slap around omegas that can’t fight back.”

Heather turned her attention back to the yard as several of the omegas got shocked when several betas and alphas arrived along with several more omegas, these being omegas who had been there a while and were learning trades.

Nobunaga only turned to help several of the omegas that fell in shock up and then the new group was herded into the building.

“We’ll be getting another movie night tomorrow, Labyrinth I think,” Carrie reminded them. “That should help some of them to calm down and settle in."

It would be different than anything many of them were used to and many would require more than movies, but Heather was certain that they would at least stand a chance here.

The car was surprisingly cool when Heather was guided to it by Nobunaga when she was finally ready. He had quickly set her single bag of possessions into the trunk and then directed her to the front passenger seat.

Having never been in a car, Heather was dumbfounded as Nobunaga instructed her on the seatbelt before shifting the car into drive. The radio was on to a station that played music softly as they rolled away from the omega compound and through the streets of Ryuuseigai, children dodging and laughing at the car while the few people that Heather recognized waved goodbye to her. Far more people knew and recognized Nobunaga and yelled or waved at him. Then the car was clear of the city and the car began to pick up speed rapidly.

The wagons had seemed weird when her group had been rescued, but now Heather felt dizzy as the vehicle rushed over a semi-road and the city that had been the closest thing to a home for Heather began to rapidly shrink behind them.

“It’ll take a few days to reach Gyudondong,” Nobunaga admitted after a minute. “We’ll be trying
to avoid big cities, but there’ll be plenty to see. If you need to use the restroom at any time, just tell me.”

“How many days?” Heather asked as her head continued to reel as their vehicle zipped past the first of the gem mines, she had been told that it took about an hour to reach those on foot! Her brain sputtered over it taking a mere two minutes to reach them in a car!

“Two to three.”

Heather bit her lip automatically. She was very familiar with her heats and the timing of them at her age. If Nobunaga was right then…

“Is there a way to get there faster?” she asked.

“Not really, that would take an airship. Would you like to go on an airship?” Nobunaga asked curiously and Heather shook her head. The car was already strange enough, what she had learned about airships thus far made them seem terrifying!

“You’ll get to see a lot more stuff this way. And…” Nobunaga’s phone went off and he grabbed it and checked the screen. “Danchou? We just left so-”

Heather watched as Nobunaga’s eyes went round in terror as his hands gripped the steering wheel of the car. He slowly glanced at her, drew in a breath, then nodded. His face seemed to harden with determination, not in a terrifying way.

“Alright, thanks for the warning. I didn’t even realize.” The call was ended and Nobunaga settled the phone into the alcove in the center of the car between them. “Your heat is coming.”

“Yes…” Heather replied, not certain how else to respond.

“The Gyudondong have heat rooms, but we won’t make it in time, will we?”

Heather shook her head. They had until tomorrow at longest.

“We’ll continue until this evening then find a place to stay for a few days,” Nobunaga promised as he mentally began to make a list of everything that Kurapika had wanted during the few heats he had witnessed. Blankets, pillows, sweets… “What kind of sweets do you like?”

“Sweets?” Heather asked, surprised. The facility had never provided sweets, not to her at least. Every so often they might hand out a candy or two to some of the prettier omegas, she had never been included. In Ryuuseigai there had been desserts handed out every other day or so, and her few heats had been the most comfortable she’d ever experienced with pillows, blankets, and cookies. “I like those cookies they gave us during our heats.”

“Cookies? What kind?”

“I don’t know, just that Palm made them.”

“What about at the facility?”

“They… didn’t give us anything.”

Nobunaga scowled before sighing. “Looks like I’ll need to find a menu for you to choose things you’d like to try. Or maybe just raid a few sweet shops like Danchou did for Kurapika the first few times he had his heat?”
Heather’s head snapped towards him sharply. “Kurapika has heats?”

“Yeah! Let me tell you, the first time that tiny thing went into heat, we all learned how terrifying an omega can be! And Danchou has been intent to care for him alone during those times after that! We were all concerned because Kurapika almost tore several of us apart during his first heat.”

“Don’t you mean rut?”

Nobunaga’s eyebrows rose. “Nope. Chrollo’s ruts only got interesting after he met Kurapika.”

Heather felt her world flip yet again as she realized her mistake: Kurapika was an omega and Chrollo was the alpha. And Chrollo waited on Kurapika hand and foot…

Complete submission wasn’t expected and Nobunaga didn’t seem like he’d expect it either. But how did Kurapika, an omega, end up having other omegas and a large number of children?

“There were rumors about Kurapika having a lot of kids already, how many do they have?”

“Currently? Five I think,” Nobunaga replied easily and Heather’s eyebrows rose in alarm. He looked so young! Nobunaga saw the expression and elaborated. “They’ve adopted all the kids they currently have, this is Kurapika’s first pregnancy.”

“Adopted?”

“Yeah, most of the kids came from abusive or neglectful families. Gon for instance was abandoned by his father and raised by an aunt who didn’t really support his ambitions. Killua and Kalluto are both omegas that were raised to be assassins by their family but were tortured and beaten regularly, especially when Killua decided he wanted to do something else. Alluka was locked up and never allowed out by her family. Pairo is their newest kid and he had a good family but they were massacred and he was captured by a rather nasty person who tortured him with the intent of killing him.”

“So they adopted them and now let them roam as they please?”

“They always have a minder nearby,” Nobunaga assured her. “Until recently that was Phinks and Feitan. Alluka and Pairo don’t get to roam yet, they are recovering from their ordeals and haven’t learned to defend themselves yet. Once they do, then they’ll probably be traveling as they please as well. Probably take the Hunter exam along with Kalluto since Gon and Killua are already licensed Hunters.”

The thought of having so much freedom was completely foreign to Heather, but she could admit that it sounded attractive. How many times when she was younger had she dreamed of flowers and freedom? It was here now, she could have those things…

True to his word, Nobunaga drove as far as he could that day. Heather watched in semi-fascination as the landscape changed before her eyes, the sand giving way little by little to green as water became more abundant. Towns began to spring up and she drank in the sights in amazement, longing to stop and explore yet also wary of the people they passed, especially when she saw an omega being dragged along on a leash and getting slapped by some other person.

Horror filled her as she realized that the beautiful world she had begun to see in Ryuuseigai wasn’t reality everywhere. She had gotten lucky.

They stopped for dinner in a bigger town and Nobunaga must have seen she was nervous about getting out of the car because he had let her stay in the car and run in for a menu. Several alphas
had gawked into the car at her, though several had looked offended at her plain face. Most didn’t seem to care though and one was even reaching for the door handle when Nobunaga returned and had struck the man with his sheathed sword, driving him away fast.

The menu was another shock for Heather, meals had always been provided, she had never thought of being able to choose something she wanted. Her alarm must have been seen by Nobunaga because he’d begun talking about things he liked on the menu as she scanned it and finally decided to just have whatever the samurai was ordering. Nobunaga in turn realized she was still new to this and didn’t press the issue.

The food was something called a ‘burger’ and it reminded Heather of the sandwiches that were often passed around at the facility except they were different.

“These are onion rings?” she asked as she poked one of the golden brown circles in her food box.

“Yeah! I personally love them and fries are good too. I got both in case you preferred one over the other.” He offered her one of the crispy sticks that were in his own box of food and Heather accepted it after a moment.

They stopped that evening at a house that Nobunaga told her was a base for the group he was in and Heather climbed out on shaking legs while Nobunaga grabbed her bag. The inside was strange and barely furnished. There was a couch and several chairs in the first room and one of the walls looked like it had just been recently rebuilt.

“This place doesn’t have a proper heat room, Kurapika just stayed in a small reading room,” Nobunaga stated as he entered and closed the door behind him then guided Heather down a hall. “It has a bathroom attached to it and I’ll deliver meals, so you won’t have to worry about going out.”

“Thanks,” Heather stated faintly as she felt her body beginning to warm and she finally breathed in Nobunaga’s scent. He smelled… nice.

“No problem. I’ll get you some sweets tonight so you should be squared away for tomorrow,” the samurai replied as he pushed open a door to a small room and flipped on the light.

It was a small room with a few books around and a couch. There was a surprisingly large pile of pillows stacked against the wall. It wasn’t her room or one of the heat rooms in the omega area, but it was still far better than anything the facility had provided.

Nobunaga set down her bag as Heather moved towards the pillows and felt one, finding the soft material as well as the pillow to be quite pleasing.

“Go ahead and get comfortable, I’m going to get some groceries unless you want to come?”

Having had a big day already and not feeling up for going out, Heather shook her head as she hugged one of the pillows against her. Instinct took over and she began to grab the pillows and couch cushions, organizing them on the floor to make something though she wasn’t sure what.

She wasn’t aware of when Nobunaga left, but he was gone when she next looked in his direction. Her bag was still by the door and she walked towards it only for her nose to direct her towards something else, Nobunaga’s bag which was down the hall.

Bonolenov stared at his phone for a moment, confused on why Nobunaga was calling him, but decided it was likely important.
“Hello?”

“BONO! Heather’s just confiscated my entire bag! I can’t get anything from it!”

“Heather?”

“The omega that I was escorting to Gyudondong village to be a teacher… I guess we’re courting? But that’s not the point! I can’t even get my soap!”

“Is she in heat?”

“Not yet I don’t think, she hasn’t gone insane if that’s what you’re asking. But she’s not letting me get anything from my bag!”

“Looks like she likes you as well then. Congratulations.”

“How do I get my underwear?!”

“You don’t. Have fun and don’t take advantage!” Bonolenov hung up with a grin as Fanaka gave him a questioning look. “I do believe that someone is finally learning.”

“Oh?” Fanaka asked with a slightly raised eyebrow. “Why’s that?”

“Because he’s calling, asking for help rather than assuming he knows best.”

The phone began to ring again and Bono answered once again, this time putting it on speaker so his mate could hear as well.

“BONO! This isn’t funny! She’s trying to take my robe now! What’s going on?! Kurapika only fixated on Chrollo’s coat, not everything he owned!”

“Just let her have it, this is new for her as well.” Bonolenov hung up the phone again with his grin still in place.
Kurapika happily hummed as he rubbed his belly. Every kick of life just made Kurapika’s smile wider, it was beginning to become painful. In about a day he’d be back in Gyodondong and he’d meet Machi’s baby and in a few months finally meet his own.

Chrollo looked over the edge of his book, giving Kurapika a warm look. Chrollo splurged on a private airship cabin since he didn’t want Kurapika cramped in a car at this stage of pregnancy. Even though they couldn’t leave the cabin without some idiot trying to show Kurapika his place, it was still far better than his mate being uncomfortable.

This slowed them down, Hisoka was a constant danger. Danger to their budding family as well as their lives but Chrollo was willing to take this risk.

“How do you think Nobunaga is faring?” Kurapika asked. “With Heather and her heat?”

Chrollo put down his book at this and considered the question. “Your heats are mild so as long as they aren’t worse I’m sure he’ll be-“

The phone began to ring. “Speak of the devil,” Chrollo raised a brow at his phone and put it on speaker.

“Yes Nobu?”

All that came through the speaker was some slight screaming, the sound of growling, hissing, and scratching.

“Nobunaga?” Chrollo sat up with a bit of concern.

“DANCHOU!” Nobunaga’s shout came through the phone sounding panicked and desperate. “FATE HAS ABANDONED ME! TELL KURAPIKA I’M SORRY, MAYBE THEN THE WORLD WILL HAVE MERCY!”
“My guard, please I need you!” A purr from a delirious sounding Heather broke through Nobunaga’s panicked begging. Her voice sounded far away, like she was behind a door and accompanied by what sounded like a door being beaten down.

“How can you be so strong woman?!” Kurapika felt his mouth gaping open and he looked to Chrollo's shocked face before he began to giggle then laugh. This was the best revenge the world could have thrown at poor Nobunaga!

“Stop laughing! She’s taken over the entire first floor, I've barricaded the stairs but she’s on a warpath and I NEED HELP!” Nobunaga seemed to be on the verge of tears.

“Good luck Nobunaga, remember she isn’t herself and don’t take advantage.” Chrollo didn't even wait a moment before shutting the phone and turning it off for the night. “He’ll keep calling for hours,” Chrollo said in lieu of an explanation.

Kurapika just continued to laugh, he couldn’t believe this. “I didn’t expect Heather to be at Fanaka’s level when it came to her heats!” Kurapika couldn’t breathe, this revenge was way too sweet. Especially because somehow Kurapika knew he wouldn’t take advantage.  

“He’ll be fine. Probably.”

How did this escalate so fast?

Once Nobunaga had gotten back with food and plenty of sweets (the sweets being three of everything the store offered since Heather didn’t know what she liked), Heather had stolen his bag! Stolen his entire bag! She had also somehow managed to get all of the couch cushions, every extra blanket lying around, and pretty much everything even slightly soft. She took over the entire game room and then began to spread out her nest down the hall all the way to the stairs.

He’d called Bono the moment he got his hand slapped away from his clothes scattered around the center of the nest. Heather tried to cuddle into his chest and seemed to get very distressed any time he tried to move a part of the nest. She didn’t seem completely unhinged yet but she was definitely beginning to flag. Bono got another call when she tried to take his robe too, he hadn't given it to her at the time and it proved to be a blessing.
Nobunaga laid out all the sweets he got for her, feeling something in himself purr as Heather looked fit to cry in happiness as she opened one of the boxes and awed over the chocolates.

Nobunaga managed to get the door to the game room closed, separating the two halves of the gigantic nest, without her noticing.

Only a few hours had passed and Nobunaga had made her some dinner and thought to bring it up to her. He was too caught up in thinking what he’d need to pick up for himself to last the week that he’d completely forgotten everything he’d learn about the danger of heats until he opened that door.

Heather has tackled him the moment he’d stepped through the door!

For a girl that had only recently began gaining any muscle and fat she was deceptively strong! Nobunaga had found himself knocked on his ass, with a whimpering lovely omega rubbing herself all over him. Nobunaga might have broken right then until he felt the girl trying to steal the clothes on his body!

There was a difference between wanting to get someone nude and plain old trying to steal their clothes and Heather definitely just wanted his robe in that moment!

One ripped off sleeve and the complete loss of his robe later and Nobunaga was desperately calling Chrollo. He’d managed to block the stairwell with the kitchen table, Heather was pounding on it and crying out for him, but Nobunaga had to remain strong! No matter how tempting it was.

This had to be a twist of fate, karma coming back at him for drugging Kurapika and everything else! Maybe if he finally apologized then the world would stop tormenting him with a beautiful girl begging for pleasure while not in her right mind!

He’d only just found out they were courting, Nubonaga didn’t want to ruin his chances with the only girl to ever like him!

Unfortunately Kurapika and Chrollo only laughed at his desperate plea for help so he was on his own.

Nubonaga was incredibly surprised to say the least, his back against the table as Heather pounded
against it and screeched for him to come to her, he didn’t think Heather would have a more intense heat than Kurapika! Heather was always so shy, self contained, and quiet; how the hell did she become this?!

“My guard, please-“ a heavy thump hit the table, almost knocking Nobunaga over, her voice was dripping with sweetness and yet somehow it sounded like a threat. “Help me. NOBUNAGA! COME AND HELP ME!” She screamed.

“Oh god help me,” Nobunaga whispered to himself. She already got most of his clothes! His hair was a mess, a bit had been ripped out during his escape and he had no idea how to deal with his lovely, cute, and quiet Heather becoming a freaking monster!

He needed something to get her to move off the stairs and back into the game room. With that decision in mind Nobunaga called Bonolenov again.

“Yes Nobu?” Bonolenov answered, sounding rather smug.

“Bono, she’s escaped the game room! How do I get her back in?!” Nobunaga whisper/yelled in panic, afraid that if she heard then she’d know what he was planning and somehow stop him.

“You could just wait until she tires herself out, then carry her back in but be careful. Sometimes omegas just pretend to be sleepy to catch you unguarded,” the way he said that made it seem that he had once fallen for such a trick.

“Oh my god, it was one time! Let it go!” Fanaka’s voice cut in sounding exasperated.

“I can’t hold her forever! She’s breaking the table!”

“If she’s a freed omega then I bet most alphas smell undesirable to her. You could grab a random alpha’s jacket or something and force her back,” Fanaka put forward the best possible plan Nobunaga had heard yet.

“My guard! I need!” The call was accompanied by what felt like Heather throwing her body at the table. All went quiet for a moment.
“Is she okay?” Fanaka asked.

“I don’t know, I’m afraid to move the table to ask,” Nobunaga whispered back.

“Good luck Nobu,” then the line went dead.

Nobunaga waited a moment, the silence was deafening. He gulped fearfully and asked with hesitation. “Heather? You okay?”

She didn’t respond and Nobunaga started to worry. Slowly he moved the table and looked down at the knocked out Heather. She was crumpled on the stairs and immediately Nobunaga threw the table to the side and went to her.

“Heather?!” He cried, pulling her into his arms, wanting to check her head for a concussion.

The moment he pushed her mass of hair from her face Heather struck. Her hands whipped up lightning quick and grabbed his shirt to yank him down.

Her lips met his and Nobunaga was in nirvana. It was like her lips were coated in lotus nectar, instantly Nobunaga couldn't think of anything but Heather and her soft lips against his.

“Oh god,” Nobunaga moaned as she lifted her hips to grind against him.

“Take me, please,” she begged. Nobunaga looked down at Heather. Her sandy blond hair that reminded him of home was a halo around her. Her green eyes darker when half lidded in desire, framed by her blonde lashes with the way the light hit her made her eyes look aflame. Her pale skin was flushed and her lips wet. She was the most beautiful person he’d ever seen, her birthmark making her even more unique.

He felt like he was forgetting something... She was trying to pull him closer again and he began to dip his head again. Heather whimpered longingly, and suddenly Nobonaga remembered her crying at the oasis, how she told him how people had used her for her whole life. This wasn't Heather!

Nobunaga shot up, backing away from her feverish form as far as he could. He wouldn’t take this
choice from Heather! He- he... respected her too much to do that.

“It’s going to be okay Heather,” Nobunaga found himself saying. “But I’ve got to go get a few things,” Heather cried out as he turned away and sprinted out of the house, not forgetting to lock it and then barricade it.

He ran down the street, disheveled, half naked, and somehow missing a shoe trying to find an alpha to steal the clothes of... And maybe get some armor too.

Uvogin was pacing, a timer ticking down to the moment Machi would enter labor. It was stressing him out. And his pacing was stressing Machi out which was how he got kicked from the room that would be where his baby would be born.

Phinks and Feitan were off in Ryuuseigai, but almost everyone else should be back for the birth, even Franklin and Leorio were heading here!

Chrollo felt like every nerve was on fire, he swore if he stopped moving he’d burst. Only a few hours to wait and his baby would be born, his little girl!

Fanaka and a bunch of the village omegas were with Machi, helping to make sure she was comfortable and assured him that she’d be okay in their hands. The last he’s seen they were having her walk in little circles around the room as she slowly began to feel the pain as contractions built.

He wanted to be with Machi but he’d been kicked out! Even so... He could break down the wall, so he could do his outside anxious pacing while keeping an eye on Machi and their baby.

“You look like a tiger that's been newly put in a cage,” Bonolenov spoke gently to the man who looked wound up enough to pop out of his skin.

“I just- is she gonna be okay?” Uvogin didn’t stop pacing, biting at his nails.

“Uvo, we’ve seen that woman take down an armored car with a broken leg. I think she can handle...
childbirth,” Bonolenov laughed. “Besides, bearing young is a pain only women and omegas can handle. You’ll barely be able to stand how fiercely she’ll hold your hand.”

