Adventurous

Recently divorced and rebuilding her life with her young son, the last thing Valka needs is a persistent neighbour who thinks she needs more adventure in her life.
Chapter 1

The Valcup has returned!

It's an unrelated (incest free!) Valcup, because... well, I've done two full related-Valcup stories (three if you count The Things We Do For Love) and now I wanna do this.

Soooo... pretty much everything will be explained in-story. Let's roll!

-HTTYD-

Trying to keep an eye on the excitable ten year old scurrying between boxes, Valka hunted for where she had absent-mindedly tossed the keys to their new home.

"I miss our old house mom!"

"I know son, but you'll come to love the new house. We can decorate your room any way you like."

Pushing his glasses back up his little button nose, Tyr smiled.

"Really? With dragons?"

"All the dragons we can squeeze in."

"Yay!"

Valka knew her son was struggling - his parents separation hadn't been easy, and 'staying together for their son' became a very necessary 'separating for their son' because they were so desperately unhappy, and that wasn't the environment either Valka or Sven wanted to raise their son in.

"But right now we need to let the moving men move everything in."

"Can I help?"

Tyr was a little small for his age, and not terribly strong but Valka knew he just took after her - an artistic soul who liked reading fantasy novels more than playing sports. But he was looking up at her so earnestly, eager to assist in the moving.

"You can keep me company making sure they don't break anything. Let them do the heavy lifting."

"Ok!"

Finally locating the keys, Valka took her sons hand and hurried along the quaint little garden path to the front door, unlocking it for the burly men - and one rather beefy lady - to start carrying in boxes and furniture in record time. Standing there watching grew boring for the little boy, who tugged at his mothers hand.

"Can I go in the garden? That box has my favourite dragon in to play with."

Tyr pointed, and Valka nodded since she could see the garden from where she was stood.

"Leave the door open so I can hear you."
"Thanks mom!"

He dug out his favourite dragon - named Loki, as he was apparently always playing tricks like sneaking into the cookie jar and framing Tyr for it - and charged to the door, only to frown when he found it locked. Shaking her head at her own absent minded behaviour, Valka let him out and little legs charged out into the garden with joyful squeals.

Valka smiled to herself at him having a little fun, then turned back to watching the men drop boxes in piles here, there and everywhere.

"Where do you want this?"

Was grunted at her by the two men holding her sofa, and Valka pointed to the far wall. The next were their dismantled beds, which she hoped they didn't mix up as she told them where to take. Soon she was left with mostly boxes and a few bits of furniture in their new homes, and decided to check on her son now the movers were gone.

He wasn't playing with Loki, instead standing near the fence where five adult heads were now floating above, looking down at Tyr as they chatted. When her son spotted her, he turned excited green eyes to her and pointed.

"Mom! Look! We have neighbours!"

Accepting that she wasn't going to get out of meeting them now, Valka walked over to her son, feeling very much scrutinised. Especially by the one with emerald eyes and a sort of messy, windswept look about his hair.

"Hey! We don't all live here, by the way. Just me and Astrid, for now. But this is Eret, that's Dagur, and that's Heather. They visit alot."

Emerald-eyes pointed to each individual he named, each giving Valka a smile and wave she awkwardly returned.

"I'm Tyr, and this is my mom. And this is Loki. He's a naughty dragon."

Rather than scoff at her imaginative son, they played along.

"I'll keep an eye out for him then, luckily I read alot about dragons so I can handle it."

Well, Tyr was already sold on their new neighbour if he liked dragons.

"Me too! Hey, have you read How To Train Your Dragon?"

"Read it? I'm nicknamed after it, and I even named my dog Toothless."

"Your name is Hiccup?"

Tyr looked enthralled; Valka wasn't even totally sure what they were talking about other than that it was a book series.

"That's what everyone calls me now, yeah. Anyway, your mom is probably busy so we'll let you get on. If you need anything, let us know! It was nice to meet you Tyr, and... sorry, didn't catch your name. I can't really call you mom."

Had Valka been so distracted by his eyes she hadn't introduced herself?
"Oh. I'm Valka. And yes, I do need to get on. Come on son, we need to sort the boxes."

"Ok mom. Bye everybody!"

Tyr - and Loki - waved, then scampered after Valka. As they went in, Valka had the distinct impression 'Hiccup' was watching her walk away.

"Find all your boxes so we can get them upstairs Ty, then we can start getting your bed ready for the night."

His boxes were distinctive, as Ty's handwriting was still rather sketchy at best while Valka had a looping, almost ostentatious script that she supposed came from all the time she spent drawing over and over. Her fingers were well suited to sculpting, to the finest details with tiny paintbrushes and the thinnest sketching pencil.

They were not designed for an IKEA disaster with no instructions, having been thrown out when the bed was first installed by her now-ex-husband. She'd sent Ty back out into the garden so he couldn't hear her swearing, and so she was surprised to hear the front door knocking. Throwing a screwdriver at the pile of puzzle pieces definitely designed to frustrate her to Hel and back, Valka headed down the stairs and opened her front door.

"Hiccup?"

"Hi. Your precocious little man said you were having some trouble putting things together, after I told him I take stuff apart and put it back together for work. And the dragon made me promise. So... need some help?"

He wasn't leering, but Valka still felt like he was scrutinising her. She turned to see a sheepish son hiding behind a half-wall, but he was smiling a little too.

"Are you sure you wouldn't mind?"

Hiccup grinned.

"Happy to help."

After gods only knew how much frustration and internal screaming for Valka, Hiccup barely even looked at the collection of parts before he was sat down fixing this bit to that.

"How did you do that?"

"Have you ever seen all the tiny bits that go in an engine? This is an ages 3 to 6 jigsaw puzzle by comparison. So, Tyr, how old are you?"

Valka hadn't even noticed that her son had snuck up to watch Hiccup work. He shuffled in, shy about his age and short stature all of a sudden.

"I'm eleven in three months."

"Is that all? I thought you were twelve at least!"

Tyr beamed, puffing up proudly. Valka couldn't help but smile at him, seeing the shyness melt away.

"Really?"
Already half done, Hiccup managed to nod over at Tyr.

"Yep. Hey big guy, can you hand me that little baggy of screws?"

"Ok!"

Tyr hastened over to help, leaning over curiously to watch Hiccup make use of them. She was about to admonish him for getting in Hiccup-the-helpful-neighbours way, but Hiccup had turned around to ask Tyr if he wanted a go at fitting the screw. That even got Tyr to put down Loki, who he had steadfastly clung to for security with the stranger in their house.

"There we go. One bedframe for you and Loki."

"Thanks Hiccup. Are you gonna help mom fix her bed now too?"