“I think I can handle that—“

“Uvo, I may have never had children before but I’ve seen the damage a woman can wreak while delivering a child, and a Nen enhanced one? She’ll have to stitch you up after the baby is born, trust me.”

Uvogin considered that for a moment, feeling it was a bit of relief if Machi would be able to at least release some tension by crushing his hand.

“Good, if it helps her she can pulverize all the bones in my body,” Uvogin nodded, finding the source of why he was so anxious. The love of his life was about to go through horrible pain and there had been nothing he could do to help.

“Ey’! Uvogin!” Uvogin turned to see Franklin, Leorio, and Shizuku heading up to the onsen.

“Did you hear that Shizuku moved herself into Leorio’s apartment?” Bonolenov questioned rhetorically as he moved to greet them. That was a surprising development. Who knew Danchou getting a mate would result in nearly every member getting themselves a love life?

“Huh,” Uvogin grinned and embraced his long time friends, clapping the doctor on the back. He better treat that girl well.

“You excited big guy?” Franklin hugged him back, looking both nervous and ecstatic for the first of the Phantom Troupes’ second generation to be born.

“Of course! Just—“ Uvogin checked the kitchen timer he had clutched in his hand. “Ten more hours to go, where the hell is Chrollo and Kurapika?!“

“They’ll get here, they’re probably cutting it close to give themselves more time with the baby before they have to leave again,” Franklin assured him, he’d never seen Uvogin this . . . agitated before.
“So what’s the name?” Leorio asked, kinda hoping he’ll be allowed to help with the birth. He wanted to be an every-man kind of doctor anyway so it would be good experience.

Uvogin suddenly paused, going stiff as a board.

“We didn’t pick a name,” he whispered in horror before turning on a dime and going sprinting into the onsen.

Kyo fiddled with his locket as he sat watching mother and her mate handle the day to day duties of being the head of the Zoldyck family and business.

Today he was just observing, getting a feel of what his job is as the next head. Kyo hadn't asked for this, hadn't asked to have one mate making his way to some isolated village, the other pissed off at him for becoming the next head of the family, and all this new responsibility.

He had been prepared his entire life for a submissive role, to bow down and allow anything.

And yet that would not be his life, he had accepted that he was a person and he would not be walked over. But it was completely different just being a member of the family compared to being expected to lead it!

What if he messed up? What if his leadership was the end of this family dynasty?! Kyo didn’t know how to run an organization like this! At least when he was just another assassin he was still taking orders, but now he had to give them too?!

Kyo wished desperately to go back with Hisoka, even if his complete lack of passion for him made Kyo feel like he had no sexual appeal. With Hisoka he had no responsibilities, with him he got to see the world and could just be Kyo.

“You’re hyperventilating dear,” Kikyo mumbled as she signed a few papers and handed them off to a butler all without looking away from the mission request she was reading.
“Oh,” Kyo calmed his breath, realizing that he had been spiraling into a panic attack.

“What’s wrong?” She asked, still not looking up.

“Nothing, it’s just... I’m not sure about all this,” Kyo motioned to himself and the room at large.

Kikyo finally looked up at him, Silva stopped what he was doing to look at the child as well. He liked his eldest son’s omegan mate. He wouldn’t have agreed to make him their heir otherwise but he knew that they’d need to give him a lot of support less he end up like Killua, hating this world or controlled by Illumi.

“Kyo, do you know why I picked you?” Silva asked, referring to only himself. He knew Kyo understood that Kikyo picked him because he had quickly become her favorite and his father because of how he impressed during his basic training.

“Because Milluki is a beta and Illumi is a bit—” Kyo searched for the right word. He didn’t want to call his mate deranged or insane but he could be at times.

“No Kyo,” Silvia cut in before Kyo found the right word. “I picked you because of your hubris.”

“My hubris?”

“Yes, Milluki would have ruined the family with his lazy confidence. Illumi with his conceited lust for power. Killua would never give it the time and dedication it deserved and Kalluto lacks hubris altogether.” Silvia paused and took Kikyo’s hand to lovingly brush his thumb over her knuckles. “But you aren’t like them Kyo, you work hard and you won’t be too greedy, that is why we expect a lot from you.”

Kyo flushed, smiling down at his hands that were still twisting anxiously in his lap.

“Well then, may I ask a favor as the next heir?”

Kikyo smiled. “You may, although in the future remember that as the next heir you order, you do not ask.”
“Okay,” Kyo agreed and then licked his lips to ask a favor that he knew Kikyo wouldn't like. “I want to bring Illumi to see Hisoka’s fight.”

“What?! No! If we allow Illumi out he’ll—“

“Why?” Silva interrupted his mate before she could fall into hysterics again.

“We’re his mates, if he dies . . . I just don’t want Illumi to have any regrets. If Hisoka is going to put his life on the line then Illumi and I should be there to support him,” Kyo explained his feelings as much as he could.

Kikyo and Silva exchanged a look and then sighed together.

“We will be sending butlers to make sure he comes back, and you are in charge of making sure they don’t do anything crazy,” Kikyo stressed. Kyo almost laughed. Sometimes he couldn’t believe how completely upside down this place was compared to the rest of the world.

“I’ll do my best,” Kyo promised.

“Good, we’re done for the day. Take these,” Kikyo handed over a towering stack of folders to Kyo. “I’d like you to go through them and assign these missions to who would fit them best. This is one of the most important jobs of the head of house, making sure the jobs sent to us are handled only by the family members most equipped to handle them. So from now on you’ll be handling this exclusively, after that you’ll start taking meetings with Silva and me when we meet with our high profile clients.”

Kyo nodded, taking the stack of folders and trying not to shake. This was all happening so fast!

Kyo left the room balancing the folders in his arms, almost falling a few times when the weight of them kept making him tip.

“I really need to work out more.”
“Yes you do,” Illumi’s emotionless voice startled Kyo enough that he almost fell forward. Only Illumi pulling him by the back of his shirt and then taking the heavy papers kept him up.

“Ah, Illumi that’s my homework, I need it!” Kyo tried to take it back but Illumi simply held it out of his reach.

“I know, This is important information so I’m . . . helping you.” Can a tone of voice have the cadence of an eye roll? Because that’s how Illumi sounded.

“Um, thank you?” Kyo blushed, not wanting to get his hopes up too much. This was still the Illumi who had been colder than normal since the announcement that Kyo would be taking over the family.

Illumi only gave a slight grunt and began to walk towards what was once his room but was now recognized as Kyo’s room.

Illumi kicked open the door with practiced ease and led the way into the room.

It was the first time he’d been in his old room since he brought the omega home. The biggest change was the increase in pillows and the amount of clothes Kyo had acquired.

“You haven’t changed anything,” Illumi mumbled as Kyo closed the door.

Kyo was flushing when Illumi put down the stack of folders and turned back to him. It occurred to him then that the last time he’d been alone with Kyo in a room had been when he’d mated him without Hisoka after they marked him together.

“Calm down, you aren’t in heat so touching you would be meaningless to me,” Illumi said with a face that gave nothing away.

“I-I know,” Kyo sighed as he took off his locket and hung it on his necklace tree, one of the few things Kyo had added to the room.

Illumi watched every movement with a calculating gaze. When Kyo stepped away from the
necklace tree and began edging around the room that now smelled more of him than Illumi, awkwardly Illumi approached the locket curiously.

“You didn’t put any pictures in it,” Illumi observed when he opened the plain thing.

“I… I didn’t know if I had the right,” Kyo answered honestly, hugging the bed post and screaming internally that he had no idea how to handle this confrontation of confusing proportions.

“You thought you had the right for everything else you did,” he spoke with a cutting look directed at Kyo, his voice somehow both sarcastic and casual.

Kyo paled, not knowing how to respond to that.

Illumi blinked at him before flicking the necklace tree over and leaving the room, the door giving a soft click. Once again Kyo felt his heart break echoed in the sound of a door shutting.
Finding several alphas to steal clothes from wasn’t an issue, and Nobunaga made certain they looked incredibly sleazy. He found nothing wrong with taking clothes from traffickers and then separating their heads from their bodies.

Armor was more difficult to come by and he ended up breaking into a very well-to-do antique and antiquity shop in order to steal several pieces that he found lying around.

‘Shopping’ while dressed in armor and mismatched clothes drew some attention, but he found that he didn’t care too much as he grabbed several bags of frozen meals he could heat along with a large selection of sweets such as frozen eclairs, cream puffs, and cookie dough.

Standing outside the base several hours after he left, the samurai-wannabe took a deep breath as he prepared himself for the most dangerous and trying battle of his life. What lay beyond this door would test every fiber of his being, especially the new respect he had found for omegas.

Hopefully the chastity belt he had grabbed at the adult store next to the antique shop would help.

Unlocking the door as quietly as he could, Nobunaga slithered into the base and gently shut the door, wincing whenever there was even a faint squeak of the hinges before locking it. Gathering his courage, he turned and began to tiptoe down the short hall to the kitchen, barely keeping his balance when his feet found the table in the semi-darkness. It had been pushed away from the stairs completely.

Swallowing thickly, courage slightly flagging as he began to sweat, Nobunaga continued towards the kitchen. The monster could be anywhere in here, and it was bound to be hungry.

For the first time in his life, Nobunaga prayed to whatever deity that may deign to hear him for help and mercy as he slipped into the kitchen and settled the groceries onto the counter. May the great beast be asleep! May the clothes from other alphas plus the armor work! And if those failed, may his offering of sweets and cookies be accepted!

Though he wasn’t particularly hungry, Nobunaga pulled out a pan and tore open one of the frozen dinners, this one containing rice and vegetables. He knew the brand and hoped it would suffice because he really wasn’t a decent cook. For once he wished he had joined Franklin, Feitan, and Kurapika during their cooking lessons with that chef person. Heck, even Phinks was better at cooking than he was!

It was as he was checking to see it the veggies were warm that he felt it, a tingling at the back of his neck and the rising sense of danger and alarm. The beast was near!

Nobunaga swung around to see Heather, crouched and ready to pounce. He assured himself later that the yelp he uttered was not as high pitch as it seemed and the wooden spoon he raised to fend her off automatically was because he was trying to not hurt her and had nothing to do with a panic directed grab for any possible weapon.

Heather’s smile was feral as she leaped at him and Nobunaga finally screamed only for her nose to twitch and suddenly she was backing away fast, a hiss passing her lips. Her nose was scrunched up in disgust and Nobunaga was both terrified and… found the expression off putting. He didn’t want Heather to dislike him at all!
Reaching back, he snagged the box of frozen miniature eclairs and yanked it open, pulling two from the box. He settled them on a plate and slowly settled the plate on the floor then slid it to the heat stricken woman. The snarls and hissing continued for a moment before Heather focused on the treats, some instinct telling her that although she didn’t like his smell currently, Nobunaga wouldn’t hurt her. It was just those hideous clothes he wore, his scent under them was still good.

Tentatively, a thin hand reached out to grab one of the eclairs and she sniffed it before taking a small bite. Nobunaga knew it was a hit when her eyes closed in pleasure, enjoying the taste and her hissing ceased.

He was going to need to pay more attention to other alphas once they got to the Gyudondong village.

Chrollo and Kurapika rushed into the clinic of the village as a roar sounded and Chrollo’s hands automatically went up to try to shield Kurapika’s ears only to find it to be unnecessary; Kurapika was already shielding his ears.

Bonolenov glanced over and waved before Shalnark offered a box of earplugs. “Baby is almost here, they just took Uvo in and now it sounds like he’s the one giving birth.”

“Or getting his arm pulverized. Machi has been surprisingly quiet.”

Another cry of pain cut through the air as the pair stuffed their ears with the offered ear plugs.

The door opened again and Kurapika turned and found himself smiling as Gon entered the building, followed by Pairo being guided by Kalluto, Alluka, and finally Killua. The Enhancer noticed Kurapika a second later and almost pounced on him and probably would have if he wasn’t grabbed at the last second by Chrollo.

“Hey Gon!” Kurapika waddled forward and felt a bit unbalanced when he bent to hug the boy. Chrollo definitely wanted to help him, but Kurapika appreciated that he didn’t.

The earplugs barely muffled the next yell and all five of the kids covered their ears. Pairo looked like he was torn over something.

“How many pieces do you think Uvo’s arm will be in?” Chrollo asked a moment later as a joke.

“At least three,” Kurapika replied.

“With Machi? Hah! It’ll be at least five!” Killua declared cheekily as Alluka laughed. “She knows that she can fix whatever she does, so she’s not likely to hold back.”

“Brother knows from personal experience!” Alluka declared happily and all saw Killua go slightly rigid. “He trained with her twice after Mr. Feitan left and declared he’d take torture over what she did any day of the week!”

“Oh? What about you, Alluka?”

“I started training and I’m a Transmuter also! Just like both of my great brothers! Machi started training me a few days ago!”

“Have you begun thinking of your hatsu?”

“Nope! I’ll eventually think about it though.”
“Turning his head, Kurapika saw that Pairo was more steady then he ever remembered his friend being since the accident. “What about you, Pairo?”

“Fine, but I’m not training yet. Fanaka-bennu is adamant that I should get my eyes fixed first or else I might trip and run into something.”

Chrollo felt his shoulders stiffen at what Pairo had just said and took a breath. The boy hadn’t been able to see the troupe when they murdered his and Kurapika’s clan, they could deny it all but…

Dark eyes moved over the five children that had been added to his pack/family. Gon and Killua knew, Kalluto likely did as well. It wasn’t fair to them or Pairo to keep the secret. Him finding out later from someone else would likely end far worse than if Chrollo told him himself with Kurapika there.

Another yodel of pain echoed from the birthing chamber and a moment later, Fanaka-bennu’s head popped out of the room. Her eyes roved over the group, nodding as she did a head count.

“How many breaks?!” Gon demanded.

Fanaka gave a faint concerned smile to the boy. “Five thus far.”

“KILLUA WINS!” the boy cheered. “Machi is really strong!”

“Uvo only started making noise after the third break,” Fanaka supplied and Gon nodded sagely.

“He says that you can block most pain with the right mindset.”

Kurapika found himself smiling as well. “Guess Nobunaga will be here in a few more days?” he asked as Fanaka-bennu slipped back into the birthing room.

Shalnark glanced over, his eyes glinting mischievously. “He’ll probably need a few days to unwind after what he’s been going through!”

Chrollo’s ears perked immediately. “Shal, what have I said about setting up cameras in the bases?”

The silence that followed the comment caused everyone to stare at the blonde.

“Oh come on! I was able to see actual footage of those two falling into the Sarip base and you can’t say you don’t want to see Nobunaga getting his just desserts! Kurapika, don’t you want to see that new omega stealing Nobu’s clothes and him running into the street in his underwear?”

“I’d prefer to not see Nobunaga without his clothes, thank you very much.”

“What about crying and begging fate to forgive him for all he did to you?”

“That sounds cathartic.”

Shalnark gave Chrollo a winning grin as the man sighed and shook his head, a small smile on his own face.

“How are Feitan and Phinks?”
“They’re on a mission to shutdown another facility that boasts about having over 100 high class omegas. They said they’d get here as soon as they deliver the new ones to Ryuuseigai. I’ll be heading there soon too. Recent income from the new businesses has caused the council to finally decide to bring internet to the place!”

The blonde continued to gush over the internet connections he would be setting up and how he wanted to ensure it was completely wireless and high speed. As he spoke, Chrollo’s eyes traveled to Pairo again, wondering when the right time to tell the kid about the troupe would be.

He was about to ask Kurapika when a roar unlike any before tore through the air, causing the entire troupe plus the kids to jump. Kortopi’s drink splashed against the ceiling due to his jump.

“That is the first time I think I’ve ever heard Machi scream…” Pakunoda stated after a long moment as she blinked at the door.

Before anyone could add anything to her comment, a new cry filled the air, that of a newborn.

The rush of the troupe members to the door was stopped only because Fanaka-bennu had stuck her head out, her expression already in a blank warning mask that caused an instinctive fear to cause even Shizuku to freeze.

“You should give Machi and Uvo a few minutes with their baby and for Machi to patch up Uvo’s arm,” she warned and each of the troupe members backed away quickly.

“It’s alright Fanaka!” Machi’s muffled voice called back and the woman sighed before stepping aside and allowing the troupe to cautiously creep into the room, terrified of pissing off the omega woman.

Uvo stood next to Machi’s bed, a tiny bundle in his one arm that he was practically cooing at while Machi was tending to his other arm, straightening the bones and using her strings to bind the pieces together. He didn’t even wince.

“Danchou, I’m a daddy!” the giant Enhancer practically yelled when he looked up and saw the rest of his family quietly entering the room. “A little girl!”

“Just like Machi thought,” Kurapika remarked with a smile as he felt his baby give a sudden kick.

Leorio was standing on Uvo’s other side, poking the man. “I really need to weigh her and do an examination,” he informed the man. “Make sure she’s healthy.”

“She’s better than healthy, she’s perfect! She even has Machi’s hair already!”

Gon watched the man who had become his idol as an Enhancer coo and gush over his newborn daughter, even as Machi finally forced him to let Leorio take the little girl. Pakunoda moved to stand next to him and was visibly smiling as well at the child as Leorio noted her birth weight, temperature, and color of her skin.

“You’ll want to let her have plenty of exposure to sunlight, she has a bit of jaundice and the sunlight will help her break down the hemoglobin causing it. Weight is 6 pounds, 9 ounces. A very healthy little alpha,” Leorio reported as he wrapped the baby that was beginning to fuss in a blanket and moved to a small basin of water. “Uvo, want to help me give little… What’s her name?”

“Ryce.” “Yue,” Machi and Uvo answered at the same time before both heads snapped towards each other.
“Guess they forgot in the excitement,” Leorio shrugged before turning to the basin and began to give the newborn a bath, one that didn’t seem to be appreciated.

“You’re holding her wrong!” Kurapika exclaimed as Leorio shifted and tried to hold the squirming infant. “Let me.”

The beta made no objections as Kurapika pushed forward and took the infant into his arms. The effect was strange and almost instantaneous as the infant seemed to ready herself to give an enormous scream and then froze as Kurapika adjusted her in his arms, humming softly as he began to wash the baby.

Leorio and Chrollo watched, both taking notes as Kurapika gingerly washed the little girl’s body and hair. Leorio watched as an aspiring professional, Chrollo as a soon-to-be father.

The bath lasted a few minutes, Machi and Uvo arguing throughout it. Shalnark suggested flipping a coin and giving the other name to their next kid. Machi firmly refused the thought.

“I’m not going through that again,” she stated sternly.

“Then what about combining the names?” Pairo suggested after a moment. “Like Yce or Rue?”

“Rue? Rue…” Uvo muttered, trying out the name before looking to Machi.

The Transmuter looked to be deep in thought as well before nodding after a moment. “Rue.”

Chrollo watched as Kurapika passed the child to Paku and felt a slight rise in his eyebrows when the newly named Rue began to fuss after a moment and cry. She was quickly passed to Kortopi, then to Bono, then to Kalluto who passed her to Shalnark who handed her to Machi where she finally calmed down after a minute.

As the focus finally turned to Machi as she rocked her little girl, Chrollo focused on Pairo and tapped his shoulder. The boy had stared at him, not quite comprehending until Chrollo angled his head toward the door, then touched Kurapika’s hand, drawing him along as well. The three didn’t notice that Kalluto watched them leave.

“Pairo, there’s something I think we should tell you… That I should tell you,” Chrollo corrected himself after finding a quiet place away from the birthing room. “It’s about your people.”