The two males looked up at Valka from their perch on the floor, Hiccup's face questioning.

"If its no trouble?"

"Not a bit. Shall we?"

"Hang on" Tyr moved Loki to the middle of the bedframe, smiling "he's guarding my bed."

Hiccup had her double beds frame set up in equally short order, with his tiny little helper who was all smiles, especially when Hiccup indulged his want to chat about that book series they both liked.

"We can't unpack properly yet because me and mom gotta do some painting in my room. I get dragons on my wall!"

"That is pretty cool. I wish I could have had a dragon room when I was your age."

Valka looked at the time on her watch, grimacing slightly.

"Ty, we need to call your father."

Hiccup stood with his own tension, favouring one sidr far more than the other as he got up.

"I'll leave you to it. Please feel free to ask if you need anything else."

"Thank you, truly."

"Truly, it was no trouble. Thanks for helping Tyr."

"You're welcome!"

Hiccup offered the boy a high-five, then took himself home and left a rather star-struck ten year old in his wake.

"Hiccup's cool. Lets call dad."

Valka dialled the number, then handed her phone over to her son to talk to his dad. Her and Sven weren't on bad terms, but they were still adjusting to splitting and divorcing and that change after sixteen years of marriage.

"Our next door neighbour came over and helped mom with the beds. He's cool!"

Tyr mentioned to his dad, and Valka already knew what was coming when Tyr held up the phone
"Dad wants to talk to you."

"Thanks Ty. Go make sure you have pyjamas for tonight, and find your messy clothes."

Tyr charged off, leaving Valka to deal with her ex

"Who's this neighbour man?"

"Relax Sven. He just offered to help put the beds together. The ones you got rid of. He lives next door. With his girlfriend."

Well, Valka was fairly sure the very pretty blonde was his girlfriend, since they lived together. Sven grunted, and they discussed their split custody of their son before Valka hung up with a sigh of relief. Sven was still in that halfway mode of knowing he and Valka were very much over, but he would consider it akin to adultery for her to see someone else.

Never mind that her neighbour was half her age, probably young enough to be her son anyway. Shaking her head, Valka got on with ensuring they had food and somewhere to sleep that night. Hiccup had helped there too, having passed local takeaway menus over the fence to Tyr while Valka wasn't looking.

The next few days would be inordinately hectic, getting their house to become a home so Valka could get back to work and her son back to school. They were supposed to have moved much sooner so she would have weeks over the summer holidays rather than days, but the previous owners delays in leaving meant late-July became late-August.

She laid in bed that night scarcely able to settle, knowing that was common in a new house and so she wasn't surprised when a timid knock at the door admitted her son to her room. He and Loki burrowed under the covers with a yawn, snuggling up to Valka with a sound of contentment. Her sons gentle breathing soothed her somewhat, even if Loki's tail occasionally poked her side as Valka looked at the shadows of boxes in the dark. Gods, moving was stressful.

Ty woke her at an ungodly hour, as usual. He was up with the dawn chorus, though thankfully happy to sit reading and eating toast - Valka had brought a bag of kitchen supplies, since their home came with the kitchen and appliances. As promised, and with the need to get his room ready before school so he could do homework and find his uniform, Valka dressed fo a trip to the local DIY store. One thing she could do was paint.

Hiccup was on his driveway, dressed in greasy overalls and buried in the front of a car hood even though the sun had barely cleared the horizon yet.

"Hi Hiccup!"

"Hey Tyr. Valka. Don't mind me, Eret's car gave out on him when he tried to go home last night so I'm just sorting it out."

"We're going to get paint! And maybe a rug."

Probably bored of them already, Hiccup smiled like he was as excited as Tyr.

"That's awesome. I hope you find the good stuff."

Valka chivvied her son into the car, earning a grumble that he had to sit in the back for legal safety
reasons. As she slid into the front seat herself, Valka looked up and saw Hiccup was watching her again.

-HTTYD-

Short, awkward opener but y'all know I suck at openings by now surely. And endings. So if you think this sucks you had better stick it out for when I get into my stride. And now I'll stop babbling on.
By now ye surely realise... I've abandoned almost all semblance of an update schedule.

As to reviewers... Thank you! And the questions of Astrid will be answered swiftly.

A Simple Cup - I assume you were referring to 'Masterpiece' as being mostly smut, but that was my test run for if I could make Unrelated!Valcup work. Since it went fantastically, now I'm doing it properly.

-HTTYD-

Finishing the tail she was painting with a flourish, Valka stepped back from the finished dragon.

"There we go."

"That's awesome! Thanks mom!"

Exhausted but still fairly happy - she did so love to paint - Valka looked around at their handiwork. The 'background' still needed doing, but that could be done in a weekend when Tyr started going to his dads for their split custody.

"Look Loki, it's you!"

Naturally, a big portrait of her sons favourite dragon toy - purple and red with some possibly disproportionate wings for flying - took pride of place opposite the window and his bed, so it would be the first thing he saw when waking up.

"Alright, lets let this dry and get some dinner."

Window and door open to air the room and encourage it to dry - at least it was still warm enough with Augusts summer nights that it would help. Tyr was as exhausted as her, he and Loki snuggling into her bed that night while his room continued to dry. Thankfully it was dry the next day, and so his bedroom was soon in perfect working order for him to start settling in to.

"Hiccup! Hiccup!"

Tyr had obviously heard movement in next doors garden, and before Valka could chide her son for pestering their neighbour, a beaming face appeared over the fence.

"Hey big guy. What's happening?"

"My dragons are finished!"

"So now you have the coolest room ever?"

"Yep! Do you want to come see?"

Hiccup glanced over to the back door, where Valka was watching the two.

"Only if it's ok with your mom."

Big green eyes magnified by his glasses turned to plead with Valka to let him show off his room to his new friend. Valka knew she couldn't deny his request.
"Alright. But remember Ty, Hiccup might have other things to do."

Tyr pouted slightly, but turned to Hiccup and grinned as Hiccup said he would be right round. At this rate, they might as well do away with the fence altogether. An excitable Tyr hurried to open the door when he heard Hiccup's door close to indicate he'd left his home.

"Come and see!"

She expected some reluctance, maybe a sort of indulgence but Hiccup looked genuinely excited alongside her little boy as they headed upstairs. Valka didn't miss his stiff gait, but he was still smiling when Ty pointed to the door with his name on.

"Wow. Did you paint all these in one day?"

"Mom did most of it, but I helped."

Hiccup turned, eyebrow quirked at Valka.

"You paint?"

"I'm an art teacher."

His eyes lit up in interest. Valka wasn't sure why.

"That's amazing."

She wasn't sure how to respond either. Something about this man made her brain stutter slightly.

"Thank you. I like it."

"Well big guy, you and Loki have a really cool room. I brought you a housewarming gift."

Tyr took the gift from Hiccup with wide eyes, turning the little egg over in his hands.

"It's a dragon egg!"

"It's also a paperweight. For if you want to do homework with a window open."

"Where did you get it? It's cool!"

"I made it. I like making stuff."

Valka would have confessed herself surprised, but then she realised his job was creative in its own way, and he clearly appreciated her work.

"Will you teach me?"

"Absolutely. Not right now, because I gotta go get ready for work now, but I will teach you."

Hiccup left with a smile at them both, leaving Tyr beaming in his wake as he admired the paperweight in his hand.

"Hiccup's so cool!"

Valka wasn't sure her sons immediate fixation with their neighbour was ideal, but he hadn't once stated missing their old home since he met Hiccup, too excited about all things dragon and all things next door. And Hiccup seemed happy enough to indulge the pre-teen.
Sorting all of Tyr's clothes out took a while, as the boy had a system. With his father helping them pack, the system hadn't transferred to the boxes and so it had to be correctly reinstated now he had furniture again. Dragon t-shirts alone had their own drawer. His shoes had an order Valka had memorised but only Tyr understood.

All tuckered out by his sorting, Tyr retired to the sofa with his game boy while Valka sighed into her coffee, rubbing the bridge of her nose as she contemplated all the things that still needed doing before she returned to work. Her actual back-to-work things were more or less sorted, but she was in no way emotionally prepared to be back in a room full of teenagers resenting the end of their school holidays. Even if art was the 'easy' subject.

Her phone ringing was a jolting shock, and Valka realised she had forgotten that Ty was supposed to call his dad half an hour ago. Sven wanted to be sure he was still in their boys life, and Valka respected that, but dealing with her ex wasn't the most fun in her day, even less so when she was tired and overwrought.

"Mom?"

"Yes Ty?"

"Dad wants to know if I can go stay with him for a couple of night before we have to get ready to go back to school."

She hesitated; she wanted Ty to adjust to their new home. But he also probably missed his dad and soon would only see him two days a week, and Valka would probably get more done without needing to keep an eye on her son harassing the neighbours. So she agreed.

"Mom said it's ok. You talk to dad, me and Loki will go pack."

Valka took the phone, watching Ty scamper off.

"Is he still talking to that toy?"

"He's adjusting to a massive change in his life. He just needs the familiarity."

Sven was a little less forgiving of their sons quirks, though he loved his son fiercely. He had probably just hoped for a little more of himself, but Tyr was pretty much all Valka. The boy adored his dad though, and the two did have their own little ways of getting along. Sven just wished his son wouldn't carry around a dragon toy, and occasionally climbed a tree rather than read a book.

Hiccup was returning from work as Sven came to collect Tyr, and the two men definitely sized each other up a little. In his greasy work overalls and with his naturally messy hair, Hiccup probably looked a little disheveled to Sven in his smart shirt and smart trousers, blonde hair tightly combed to cover where it was thinning.

"Off on an adventure Tyr?"

"I'm going to see my dad for a bit, but I'll be back soon!"

"Ok big guy, have fun."

"Hiccup! Thank gods you're home, I broke the thing again!"

The pretty blonde at the door in her casual t-shirt and shorts definitely seemed to reassure Sven that Hiccup really did live with his girlfriend, and after offering the leaving ones a wave and Valka a
smile, he headed in to save Astrid from whatever she had broken again. Valka watched her ex and son driving off, then headed in.

For a moment, she was desperately lonely with this new house and her sons energy gone. Then Valka shook herself off, then got on with setting up her own room. Loose t-shirts and blouses went at one end of her wardrobe, ready to be selected for work. Her files and folders that needed to go with her to the actual school was stacked on the desk she had set up all by herself. It was a little wobbly on the one side, but it was standing so far.

Finally done for the evening, and with no worries for Tyr, Valka settled herself in the garden on an old deckchair she didn't remember packing, with a large glass of wine and some chocolate. She wasn't really a drinker, but the occasional treat didn't do her any harm. The wine had been a gift for hers and Sven's anniversary, only a month before they agreed to begin divorce proceedings.

It seemed fitting she use it to drown her sorrows on the first of what would be many nights all by herself. Gods, she missed her son. In a way, she missed her marriage. Not the rows or silence or the plain old unhappiness. But having somebody at home... and they had had some happy times. They had their wonderful boy. Valka had wanted a second child, but Sven wanted a son. They had one.

Now she was too old to think about a second child, and too single to really have any way to have one regardless. Taking a long gulp of wine, Valka sighed audibly. Then promptly almost leapt out of her skin when Hiccup's face appeared over the fence.

"Everything alright? That was a very loud sigh."

"Hiccup! You frightened the life out of me."

"I do apologise. Aside from life-frightening, are you alright?"

"I'm fine. Just missing Ty."

"He's a great kid. Reminds me a lot of little me. If you're lonely, you are welcome to come get drunk in my garden. Astrid's gone to stay at Heather's but I have a cute dog and more alcohol."

The prospect of being reminded how much older she was than her neighbour wasn't highly appealing, but since Ty already liked him Valka supposed she could take the time to get to know the man herself.

Plus... she was lonely.

"I can't say no to a cute dog."

"I'll leave the door unlocked. Just come on through... if you're attached to that wine you can pass it over to me."

Valka looked at the half glass, then downed it in one and stifled a terribly unladylike belch.

"Or you could do that. See you in a few."

Hiccup's front door was indeed unlocked, and though it felt almost intimate to just let herself in to his home. There were dragon statuettes dotted around, little ones on the boarded up fireplace and big ones in a cabinet in the corner. A sketchbook and some charcoal sticks rested on the table, but Valka knew art was often personal, private. She wouldn't pry.

Spotting the array of photos in multi-frames on the wall, Valka found herself looking closer. Saw
pictures of Hiccup as a little boy, then a couple of him in a wheelchair around early teens. He really had been quite small... no wonder Tyr reminded him of himself. A scowling blonde appeared around the time Hiccup was visibly out of his chair. Seemed Hiccup and Astrid were childhood sweethearts...

"Are you enjoying the peek into my life?"

Hiccup was leant against the door frame, wearing t-shirt and shorts. The wheelchair, his stiff gait on stairs, his favouring one side over the other... it all made sudden sense when she saw the metallic limb replacing his lower right leg.

"I didn't mean to pry."

"I know. I invited you in, I can hardly bar you from looking at photos on open display. It's ok if you stare by the way. Most people do."