“Did you find someone else?” the boy demanded, hope in his eyes and Kurapika shifted next to him, his eyes questioning.

“No, it seems that you and Kurapika are truly the last of the Kuruta and I want to apologize for that.”

“You’re Kuruta too since you mated him,” the boy pointed out, causing Chrollo’s heart to drop. “It’s not as though you killed our people.”

The silence that followed was deafening and Pairo’s eyes widened as no denial came. “You didn’t, did you?” he demanded sharply.

“I was stupid and have no other explanation,” Chrollo replied.

“Then how… How did?... Kurapika?! Did you know?!”

“Yes,” the blonde replied. “It was-”
Pairo cut him off. “Did he force you or something? Find you after and force himself on you?!”

“No, we… met and things happened.”

“Mating isn’t just a thing!”

Kurapika shook his head. “It wasn’t that, Chrollo... He learned and apologized. He fell in love first and though I’ve never forgotten or forgiven him, I do know he authentically regrets it and I came to love him.”

“THAT SORT OF THING DOESN’T HAPPEN!” Pairo roared and lurched forward, tiny child fists beating at Chrollo’s chest. The man made no move to defend himself or to stop Pairo, just let him beat at his chest. “My mother and father! I heard them both screaming! Screaming for me to stay hidden! As they were both killed! Kia was screaming and crying, she was only three!”

“I know, I’m trying to repent the only way I can. That’s why we are going to make sure you are safe and grow to be strong,” Chrollo reassured the best he could.

“I HATE YOU!” Pairo finally cried as he shoved past the man and took off down the hall, barely avoiding walls and chairs as he tore out of the clinic.

Chrollo turned, ready to run after the boy when he found himself staring at Kalluto.

The omega took a long breath as he stationed himself to block Chrollo’s path. “He needs to calm down, I’ll go after him,” he stated evenly.

Chrollo glanced at Kurapika who nodded and then he nodded in turn. Kalluto inclined his head slightly before gracefully turning and going after Pairo, kimono barely moving and definitely not flapping the way it would if a normal person attempted to run in a kimono.

“Chrollo,” Kurapika’s voice called the Phantom troupe leader to turn to his mate. “Thank you.”

“Why?”

Kurapika smiled faintly. “For showing that you do care and want truth in our family.”

Our family. Their family. Chrollo hugged Kurapika gently before a thought occurred to him.

“I have something that I think we both will want to see!” he stated excitedly as he grasped Kurapika’s hand and turned towards the door. “I told Uvo and Machi and they helped but I haven’t seen it yet myself!”

“Haven’t seen what? And weren’t we here to see Rue?”

“You already held her longer than her parents have, let’s let them have a chance!” Chrollo pointed out as he practically pulled Kurapika out of the door and down the street towards their house.

The large building now had a beautiful light brick exterior with white accents and pillars. It was beautiful! Then Chrollo opened the door and Kurapika felt his breath draw in. The coffee bar had been set up with a few small tables and the bookcases that now lined the room, creating rows and lining the walls, begged to be filled with books. Books that Kurapika knew Chrollo had wrapped up in the Fun Fun cloth.

It was like a dream!

Chrollo guided him to the back of the shop, past the classrooms that had already been furnished
with tables and chairs for students. They climbed the stairs to the residential part of the building and Chrollo was giddy as he guided Kurapika to a door next to the master bedroom, one that would have a view of the fields behind the house.

“We can make some alterations if you want,” Chrollo promised as he moved towards the door, his smile large and happy.

“Alterations?”

“To the nursery!”

Chrollo reached out then to swing the door open to what was to be their baby’s room and as the door swung open, a presence reached his senses that caused him to immediately push Kurapika behind him.

The room was beautiful, light blue in color with some yellow accents. The rocking chair was polished wood and Uvo’s wonderful crib…

“HISOKA!” Kurapika yelled as they both focused on the clown, perched precariously on the crib with a horrifying grin painted on his face.

“Finally caught up to you. Let’s fight!”
Feitan sighed as he walked deeper into the depths of the horrific facility. He was an expert in torture but this made him sick. Apparently this facility was on the low end, so they felt they could be tougher with their ‘merchandise’. Most, if not all of the omegas, were completely defenceless and they still beat them, tortured them!

The worst part of the facility was the room full of dead bodies, Feitan had smelt it the moment he entered this hellhole. From the looks of it, they all mostly died of malnutrition, a horrible way to go.

The facility must have been a mine or something at some point in the past, the place went far too deep to have not been. Mine carts became a regular thing the further he descended.

He wouldn’t be going this deep if anyone else had been with him when a random omega boy had stopped him and begged for Feitan to find his friend. He hadn’t seen her in ten months, apparently the head of the facility had taken a liking to her and kept her in his private chambers at the deepest level.

He sighed again when he finally found the guard bunks and then the main quarters of the freak that ran this place.

Feitan didn’t hear anything coming from the room, not even the sounds of sleeping. He waited outside the door for another minute, just listening until he heard a small rustle of moment.

Didn’t sound like an adult . . . If that man had taken a child as his- Feitan might just go up and further defile his corpse after this. Then have Alluka bring him back so he could properly torture him!

Feitan swung the door open as calmly as possible, not wanting to scare the omega inside. Only he didn’t find an omega inside, at least not a living one. What he did find made him freeze: a baby.

“No,” Feitan whispered as he approached the still body of the dead omega woman, between her bloody thighs lay the abandoned child, umbilical cord uncut and face scrunched up in miserable sleep. She must have died in childbirth and the worthless alpha just up and abandoned his child. The only reason for it was the thick scent of an omega.
Feitan didn’t know what to do with the newborn, his brain had stalled completely until the baby suddenly began to stir. The baby girl cracked open one stormy grey eye, looking at him before her mouth dropped open and the screaming began.

Feitan jumped to action immediately, scooping up the babe with only instinct to guide how to hold the child. Thank god he’d paid attention when Chrollo was getting instructions for this.

Once the baby was held firmly against his chest, Feitan used a quick movement to cut the cord and tie it with one hand. The baby stopped crying to coo and curl into his chest, whimpering and moving like she was searching for something.

Feitan only realized she was searching for food when she began to suck on one of his coat buttons.

“No food,” Feitan gasped, yanking the button out of the baby’s mouth. The child's face scrunched up, making sounds like she was going to wail again so Feitan did the only thing he could think of.

He frantically began to rock her, shushing her. When it didn’t work he tried to distract her with a finger only for the baby to catch the digit in her mouth and begin to suck.

Not wanting her to cry, he surrendered and left the finger there.

Soon enough she drifted off to sleep again and nuzzled into his coat.

“No get comfy,” Feitan warned the babe as he turned to leave the room and begin the long journey back up the facility. Biscuit or one of the other omegas, maybe even the friend that asked him to find the mother, they would take the child. She wouldn’t be with him long.

Hisoka grinned and licked his lips as he watched Chrollo push a very pregnant Kurapika more firmly behind him. He certainly didn’t waste any time, and Hisoka made a note to watch that baby grow, it would certainly be one of his most exquisite fruits.
“Hisoka,” Chrollo growled lowly, still trying to get Kurapika away from the room as gently and firmly as possible. Kurapika would not be shuffled though, he was already materializing his chains and readying himself for a fight.

“No more stalling Chrollo, we are going to fight!” Hisoka cackled madly as he also readied his playing cards, licking his lips and feeling a swell in his pants from the excitement.

“Wait!” Chrollo called, gritting his teeth. He needed to stop this, he didn’t want to put his life on the line before ever getting to hold his child. “Hisoka, I never planned to not fight you, I just wanted to hold my child before! If you would just wait a mon-”

Hisoka threw a playing card, slicing the hand carved crib in half. The meaning was clear: you fight me now or I’m going to go after your baby.

Kurapika gasped, laying both hands protectively over his stomach. He hissed in his throat and felt his thoughts bouncing around like a hurricane. They needed to get Hisoka out of their house, they needed to create some space and maybe get Chrollo some time to actually put a strategy together. Kurapika knew he’d thought on it a little but not enough. Chrollo was the type that needed a concrete plan before engaging an opponent like Hisoka.

But how could he get Hisoka to just wait a little longer? The man didn’t care about anything other than a good fight, Illumi, and maybe Ky-

“What about Kyo?!?” Kurapika shoved his way past Chrollo, shouting desperately much like he did back in the Hunter exam when Hisoka had come at him bloodthirsty.

Hisoka’s eyes snapped to Kurapika.

“What about my blossom?” Hisoka spun a card around his fingers the way one might play with a coin.

“You promised him that you would let him watch the fight, right?” Kurapika gulped, stepping a little closer even as Chrollo readied himself to wrap Kurapika up in the fun fun cloth and run away with him. “Well? Where is he? Or did you lie to your mate?”

Hisoka didn’t say anything, only sharpened his glare.
“Heavens Arena, go collect Kyo and Chrollo can actually plan. You wouldn’t want to fight an ill prepared Chrollo, right? That wouldn’t be fun,” Kurapika bargained.

Hisoka considered that with a hum in his throat. A bit of amusement bubbled up in his chest at the reminder of why Kurapika had become one of his fruits.

“We’ll meet up there in a month,” Kurapika began only for Hisoka to throw another card at the crib, loving the way Kurapika flinched at the barely hidden meaning and the hard edge to Chrollo’s eyes.


Chrollo clenched his jaw, one week, if he died Kurapika would go through labor alone. He’d be raising their child alone, a child that Chrollo would never have held or assured how much he loved in the flesh.

Kurapika took his hand and squeezed, deciding for him.

“Okay, Heavens Arena in a week,” Chrollo promised, squeezing Kurapika’s hand back. He wouldn’t be dying. Hisoka had threatened his mate, his baby, invaded his home, and chased them so ferociously that Kurapika had to suffer being pregnant inside a car for nearly 8 months. Chrollo was mad. No, he was furious!

Hisoka wouldn't be killing him, he was going to destroy the redhead.

“Good,” Hisoka grinned, pivoting quickly and leaping out a window.

Chrollo fell to one knee, feeling his heart trying to beat out of his chest. Immediately Chrollo wrapped Kurapika up in his arms and just held him. That was the closest he’d ever come to losing Kurapika since the run away incident. He forgot that love could make him feel like this, like there was no air left.

“It’s okay,” Kurapika whispered to Chrollo, comforting him when Chrollo hadn’t even realized
he’d needed it. Emotion was such a pain, situations like this had seemed so much easier when he had nothing to live for. “I’m okay, you’re okay.”

“How’s the baby? Are you too stressed? Any pain?” Chrollo asked a bit frantically, pressing a hand on Kurapika’s swollen belly.

“Have you met their father? I’m sure the baby can take a few life threatening situations,” Kurapika whispered, pressing his hand over Chrollo’s as the baby wiggled inside him, like they were agreeing.

“Not to mention their mother,” Chrollo chuckled as his heart rate began to go down. “That was some quick thinking Kurapika.”

“I try.”

“You succeed.”

“Well I don’t intend to be widowed at 18, so are you ready for some impromptu strategy brainstorming?” Kurapika grinned at Chrollo as he began to get up, casting a disappointed look at the ruined crib. Uvogin was not going to be happy about that.

“With you? Always.”

Pairo was surprised he hadn’t run into a tree as he continued running through the blurry forest. Not that he would have cared at the moment.

The forest was reminiscent of his home enough to rip out his heart for a fourth time.

The first was when his people were killed, the second when he awoke to find his best friend mated and pregnant, and the third when he found out that mate was the murderer of his clan.
Somehow the betrayal of Kurapika choosing to be with him was worse, and the fact that the bastard had started to grow on Pairo.

Tears were already running down his cheeks, further blurring his vision and he was forced to stop running. He collapsed onto the ground and just cried.

“How could you?!” Pairo screamed towards the direction he’d ran from, at Kurapika.

That man killed their families, cut out their people’s eyes! How could he ever love him? That isn’t possible, it’s sick and wrong!

They had to have done something to Kurapika, brainwashed him or something! He couldn’t have... he wouldn’t have...

“Pairo,” Kalluto’s soft, bland voice made Pairo jump.

“Stay away!” Pairo yelled at him. “You lied to me! You're probably a murderer just like him!”

Pairo could hear Kalluto pause.

“That’s right,” he whispered and Pairo whipped his head around to gape at the boy. He hadn’t actually thought that Kalluto could be a killer. He’d just been so angry!

“Did you kill my family too?” Pairo whispered hoping, praying that Kalluto didn’t.

“No,” he confirmed. “I was a toddler then, but I am a killer.”

Pairo shuddered. How many killers had he been spending his days with?!

“Gon and Fanaka I don’t believe have ever hurt anyone that didn’t deserve it,” Kalluto finally moved forward, sitting next to Pairo but giving him his space. “Fanaka’s lived here since the troupe saved and moved her tribe here and she does what she needs to to protect it. Gon was raised a lot like you, a happy innocent childhood where everyone was accepting of him and he got to play the days away in the forest.”

“But not the rest of you?” Pairo asked with a sneer, feeling like this conversation was about to become vague apologetics. Talking about how they didn’t mean to become monsters, that it was their childhood that did it to them.

“I guess, Killua and I were raised to be assassins. It’s the family business, enduring the torture was just what was expected of us. Him and I have killed because that was the life we were born into,” Kalluto waited for Pairo to say something but when he didn’t, Kalluto continued. “Alluka is the only one that shouldn’t have any blame for her killings.”

“And why is that?” Pairo gulped, feeling even more crushed to find out the sweet girl was also a killer. Especially because she’s the one that brought him back to life.

“Nanika, the thing that lives inside Alluka, the thing that brought you back from the dead. She has no control over it, if you refuse her requests three times it will kill you. Sometimes kill people close to you,” Kalluto explained. “She has never wanted to hurt anyone, and neither has Nanika, it’s just the rules of their power are very strict. Please don’t blame her for that.”

Pairo didn’t say anything, but he didn't feel any ill will towards her. He guessed he could forgive Alluka for that, it wasn’t her fault.

“As for the Troupe, I won’t apologize for them but I do know that when you grow up in a place where empathy means death, you tend to do some things that you would otherwise regret. I don’t expect you to forgive me or them, I don’t even expect you to still like me now that you know about the blood on my hands. But I just wanted you to know that,” Kalluto got up, intending to allow Pairo to grieve. Only for Pairo to take his hand to stop him.

“I-I don’t want to be alone,” Pairo whispered, not looking up at the omega.

“Okay,” Kalluto smiled as he sat back down, holding Pairo’s hand tightly.
“Take baby,” Feitan walked right up to Biscuit and held the baby out to her. She was heavy, or at least after six stories of climbing she had become heavy. Especially because at some point she had started crying for food and hadn’t stopped since, even when he offered his finger again.

“What about the omega you went down to get?” Biscuit asked as she moved to take the child, throwing an order over her shoulder for Knov to grab some of the formula he stored for little surprises like this.

“Dead,” he sighed in relief when the child’s weight left his arms.

“I’m guessing she died in childbirth?”

“Yes,” Feitan was about to move away, done with the report of what he’d found when the baby began to scream. It was louder than anything he’d heard from her so far, she turned her head away from the bottle they tried to feed her with. She struggled and wiggled and everyone seemed confused until the girl managed to open one stubby hand and reach out for Feitan desperately.

Biscuit’s eyes widened before she yanked Feitan closer and the baby calmed quickly when his scent was once again close.

“Feitan, I need you to feed her,” Biscuit said as she moved to pass the baby back.

“No, me no like babies!” Feitan gasped trying to wrench away but Biscuit was relentless and he soon found his arms full of newborn baby once again.

“She needs to eat, and if she’ll only do it in your arms then you’ve got a baby Feitan,” Biscuit helped adjust the baby until he could hold her with one arm and then pushed the bottle into his free hand. “Don’t worry, I’m sure once we get back to Ryuuseigai and get her comfortable, she’ll stop being so attached to you.”

“Better,” Feitan mumbled as the baby cooed up at him as she began to softly suck on the nipple of the bottle, her barely cracked open eyes grey eyes looking up at him.
“Hey Feitan, what you got there?” Phinks approached his mate only to freeze when he saw the man holding an infant that was nursing on a bottle. They had agreed that they didn’t want children but something about seeing Feitan with a baby made Phinks’ heart squeeze. He looked so cute! Not that he’d ever say that to the torturer, he’d get killed!

“Baby,” Feitan answered simply.

“You should wrap her in something, it’s gonna be cold once we get outside,” Phinks mumbled as he moved next to the shorter man and gingerly rubbed a finger on the child’s cheek. The small girl looked to him, the bottle popping out of her mouth to coo at him too. “Hey I think she likes me!”

“Good, take!” Feitan pushed the child into Phinks arms and showed him what to do before stepping away, breathing a sigh when the girl didn’t begin to cry again.

Phinks asked where he found her and Feitan gave him a quick explanation of how he came to be the one holding the baby.

“Huh what a little survivor,” Phink cooed back at the baby.

“I get blanket,” Feitan sighed, the girl really was a survivor. There was no telling how long she had laid alone and scared between her dead mother's thighs but she had held on.

“Biscuit,” Feitan called the woman's attention. “Naji need blanket,” he told her when she looked at him.

“Naji?”

“Baby, she need blanket,” Feitan flushed, unconsciously he’d called the girl ‘Survivor’ in his native tongue.

“Naji is a good name for her,” Biscuit praised as she collected a small soft blanket and handed it to Feitan. “I should have thought of a blanket sooner, you’re better at this than I thought you’d be.”

“She someone else problem when get back,” Feitan glared, there was no way he was getting stuck
with a kid. He liked his freedom, a kid would tie him down.

Feitan went back over to Phinks and laid the blanket over his arms, holding them out for Phinks to settle her back into his arms. Phinks took the time to wrap the ends of the blanket around her to sloppily swaddle her.

“She’s real cute, maybe we should get Machi to make her a hat,” Phinks grinned down at the girl who yawned and cuddled her face back into Feitan’s chest.

Suddenly her mouth dropped open and she burped, mucus and white slime cascading out of her mouth and down the front of Feitan’s coat.

He glared back up at Phinks who had stepped away in surprise. “Sure, cute!” He growled as he adjusted the girls head so she didn’t choke on her own sick. “Naji goes when get back!” He promised darkly.

Phinks frowned and aided in the effort to clean up the baby vomit.

“Ohay,” he mumbled. Thinking it was a shame because they had already named her.

The journey back was long, luckily the facility was far enough away from Ryuuseigai to warrant a shuttle of cars that would get them to the desert before everyone would go on foot.

These missions were getting easier, especially with a large group of the newly freed omegas in Ryuuseigai that were now training to become Hunters and protectors. They were coming along on these missions for training and could more effectively convince the omegas that they were there to actually help them.

Phinks stole a car so they could head back to the city by themselves, well them plus the baby. No matter what Feitan did, the child refused to be held by anyone but himself or Phinks.

He just couldn’t wait to get back to the original base and change, shower too. The baby was all bloody and gory as well, someone will have to bathe her when they get back. He wondered what temperature the water should be before he firmly shut that line of thinking down. He wasn’t keeping it! The moment they got home someone would take her and he’d never have to think about her again.
“How’s Naji doing?” Phinks asked from the driver's seat. Feitan was laid down in the back, the baby nestled in the crook of his armpit.

“Asleep, she like the car,” Feitan sighed, just happy she wasn’t crying.

“Yeah I heard babies like that.”

“Not know you cared about babies,” Feitan grumbled. If Phinks wanted a kid he’d have said so, right? He seems too excited about this situation, especially when they’d both sworn off kids after their babysitting failures.

“I-“ Phinks cleared his throat. “I don’t really, just a few things I think I heard here and there."