That made Valka resolve *not* to look much at his leg. Of course, that left her staring at his intense green eyes and half-smirking mouth. That wasn't much better. A big furry distraction appeared the form of Hiccup's dog, bowling around their legs to sniff at Valka eagerly.

"This is Toothless. His bark is much worse than his bite... literally. I got him as a rescue when he was a couple of years old. His owners dumped him cus he had dental problems. But drooling aside, he is the best dog on the planet."

Valka couldn't resist the big bundle of fluff, kneeling down to meet the animal properly. Toothless licked her face, nuzzled her and huffed happily as she carded her hands through his shaggy fur.

"What breed is he?"

"Uh... Shetland sheepdog. They normally have more distinct markings, but he just wanted to show off. Toothless, outside."

The dog padded off outside obediently, leaving Hiccup alone with Valka as she wiped doggy drool off her cheek.

"You coming?"

She followed him silently, doing a bit of a double take when she saw the inflatable *hot tub* just sitting there.

"It's not what it looks like. Well, it is. But Astrid bought it since we host the others a lot for hanging out, and the hot water is great on my leg. Grab a seat."

Hiccup slung himself into a rather sturdy looking chair with a leg rest, leaving Valka to choose from the four other seats Toothless hadn't occupied.

"So what does Astrid do?"

Valka couldn't help asking; it seemed like a rather frivolous purchase, but then she didn't know how much disposable income the couple had. Hiccup sat up, handing Valka a bottle of cider plus a bottle opener.

"She's a model, and a personal trainer. Works for a fancy gym, Dagur too. Heather's a chef. I think Eret's a mountain instructor. And me? I'm a mechanic."
Valka took a mouthful of her drink, surprised at the crisp, fresh taste. Hiccup did the same, then turned slightly to look at her.

"So, my turn art teacher. Divorce?"

" Hmm. We tried to stick it out for Tyr, but we just weren't happy" why was Valka telling this to him so easily? She hadn't drank that much "and it wasn't good for Ty."

"That's a very mature decision. Ok. You can ask me a question now if you want."

She couldn't help herself.

"How did you lose your leg?"

"Car accident. Wasn't a fun time, but then I guess neither was your divorce and I asked. My turn. Less morbid. Do you like your job?"

Valka wasn't sure when she agreed to this quiz, but hadn't she come over to get to know him?

"I love it. What do you do for fun?"

"Walk Toothless. Draw. Make stuff. I'm really very routine and boring. Tyr makes me feel like a superhero by comparison with how much he tells me I'm cool."

"Does that make me routine and boring?"

"Not at all. You're a mom. By definition, that makes you not boring. Plus, you teach art. You spend your time bringing out other people's creativity. That's just... amazing."

There he went with those deep green eyes... Valka definitely shouldn't drink any more. They traded a few more questions before Hiccup stifled a yawn in his hand, but years of a child who insisted he 'wasn't tired!' meant she spotted it in a heartbeat.

"I should be going anyway. I have things I really ought to sort out before Ty comes back."

"Hey, speaking of the little dragon, do you think my leg will bother him?"

Hiccup looked genuinely concerned, glancing down at his prosthetic. Valka wasn't sure, because it wasn't really something she had ever addressed with her son. Still, she couldn't see much deterring the boy from his new friend.

"I shouldn't think so. But I'll tell him about it first... if that's alright with you?"

"Definitely. I don't wanna scare him. Come on, I gotta walk you out to lock up."

He was surprisingly easy company, and Valka admitted to herself it was nice to talk to another adult. Even if said adult was eighteen years her junior. He might share interests with her ten year old son, but Hiccup wasn't immature in any way. And they shared a love for art too. Valka didn't know many people willing to talk about watercolour versus acrylic paint quite so readily or happily.

Her head was a little sore the next day, but Valka hadn't drank that much. She just stupidly forgot to take water to bed. Rectifying that after she crawled out of bed, Valka got on with making her house resemble a home. Then treated herself to a long bath, just because she could. Valka soaked in the bubbly water, luxuriating in her little indulgence before hard work returned.
Some walls needed re-painting and Valka needed to buy new storage units to finish moving books and dvds and some of her art supplies and *where* did she end up with so many trinkets... but the bones were there and the house was functional. And she was completely exhausted. And *ravenous*. She could cook, or she could go out and search for some places to eat. Of course, the most logical choice was to go and do a proper food shopping trip, since she would need supplies to make school lunches soon.

Reluctant to go and join the end of summer rush, Valka hauled herself outside and got on with it. After getting back, there was really only one thing for her to do to unwind for the day. She got out her paints and headed out back to get some sunshine and art in her system. It was exactly what she needed, and Valka welcomed her sons return the next day with a light heart and happy smile.

"Mom! Missed you!"

"I missed you too my boy. Did you have fun with your father?"

"Yep! We went to get ice cream and visited grandma. She asked if you were feeding me enough."

Valka hugged her son to help hide her rolling eyes. Her mother-in-law was an interfering old witch, but she adored Tyr and Tyr loved her too. So she tolerated.

"Sounds good. Do you want to pick him up from school or here on fridays?"

Sven ruffled his short moustache as he pondered, then shrugged.

"Here works."

"Alright. I'll see you next Friday."

Tyr thankfully waited for his dad to leave until he brought up their neighbour, looking hopefully to next door.

"Is Hiccup home? I wanted to show him the new jumper grandma got me. It has a dragon!"

"I think he's at work, lets get you unpacked and make sure your back to school stuff is ready. You can show him later."

Sulking, Tyr trotted inside and did as Valka asked. He was mischievous, but rarely naughty or disobedient. Of course, that could all change when puberty came around, but still. She would enjoy it for now.

-HTTYD-

Won't all be Valka POV, haven't decided if it'll be mostly her or more even though. I just go with who matches the chapter plan best.
Chapter 3

Sorry for any confusion over Astrid - this is not a cheating fic.

Hiccup POV.

-HTTYD-

Chasing his dog away from their food, Hiccup called out to his sister.

"Astrid, come get your lunch!"

Messy blonde hair preceded the grizzly hungover Astrid, who had only surfaced from her bed an hour ago to spend most of it on the sofa, glaring outside at the sunshine. Hiccup knew it was her last hurrah drink, part of a week free from diet monitoring and nutrient calculations to see out the summer. She did something similar for Christmas.

And usually regretted it the morning after.

"Here's your water, painkillers and food."

"Love you. M'dying."

Once she had eaten and the paracetamol had kicked in, Astrid would perk up, but she was quite funny to watch when the hangover was winning. He kissed her forehead, then sat down to eat his own food. Toothless was napping by the open back door, feeling the breeze on his fur to stay cool.

He could hear Valka singing to herself in her garden, possibly hanging things out on the airer to dry in time for their return to school and work. She had a beautiful voice... not that Hiccup would tell her that. Then she would know he heard her, and possibly stop.

"So what're the neighbours like?"

Hiccup couldn't keep the smile from his face, twirling his fork through brown rice as Astrid brought up the new neighbours next door. She'd only really met them in passing, either at Heather's or Eret's the last few days. They weren't bound by school terms, but summer was coming to its close and so they crammed as much activity into the last of the sunshine. Hiccup much preferred autumn and winter himself.

"The kid is great. Crazy about dragons, and he tells me I'm cool all the time."

"And his mom? Aside from her being totally your type, I mean."

Hiccup glared at his smirking sister.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Don't play coy with me! I know you big brother. Mala was nearly ten years older than you. And when everyone else was crushing on Amy Pond, you like River Song."

Damnit, why was Astrid so observant?

"That... is not the point. She's going through a divorce, and yeah, I'll admit she's gorgeous" and he really hoped Valka couldn't overhear them "but I barely know her, and she needs a friend. Not a
"Creep."

"Fair. Anyway, what's she like?"

"She's an art teacher. Her and her son are like two peas in a pod."

"The total opposite of you and dad."

"Yeah, pretty much. It would be weird if she had his bountiful facial hair."

Snorting into her hand, Astrid laughed at that mental image. Hiccup joined in, finished with his lunch by now and considering going to read outside.

"Hiccup! Hiccup!"

"Ty, he might not be able to hear you!"

Astrid watched him leave to answer the excitable ten year old, chuckling as Hiccup hopped up to kneel on the table allowing him to see over - he couldn't really tip toe with only one foot.

"What's up Tyr?"

"See, he could hear me mom. Can you teach me to make dragon eggs now? Only when school starts tomorrow I won't have time."

Hiccup glanced up at Valka, checking she was ok with it. She nodded, smiling fondly at her precocious son.

"I can do that. Do you have clothes you can get messy?"

"Yeah!"

"Ok. I'll bring my stuff round and we can set up in the garden. I'd suggest mine but there are too many chairs."

Tyr charged off to change, and Valka came up close to the fence.

"You don't have to indulge him you know."

"I'm not indulging him, I said I'd teach him. Plus, he's a great kid, why wouldn't I want to hang out making little eggs with him?"

Hiccup grimaced.

"Hopefully she doesn't think you're a pervert trying to get close to her kid, or else you would have to tell her your dial swings wayyyy in the other direction."

Hiccup chuckled to himself, adding one of his painting sheets to the box and checking he didn't mind getting the clothes he had on dirty, then left his front door to walk down one path, across less than a dozen steps, then up a second path to have the door opened by little Tyr in a paint-splattered
"Hi!"

"Hey big guy. Ready to make dragon eggs?"

Tyr scampered out to the garden happily, setting Loki to watch as Hiccup put the sheet down so they'd not lose anything in the grass. Then he emptied out the clay, fishing weights and little paints and brushes. Valka had already brought out a clearly designated paintbrush swishing cup, full of water. Tyr reached for a weight, holding it in hand.

"What's this for?"

"It's originally designed for fishing, but I noticed they were about the right shape to make eggs out of. I had to remove these metal loops off the top, but now we just shape clay around them, then paint the clay and let them dry. Here, you have a go."

Tyr's little face scrunched up in concentration, eyes bigger through his glasses and making him look even younger. But as a baby-faced teen waiting for a late puberty to finally come along, Hiccup knew reminders didn't make him feel better. So making Tyr feel better about himself came naturally.

Hiccup shaped clay around the weight, smoothing it as much as he could and watching Tyr do his absolute best to emulate it. Valka was watching quietly, so Hiccup held up his completed egg.

"Want to join in?"

"Yeah, come on mom!"

Valka wavered, but eventually sank down and took one of Hiccup's completed eggs from him, smiling just a little when Hiccup nudged his paints and brushes over to her. She painted it with delicate swirls, mixing paint colours against the thin skin on the inside of slender wrists to create unique shades and Hiccup was entranced just by watching it.

"Hiccup, I can't make it smooth!"

"That's ok. Not all dragon eggs are the same."

Tyr lit up, then joined his mother in painting while Hiccup continued creating clay shapes around fishing weights. The sunshine and a specially selected tray dried the paint, and Tyr was ecstatic with his new collection of eggs that he had helped make. Valka sent him in to clean paint off his skin, then turned to Hiccup.

"Thank you. He hasn't mentioned going back to school once, and I know he often worries about that."

"No problem. Does he get bullied?"

Valka nodded sadly, hugging her knees to her chest.

"Sometimes. He's small, shy. He has friends, but like him they are quiet, bookish and artistic."

Hiccup hummed to himself, looking in the direction of the house.

"Exactly the same as me. Then after the accident I was an even bigger target, but... I met great people and made good friends. Grew about a foot in a year, focused more on drawing and passing
exams. Then at college I was in a room with people who respected what I knew about engines... it might be tough, but he's tough. Tyr will be fine."

Her smile wasn't beaming, but Hiccup could still see there was a smile on Valka's face.

"I better get going, I need to get my overalls out of soak and in the wash" at Valka's confused expression, Hiccup elaborated "you don't just toss greasy stuff in the machine. You soak them overnight, then wash them normally."

"Ah. Sorry to take up your time." "Are you kidding? I had a blast. If anything, I'm sorry for just appearing in your garden."

Valka shook her head lightly. "I had fun too."

"Then everybody wins."

Hiccup so hated getting up from the floor, having only one ankle joint meant it was usually a sore, wobbly affair. Seeing him stumble, Valka reached a hand out and helped steady him. He swallowed thickly, trying not to notice how nice she smelled, paint and sunshine and a soft, powdery soap scent.

Damn Astrid and her jokes and knowing smirks.

"What are you doing to Hiccup mom?"

The two quickly moved apart, and Hiccup felt a little guilty for reasons he couldn't identify. Tyr looked at them from the door, pushing his glasses up his nose. "She was helping me up big guy."

"Cus you have a metal leg?"

Thankfully, aside from his concern about whether or not it hurt him, Tyr hadn't been fazed by Hiccup's prosthetic.

"Yep. I don't have a proper ankle this side, so sometimes I struggle to get off the floor."

"Oh. That was nice of you mom. Do you have to go now Hiccup?"

"Yep, but you and Loki can enjoy all your new eggs."