“Hm,” Feitan hummed as he noticed that the buildings were becoming smaller outside. “I call Biscuit, hot desert no good for baby.”

“Good thinking.”

Biscuit of course agreed with him, a newborn should definitely not be traveling under the beating sun. She asked for them to make a quick stop and shuttle some of the weak or injured omegas along with them.

Feitan wanted to tell her just to take all the cars across the desert but he also knew that would draw way too much attention. Chrollo wouldn’t care for that.

Strangely the three omegas they picked up weren’t afraid of Feitan or Phinks like they normally were. At first they were hesitant of course, but then they noticed the baby and all seemed to relax.

The moment they got back to the city, Feitan and Phinks led the three injured omegas they’d brought along towards the newly set up clinic, one of the doctors the Zoldycks had sent ended up mating with an alpha from Ryuuseigai and set up his own practice here. He was even training a few of the new omegas to be doctors and nurses.
They sat them down in the small waiting room to wait for the doctor then marched the baby right up to the front desk.

“Check up,” Feitan held the baby out to the lady running the front of the clinic. She was from one of the first facility takedowns.

“Oh,” the girl tutted. “I’m guessing her mother didn’t survive?” She asked, taking the baby in her arms.

Feitan nodded and moved to leave now that the baby was safe and with people that would help her. But of course he didn’t get far before Naji began screaming her little lungs out and he was being called back frantically.

“What wrong? Can’t hold her forever!” Feitan snapped, taking her anyway. Phinks hadn't said anything as of yet.

“I’m sorry but I think you need to go in with her to see the doctor.” She didn’t seem too sorry as she led them both back to see the doctor. She had them step into a room that had obviously just been redone, a sink and what looked like a medical bed. Feitan wasn’t sure what it was called.

“Wonder why she keeps crying when you try to leave her,” Phinks said as he sat himself in a chair in the corner.

“No idea, I not mother,” Feitan shrugged, glaring down at the gurgling, drooling newborn and his head began to ache. He should be in the shower right now, not in whatever this situation was.

The door opened and the only medical doctor in the city walked in with a bright smile.

“Hello, I was told you found a newborn?” He asked as he closed the door behind him.

“Yes, take!” Feitan demanded, so far she had rejected every omega he’d passed her to but that didn’t make sense! Feitan was a beta, random newborns didn’t do this with betas!

For the first time an omega he tried to hand the baby off to didn’t immediately make to take her.
Instead he put his hand up and shook his head.

“It’s not good for her to keep passing her around like that,” he warned and nodded when Feitan brought the child back to rest against his chest.

“We just need to get her a check up, maybe a bath, then someone in the city will adopt her, right?” Phinks stepped forward when he recognized the signs of Feitan pouting.

“That I do not advise,” the doctor said seriously. “Giving her to someone else I mean.”

“Why not?!” Feitan demanded.

“She’s bonded to you,” he answered seriously. “When you die your scent dissipates pretty quickly. That means that after who knows how long the very first scent the babe got that gave her any comfort was yours,” he explained expertly. “After such a trauma, you are her only anchor now. If you left her before she’s at least a few months old, well it’s safe to say she’d die.”

Feitan gaped at the doctor and then down at the happy little baby that was apparently distracted by his hair. He’d told her not to get comfy! And look what she did! Bonded to him, what the hell?!

“Congratulations, you’re parents.”

“Fuck!”
Strategies flew back and forth as Kurapika and Chrollo cleaned up the destroyed crib, though Chrollo didn’t allow Kurapika to pick up anything particularly large. They were discussing Chrollo using more mannequins like they had used as a distraction in the Kakin Royal Palace, carrying the pieces of the crib out when Shalnark came screeching through the door.

“Bono saw Hisoka in the village and…” the blonde’s warning died when he saw the pieces of the crib, obviously cleanly sliced in Chrollo’s arms and the destroyed bedding in Kurapika’s.

“We know, perhaps you would be willing to join in our strategy meeting?” Chrollo asked as he moved past him only to be surprised to find Uvo, Kortopi, Bono, Pakunoda, and Franklin outside. Each looked ready to fight though Uvo looked particularly thunderous when he recognized what Chrollo was carrying.

“He caught up and threatened you, didn’t he?!” the man demanded though his tone softened when he saw Kurapika with the torn mattress and blankets.

“Not me, the baby. This was his promise of what would happen if I wasn’t at Heavens Arena, ready to fight in a week.”

“A WEEK?!” Everyone was shocked when Kortopi’s voice screeched. “He should understand that you would want to hold your baby before this!”

“Please,” Kurapika interjected as the rest of the troupe began to get worked up. “We only have a few days to work on a strategy, we need to use them.”

The murmuring died down as the present troupe members saw that Kurapika was correct.

“Count me in,” Shalnark volunteered. “I’ll do whatever is needed.” The rest of the troupe were quick to volunteer whatever aid was needed as well.

“Thank you,” Chrollo finally declared, bringing silence to the group. “We’ll work on a strategy and hopefully come up with something that will allow me to deal with Hisoka. I’ll let you know if I need anything further.”

Uvo huffed, reaching for the crib remnants in Chrollo’s arms and began to pick through them, setting aside certain pieces. He tossed the rest out himself. “Is the rest of the crib still in the nursery?”

Kurapika nodded. “We were going to clean it up later.”

“I’ll get it, gives me something to focus on.”

“Uvo, you can-”

“I’m not good for the planning part, just the fighting,” the large man objected. “You’ll be needing a new crib anyway.”

“You don’t hav-”

Uvo shook his head, expression angry. “I do, or I’ll try to fight Hisoka myself. Threatening you and
danchou like this…”

Shalnark joined the planning after that and was quick to offer his ability for the battle as did Kortopi. Planning continued into the night as they considered strategies based on the techniques Chrollo currently had and ones he could borrow.

“You should take mine,” Kurapika finally stated right as they were wrapping up for the night, causing Chrollo to look up in confusion.

“Kurapika, the way we fight is complimentary but very different,” Chrollo attempted to protest. “Regardless of the fact that I’ve used them before, your chains aren’t something that would suit me very well, especially when fighting Hisoka.”

“It wouldn’t be for the fight. It would be for the end of it.” Kurapika summoned his chains then, holding up his hand to show the chain gauntlet on his hand. “To ensure he doesn’t come after us ever again.”

Chrollo stared at the chains for a moment then nodded and pulled out his phone.

“What?” Kurapika asked only for Shalnark to touch his shoulder.

“Phinks, are you and Feitan busy? Would you be able to get to the Gyudondong village within the next few days?”

Kurapika didn’t have an issue with Phinks and Feitan coming on this trip, he knew it would be dangerous.

“No, I need you to stay in the village with Kurapika.”

Now Kurapika had an issue. A very big one.

“Excuse me? Stay HERE?!” he demanded despite Shalnark’s attempts to keep him away from Chrollo.

Chrollo looked to him and Kurapika could tell the man was torn, but also that he was determined.

“What makes you think I would stay here when Hisoka threatened both of us? And our baby?!”

A loud noise erupted from the phone and Chrollo yanked it away from his ear.

“Just get to the village if you can!” he sharply told whoever was yelling and then another strange noise came, it almost sounded like a baby was crying. Chrollo cut the call before things got stranger. He turned his attention to Kurapika instead. “Because he threatened us and our baby,” the man responded. “If something happens, I want you to be here and not there.”

“You want me to let you possibly go to your death and NOT be there?!” Kurapika demanded. “What do you expect me to do?”

“Rest, finish the nursery, help Pairo?” Chrollo suggested. “I’ll have your ability with me, meaning you’ll be heavily pregnant in an area with possible enemies and no hatsu. Even if I defeat Hisoka, someone else might decide to take revenge by targeting you! But most importantly, if our plan somehow fails, I don’t want you to see me…”

The word ‘die’ had never been difficult for Chrollo, he believed that he had accepted the
possibility of death long ago. It was possible every time he went on a heist, even if it seemed unlikely due to his caution. But right now, the thought of death was hard, the word refused to cross his lips, and the thought of Kurapika watching him lose, seeing him die was the worst thing he could imagine.

Now as he stared into his mate’s eyes, he knew it was selfish to demand this but he couldn’t deny it was what he wanted: his mate and child safe and far from Hisoka while he finished this business between them.

“What makes you think I could? I gave up my… original powers because of what they cost, so why should you sacrifice your life for this without me there?”

“Because there is no getting around this,” Chrollo replied as his hands found Kurapika’s. “You heard Hisoka: I need to be there in a week. I also know Hisoka well enough to know that he will resort to dirty tricks to win a fight he wants.”

Kurapika knew that was true as well, Hisoka wanted to fight strong opponents but was not the type to accept death if he lost, or even to accept a loss. “I could stay out of the arena.”

“We both know you wouldn’t.” Chrollo gently pulled Kurapika to him, hugging him gently. “Please stay here and settle in, get the shop set up, help Machi with her baby. Let me deny you this once, let me be selfish.”

“If you lose, I’ll find a way to bring you back so I can kick your butt for leaving me and our child.”

It was typical of Kurapika to say such a thing and Chrollo bit back a chuckle in response.

Kyo stared across the blanket at Illumi, not certain what he should say or if he should say anything.

Kikyo had surprised them today with a picnic in one of the many meadows around Kukuroo mountain. It was clearly spring and flowers were in full bloom all around them, a wash of color that Kyo had never really seen before.

Even more interesting was the well maintained play areas that they had passed while walking to this particular meadow. Kyo had seen pictures of swings, slides, and other such equipment before but had never been on them. Even now his eyes wandered over to one such play area that was just in view, a swing swaying a bit in the light breeze.

Kyo found himself divided between going to try the swing himself and a fantasy of children that would grow up playing on such structures, not caged regardless of their gender.

Illumi fought to remain neutral as he was he glanced around at the butlers that were hiding behind the trees, watching to ensure he did not escape or leave. It was bizarre, everything seemed to have been turned upside down!

He had not been the golden child for almost 10 years when he’d been 14, but his freedom had never been restricted like this. His mother had not been bothered by where he went, who he saw, or how he acted. She hadn’t even been bothered when he informed her of his relationship with Hisoka.

So why had everyone started acting so differently when he finally did mate an omega? He had chosen one that he had found physically pleasing as much the world did. He already had a partner in life, the omega was just a way to tie them together!
Illumi’s attention turned to Kyo as the boy suddenly stood, head following the form as he walked to a barely visible playset. Tsubone appeared for a moment, her eyes narrowing as she jerked her head slightly to signal that Illumi is to follow his mate.

Why was everyone acting like they loved his mate so much?! Illumi climbed to his feet and followed the boy to the playset and watched as he settled into one of the swings.

It was quickly apparent that the omega had no idea on what to do to make the swing go. He moved back and forth but didn’t manage to do much. A snort behind Illumi from Tsubone got him moving and he walked behind Kyo and began to give him light pushes.

“Pump your legs back when coming back and forward when going forward,” he instructed after a second.

Kyo looked shocked back at him but began to do as he had been instructed.

Why was his mother so attached to this omega that looked so similar to Killua? Even Tsubone was acting like this omega was-

“I got it!”

Kyo’s voice cut through Illumi’s thoughts and he glanced up only to freeze. The scene was exactly like it had been when he’d taught Killua to swing! It had occurred on this exact play area for that matter, on this same swing! Even the way the omega angled his head to look back at him was a mirror of Killua that day!

Everything seemed to fall in place in that moment and the world made sense. Everyone was treating Kyo like Killua because to them he was! Illumi knew he wasn’t, knew in that moment what he was: a nen construct. His nen knew what he wanted and had formed it, crafting an omega that he would like.

Kyo’s change in attitude was also starting to make sense; he was becoming more similar to Killua as he matured! Illumi could admit that his initial intention of just using the omega for carrying and caring for children meant he’d be very detached and likely would never have really spoken to the omega. However, once he thought on this, the omega, Kyo, was much closer to what he would have wanted now.

Kyo had some ideas but did seem devoted to him and Hisoka. Then there was that locket: how many times had he imagined having a shared piece of jewelry for Killua and himself? Kyo listened to him, thanked him for helping him.

In addition, his nen type and even the reaction on water divination were the same as Killua!

Now if only he could convince Kyo to undo the makeover that his mother had pulled on him!

The urge to finally talk to his mate came over Illumi as he felt a strange fondness come over him, but right as he was about to open his mouth, the moment was interrupted with extreme flamboyance.

Hisoka was suddenly there, on the swing. His feet were attached to the top of the swing set while his hands clutched the chains right above Kyo’s hands, fingers brushing. He seemed perfectly natural in his inverted position as he grinned in an excited manner.

Kyo blushed as he leaned back so his head wouldn’t hit Hisoka’s as the swing continued to move.
“~Kyo~!” The man cooed happily. “I found Chrollo and we’ve set up our fight! I’ve come to take you along as promised!”

“Oh!” Kyo declared as Illumi watched the pair. “You kept your promise! We need to take Illumi with us too!”

Both alphas blinked in surprise.
Phinks stared at his phone in shock for a moment as Naji began to scream again, Feitan waking from the dozing he’d been doing to immediately begin rocking her again.

Neither of them had slept since they had unceremoniously become parents. Naji needed a lot of special attention as told to them by the doctor. She vomited up all the formula they gave her until the doctor recommended a lactose free mix. Then they had to make up all the nutrients she had missed out on by mixing a special paste into her bottles. One of them had to go and find clothes for her while the nurses took turns with each of them to show them how to wash and change her. They also had to work out shifts to take parenting classes.

Luckily Biscuit and all of the omegas really had been very understanding of their situation and helped as much as they could to get them set up with everything they needed. Phinks envied couples that got nine months to prepare because now he knew just how much a baby truly needed.

Naji still wouldn't let them put her down but their arms had been saved by Biscuit and Knov getting them some kind of baby holster to strap the infant to one of their chests.

“Need help?” Phinks asked Feitan instead of telling him that they needed to leave and go to Gyodondong.

“No, she just hungry. What Danchou want?” Feitan asked tiredly as he took Naji out of her baby holster to hold her as he fed her one of the bottles they had prepared earlier. Thank some kind of deity for the automatic bottle warmer Kite had gifted them.

“He wants us in Gyodondong, Hisoka’s going crazy and he wants us to be there to protect Machi’s baby and Kurapika,” Phinks sighed deeply. He’d never been this exhausted before. It hadn’t even been that long but he felt as if a week had passed with no rest. He couldn’t believe that he’d even forgotten that Machi was having her baby!

Feitan groaned, looking stressed enough to cry.

He looked up miserably at Phinks and then down at Naji knowing they would have to bring her along. Then a realization suddenly lit up his eyes.
“Fanaka! Fanaka help us!” Phinks instantly understood. Gyudondong knew omegas, and thus omega babies, better than any place in the world and Fanaka would be able to help them better than anyone! Maybe she could even figure out how to get Naji to sleep in her crib long enough so they could just get an hour of rest!

“Use Hunter license, get us private room in blimp,” Feitan continued when he noticed that Phinks understood what he meant.

“Got it, I'll get everything together for the move.” Phinks was up and moving with a renewed vigor. If they could just get a little sleep then maybe Feitan would warm up to the idea of keeping Naji when she was healthy!

“I can’t believe you even convinced my mother to let me off the mountain,” Illumi murmured after Kyo explained that he’d requested that Illumi go see the fight as well.

“Well, what's the point of being the heir if I can’t help you two out?” Kyo hummed happily. He couldn’t describe it but he felt as if Illumi was being just a touch warmer to him. Just a bit kinder. Maybe?

“Hm,” Hisoka preened a bit at the idea of both his mates being there to watch him win. Kyo really did turn out to be more than he expected. He was different from Illumi in a way Hisoka never knew he’d like.

His innocence was endearing, even Hisoka could admit that but normally Hisoka would have lost interest in an innocent thing like Kyo a long time ago. The difference was that he wasn’t naive, no Kyo knew when to put his foot down and when to trust and try something new. It was incredibly attractive when combined with Illumi’s personality trait of always knowing exactly what he wants and not allowing anything to change his determination to get it, the result was a more fun and interesting dynamic. Hisoka could actually say he liked it better this way.

Kyo was smart, but always searched for more knowledge, somehow he had managed to keep up with Hisoka during their outings. And not just physically but mentally. Plus he didn’t seem to mind death, gore, and other things that turned off most others after getting used to it a bit.
Bottom line: he was much more than Hisoka ever expected of him. The best part? Hisoka could tell
Kyo authentically liked and devoted himself to Illumi and himself, which wasn’t something Hisoka
thought he’d ever find from an omega. Which had been why he was so willing to just force a
relationship when Illumi said he’d wanted an omega to join them.

“Hisoka?” Hisoka blinked and looked down at his little omega mate and stared a little dumbly.
He’d always known Kyo was attractive but somehow he seemed more tantalizing today, even a
little seductive with his cute pin up doll style glasses and tousled and curly half braided hair.

“Yes~?” Hisoka hummed bending down to meet Kyo’s eyeline. Then Hisoka noticed that Illumi
wasn’t with them anymore. How had he missed that? “Where’s Illumi?”

“He insisted that he wanted to grab his locket before we left, I just wanted to know if you noticed
anything . . . odd about Illumi?” Kyo was blushing prettily as he asked. The explanation for
Illumi’s absence and the question restarted Hisoka’s brain completely.

“Odd how?” Hisoka narrowed his eyes. If he wasn’t careful, Illumi could very well ruin all the
progress Kyo had made.

“I mean he just seems,” Kyo paused, biting his lip and playing with his hair a bit. “More
interested,” he finished practically glowing red. Hisoka wasn’t sure what he had missed while lost
in thought but apparently it was a big deal. Hisoka knew Illumi better than maybe even his mother,
and he knew that Illumi wouldn’t just make an about face on this particular issue. And he hated
that locket, why would he suddenly feel the need to keep it with him? Something was up.

“Kyo,” they both turned to see Illumi moving back to them, carrying two lockets. Others wouldn’t
notice the differences in Illumi’s facial expressions but Hisoka and Kyo could easily tell the man
was in high spirits. “You weren’t wearing yours, make sure to from now on.” Illumi took Kyo’s
locket that he had fetched and put it on him almost gently. Illumi had never been gentle with Kyo
before.

“Oh, okay,” Kyo looked up at Illumi strangely as the man then put on his own locket.

Hisoka narrowed his eyes even more, things were getting stranger and stranger.

“Illumi, what are you thinking?” Hisoka hissed in his ear the moment Kyo got distracted with
directing a few of the butlers on what clothes he wanted packed for the impromptu trip.
“I’m thinking about what photo I should have put in Kyo’s locket, he still hasn’t put one in his,” Illumi told him almost distractingly, like it was a big decision.

“What does that matter?” Hisoka grabbed Illumi by the shoulder when he tried to step away.

“Well if we pose for a photo for his locket, I’d like to have mine replaced once he does away with that ridiculous makeover my mother gave him,” Illumi explained with his normal cold tone, he was no longer being clipped and harsh and Hisoka was very concerned!

“Kyo likes how he looks,” Hisoka growled, feeling a swell of protectiveness in his chest. “Why would he ever change that?!”

“Well considering what he is, why wouldn’t he?” Illumi looked back at him like it was all obvious, like he was the one being ridiculous. “He’ll want to please us, so he will go back to the way he was before. Although he can keep the attitude change, I’m beginning to see its merits.”

Illumi tried to walk away again but Hisoka took him by the shoulders almost desperately.

“What do you think Kyo is?!” Hisoka demanded. “Tell me!”