Back in his own home, Hiccup could swear Valka's scent was branded into his clothes. He stripped off the t-shirt and tossed it into the wash pile on the floor, glad for the excuse of it being covered in paint. He wasn't going to go developing pointless crushes on his next door neighbour. Gods, the woman was going through a divorce, and she had a son only thirteen years younger than him.

"Are you ok?"

Astrid asked, finding Hiccup staring at the bottle of detergent. "Me? Fine. Just putting some washing on."

"Ok. Well, I'm gonna go crash at Eret's tonight. Maybe tomorrow night. He's going on a climb in a
couple of days, so gotta get on him while he's here."

Hiccup cringed as Astrid laughed.

"Lovely image. Be sure to give dad a call, he misses you when you're always on the go."

"I will. Love you bro."

Astrid stretched up on tip toes to kiss his cheek, squeezed him in her trademark rib-cracking hug that she had definitely learnt from their dad, then headed off to spend time with her boyfriend before he went off on a climb.

Relaxing with a movie and his leg off after walking Toothless, Hiccup could hear his neighbours dashing around, preparing all those last minute things needed for back-to-school that slipped everybodies mind until the very last moment possible. It went quiet around eight in the evening, with only a few sounds of Valka puttering around, probably fixing school lunches for herself and her son, or making sure she had everything ready.

Reaching over for the sketchbook next to him, Hiccup doodled for a bit before deciding he ought to get a bath and an early night. He had an all day shift the next day, after all. Checking his overalls were drying nicely, Hiccup put his leg back on, let Toothless out before he went to bed and soaked in a hot bath, then crawled into bed and dropped off quickly.

He was up early, walking the dog and getting dressed for work before the sky was fully bright. September mornings were usually cool, which meant the garage was going to feel sweltering by comparison when he got there. A knock at the door surprised him - Hiccup wasn't expecting deliveries or visitors - but he was quite pleasantly surprised to see Tyr stood there, freshly dressed in a new school uniform and with dragon-scale patterns visible on his backpack straps.

"Well don't you look smart."

Tyr smiled, then pointed over to where Valka was fretting at her car.

"Mom's car is leaking and I know you fix cars, can you help us?"

It didn't take long for Hiccup to diagnose the issue, not even needing to get too close.

"You have an oil leak, you cannot drive that car."

That was clearly not welcome news to Valka, who was growing increasingly flustered by that early morning frantic panic. First day back at work and school, car troubles weren't exactly high on the good list.

"I don't have time for this!"

"It's ok. Look. I'll drive you guys today, and I'll fix your car tonight."

"I can't let you do that."

"Well, I don't think you have many options."

Tyr thought it was an adventure, and Valka was obviously stressing over gods only knew what. Hiccup was going to be late for work, and he had to apologise to Toothless for putting him in his carrier so he wouldn't climb all over Tyr, but he had a very understanding boss and Toothless was agreeable enough.
"Ok, you gotta call and tell the school I'm picking him up, yeah? Don't want to get arrested for kidnap."

"Of course. Tyr, you be good!"

"I will! Bye mom!"

Hiccup didn't realise until after he had dropped Valka off, then started towards Tyr's school, that she hadn't said anything about leaving her son alone with him. Apparently Tyr usually went to a before-school club, and an after one, as Valka started and finished her work day outside of his school hours, but the club didn't run on the first day of term.

"You want me to walk you in Tyr?"

The boys lower lip jutted out in thought, and Hiccup smiled to himself. Astrid did that.

"Yeah. Just so the teachers know who you are."

Hiccup suspected there was a little more to it than that, but he got out of the car, leaving a little crack in the window for Toothless - he would be back in a few minutes - and walked Tyr down to where teachers and parents and children milled around en masse. Hiccup met Tyr's teacher, who confirmed Valka had called them to say he wasn't a criminal.

"There's my friends. Thanks Hiccup! I'll see you later!"

Smiling, Hiccup waved the boy off as he headed to join a couple of others boys.

"Valka said you're her neighbour?"

"Yeah, they moved in next door to me. Tyr discovered we both like dragons and so we had to be friends."

When he got to work, Toothless trotting in at his side - if the house was going to empty all day, Hiccup took the dog to work - his dad was waiting.

"Nice of you to show up!"

Hiccup gave his most winning smile, and he saw the beard twitch as his dad tried to stifle his own.

"My neighbours car got a leak. I drove her to work and her kid to school. I gotta pick them up too, so if you don't mind I gotta leave early. I'll make up the hours, I promise."

Stoick was never going to tell Hiccup not to be kind and helpful, and gave him an affectionate shoulder pat before leaning down to greet Toothless.

"These things happen. What was wrong with the car?"

"Oil leak. I'll sort it tonight."

"Good lad. Get to work, I'll set Toothless up."

"Thanks dad."

Hiccup buried himself in an engine, only taking a short lunch break to eat his sandwich and chocolate bar before he moved on to a rusted tyre fixture, then replacing several worn parts in an ancient car. His phone alarm went off to tell him to go pick up Tyr, so Hiccup washed up, thanked
his dad again for understanding, arranged seeing each other over dinner tomorrow and changed out of his overalls, not wanting to turn up looking a total mess or risk getting grease on Tyr's uniform.

Tyr was waiting anxiously when he got there, but lit up when he saw Hiccup appear, running over to him excitedly.

"Come on big guy, lets go pick up your mom."

"Yeah!"

Toothless was probably having the time of his life on 'holiday' at Hiccup's dads, since Hiccup knew he was in work tomorrow and could pick the dog up then. Having his own dog, Thor, Stoick was equipped to take care of a pet.

"Hi mom!"

Valka looked unduly relieved that Hiccup turned up with her unharmed and happy son in the car, and she slid into the vehicle with a waft of that soft, powdery smell mixed with paint.

"Good first day son?"

"Yeah!"

Hiccup left the two to discuss their first days back, letting them out when they got back home.

"I'm gonna go get my stuff to take a look at your car."

Before Valka could argue, Tyr was piping up.

"Can I come?"

Hiccup wavered, thinking if the likely fixes risked hurting him.

"Make sure your clothes are messy clothes. Cars are kinda dirty."

Changing into his old overalls for when he was decorating or working on car stuff at home, Hiccup would check the engine before he decided to jack the car up and fiddle underneath. If need be, he could call his dad. His dad could serve as a human car jack, really.

"Hey Valka, I need your car keys to get into your engine."

She looked surprised to see him kitted out with even a stool for Tyr to perch on, since he wanted to take a look. Handing over her keys, Hiccup opened the car, popped the hood and had a quick glance. He had to degrease several parts to look for the culprit, but it turned out to simply be a poorly replaced seal from her last oil change. He did give Tyr latex gloves, so his hands wouldn't need scrubbing with mechanics soap.

"Ok, take a step back Tyr. Not that I don't appreciate your help, but you're in the light there."

Trotting off, Hiccup nodded to Valka to run the engine, checking for any further leaks underneath. Satisfied, he called her to cut it, wiping up oil smears and closing the hood.

"Should be fine. Next time your car needs servicing though, I'm sending you to my dad. And thank you for helping Tyr."

Stepping back from the car, Hiccup heard another one pulling up behind them, turning to see Tyr's
father pulling up.

"Dad!"

Hiccup knew it would look bad, but grabbed hold of Tyr's shoulder to stop him leaping on his dads expensive looking clothes.

"Whoa Tyr, careful. Your clothes are greasy."

"Oh, yeah. I'm gonna go change dad, one minute."

He hastened to the house, leaving Hiccup stood between the two parents.

"Valka. Just came to see how his first day went" well, Hiccup couldn't fault him for that, but he could tell the man didn't like him "didn't realise you had company."

"Hiccup was just fixing the car, the engine leaked. I think."

"You fix a lot of cars boy?"

Yep, definitely didn't like him. Hiccup let the dig at his age slide, wiping oil off his hands near-pointlessly.

"It's my job. I'm a mechanic."

Tyr reappeared to at least ease the thick tension in the air, clean clothes meaning he could hug his dad.

"Mom's car leaked so Hiccup drove us today. The boys at school thought I was cool for having a grown up friend."

That was definitely news to Hiccup. And Tyr's parents, by the faces they pulled.

"Sounds good son. How about we go get ice cream? Or pizza?"

"Can I go mom?"

Tyr had that puppy dog expression down pat. Hiccup reckoned he got away with almost everything.

"So long as you're back in time for bath and bed."

Sven - as he finally introduced himself - took his son for a little outing, leaving Hiccup and Valka standing quietly in the driveway. She stared after where her son had vanished, obviously missing him and not liking the shared custody.

"Hey" he didn't touch her with dirty hands, but gently got her attention, speaking quietly "it'll get easier. You might even start to think of it as time for yourself."

"I know. And thank you for... well, everything. You must be wishing you had much quieter, less neurotic neighbours."

Hiccup chuckled, shaking his head.

"Why would I want that? That would be boring."
"Still. Thank you. I am so very unsure how to be now I'm not a wife... sorry, I didn't mean to say that."

Her cheeks tinged pink, so Hiccup endeavoured not to make her feel more embarrassed.


"Thank you Hiccup. Wait... that's not really your name, is it?"

"No. My name is Henrik, but nobody has called me that in years."

"Well, I dare not break the trend. Thank you Hiccup. You're a good friend."

-HTTYD-

I have this problem when writing, where I get unreasonably attached to characters and end up binge-writing fluffy bonding stuff. Here, it seems to be Hiccup and Tyr. I'll try and reign it in... at least so far as to not be the detriment of progression.
Chapter 4

**Lets hope y'all don't hate this one.**

-HTTYD-

Valka missed her son.

Five weeks into sharing custody with her ex husband - their divorce had finalised, thanks to a relative lack of any real animosity between them - and Valka was bored. She had already had a bubble bath, organised her sock drawer and finished marking homework. Tyr kept her busy, and with work and school she only saw him a few hours each day in the week.

Still, she wouldn't deprive Sven and Tyr of their time together.

"It is freezing here! Now I remember why I left!"

Being relegated to rarely hearing an Australian accent unless she called her family, Valka's intrigue was piqued when one reached her ears through the open back door. She had been contemplating calling on Hiccup to ease her boredom and Tyr-related lamentations, but it seemed he had company already. Probably for the best; he was perfectly lovely to her all the time, but it wouldn't do to harass him as she chided her son for.

"It's autumn! If you're that cold then I'll fire up the hot tub. I meant to put it away since we're due rain tomorrow, but it'll warm you up."

"I could think of better ways to do that."

Valka shouldn't be eavesdropping, but the voices sounded... intimate and she was awfully curious. Astrid definitely didn't have an Australian accent.

"Keep it down would ya?"

"Since when did you become a fan of censoring?"

"I live next door to a ten year old now, I just don't want him overhearing anything he shouldn't."

"Ah. My apologies."

Valka frowned slightly; Hiccup knew Tyr was away at weekends. Was it possible he was cheating on Astrid and didn't want Valka to hear and find out?

Of course, she could be conflating it all in her own head and they were just playful friends. Hiccup wouldn't even know she could hear them. The sound of water said they were getting into the heated tub, and Valka opted to turn the radio on so she couldn't eavesdrop further and invade her neighbours privacy.

She ventured out into the garden ten minutes later, needing to check on the washing hanging on the line. As Valka crossed the grass, amongst the music emanating from her radio she heard what she thought might be a breathy sigh, the sort one might make for a pleasurable touch. Shaking off such thoughts, she found her clothes still wet and all but ran back inside lest she overhear anything else and misconstrue it. It could just be the woman next door enjoying the tub.
It didn't have to mean anything.

Even so, Valka found herself talking herself into leaving the house, taking a walk under the light clouds and a cool wind. She stopped at the art store and bought new paints, treated herself to some new books since she was obviously already struggling to fill her free time without Tyr. Besides which, she had missed reading in general.

Upon her return, Hiccup and (presumably) his accented friend were leaving the house to walk Toothless. There was a noticeable bruise on the base of Hiccup's throat, which Valka could only assume he had had before - surely Astrid would notice if he had a fresh lovebite she didn't give him?

Not that Valka was assuming anything.

"This is my neighbour Valka. Valka, this is Mala. She's from that island full of all the poisonous stuff too."

Mala was visibly tanned, tall and had short blonde hair that just brushed the top of her high cheeks. She was definitely older than Hiccup. Not as old as Valka, but still noticeably so. Every little step she took was practically a sway from one side to the other, her slim waist and curved hips impossible not to notice.

"Oh? Where are you from?"

Upon hearing Valka's own lilt, Mala became more engaging.

"Adelaide. Yourself?"

"Sydney. I've visited Adelaide though, it's lovely."

"I could not stay away, I moved back to Australia after only a handful of years here. I forgot how cold Britain is."

Valka could tell the woman was clearly a fan of the sun, skin bathed in a golden glow.

"I've adjusted, but then I've been here twenty years now."

"And kept your accent. Quite right to. Let us not delay the poor woman from getting her bags in, come along Hiccup."

Hiccup smiled, waving at Valka as he and Mala headed down the street with the dog, leaving her standing there for a minute. Hiccup actually turned back, saw her there and probably thought she was crazy for having not moved. Blinking away her reverie, Valka headed in to her home.