Illumi blinked at him, brushing off his hands and looking at him like he was crazy. Or crazier than normal.

“Well you had to know,” Illumi tilted his head in a dangerous way. “He’s a nen construct.”

Hisoka didn’t even know where to begin to deal with this shit. He should be excitedly planning for his fight, why did he have to be attracted to this insane man?!

Nobunaga was exhausted. Disheveled couldn’t even come close to describing his state. Heather had come to her senses after four days, meaning they had missed the birth of Machi’s child by
about two days.

Heather was understandably embarrassed as she awoke to find herself within a large room sized nest with Nobunaga hiding in the bathroom. He brushed off any apologies that she tried to stammer out and just asked if she was feeling well and if she needed something to eat. Bonolenov had texted to remind him that after a heat, omegas need lots of protein.

Heather was still blushing even as they rolled up to the village. She really didn’t understand where all of that had come from. Normally she had very mild heats, she felt a little bit off and she just secluded herself for a few days, then done! Heat over.

But this time had been very different, she had never experienced going completely out of her mind before! The heat had basically consumed her and the only thing that remained the same was the unusually short amount of time her heat lasted.

She could remember flashes of what happened during her heat and it all made her blush. Nobunaga had actually taken care of her! It was almost sweet enough to make her cry out of happiness, she’d never had anyone care for her through a heat before.

Heather was so embarrassed that she wasn’t even worrying about the life changing move she was making, or overthinking on whether she’d even fit into the Gyudondong village. No, her mind was to be caught up in the first definite wish she’d had since being freed; she wished to be Nobunaga’s mate.

Nobunaga never thought he’d ever be excited to see Gyudondong. He’d once proclaimed this place ‘the village of defective omegas’ but now he could only be glad that it was such an inclusive place. He only wanted the best for Heather and she deserved to live in a home that didn’t make her afraid for her safety. In fact Heather has been the only person on his mind since Chrollo had asked them when they began courting.

He had been surprised because he honestly hadn’t thought they were courting. He’d just been helping her out and all those little flowers and fun conversations had just been because he liked when she smiled. He’d never courted before so how was he supposed to know that this is how it always should have been? Just supporting someone else and doing things because you wanted them to be happy.

“My friend just had her baby, and Chrollo asked a lot of us to stay to guard his mate while he takes care of something, so I’ll be sticking around for awhile,” Nobunaga told her, feeling a purr rumble in his chest when she smiled shyly. She was glad he was sticking around.
“Seeing the baby, that’s good,” Heather muttered, wanting to ask if he wanted kids but not really knowing how. She wanted kids, and was told by the other omegas that not everyone else did.

“Yeah,” he hummed feeling the awkward tension that normally surrounded them when Heather was unsure how to talk about what was on her mind. Normally they found they could be more open with each other except during these moments.

“Do you like babies? I mean seeing someone else’s is always different when you love them so of course you want to see your friends baby but that doesn’t mean you like babies.” Nobunaga couldn’t help but grin as she babbled with no stuttering. She didn’t stutter with him anymore. Then the question registered in his brain and Nobunaga had no idea why she’d be asking something so poin-OHHH! Did she want to know if he-? Wanted a kid?!

Nobunaga blushed, stopping the car outside the onsen a little faster than he’d meant too. “I- I um, I'm not against them. I always thought I’d have a few someday.”

Heather lit up like a Christmas tree and smiled down at her lap with such a giddy energy.

“I’m glad you’re staying,” Heather whispered, not looking at Nobunaga as she immediately moved to leave the car.

Nobunaga was left feeling warmer than he could ever remember.

Fanaka was called out of the onsen the moment the car was spotted heading to the village, she was a sort of regent town mayor as the closest to the Phantom Troupe while also living in the town year round. That would be changing soon considering the new little Spiders that would be running around.

She was actually glad to see Nobunaga, they had never really liked each other before but as he’d recently realized how much he was wrong before, she was willing to try again for friendship between them.

And she was even more excited to see who she believed to be the incredible Heather! She had to be amazing to force Nobunaga to see the light! The woman looked like she was escaping the car as she jumped out, a blush so fierce on her face you’d think she had the pigmentation of a tomato.
“You must be Heather!” Fanaka cried as she met the woman half way, pulling her into an unsolicited hug. The woman squeaked in surprise and tensed but soon relaxed when she met the unrelenting scent of wildflowers that Fanaka oozed.

“I’m the mate of Nobunaga’s good friend, and the owner of the onsen you’ll be staying at. My name is Fanaka-bennu, but you can just call me Fana!” Heather pulled away from the woman who seemed both aggressive and exuberant.

“Um, I’m Heather?” She realized this was a dumb thing to say after a moment. This black haired beauty already knew her name! “Hi,” she tacked on lamely.

“Oh my, you are adorable!” Fanaka squealed happily. The girl was simply precious. “If you’d like to rest I can show you to your room or I could take you on a tour? There are a few places where only omegas are allowed and same with alphas and betas, so it will be important to know where to avoid and where you’re allowed.”

“You have sectioned off spaces for different genders?” Heather asked sceptically. Honestly that was something that she didn’t find she liked. She had enjoyed the unlimited equity in Ryuusaigai.

“Yes, sometimes it’s good to have a place just to be alone and recuperate. The omega waterfall is a good place to do a head count and just have a space to ourselves. But don’t you worry all genders have their own special places that are perfectly suited to each genders needs.”

“A waterfall?” Heather’s eyes grew wide, she had heard of such a thing but now she felt a desperate need to see it. “Are there flowers too?”

Fanaka grinned. “Yes! So many this time of year too!” Fanaka linked their arms and turned her towards the forest path. “Nobunaga will bring your bags in. Nobu! Your ban on the alpha cave has been lifted, and Machi is at her house we built for her. Feel free to go see the baby or rest. You look like hell,” Fanaka laughed. The man’s clothes were ripped, his hair ratted and his skin pale like he’d just witnessed the rise of a demon.

“Thanks Fana,” Nobunaga smiled. It was good to see Heather already getting a grand welcome and he couldn’t lie that he was exhausted. The alpha cave sounded nice too.

He did as Fanaka said without a thought and brought all of Heather’s things to the only room that
seemed recently aired out and turned down for a guest. He’d have to talk to someone about getting Heather a permanent place to live but for today he just wanted to sleep after stopping in to congratulate Machi and his best friend.

Nobunaga turned to leave the onsen and head down to the modest house Machi had made for herself and Uvogin. It was a small three bedroom place with an open garage where Nobunaga could see Uvogin carving while muttering angrily to himself.

“Uvo?” Nobunaga stopped right outside the area. The two hadn’t made up since the incident at the brothel, for all he knew Uvogin was still pissed at him.

“Nobu!” Uvogin lit up at the reappearance of his friend. He’d heard about his success in love and his personal growth to join the rest of them in the enlightened world. So he was happy to forgive Nobunaga without any words of apology, that’s what friends were for! “I’m happy to see you, my friend! I heard you got yerself a girl,” Uvogin wiggled his eyebrows.

“It’s good to see you too,” Nubonaga clapped their hands together and hugged his friend with the other arm. “And I guess? She’s amazing so I don’t really understand why she’d pick me but it’s going good I think,” Nobunaga flushed when Uvogin just seemed to grow more excited. He immediately covered his ear before Uvogin belted out an ear bursting laugh of joy. He waited a moment before continuing. “So I hear Machi was right and you’ve got yourself a little girl?!”

Uvogin went from happy to bouncing in excitement in two seconds flat.

“Yes! I’m a daddy! Her name is Rue Komachine and she looks just like Machi already!” Uvogin proudly bragged. “But she’s got my lungs! I thought she’d bring the house down yesterday!”

“Sweet lord,” Nobunaga gasped even as Uvogin kept going on about how amazing the girl had proven herself in only two days of life. Most of it was just purely Uvogin seeing only the extraordinary in his flesh and blood.

“So where is the little girl of honor? And why are you out here angrily carving?”

“Oh Hisoka ruined the crib I made for Kurapika and Danchou and Machi has Rue with Kurapika inside, you can go in and see her if you want,” Uvogin offered, wiping the sweat off his neck with a cloth and heading towards the inner door. The door was larger to accommodate Uvogin’s 8 foot frame.
“Yes, I can’t wait to meet her!” Nobunaga followed Uvogin into the house, noting now the ceiling was higher than a normal house. Obviously when Machi supervised the building of the house she had kept Uvogin’s height in mind despite her being only a little over five foot.

“Thanks for the warning,” Kurapika’s voice floated from the small yet spacious kitchen.

“Having my intuition makes being Uvo’s mate easier, saves my ears too,” Machi’s response met the two men as they entered the room. “I’m sorry you have to be here all the time, she’s just a lot less fussy when you’re here.”

“How are the two best girls doing today?” Uvogin spoke as a way of announcing his presence to the kitchen occupants.

Machi looked over her shoulder and smirked at Nobunaga. “I figured you’d be here today Nobu, how’s your girl?”

Nobunaga sometimes hated how close everyone was. They all knew even though he hadn’t told anyone, Chrollo had even known before himself! “She’s settling in, Fanaka is showing her the waterfall now.”

Kurapika smiled, he’d been having a hard few days and seeing Nobunaga flush at the mention of his very sweet budding relationship somehow helped.

Chrollo had set out to Heavens Arena with Bonolenov, Shalnark, and Franklin the day before. He took Kurapika's chains and his heart with him, if he should never return . . . He might just go on a warpath. No one could say Kurapika dealt with loss in a healthy fashion.

Pairo had avoided him for the last two days, he’d come back to the onsen for food and sleep but otherwise he was off in the forest and made it clear he didn’t want to talk. The only people he would give more than a disdainful look to were Gon, Killua, Leorio, Kalluto, and Fanaka. Leorio only stayed in order to help the doctor that would be coming to fix up Pairo’s eyes in a few days.

He knew this was a hard thing to accept and that was why he hadn’t pushed him to talk yet. Kurapika had spent most of the last two days with Machi, little Rue seemed to take great offense when Kurapika left.
Machi could normally get her under control but when Kurapika was around the newborn was calmer while, when he was away she became fussy like an average child was all the time. So Kurapika felt he had a good excuse to ignore all his problems by hanging around the new mother.

“That’s good, Fanaka will get her settled in and comfortable. She’s good at that,” Kurapika spoke.

“Yeah she’s great,” Nobunaga muttered his eyes glued to his best friend's child with growing excitement.

“Would you like to hold her Nobu?” Machi asked.

“Yes!” Nobunaga jumped forward and allowed Machi to direct him in how to position his hands while Uvogin stood close by ready to catch the babe should anything go wrong.

Machi gently passed Rue to Nobunaga and he immediately fell in love with the girl. She had precious pink hair, a cute little button nose, and the chubbliest cheeks he’d ever seen. Best of all, she had Uvogins eye’s, bright and intelligent green eyes looked up at him curiously.

“She’s beautiful,” Nobunaga congratulated the new parents before the girl began to look like she was getting ready to start crying so he handed her back to her mother.

“Thank you,” “We know,” Machi and Uvogin answered at the same time, Uvogin preening as he turned to coo down at the little girl. He was certainly a very doting father.

At least there were some good things going on Kurapika thought. Nobunaga was finally part of the fold again, Rue was healthy and part of a loving and large family, and the world seemed to be changing for the better one person at a time.

Some things were worth being happy about, even as he worried for his mate entering into the fight of his life in only five more days.
Pairo still didn’t understand. He didn’t understand why Kurapika would choose to be with the killer of their people, he didn’t understand why people like them could kill people so callously, and he definitely didn’t understand why it hurt so much to find out that none of them had been telling him the truth.

He hadn’t been here that long but they’d all taken care of him, fed him, entertained him, promised to help him get stronger, and accepted him as a part of their family. All while they knew that he had reason to hate them! It seemed unfair that they would get him to love them before releasing such information.

He couldn’t bring himself to talk to Kurapika yet, he just felt so angry and upset whenever they passed each other in a hallway. Pairo had found great comfort in Kalluto’s presence over the last three days since Kurapika’s murderous mate left to fight someone. Because of Kalluto’s openness with him, Pairo had found he could also be upfront and open with his feelings.

He talked about pretty much everything with Kalluto and Pairo felt he knew the younger boy better than almost anyone else. He now knew about his killer past, all of the torture his mother had put him through, his complex feelings about Alluka, and even how he felt about his other three siblings including Killua. Despite how calm he normally sounded, Pairo quickly began to realize that Kalluto is in fact a very emotional and insecure person.

It was through him that Pairo felt safe enough to re-approach Gon, and Killua. With Kalluto’s quiet support Pairo was able to ask them how they could be friends with such a group, and how all this happened.

Gon didn’t seem to know much of what happened besides what he experienced but he did seem passionate in his belief that there was something redeeming growing in the heart of the Troupe. Killua was a lot more detailed and callous. He told the full story on the original capture that led to Kurapika evidently trading himself for the lives of his friends (which to be fair is so very Kurapika like) and then the three month long endeavor of trying to free him only to get beaten to it by Chrollo letting Kurapika go.

Once Pairo felt like he could understand what they both had gone through and experienced, Pairo moved on to Leorio.

Leorio unfortunately hadn’t been involved in much of what went on in the first three months. He knew of Kurapika being captured and his big reveal of being an omega but had been sure Kurapika and the others could manage. He also felt that at his power level he would only get in the way.
He told Pairo of the phone call where he allowed Kurapika to speak on everything that happened, letting him just vent it all out and even managed not to become frustrated when Leorio spoke about how authentically in love Kurapika had sounded.

After that Pairo moved onto Fanaka. She was similar to Kurapika in being a moral omega mated to a killer so he asked her why. Why could someone like her love someone that didn’t value life!? Her answer had been fairly straightforward: “You don’t have to agree with everything about a person to be in love with them, sometimes it’s just about knowing what lines you cannot accept being crossed and then just trusting that they love you enough to not cross them.”

Fanaka had smiled and patted him on the head as she spoke. “Life only gets more complex as you grow, and not everything is as straightforward as it seems as a child. And love it the most complex thing out there. You don’t have to forgive or forget to love someone, just decide whether or not you can accept someone for who they are. And you never know, they may just become better from the love they receive.”

“But people don’t really change!” Pairo had argued back.

“No they don’t, but they can evolve.” After that Pairo had let her speak on all the little shifts of Chrollo and the Troupes perspectives, outlooks, and behaviors since Kurapika came into their lives.

All of it left him wishing to run away but with a deep desire to find his best friend and talk it out like they did as children. Kalluto has asked if he wanted to talk to Kurapika but he just wasn’t ready yet and the soft spoken omega had nodded in understanding.

“Maybe I could talk to someone else?”

“Like who?”

“I think I’d be okay hearing about the factors of how the troupe grew up now. Do you know where Machi is?” Pairo asked his new friend.

“Yeah, I’ll bring you to her house.” Kalluto took Pairo’s hand, loving how much he’d gotten to hold his crush’s hand in the last three days.
Kurapika sighed as he watched Pairo, Gon, Kalluto, and Killua play a board game in the other room. Pairo had begun stopping in periodically to talk to Machi and sometimes Uvogin but only when Kurapika wasn’t around.

Kurapika had tried approaching first only for Pairo to yell at him. All in all Kurapika felt worried. Worried that Pairo would never forgive him, worried that Chrollo wouldn’t ever come back to him, worried that the stress might just cause him to go into labor early.

He’d begun to feel pain about two days before, which he was told was normal to start getting random labor pain even this early.

“You doing okay Kura-honey?” Fanaka asked when she noticed Kurapika sigh as he stared into the common room where the kids were playing.

“Yeah, it just feels like a lot,” Kurapika sighed. “By the way, where has Alluka been lately?” Kurapika asked as a way to distract himself.

“Oh she got a little fixated on all the teas and how they are made. I showed her the little temple where they are grown and she’s been going every spare minute. I believe the shrine maidens have been quite taken with her,” Fanaka explained before describing the small structure about a half mile deeper into the forest where the village tea makers had set up the temple and live year round.

“Oh,” was all Kurapika could say to that.

“I know this is frustrat-“ the door suddenly swung open with a smack and both omegas jumped in surprise, readying themselves for a battle out of instinct. Only for a very, very tired looking man to stumble through the door.

It took Kurapika a minute to actually recognize Feitan. The man’s jacket and bandana were covered in some kind of film, his hair was greasy and flat, his eyes were bloodshot, and his skin pale with heavy bags under his eyes.
“Help,” he whispered, eyes fixed on Fanaka.

Phinks stumbled up behind Feitan and he looked just as bad.

“Please help us,” he cried out, seeming to only barely be keeping himself up. But Kurapika’s eyes only briefly noted all of that because his eyes were immediately zeroed in on the newborn strapped to Phinks’s chest, happily gurgling.

“What happe-, where did-, WHY DO YOU HAVE A BABY?!” Fanaka practically jumped over the kitchen counter to fret over the child and the two exhausted troupe members.

The commotion called the attention of the four children in the other room who came out to investigate.

“Feitan found her in a facility and the mother had died.“

“And now she’s attached to you two?” Fanaka finished with an upraised brow. Kurapika understood as well. It was a little known phenomenon with omegan babies and very rare, but it did happen. Sometimes after abandonment they will attach themselves to the first person to pick them up. If separated they can get sick or even die.

“She won’t let us sleep, we can’t put her down without her crying. We haven’t slept since we found her!” Phinks pleaded.

“Okay give me a minute,” Fanaka nodded very seriously and was off like a tornado of activity leaving everyone else behind.

“What’s her name?!” Gon leaped forward to see the baby. He was already so excited about Machi’s little bundle of joy and now there was another?!

“Naji,” Feitan mumbled, now leaning heavily on the doorframe for balance.
Kurapika couldn't hold back a giggle at the two new parents. They just seemed so thrown by the vast amount of effort that went into taking care of a baby.

“Did you bring all her supplies with you?” Kurapika asked, taking pity on them.

“Yes, we have her lactose free formula, carrier, clothes, diapers, and bottle warmer all in the car,” Phinks wearily explained.

“Okay, boys will you help them out and bring it all inside for them?” Kurapika asked the boys, looking hopefully over to Pairo. He was still ignoring Kurapika but he did seem to understand that he could opt out if he thought he couldn’t handle it.

“Sure!” Three voices answered, Gon and the two Zoldyck’s running off to help out Feitan and Phinks. All three of them took a moment to coo at how cute Naji was as they passed. Pairo moved back into the game room to wait for them to be done.

“Kura-honey! Could you grab a rubber glove, fill it with rice and heat it up?” Fanaka called from a room down the hall. She called again a moment later. “Do they have a crib?”

Kurapika looked to Feitan who nodded miserably in the affirmative.

“Yes they have a crib, want me to send it back to you?” Kurapika called as he took a rubber glove and filled it with rice and began the process of heating it. He could kinda see where Fanaka was going with this.

“Would you?” Kurapika grinned when he spotted Gon carrying in the disassembled crib.

“Gon, bring that back to Fanaka.” The boy nodded.

Once the rice was warm but not hot, Kurapika motioned for the exhausted men to follow him back to the room he was sure Fanaka was turning down for them.

Gon had set up the crib with Fanaka very quickly so as Phinks dragged himself into the room, Fanaka began to direct them.
“Okay lay her down, and rub her back as she falls asleep,” Phinks lifted the baby from the strap and laid her down the way Fanaka told him and kept a gentle hand on her. “When she is asleep slip the rice bag onto her back like you would when tricking a pressure sensor in a heist. Wrap the rice bag in your bandanna too Feitan, she’ll be asleep for hours and you two can catch some Z’s right here next to her.”

Everyone watched silently for Phinks to do as she said and they looked as if a miracle had been performed as they stepped back and got a little room to breathe.

Both basically collapsed in relief and then fell right to sleep. Kurapika snorted along with Fanaka before helping wrap a blanket around the two and everyone shuffled out.

“New parents all around,” Fanaka shook her head with a smile on her face, already snapping back into action to organize where all the new baby supplies would be stored until Feitan and Phinks were alert enough to handle it.

“Yeah new parents,” Kurapika sighed, feeling his baby kick. His mind totally focused on the father of his child. All he wanted was for him to come home safe.
THE new crib is just as nice as the last one,” Kurapika stated as he folded a soft yellow blanket over the side of the crib. “Uvo was able to salvage the bars from the previous one and used them on this one. It saved him a lot of time.”

“Same color?” Chrollo asked.

Kurapika smiled slightly. “No, he chose a wood for the frame that contrasts nicely with the bars. Nobunaga even went out and bought a new mattress and sheet set.”

“Oh? Sounds like he has really come around.”

“They’re penguin themed,” Kurapika explained as he smiled down at the sheets before feeling the smile leave his face. “I think you’ll like them.”

“How has Heather been settling in?”

“Well enough, I showed her the classrooms yesterday and we’re already making plans for when classes will begin. She wants to start quickly but was surprised at learning there were adults here that would be interested in learning to read as well. She looked shocked when an alpha and beta both insisted on meeting her and then Gosimber showed up.”

A snort over the phone told Kurapika that Chrollo already knew something had happened. “What happened?”

“His typical spiel even as the alpha and beta began telling him to leave, I almost stepped in but Nobunaga arrived.”

The snort sounded again and Kurapika knew Chrollo was fighting laughter. “How many pieces is he in?”

“Currently? Two. Machi refuses to reattach the last piece. Initially he was in more pieces. I thanked Nobunaga for dragging him out of the house before removing that one’s hands plus other appendages for daring to touch Heather.”

“I might need to apologize to the Gyudondong for that.”

“They’ve been apologizing to Heather actually, admitting that Gosimber would have been banished long ago but they don’t want him telling people about their secret.”

“I wish there was a way to make him understand how unwanted his attention is.”

Kurapika paused for a moment. “Killua mentioned wanting to make a wish with his sister.”

Now Chrollo’s voice was disapproving. “We agreed to not force Alluka to grant any wishes.”

“Alluka doesn’t like him either and said out loud last night that she wanted to turn him into an omega.”
“That seems reasonable!” Chrollo replied, his voice changing to a jovial tone and Kurapika smiled on reflex. “Do you think it would change his appearance?”

“It might,” Kurapika replied. “Otherwise he’d never have to worry about unwanted attention.”

“Perish the thought!”

Kurapika laughed slightly as his eyes moved up to the window and saw Gon working with Uvo yet again. “Come back safe.”

“I will,” Chrollo promised, his voice serious. “And we’ll raise our baby peacefully. I love you both.”

A series of kicks were delivered by the infant in that moment and Kurapika rubbed his belly. “We love you too, our baby insisted that I say that.”

Chrollo smiled as he ended the call and settled his phone deep in his coat pocket before he headed to the door of his room and entered the main living area for his apartment in Heaven’s Arena.

Shalnark glanced up at him from his cellphone and sighed before standing along with Kortopi. It wasn’t the phone tied to his ability, that one was safely stowed away.

Neither spoke as they followed Chrollo to the door. Chrollo had used his Floormaster status to get them into the match despite the fight being sold out inside of an hour of it being announced. They were to not get involved.

Stepping away from the pair to head for the competitors area was difficult, it meant that the moment was almost upon him and Chrollo found himself fidgeting with a picture he had in his pocket that featured Kurapika and him during one of their brief visits to the Gyudondong village after discovering that Kurapika was pregnant. Kurapika was leaning against him, eyeing his coffee mug longingly while rubbing his barely formed baby bump.

Taking a brief moment, he pulled out the photo for a quick look-

“Mr. Lucifer! Do you have time for an interview?! a journalist that Chrollo recognized as being employed by the arena demanded as she stepped too close. “And what may I ask are you looking at?”

“Sorry, no comment,” Chrollo replied as he attempted to take a step towards his assigned prep room.

“We met your competitor, Hisoka. He told us that this fight was one he had been pining for for quite some time and that he had to threaten your mate to get you to agree.”

The alpha’s eyes darkened and the woman stepped back on reflex as her instincts told her there was danger. Her attempts to get a story were backfiring horribly.

“Interestingly, Hisoka has chosen to bring his mate to this match, a young omega named Kyo. Is your own mate around?”

“Would ask that you not attempt to approach my mate and as I said before, no comment,” Chrollo stated coldly, eyes narrowing. He was going to need to warn Kurapika about these people, especially if Chrollo decided to maintain his Floormaster title. Reporters in particular seemed to go crazy over mystery.
The prep room was comfortable and empty and Chrollo took a deep breath as he reviewed his plan once more then pulled out the photo of Kurapika once more. This plan would work and when Hisoka wasn’t a threat anymore, he’d be able to go home and see Kurapika and be there for the birth of their first child.

A small smile crossed his lips at the thought of trying to convince Kurapika to have more children, he felt like just this one wouldn’t be enough for him.

A tone sounded in the prep room suddenly and Chrollo stood before heading towards the doorway and trooping down the hall. He had a plan, one he had worked extensively with Kortopi and Shalnark the night before to set up so it could be implemented flawlessly.

The ring seemed so bright when he entered the fighting area and he was acutely aware of Hisoka entering opposite of him. The clown on the other hand seemed very distracted and his golden eyes were on the crowd instead, namely on one of the boxes.

Following his gaze, Chrollo recognized the glasses-wearing omega sitting next to Illumi quickly. The alpha looked pleased about something and Hisoka looked… worried?

That wasn’t something that Chrollo had foreseen.

“Worried about something?” he asked after a moment and Hisoka’s eyes slowly slid towards him, his normal excitement seemed to be muted.

“Promise me something,” Hisoka’s tone was strange. “If by some chance you manage to kill me, promise that you’ll take Kyo.”

That was very unexpected and Chrollo felt his eyebrows hit his hairline.

“Not forever, just until he can control Illumi.”

Now Chrollo felt understanding enter his mind, it seemed that Hisoka could care about another. “Fine.”

The clown’s lips began to curve into a more familiar smile. “Not going to ask that I stay away from Kurapika and your child if I win?”

“That will be unnecessary, I am confident in my ability to beat you.”

Hisoka’s expression gained the very familiar perversion and he seemed to have become aroused at the response, his worry being shoved aside in favor of excitement. “Then let’s fight!”

Before either man could move, a referee scurried into the ring and situated himself between the pair. “Floormaster challenge, Hisoka vs Chrollo. First to ten points or to incapacitate their opponent wins!” the man announced.

Chrollo made the first move in that moment, knocking the referee unconscious as he kept an eye on Hisoka, hoping the man was intrigued enough to wait for this key bit of misdirection. Using Gallery Fake, he made a copy of the man before discreetly cancelling the ability, returning it to Kortopi.

“And what is this about?” Hisoka asked as Chrollo turned to a new page in his book and pulled out what appeared to be a stamp.

Chrollo didn’t reply, just choosing to stamp the doppelganger of the referee on the forehead. The
‘corpse’ animated a second later, standing in a jerking motion. This part was about buying time.

“Break Hisoka!” he ordered the doppelganger and the thing charged at Hisoka, the jerkiness of its original movements disappearing rapidly. An antenna appeared in Chrollo’s hand and as Hisoka dodged the charging doppelganger, he realized what it was for: Shalnark’s Black Voice ability!

Chrollo watched hisoka dodge both the doppelganger while keeping most of his attention on Chrollo himself, just the way he wanted. Behind the clown, he saw doppelgangers beginning to pop up in the crowd as Shalnark planted an Antenna into the neck of the announcer, one of his real ones instead of the knock offs Chrollo carried. Kortopi made a doppelganger of her to stay in her position while Shalnark ordered the original away.

The doppelganger felt no pain and was able to keep attacking, Chrollo using it to cover his own ‘attacks’ and ‘attempts’ to plant the antenna he held on Hisoka. Hisoka in turn was beginning to understand how to fight the doppelganger as attempts to cut off hands and slice open the torso got no response and didn’t seem to slow the clone down at all.

Chrollo knew his opportunity to buy time was up the moment that Hisoka caught the doppelganger around the neck and began to turn, quickly leaping back into the crowd behind him for cover. His coat came off fast and was traded for one of the coats and hats he had carefully planted in the stadium the previous night as Shalnark raised to his side, hair covered and normal clothes traded out for something more discreet.

“Mannequins or doppelgangers?” the Manipulator asked.

“Doppelgangers for now, mannequins after. Are the bombs ready?”

“Yes sir! Announcer is at the appointed spot!” Shalnark replied and they separated in a single sharp maneuver.

Chaos was beginning to rein in the stadium as people began to notice the large number of doppelgangers that surrounded them, crushing numbers of them in a stadium that was already overcrowded and Hisoka saw them as well.

Golden eyes scanned the audience, looking for familiar black hair or Chrollo’s coat. He was both cautious and impatient, mind whirling as he tried to determine where his target was. He took a step forward then paused as a roar sounded behind him and a large man he barely recognized as a middling-range fighter on the 200th floor tore through the crowd towards Hisoka.

Hisoka never could say he found this man interesting. He was a decent fighter but nothing special, he’d make it to the 200th floor, win and lose some fights, be sent down to the 190th floor and usually be back inside of a month. He didn’t stand a chance of becoming a Floormaster but chose to keep coming back.

Hisoka side-stepped the sloppy charge and his eyes swiftly scanned the man’s neck, finding the anticipated antenna rapidly. Hisoka snapped the fighter’s neck in one move.

Taking a second, Hisoka considered the fight as it had unfolded thus far. Chrollo was very intelligent, very capable, and was using techniques Hisoka hadn’t known he had. He was being cautious as the clown knew him to be, but cautious to a different level now.

Chrollo LIKED to talk about his stolen abilities when he displayed them, ENJOYED talking about what they did and drawbacks he found with them. Except this time he wasn’t doing that at all! Hisoka was having to figure out what each technique did, had to see it first hand and thus far he had
only witnessed three: Gallery Fake, Black Voice, and whatever that stamp was. That couldn’t be all he was using though, could it?

Chrollo rushed through the crowds, following the route planned two days ago that Kortopi was to run and create doppelgangers. The Order Stamp was used to mark people who were blank faced and limp, the way a doppelganger should appear. He had no fear of accidentally marking a person, the original owner of this stamp had set rules that didn’t allow for that, rules that Kurapika had appreciated. His attitude had changed when he found out that omegas were an exception to the rule due to the owner not viewing them as ‘people’.

It was almost time to start on the mannequins and he glanced over to see Shalnark standing next to the announcer who held her wireless microphone. Exactly as planned. Rushing over, he accepted the microphone from the woman.

“Break Hisoka!” he declared over the loudspeakers for the stadium, causing the dozens of marked doppelgangers around the ring to rush at the man who was still searching for Chrollo in the bleachers.

Shalnark was holding a book that had been doctored to resemble Bandit’s Secret and was watching the match avidly as Hisoka was attacked.

Chrollo placed his newest technique, the Double Face Bookmark, on the page for Order Stamp and switched to Covert Hands, Shalnark’s hand sneaking around his hand to touch his palm while Chrollo grasped his wrist with his left. The switch took only a moment and then Chrollo was looking at himself and knew he appeared as Shalnark now.

“Keep your distance if you can, get away if hurt,” Chrollo ordered.

“I’ll use Autopilot mode, no guarantees I won’t kill him!” Shalnark called back as Chrollo continued on the last leg of the planned route while Shalnark turned his attention to the ring, his normal smile melting into a facsimile of Chrollo’s neutral expression, something that Kurapika had made him practice for over three days. While armed with one of the short swords Pakunoda had gifted them as a wedding present. Luckily for the Manipulator it had been sheathed though he’d complained on the first day about how he’d rather have Machi sewing his legs back on rather than dealing with the bruises Kurapika could cause.

Kurapika…

The thought of his mate caused Chrollo to increase his pace significantly and not look at the ring. Just a few more minutes and they’d be finished. He could go home and just enjoy the last few months before their baby was born. He didn’t even bother looking at the faces of the last of the doppelgangers, just marked them and ran on.

Hisoka was thoroughly enjoying himself in the ring, even if he was annoyed by the ‘copies’ that kept attacking him. His heart pounded as he dodged, kicked, punched, and attempted to cut down his assailants one at a time.

Chrollo was near and in his typical fashion, was taking opportunistic strikes. But something was wrong, Chrollo didn’t quite seem like Chrollo. His expression was perfect, his patterns of movement exact, but he wasn’t seamless the way Hisoka knew him to be. His attacks lacked some of the strength and speed that he was supposed to have! What was going on?!

Clothes were different, that was easy to explain. Expression seemed right. Hair was right. But something was off… Twisting, Hisoka planted a hard kick on the torso of one of his attackers and
attached his bungee gum to them. As “Chrollo” attempted to come in for another attack, Hisoka
contracted the gum, sending the struggling thing it was attached to at Chrollo and watched in
amazement as “Chrollo” dropped his book as he crashed into the thing.

The book… It was supposed to be conjured by Chrollo, not be a solid prop! It should have
dispelled and all techniques would end the moment Chrollo loses his grip on it!

Alarms rang in Hisoka’s head as he attempted to get himself moving only to receive a hard punch
from one of the dolls running around. Leaping high, he glared at “Chrollo” who was on his feet
again and not even bothering to attempt to collect his book… And happened to be wearing a grin
that looked very “Shalnark” in Hisoka’s opinion.

“Thanks for not breaking my antenna by the way!” the disguised Manipulator called up to the
clown, confirming his identity as a familiar antenna appeared in his hand. Wait, why was his not
breaking the antenna on that fighter so important… Was someone else being controlled?!

Hisoka didn’t get to ask because Shalnark, still disguised as Chrollo, stabbed himself with the
antenna he had produced.

Hisoka knew Shalnark was a Manipulator, the guy fit his personality assessment to the letter, and
he knew that his ability was linked to his phone. He had no idea that Shalnark could or would stab
himself with the antenna or what would happen.

“Autopilot, on,” a voice chirped as Shalnark’s aura began to rapidly grow, exciting Hisoka.
“Enemy has been sighted. Subdue target.”

Hisoka barely dodged Shalnark’s charge by using his bungee gum to slingshot himself to the
ceiling of the stadium, even as he tried to figure out what to do. He could already tell that this
ability was really troublesome.

Shalnark was quick to follow the other, bounding towards the ceiling, his borrowed appearance
looking completely blank; no smile that Shalnark normally had or Chrollo’s neutral or slightly
amused expression, just blank and Hisoka doubted he was even aware of what he was doing.

Hisoka enjoyed a good fight, one where he had to fight to overcome the tactics and abilities of his
opponents. But an opponent he would have thought would have come up with a much better
strategy than become a mindless tank?!

THAT WAS BORING!!!

It didn’t seem boring a moment later when Hisoka attempted to dodge Shalnark again and a mere
brush from the charging Manipulator made it feel like his arm was being yanked and snapped at all
of his joints!

His arm was definitely dislocated Hisoka determined a moment later as it hung limply.

Releasing his technique to drop back to the ring, Hisoka grabbed his limp arm and reset the joint
with a quick, sharp jerk then activated his bungee gum and rushed into the crowd of
doppelgangers, attaching it to many of the doppelgangers to create a pseudo-web.

Hisoka grinned when he was proven correct about Shalnark not being aware of what he was doing
as the man charged straight for him. Straight into the bungee gum trap.

The order to contract when Shalnark was nearing the center of the trap caused many of the bodies
to go crashing into the glowing young man. Shalnark’s aura destroyed many of the doppelgangers,
ripping them to shreds. They also served to deplete his aura more than just a little.

Hisoka noted the slight dimming and mentally filed it away. This ability burned nen at a high rate and destroying or coming into contact with anything increased the depletion rate. Best way to take Shalnark out in this form would be to trap him in bungee gum and let him burn himself out trying to escape over and over, or have a large number of targets he’d need to destroy.

Activating bungee gum yet again, Hisoka attached more bits to various doppelgangers, pieces of doppelgangers that still moved, and other debris before starting the barrage yet again as Shalnark attempted to charge yet again.

In the brief moment he had, the clown took in the area surrounding the ring. Most of the spectators were out of their seats and were staring in shock while a few were running for the exit. Very few were running in circular paths. Two exactly: Kortopi and someone who looked like Shalnark but was probably Chrollo. And ‘Sharlnark’ had just stopped next to a person that Hisoka saw was wearing the uniform of an announcer for Heaven’s Arena.

Hisoka managed a single step before the crowd of doppelgangers that were now entangled around the actual Shalnark slammed into him.

“GRAB HISOKA!”

The punching limbs turned into claws attempting to grab him from the mound behind him and Hisoka pulled hard but found that he was getting more wounds yanking himself free of dozens of grabbing hands than warding off punching ones. This was amplified by Shalnark still being in the middle of that mound of pseudo-humanity.

Bungee gum, hundreds of threads of it, spread over the mound and slowly began to stick the mound to the ground, but Hisoka had to abandon his attempt when the thunder of footsteps brought his attention to the new threat.

A final wave of doppelgangers were coming at him, hands already reaching out to grab him. They were followed by what appeared to be a legion of mannequins, all bearing a strange symbol. But what caught Hisoka’s attention was the small figure that seemed to be leading the charge, one that made Hisoka freeze.

Kyo.

Hisoka’s head turned and he sensed more than saw Shalnark’s aura fade, horror still filled the clown. Two antenna, Shalnark always carried TWO antenna. One for himself it would seem, and one…

Bungee gum allowed Hisoka to head for the ceiling again, heart pounding as he turned his attention towards Shalnark. If he killed him, then the control he had over Kyo would end and…

A tower of bodies formed, arms and torsos and legs that writhed and climbed over each other as they all reached towards him. But Hisoka saw Kyo’s form too clearly in the mass and some wild instinct sent him careening into the mass, allowing arms and fingers to tear at his clothes, skin and hair as he wrapped a long fingered hand around Kyo’s arm and hauled his mate out of the mess.

His attempt to escape after only half succeeded as Kyo wrapped his arms around Hisoka’s torso, hugging him tightly as the animated monstrosities surrounding them attempted to separate them.

Hisoka landed hard at the foot of the tower of bodies, cushioning Kyo’s body then shoving him hard to attempt to get him away as the tower collapsed on them.
“Get away!” Hisoka ordered as he tried to shove the boy from him then saw the horrifying mark on his forehead. A doppelganger.

Turning his head, Hisoka saw Kyo at the side of the ring, trying to get to him but being held back by Illumi.

At the top of the stands surrounding the arena, Chrollo watched in shock and relief as the tower of doppelgangers and mannequins fell on Hisoka, grabbing at his limbs and pinning him. Waiting for him to detonate the bombs on the mannequins to destroy them all as Shalnark dragged himself away.

He hadn’t expected Hisoka to choose to go down like that to try to save what he had apparently confused for his mate.

Chapter End Notes

Just started a new job and having a great two weeks! We're almost to the end!
“HISOKA!” Kyo screamed trying to get the redhead to realize that the white haired double wasn’t him. From outside the ring and within the protective circle Illumi had created to keep panicking bystanders away, Kyo saw Hisoka rush right into a lethal mistake. It was made all the worse because Hisoka was doing it because he thought he was saving him!

Illumi held him back from rushing right into the ring blindly but Kyo wished he would stop. Wished Illumi was also trying to run into the ring with him!

“Illumi! We have to stop this!” Kyo clawed at Illumi’s steel grip on his arm. “He’s gonna die!! Don’t you love him?!”

Illumi looked down at him, his expression as unchanging as always. “Of course I do,” he stated like it was the most obvious thing in the world. “But this is what he wants, he wanted this fight and he’d hate us if we interrupted it.”

Kyo bit his lip and looked back to the fight to see the tower of bodies collapse on top of Hisoka and pin him to the ground. Kyo was barely holding himself back as Hisoka grunted in frustration and tried to fight against the hold of the doppelgängers and mannequins.

“Having Shalnark help wasn’t in the deal Chrollo!” Hisoka growled as he tried his best to escape the pit of grasping hands he’d found himself in.

Chrollo didn’t even have the grace to look smug in the situation. “You challenged the Spider head and Shalnark is one of my many legs. It is your own fault if you assumed I wouldn’t use every tool available to me.”

“Illumi,” Kyo was beginning to panic seeing as Hisoka looked like he was about to be killed. “I don’t care if Hisoka hates me forever, we have to stop this!” he begged his other mate.

“No, this is how you love Hisoka. You have to keep allowing him to be free, and even reckless. Should he die we just have to remember he died doing what he most craves.”
Kyo knew Illumi was right in a way, that was how his relationship with Hisoka worked but Kyo was not Illumi, the way he loved was different. Kyo wanted his mates safe above all else.

“Now Hisoka, those bodies will blow when I decide. Under normal circumstances I’d have just killed you but I’m going to give you a choice,” Chrollo commanded the arena with his voice, drawing all attention back to him and the winding down fight. “Leave me, my people, and my family alone, or you can just die.”

Hisoka glared at Chrollo, this was boring! Chrollo going easy on him and offering a deal? No, this wasn’t the Chrollo he had been dreaming of fighting for years. The Chrollo he wanted to fight was just as reckless when pushed to the edge and didn’t even blink when killing even a small child if that child had something he wanted. What the hell did Kurapika do to his fantasy opponent?!

Hisoka lifted his chin, wanting the ultimate conclusion to the epic showdown he’d always wanted. Illumi would understand, Kyo may not but he’d already made a deal to make sure he’d be fine.

“To the end huh?” Chrollo sighed when it seemed Hisoka would rather fight till he died than concede to defeat. “Fine then.”

Kyo felt his breath leave him as Chrollo began to back away, indicating that he was going to make good in his threat to blow Hisoka up.

It was such a snap decision in Kyo’s mind but he knew that if something wasn’t done, Hisoka would die because of his own stubbornness.

“STOP!” Kyo screamed, ripping himself away from Illumi to rush to the wall and then drop into the ring and go sprinting as fast as he could at Hisoka and the slowly backing up Chrollo.

Unfortunately Kyo’s speed and stamina had never improved; fortunately Chrollo had heard him and turned to watch as Kyo clumsily ran towards them.

“It seems your mates have some issues with your decision Hisoka,” Chrollo casually narrated to Hisoka who couldn’t see the entire fighting ring.
Kyo looked behind him to see Illumi was indeed following. While to outsiders he seemed to have no care in the world but to Kyo he looked almost relieved to have an excuse to end this madness.

Illumi quickly caught up with him and lifted him up in his arms to get Kyo to the center of the ring quicker. He put him down once they closed in on Chrollo and the pinned Hisoka.

Hisoka was glaring at Kyo and Illumi both for daring to interrupt and now standing in front of the black coated man Kyo froze up. Illumi was definitely only interfering because Kyo was, he didn’t want Hisoka to die as much as Kyo but he never would have stopped it unless prompted like this. Illumi seemed to be waiting for Kyo to continue on in his series of snap decisions before progressing any further.

“Don’t kill him,” Kyo begged the black haired man. “Please.”

Chrollo considered Kyo, looking at expressive green eyes begging for mercy then looking to Illumi. His almost dead eyes and expressionless face showing his determination to support those he cares for no matter the decision.

“Hisoka has hunted my mate and I for months, threatened to mark my mate without his consent, and then threatened my unborn child. Why should I spare him?” Chrollo demanded an answer from the shaking Kyo and the detached Illumi.

Kyo couldn't fault Chrollo for wanting to kill Hisoka for any of that, he himself had killed for less personal offenses and was currently planning a take down to his old facility. So he understood but he also deeply cared for Hisoka. The man had began as a terrifying reality of the real world, someone disinterested and cruel. Now he was attentive, supportive, funny, and could even be charming at times.

Illumi just raised a brow like he was expecting Kyo to lead this.

“I know,” Kyo sighed, stepping in front of Hisoka. “I know he’s crazy, and has done you wrong but he’s so very important to me and to Illumi. Without him what would we ever talk about?”

Illumi grunted, not liking that Kyo liked Hisoka more.
“Look I can’t promise that I can control these two madmen but I’ll do everything in my power to keep him away from you and your family,” Kyo fumbled for a reason to spare Hisoka that would appeal to Chrollo but he didn’t seem to be bending. “How would you feel if you lost your mate?” Kyo suddenly asked firmly.

He didn’t like this, this pressure to find a reason to save Hisoka. To find value in a life that he knew to some seemed without. Illumi didn’t typically seem like the type to offer support but Kyo could tell that in his own way Illumi was squaring up behind him in support.

Which was good because Chrollo seemed to take offense with his question and also tensed like he was preparing to strike.

“Be careful,” Chrollo growled, finally showing a bit of the fury hidden beneath his calm facade.

Kyo gulped, not noticing he’d stepped back until he bumped into Illumi. Kyo clenched a fist and forced himself to re-take that step, getting right into his face.

“No,” Kyo demanded the attention and respect around him as he’d been taught to. “You hate the idea as well right?! It takes your breath away just thinking about it right?! I realize some might think that I love Hisoka more or think me odd because I have two mates and therefore a back up but to me,” Kyo looked up at Illumi, then to Hisoka who had remained silent but looked pissed to high hell. And Kyo grinned. “Neither of these two are replaceable to me.”

Kyo and Chrollo stood in a standstill now, staring the other down.

“You of all people should understand the desperation to keep the people who finally make life worth it alive!” Kyo yelled when Chrollo didn’t move to speak.

Like a snap resonating in the air Chrollo suddenly broke the tension with a chuckle that soon evolved into a chest shaking laugh.

“Oh god Hisoka, I don’t know if I should pity or congratulate you,” Chrollo wiped a tear from his eye as Kyo just stood wide eyed at this new development.

“Why’s that?” Hisoka pouted against the ground, knowing that the fight was truly over now.
“He loves you so much he’s not going to allow you to be so reckless anymore. No more gambling your life for you,” Chrollo borderline teased the redhead. Then he looked to Illumi, thinking of the promise Hisoka had made with him to take Kyo away should he die. It was obvious that Illumi cared about the little silver haired boy but something told Chrollo that it wasn’t for who he was. “Illumi, I’d suggest opening your eyes sooner rather than later. An honest and loving relationship isn’t something you luck into everyday. Most people have to work for it.”

Chrollo gave Kyo a nod of respect, it wasn’t everyday that someone stood up to him so earnestly. You could say it even reminded him of Kurapika in a way. Then he summoned Kurapika’s chains.

“These are my mate’s hatsu, it includes a way to reinforce promises,” Chrollo explained, half from habit, half to ease the worry building on Kyo’s face. “It is a two way promise, if either of us breaks it we will die.”

Kyo bit his lip but knew that Chrollo had bent as much as he ever would. “Then I’ll make sure he keeps it,” Kyo promised.

Chrollo just nodded as a chain formed around his hand then split in two, one end going into Hisoka’s chest and the other into his own. “I’m sure you will.”

“Wait a moment! Don’t I have a choice in this?!” Hisoka yelled in fury, trying to beat against the ground to break free.

“No,” Kyo and Illumi said at the same time.

“Hisoka, I have three conditions.” Hisoka looked absolutely pissed but also semi-resigned. If this was the current Chrollo then he wasn’t even worth a fight to the death! “First, neither you or I will threaten the others family. I will never raise a hand to Kyo, Illumi, or the Zoldyck’s. You will stay the hell away from the Spiders, their children, Kurapika, his friends, and my children.”

Kyo nodded thinking this a good first promise. Hisoka had a calculating look like he’d just heard something terrible.

“Second, we will not purposefully endanger the loved ones of the other. No more tricking Gon and Killua into doing your dirty work!” Chrollo added this mostly because he was still pissed that Hisoka had sent two kids at him and he could have killed them! Those kids were important to him.
now and if things had happened even a little differently they could be dead right now!

“Third, any future interactions between us will not include us trying to cheat or kill each other,” Chrollo finished up, cringing inwardly at the feeling of the chain wrapping around his heart. He really didn’t know how Kurapika dealt with the cold and stifling feeling of the chains sharp point ready to strike should he misstep.

“The promise is made,” Chrollo called off the chain and bookmarked the page so when he eventually gave it back to Kurapika the promise would still be in effect.

Hisoka huffed in disappointment and a bit of pleasure. At least the chain wrapping around his heart had been erotic, if only that.

The mannequins and doppelgängers were called off and Hisoka sat up, giving a glare to Kyo and Illumi for intruding on his big moment. It was disheartening to know that they thought he was really going to die, that he didn’t have fail safes and ways around death.

Hisoka stood and brushed himself off with a sour look.

“Does this mean I can’t have my fight with Gon once he’s big and strong?” Hisoka asked with real heat behind his words.

Illumi sighed, not expecting anything less from his first love and mate but Kyo bristled in anger as Chrollo began to look murderous as well.

Something must have snapped inside Kyo as he marched forward towards Hisoka, raised a hand, and slapped the redhead across the face.

Hisoka grunted in surprise as he head jerked to the side from the tiny Nen enhanced slap.

“Can you stop it? Why are you trying to die when Illumi and I would be lost without you?!” Kyo yelled at the redhead. “You are not allowed to die, Hisoka! I don’t mind your crazy mannerisms but if you ever enter into a battle you could lose when you don’t need to again, I will lock you in the torture chamber for a year!”
Hisoka stared down at Kyo, holding his cheek and just processing how insanely turned on he was.

“So the blossom finally becomes a fruit!” Hisoka charged Kyo and grabbed him, lifting him into his arms. Kyo cried out in confusion but Hisoka just silenced him with a kiss. Their first kiss.
“Illumi, hotel room now!”

Hisoka was already rushing off with a very confused Kyo and Illumi trailing behind with a chuckle. Hisoka’s mind was filled with images of the wonderful threeway he was about to engage in.

Chrollo raised a brow as the three rushed off, butlers trying to stop them as they did. He gave Kyo a little salute when he looked back still looking confused. Looks like he’d finally found the way to Hisoka’s dick, accidentally at that.

Chrollo sighed before turning to gather Shalnark and Koltopi, he missed his mate. Chrollo wanted to go home.

Kyo wasn’t put down at any point in the desperate sprint to a hotel. Any time there was a pause Hisoka would lean down for another kiss, each time the kiss got more and more heated. Hisoka’s tongue was hot and would curve and lick at any surface it could reach. His hands were the same, reaching everywhere to grab and squeeze at any surface even while out in the open.

“Hisoka!” Kyo gasped when the man’s hand squeezed his member through his jeans.

“Come here,” Illumi was suddenly pulling his head back to lock their lips while Hisoka bent down to lick and suck at his nipples over his thin blouse. “Seeing you hit Hisoka was-“ Illumi didn’t finish before he was attacking Kyo’s mouth again from the awkward angle.

“Wasn’t it so sexy?” Hisoka groaned in agreement to Illumi’s unfinished sentence.

“Yes,” Illumi moaned back.
“Guys, we’re in public,” Kyo squirmed uncomfortably. People were looking and after months of not being touched by his mates, Kyo was already hypersensitive and holding back moans from the light touches.

“We will be in a hotel soon,” Illumi promised as he curled his finger to play with Kyo’s ear while turning Hisoka’s head to kiss him. Hisoka’s hands were still grabbing at whatever he could.

Finally they made it to a hotel and the butlers that had been trying to catch them finally gave up on stopping what was going to happen and just began helping out, including running ahead to book a room for the three of them.

They were already in the elevator when a butler ran up to hand them their room key before being unceremoniously shoved out by Illumi.

Kyo found himself pushed against Illumi’s chest with the ravenette braced against the elevator door and Hisoka taking residency between his legs.

Kyo arched in bliss even Hisoka’s ground their pelvises together. Kyo felt like he was being skewered from the front and back, this was long overdue, Kyo was in heaven!

Illumi began biting and sucking on Hisoka’s mark on Kyo next while Hisoka attacked Illumi’s. The effect was orgasmic for Kyo who moaned loudly much to the enjoyment of both alphas.

The elevator room opened and all three lost their footing and tumbled out into the hallway. Kyo belted out a laugh as Hisoka and Illumi laughed as well.

“Room please!” Kyo groaned when they tried to continue right there on the floor. Their legs were stopping the elevator from closing!

“As you wish,” Illumi said in that eye roll sounding voice, they stood together and this time Illumi got Kyo up in his arms and left Hisoka in the dust towards the room.

“Not fair!” Hisoka rushed after them, a grin still on his lips.
Hisoka ran in front of them to open the door. The moment they were in the room the tearing happened, Hisoka and Illumi didn’t disrobe him. No, they were just tearing his clothes off. Kyo didn’t know why but this action made it all hotter to him.

“Oh god,” Kyo moaned when he finally felt skin on skin as Hisoka and Illumi began to feel him up with rough hands.

Illumi shoved Hisoka onto the bed and sat Kyo on his lap.

Hisoka wrapped his arms around Kyo’s waist and held him against his chest. Kyo finally realized that Hisoka had undressed.

“Knees up,” Hisoka whispered right into Kyo’s ear as he moved to spread and lift Kyo’s legs in order to present him to Illumi completely.

Kyo squeaked at the sudden movement but he was no virgin and calmed quickly with a red face, the only indication that he was reacting to being held in such an awkward display to Illumi.

“Illumi dear, why are you still wearing clothes?” Hisoka asked the other who was just taking in his two attractive and naked mates. “Come on, strip for us~!”

“Ye-yeah strip!” Kyo added on, liking to way Illumi raised a brow with a light dusting of pink on his face.

“Looks like I have to oblige my mates,” Illumi smirked.

“Ohh~,” Hisoka blew on Kyo’s ear. “We are in for a treat, Illumi does the sexiest strip dances.”

Illumi cocked a hip and hooked his thumbs in his pants. “Hisoka, please don’t raise the bar too high.”

“You always reach it anyway,” Hisoka figuratively waved it all away. His hands were too busy rubbing his hand up and down Kyo’s soft thighs. To Kyo this was already better than all the ‘practice’ he had been forced to endure at the facility. Love really made all the difference.
Illumi gave another barely discernible smirk as he raised one hand to slowly lift the edge of his shirt with his thumb to his lips so he could bite at the material and hold it between his teeth.

Illumi hand traced down his well defined torso muscles leaning his hips forward as he pulled one side of his pants down over his hip. In a quick movement Illumi snapped open his belt and Kyo felt like he would cum right there.

Illumi might be an ice prince but damn did he cut a sexy figure.

“Holy crap,” Kyo gasped when Hisoka suddenly began to stroke at his member, soft and with definitely not enough pressure to relieve the boy. “Nah!” Kyo cried out as Illumi raised his arms to pull both shirts off at the same time.

Kyo was transfixed by the way Illumi shimmied while his hair fell around him like a black waterfall.

Illumi smoothed back his hair as he slid a hand into his pants and stepped up to Hisoka and Kyo, standing close enough to touch now.

Hisoka continued to lightly run his hand up and down Kyo’s small shaft but he jumped in surprise when his other hand came around to run over his entrance. Kyo gasped and moaned, trying to keep his eyes on Illumi as Hisoka sunk a finger into his dripping hole.

Kyo has never seen a man gracefully take off his pants before but Illumi was a vercitial man with many talents and apparently this was one of them.

“Do you want to touch me Kyo?” Illumi asked when Kyo reached out almost on instinct.

“Yes,” Kyo whispered without hesitation, inching his hand to touch Illumi’s stomach only for Illumi to take his hand and guided it down his taunt muscles and around his stiff shaft. At that moment Hisoka added two more fingers and stretched him very suddenly.

“You are so soft and malleable down here Kyo,” Hisoka whispered in his ear, gentle and almost threatening in a way that made Kyo’s body heat rise and sweat to bead on his brow.
“Ohh,” Kyo gasped as Illumi took his other hand to keep guiding him in jacking him off. Soon though Kyo took the reins, grasping firmer and moving faster to match the speed of Hisoka’s hands pumping on his cock and in his entrance.

“He’s much less innocent than he appears~,” Hisoka croned happily.

“Do you doubt my eye for detail Hisoka?” Illumi hummed back, grinding into Kyo’s hands. “I made sure he’d be absolutely perfect.”

“And he is,” Hisoka added a fourth finger and Kyo broke. His back arched and he let out a deep moan as he came all over Hisoka’s hands. “So perfect,” Hisoka affirmed as he licked the cum off his hands.

“Hmm,” Illumi hummed again as he pushed Kyo’s hand off him and placed himself between Kyo’s spread legs. “Well then Kyo, let’s hear it: can you take both of us like the perfect two alpha mate?”

Kyo was only just coming out of a daze but he was quick to process what he’d been asked. It’s not like it was coming out of left field, he knew from the beginning that Hisoka and Illumi were going to share him. And as time has gone on he’d been excited by the idea.


Illumi grinned to Hisoka and Kyo assumed that he grinned back as suddenly he was being lifted up and positioned right above Hisoka’s hard length. Illumi added his length and with no warning they both began to slide into him.

The stretch was a painful but long overdue relief.

“Finally,” Kyo moaned. He was going on to thoroughly enjoy the night.

Chapter End Notes
Getting close to the end here. I hope you are all taking care of yourselves in this crazy times!
Illumi looked too pleased. That was Hisoka’s first thought as he settled into the couch across from the other alpha in the main room. Kyo was thoroughly wiped out and asleep in the bedroom.

Illumi in turn took notice of Hisoka and turned his attention to the man as well. “Ah, Hisoka. We have some things to discuss for right now. I think we should talk to Kyo about putting off having children until he has completed his training as the heir of the Zoldyck family and then plan how many children we want. We can get him some birth control for now.”

Hisoka was honestly confused. Was Illumi’s insanity-?

“Or maybe that won’t be necessary… If he’s a nen construct after all then I might be able to affect whether or not he can be impregnated…”

Hisoka almost smashed his head into the coffee table that currently separated him and his insane lover as he was reminded of the newest madness that Illumi had somehow convinced himself of. He loved this man but where the heck did he get some of these ideas of his?!

“I will need to sire at least one child but I would not be opposed to more. What of yourself?”

Once again Hisoka felt sick, but there was really no getting around this. Illumi had finally come to ‘like’ Kyo but still didn’t view him as a person. His mind was holding onto the notion of control regardless of the insanity of it.

“We should ask ‘him’ how many children he might be interested in,” Hisoka finally replied after a moment. As far as he was concerned, it was time that Kyo take the reins of this particular fight. Kyo becoming strong enough to stand up for himself and them against outside forces was one thing, but it was quite another to stand up to them.

In total, if Hisoka tried to fight Illumi over this anymore it would hinder Kyo’s further development. But he could try to make Illumi think.

“I suppose we should, especially since he is developing and will likely start having opinions rather than just being a basic doll. Besides, being the Head of the Family will mean remaining an active assassin much like father and grandfather. Kyo may practice a different form of assassination but having too many pregnancies may make it difficult. We may need to step up for a few years as the main fighter-type assassins if grandfather decides to retire before one of the children reaches an age and level of ability to be deployed in his stead though that seems unlikely.”

At least Illumi was thinking of letting Kyo have his career and a choice in the number of children they had.

“Illumi, why do you believe that Kyo is a nen construct?” Hisoka finally asked, hoping that Illumi will poke holes in his own theory.

“Because he’s becoming exactly what I can now see I want. It started just physically, but as he’s become stronger and mentally developed plus the way my mother, father, grandfather, and even Milluki have interacted with him, it has become obvious that they associate him with someone else. Even the butlers that gravely dislike me seem to like him.”
“Those same butlers have come to like me when originally I know they viewed me as a very offensive individual as Gotoh so eloquently put it. Tsubone even waved at me when we were leaving.”

Illumi looked thoughtful then shrugged. Hisoka had been good to Kyo for months, perhaps when the butlers realized he authentically cared then they would view him differently as well.

But he’d been Killua’s brother since he had been born and they had viewed him with disdain even before then…

Illumi shook off the thought as he went back to planning. Eight years would likely be a good timeframe for child planning. Kyo would have plenty of time to train as an assassin, the Head of the Family, and complete his development into a whole being.

Chrollo had stared in shock as Kyo had slapped Hisoka but knew where this was likely headed for the trio.

It didn’t matter in that moment, Chrollo had won the war and now was intent to head home to his mate. Kortopi had fallen into step with him while Bonolenov and Shalnark followed, the blonde leaning heavily on the Gyudondong warrior.

The group headed rapidly to the airfield/airport of the city and boarded the first airship headed out, Chrollo unable to hold still or wait for a ship heading to the city nearest the village. Their Hunter licenses got all four of them onto the ship without questions.

Old habits had won out when they arrived on the ground and the group had stolen a car, except for Shalnark who chose to separate and head towards his own home. Kortopi declared he didn’t have anywhere else he particularly wanted to go.

What should have been a five hour drive only took about two and a half due to Chrollo keeping his feet floored on the gas pedal. Bonolenov was clutching his seat in horror at the speed that his danchou, normally a very careful driver who didn’t go a hair above the speed limit since Kurapika’s pregnancy began, was driving like a speed demon! Kortopi was in the backseat and had used the seatbelts of both the window seats to create a pseudo-crash harness for himself and was hyperventilating.

Chrollo only began to slow down when the road to the village came into sight and though he went faster than he normally did, his speed could at least be called reasonable.

Bonolenov bailed out of the car the moment it stopped in front of the school/bookstore, dry heaving on the street while Kortopi sat unmoving in the backseat. Chrollo sprung from the car and raced into the shop, taking the stairs two at a time up to the living quarters.

Kurapika wasn’t in the living room, the kitchen, the bathroom, the nursery, their room, or any of the other rooms. Chrollo barely even paused long enough to admire the new crib in the nursery with the rather cute new sheets, blanket, and mobile.

Rushing down the stairs again, jumping the last ten or so, Chrollo wondered where his mate could be then focused on the onsen that Bono was hobbling towards. Chrollo was past him in a mere second, barreling through the entrance of the onsen.

Catching Kurapika’s scent, he followed it back towards the kitchen and there was his beautiful mate, worriedly fidgeting with a mug.
“Don’t worry that Chrollo hasn’t called yet,” Phinks’ voice called from a corner. “He’s probably just busy making sure that clown never—”

Phinks cut off when Chrollo stepped through the door, but no one managed to say anything before the man was behind Kurapika, wrapping his arms around his mate in a hug. The baby chose to kick as one of his arms settled around Kurapika’s stomach and Chrollo hummed in happiness. It was finally over. He could just stay beside Kurapika for the rest of his pregnancy and the birth of their baby.

Kurapika turned in his arms, a small purr echoing from his throat as he snuggled into Chrollo’s chest…

“Chrollo, why didn’t you call when you finished your fight?”

...The temperature of the room dropped ten degrees instantly.

“I… I forgot because I was so excited to get back to you,” Chrollo admitted though he knew that he was definitely going to be babbling in a moment. “After I beat him-all-I-could-think-of-was-getting-backandthenIdidn’tstopandBonoandKortopiatesickbecauseofhowfastIwasdriving…”

Bonolenov crawled into the room at that point in time and Chrollo found the way that the man suddenly regained his feet enough to be able to charge out of the room fascinating.

Then the musical tone of Kurapika chuckling drew his eyes back to his mate that he still had wrapped in an embrace.

“Why is it so difficult to stay mad at you when you turn goofy?”

Chrollo was going to need to remember that and probably keep his pink Speedo close whenever he suspected that he might have done something stupid. Maybe he should parade around in it later—?

“Hey! Chrollo is back!” a yell sounded and a moment later, Chrollo caught a young boy that came barreling into the room. Green clothes were the best indication of which of the five children this one was, that and the very loud and excited voice. “Did you really fight Hisoka? He wasn’t hurt too badly, was he? Kurapika said he gave you his chains just in case! How did the match go?”

Chrollo was feeling a bit bewildered at the waterfall of questions that were pouring from the boy’s mouth. Then another laughing child joined him, laughing as she wrapped her arms around his neck.

“Hey! Chrollo just got back! Give him a minute!” Fanaka-bennu’s voice called out.

Phinks cut in then. “But we all want to know how badly he kicked that clown’s butt!”

“Preferably tore it off and gave it to Illumi!” Uvo called.

“Actually, Kyo seemed intent to whip his butt after I finished!” Chrollo called out, earning some hoots and laughs.

Gon seemed to understand the implications of his statement. “So he’s still alive?”

Now the laughs that echoed around the room seemed to die very quickly.

“Yes, I used Kurapika’s chains to enforce a promise that we will not endanger each other or our friends and families.” Now Chrollo’s eyes turned to Kurapika’s, meeting and holding them. “Kyo was there and forced the agreement. He’s gotten stronger and seems intent to not allow Hisoka to
throw away his life in fights that he won’t win. Sound familiar?”

Kurapika snorted in turn as he took a step back as fussing began to fill the air and Chrollo’s eyes automatically sought out Machi and Rue but was surprised when the sound seemed to be coming from a bundle in Feitan’s arms.

Phinks jumped into action immediately, he seemed to have been in the middle of fixing a bottle when Chrollo had arrived and the water for the formula had cooled during the brief distraction. He was testing the formula on his wrist before handing the bottle to Feitan.

“When did you two decide-?”

“We didn’t,” Feitan snapped as he gently offered the nipple of the bottle to the tiny omega infant in his arms. “Naji choose us.”

“Turns out some of the traffickers and guards might decide to mate or use the omegas they kidnap. Naji’s birth mother was… used in such a way and was left alone during labor. She didn’t make it and Naji attached herself to Feitan when he found them,” Phinks explained.

Chrollo felt his eyes harden a bit then softened again as he stared at the baby before his eyes swept over the room.

Kurapika stood near him, leaning against a counter as Kalluto attempted to follow Alluka’s directions to brew tea at the small stove nearby. Killua had moved to stand by Machi while Gon was excitedly talking to Uvo. Kortopi had just appeared in the door, helping Fanaka carry Bono back to the room. He could just make out Pairo behind the trio.

This was his family: friends and troupe members he’d known since childhood in some cases or encountered in his travels since. A mate that had changed his view on many things and their five children thus far.

Their family was a crazy mish-mash of planning and impromptu decisions, of trust built over years and love earned. It was chaos, loud, and so many things that he never knew he needed until that moment.

It was perfect.
Chrollo gave a content sigh as he woke up. The large king sized bed was even more comfortable than he’d dreamed, and cuddling next to Kurapika on it had made him feel like an actual king.

Kurapika was gone now, but his side of the bed was still warm. Chrollo didn’t feel any anxiety to go find him, even if he was disappointed that he wasn’t around to cuddle just a little longer but he knew Kurapika needed time to himself from time to time.

And since his return to the village a week prior they hadn’t been apart for longer than ten minutes.

Chrollo stretched, rolling in the covers a bit. Perfectly happy to experience a rare lazy morning, it had been a while since he’d have the luxury of nothing to worry about. Kurapika, their baby, their family, and their relationship were finally all safe and stable.

Well... there was still Pairo to deal with, the boy having been avoiding any contact with Chrollo since his return but today he wasn’t going to worry about that. Today he was just going to be a content expecting father, enjoying a day.

It was days like this that Chrollo thought on the idea of fate. He'd always believed heavily in fate, one could say that it had been almost a religious belief to Chrollo Lucifer. He believed that everything that happened not for a reason but because events transpire due to some things being fixed; some things are always meant to be.

Chrollo had always been, not excited, but intrigued to find out what fate had in store for a dirty little orphan once thrown out like common trash. Who would have thought fate would give him, that same emotionally stunted little orphan, a gift like Kurapika?

Yes, Chrollo believed that in every time, every life, Kurapika and him were simply inevitable. No matter if they met just as bad, or even worse, then they had this time around or not. Kurapika and he would always find a way to talk, debate, fight, and connect; fall in love again and again. And hopefully sometimes they’d meet in good circumstances.

Somewhere in the fates design, worlds away or in time lines unknown to them both, he’ll spot Kurapika in a coffee shop and strike up a conversation. Or maybe he’ll have the feisty blond suddenly berate him about a book choice in a library and fall in love instantly. Whatever the
circumstances, they’d find each other, Chrollo was sure of it.

“Chrollo!” Kurapika’s voice rang like the bells of heaven from their kitchen just down the hall from their room. The kitchen was on the second floor along with their room, the nursery, and the guest rooms that may one day become more nurseries for another child or two. Kurapika has put a hard limit on three and Chrollo agreed.

“Yes?” Chrollo called back, finally pulling himself from the large bed. Kurapika must have been very anxious while he was away because their room had been decorated, most of the house had been decorated, the library almost fully shelved and organized as well. Kurapika had painted the walls of their room a soft grey, the very few pictures they had taken together over their honeymoon framed and sitting atop the mahogany dresser. The large skylight streaming in sunlight, lighting up the photos of the forest Kurapika had hung up.

Chrollo knew that eventually more personality would come to the room, as they lived in it and grew their lives and family. For now it was all a little cold, no problem, it would just take time.

“Wake up and come eat!” Kurapika said from the other room, sounding exasperated yet there was a happiness to his voice that made Chrollo smile.

Chrollo cleaned up and dressed in a pair of comfortable pants and a loose shirt, not buttoning it since he preferred it open anyway.

The world felt much too perfect as he entered the kitchen to see Kurapika dishing up eggs and bacon.

“Good morning my love,” Chrollo wrapped his arms around Kurapika’s bulging midsection, kissing the bend of his neck.

“Chrollo! That’s dangerous, the stove is on!” Kurapika chided, although he laughed as he said it so Chrollo just grinned and backed away.

“You should have stayed in bed, I would have made you breakfast,” Chrollo said.

“You always make breakfast,” Kurapika turned around and set a plate in front of Chrollo then took a seat himself with his own plate. Chrollo tried to stand to help him but he was waved off.
Chrollo and Kurapika ate breakfast in a peaceful silence, the air comfortable as Kurapika pulled out a baby book and read. Chrollo almost pulled out his own when a thought struck him.

They had been so busy: the reconstruction of Ryūsaigai, Hisoka, Pairo, and Alluka. All of it had distracted them from naming their child!

“Kurapika, we don’t have a baby name,” Chrollo watched as Kurapika’s head snapped up and his mouth formed a surprised ‘O’.

“We completely forgot,” Kurapika chuckled. “How does that happen?”

“We’ve been busy,” Chrollo laughed as well. “Well then, I believe you once said you’d name a child after your parents, although I do realize that was a dig on me now.”

“God I forgot about that,” Kurapika giggled into his hand.

“Well?” Chrollo asked, sliding closer to his mate. All he got in return was a confused look so Chrollo clarified. “Machi says we’re having a boy, so what was your father’s name?”

“Oh,” Kurapika lit up, beaming with pride. “Bum.”

Silence.

Chrollo blinked, poker face slipping as his brain stalled. Kurapika didn’t seem to see the issue, he seemed like he thought the name was grand.

“Bum?” Chrollo asked, trying not to laugh but failing. “I’m guessing it’s better translated in Kuruta?”

“Why are you laughing?” Kurapika asked harshly. “Bum is a perfectly respectable name! It’s a scholarly name!” He banged a fist on the table growing increasingly frustrated as Chrollo couldn’t hold in his laughter anymore. “Shut up! My father’s name is- oh” Kurapika lurched forward and
the humor drained from Chrollo's face.

“Kurapika? What’s wrong?” Chrollo stood and rushed to Kurapika's side as the boy hunched over holding his belly.

“I think my water just broke..” Kurapika whispered, Chrollo looked down to see a puddle dripping onto the floor.

“Oh god! Wha- what do I do?! Do we-! CAR! I’ll get a car!” Chrollo jumped up searching for his phone frantically. “Wait!” He turned back to Kurapika who was trying to stand. “You can’t be in labor! Don’t we have another few weeks?!”

“Tell that to him!” Kurapika growled as a contraction hit, he had to grab the end of the table and groaned, barely keeping himself upright.

“Oh-!” Chrollo was at his side in a moment, holding him up as best he could without harming his mate. “Okay! I’ll get Phinks to bring a car! We need Fanaka!”

Once the contraction died down Chrollo was off trying to find his phone again.

“Chrollo, Fanaka is two houses down!” Kurapika called but the man wasn’t listening. He’d found his phone and was yelling for Phinks to bring the car around.

Kurapika shook his head at the stupidity before turning and steadily making his way down the stairs.

“Where are you going?! We have to pack a bag, get your things!” Chrollo called but Kurapika just rolled his eyes and continued. “KURAPIKA! Wait for the car!” He was so not waiting around for a car to drive him less than a hundred feet!

“Kurapika you shouldn’t be moving! Wait, the car will be here in a minute!” Chrollo abandoned his packing and ran after his mate, the blonde had already made it out the door by the time he’d descended the stairs. “Wait for me!”
“Catch up!” Kurapika called back, not stopping from his slow and steady trek to Fanaka’s.

“Kurapika the cars here, turn around and we can drive there,” Chrollo took his arm to try and pull him back.

Kurapika turned and slapped the alpha across the face. “Chrollo! Calm down, we’re already here!” Kurapika's head turned to the onsen that they stood in front of.

“Oh,” Chrollo said sheepishly.

“Yeah oh,” Kurapika laughed through the pain. “Calm down daddy, you’re gonna be okay,” Kurapika muttered patronizingly as he took the lead into the building, allowing Chrollo to take his arm to steady him.

“FANAKA!” Chrollo bellowed as he pried the door open and rushed ahead to try and do, well, anything productive.

“What are you all yell-,” Fanaka stopped dead when she turned the corner to see the panicking Chrollo and Kurapika bent over in pain, breathing shallowly.

“Girls! Get some water boiling!” She yelled, rushing past Chrollo to take Kurapika’s arm and help him towards the room she had prepared for this eventuality. Machi has said she’d need it all set up early, and now she was glad for it.

“Get this thing out of me!” Kurapika said very seriously when their eyes connected.

“Okay, whatever you want Honey,” Fanaka nodded, having dealt with enough pregnancies to just go with it. Kurapika continued to mutter curses and Fanaka hummed, allowing him to scream anything he wanted without a fight.

She led him and the very panicked Chrollo into the room she’d prepared for them and instructed the alpha to help Kurapika to walk in circles until the contractions got closer together.

She raced away to get everything needed as soon as Chrollo appeared confident in what he was
“Good, hold that concentration!” Uvo instructed Gon through gathering his Nen.

Pairo watched with recently fixed eyes as Killua, Gon, and Alluka all got private instruction from the murderers of his people. And yet knowing who they were, he was struggling.

It was difficult not to like them, they were quirky, fun, and surprisingly kind. They were kind to the village, to Kurapika, and all his friends which had initially made it all worse. If they could be so kind, why had they hurt his clan? How could they be so kind but have hurt him so thoroughly?

Pairo was still caught up on how anxious Kurapika had gotten when Chrollo was gone, how scared and irrational he’d been when he never received a call. Somewhere in his mind Pairo had still been convinced that his friend was being held prisoner in some way but the love and devotion and fear for his mate had finally shined real doubts on those thoughts.

Pairo sighed heavily, absentminded wondering if he should ask to start training as well, he couldn’t remain like this forever. He was the same age as Gon and Killua but either one could beat him with nary a finger lifted.

“Kurapika’s gone into labor!” A shout caused every head in the vicinity to whip around. Most of the village has been excitedly waiting for the birth of Chrollo and Kurapika’s baby, Chrollo being the town savior and Kurapika earning a lot of respect.

Gon was the first to react, speeding away from his work out with Uvogin to sprint towards the onsen, Uvogin quickly overtaking him and heaving the boy onto his shoulders as he passed.

Killua kicked up dust in the rear, after that Pairo lost count of who ended up behind who. Pairo waited for all the crazies that could trample him to get far ahead before jumping up himself and doing his best to cross the distance as quickly as possible.

He entered last, just as the sound of Kurapika’s screaming and grunting grew in volume. Killua was covering Alluka’s ears as Kurapika’s screams mixed with wild curses and threats filled the
“YOU FUCKING BASTARD!” Kurapika’s voice sounded pained and raw. “YOU DID THIS TO ME!” Kurapika started saying something about seeking vengeance but a shriek tore from his mouth.

Behind the screeching Kurapika was doing, Pairo could just barely hear the gruff voice of Chrollo giving encouragement and just taking the abuse.

“I bet no broken bones, but Kurapika’s definitely torn up his skin,” Phinks said.

“One break, many gouges,” Feitan added his bet. Pairo was a little startled how they all began betting on the condition their friend and leader would be in when the baby was born. Discussing the logistics of Kurapika’s enhanced strength when his eyes turned red and how with the things he was screeching there was no way his eyes weren’t red.

They all seemed to agree that at the very least Chrollo’s hand would be pulverized, bones turned to dust.

With an ear splitting yell Pairo settled in to wait.

______________________________________________________________

“It’s a boy,” came the call signaling the trauma was over. Kurapika sighed, panting and red faced, still gripping Chrollo’s destroyed hand. He didn’t seem to care as his eyes were locked on the whimpering bundle that Leorio clamped the cord of. He offered the honors of cutting the cord to Chrollo who happily obliged even with his dominant hand limp and useless.

Once done Fanaka pushed forward to wrap the babe gently. She had tears in her eyes as she handed the baby over to an exhausted Kurapika.

Dark grey eyes squinted up at Kurapika and he fell in love for the second time in his life. In a moment Kurapika understood that if anything ever happened to this child he’d end the world with the fires of his rage.
Tuffs of slimy black hair nuzzled into Kurapika's chest as the newborn instinctively looked for food.

“Congratulations you two,” Fanaka whispered with tears running down her cheeks. “He’s a beautiful little omega.”

Kurapika didn’t dare look away from his child even as Chrollo wrapped his arms around the both of them and joined in on his staring. Kurapika couldn't believe that this new life was made by him! And they hadn’t even gotten to pick a name!

“Chrollo what do you think?” Kurapika asked, still not looking away.

Chrollo thought about it but still couldn’t get behind the name Bum so instead asked, “What was your mother’s name?”

Kurapika smiled softly. “It was Isra.”

“Perfect,” Chrollo responded, instantly liking the name. “Our little Isra.”

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