Tall Australian woman... should Valka be watching out for Hiccup's friendliness edging toward something more? Gods, what was wrong with her? She didn't even know anything went on between them! They might have been friends just hanging out because Mala was visiting the country after leaving for her homeland.

Yep, Valka definitely needed a hobby if she was already reduced to inventing gossip about her next door neighbours. She unloaded her bags, putting paints away in her art supplies and stacking her new books near where she often lazed upon the sofa with some raspberry tea. Valka made herself a drink, picked up a book and got comfy to read.

After a dozen tries at starting, only to realise she wasn't taking any of it in, Valka placed the book
down, drank her now-cold tea and spotted the first raindrops pattering against the window. Dashing out to retrieve her laundry, she heard raucous laughter and heavy steps, laughter she recognised as Hiccup's followed by who she could only assume was Mala.

"You are terrible!"

"I am not! You're just mean."

Valka wasn't sure why Hiccup was terrible or Mala was mean, hearing the sound of bodies hitting the fence with more giggling from both. She didn't stop to dwell on why the giggling stopped, taking her basket of thankfully dry washing in and closing the back door behind her. Losing herself in a painting, Valka successfully whiled away the afternoon, stomach growling angrily at her when she stepped back from the canvas.

The smoke alarm began wailing when she cooked herself dinner, not stopping even when she hit it with a wooden spoon and scolded it. Cracking the back door open again and hoping not to overhear anything, she waved a tea towel at the wailing inconvenience until it silenced, rescuing *slightly* overcooked meat from it's near-cremation.

Cooking wasn't one of her gifts. Thankfully, she had learned to muddle along enough that she had never poisoned her son, and Tyr could make a merry mess baking with her even if they never quite turned out right.

When her boy finally returned the next day, Valka couldn't hug him quick enough.

"Mommmm! People will see!"

"Sorry Tyr, I just missed you terribly."

"I missed you too. But I gotta pee so put me down!"

Chuckling, Valka put her squirming son down and he dashed to the house in search of the bathroom. Sven reached into the car, pulling out Tyr's backpack of things he couldn't leave at his dads, like homework and his favourite slippers.

"Thank you."

He nodded, moustache twitching.

"Likewise. So far he seems to be coping well with it."

"Well, we aren't fighting anymore. I imagine in some ways at least, he sees that this is better."

Sven opened his mouth to answer, but an opening door and a child's voice cut him off.

"Hi Hiccup! Who's that?"

"Oh, hey Tyr. This is my friend Mala."

"Hi Mala!" Tyr charged down the path again to hug his father goodbye, smiling "see you Friday dad!"

Valka cursed herself, but she *looked*. The angle Mala leaned in at made it impossible to say if she kissed Hiccup's cheek or mouth goodbye.

"See you Friday Ty. Be good for your mom ok?"
"I will."

Mala was gone by the time Valka had chivvied Tyr up to their front door, Hiccup waving at them before vanishing into his own home.

"Is Mala Hiccup's girlfriend?"

"That's none of our business Ty."

And Valka wasn't sure anyway. She didn't want to confirm or negate, risk colouring Tyr's view of his grown up friend who was so very patient and smiley with him. She struggled to match the man who had been so very kind and helpful to his new neighbours with someone who cheated on his girlfriend, but then supposed that it was possible, but she had no proof. Just a curiosity that would do well leaving her be.

Happy to be reunited with her son, she checked his homework and then they snuggled up on the sofa, nested in pyjamas and blankets watching a movie. She got precious little 'free' time with him, Sunday evenings the only chance they really had. With her and Sven agreeing to split Tyr's school holidays between them, and her own time off work matching up perfectly, at least she would get some chances to do things like days out.

Tyr dozed off before the credits rolled, glasses askew as his head lolled slightly. Heart warmed by her adoration for her son, Valka carefully extricated him from the blankets, then carried him up to bed and tucked him in. He snuggled under the covers, looking ever so sweet as she placed his glasses folded up, back in their case. That was how he liked to find them.

Sorting everything for the morning, Valka readied herself for bed and allowed sleep to overtake her, relieved to wake and find her son in the kitchen again, eating toast and reading one of the How To Train Your Dragon books for about the hundredth time.

"Morning Ty."

"Morning mom."

Slightly more human with coffee and a fruity yoghurt in her system, Valka managed to get she and Tyr ready and out the door on time. Always a great achievement. They exchanged waves with Astrid, who was heading out in what looked like gym gear. She could be going to work or workout, Valka had no way to know which. She wondered if Astrid even knew Hiccup spent the weekend with another woman in the house.

Then promptly told herself she didn't care, it wasn't her place to care. It wasn't her business.

"Is Astrid avoiding me?"

Mala quizzed, laid on her front, elbows supporting her raised upper body while a light sheet draped lazily across her back. Her tanned skin contrasted rather nicely with his sheets.

"No, she's got an overnight shoot. Something to do with hi-vis sports gear... I think? Why would she be avoiding you anyway?"

"Well, I know she does not think this wise."

Mala gestured loosely between them, more than likely referring to the fact they'd just had sex.
"That's not because of you though. She just knows that why we broke up isn't going to get fixed. She's worried we aren't letting go and that we'll get hurt."

Their relationship had ended on good terms; they still cared deeply for each other, and they didn't fight or cause each other distress. But Mala couldn't stay away from Australia, and Hiccup wasn't willing to relocate, to leave Astrid and their dad. They talked about trying to make it work long distance, but since neither could see permanently relocating in their future, they agreed breaking up was the sensible option.

Mala's first visit back - her cousin Throk still lived over in England - she had come to see Hiccup, and the two had ended up in bed together. He had missed her terribly. Never one to shy from a tough conversation, Mala had asked what it meant. After some discussion, they had an arrangement of sorts.

Sexual chemistry had never been lacking for them, and Hiccup felt certain they were on the same page. They had familiarity, a comfortable ease with each other and plenty of experience. Until one of them met someone else, they fooled around when Mala was visiting. It was working very well for them.

"Understandable. Your sister is quite protective of her big brother."

"Yeah. But she still likes you, promise."

Smiling, Mala kissed him, golden skin pressing to his freckled paleness. When they resurfaced later on, they bumped into Valka on their way out to walk Toothless. Hiccup realised with startling clarity that he may or may not have a bit of a type when it came to women he found attractive. Tall. Older. Even the same bloody accent.

Not that he had any intentions of pursuing anything with Valka other than friendship. But he could admit she was very attractive.

Mala swung by again a couple of days later to see Hiccup, and Astrid and Eret and Heather... all they needed was Dagur for a full house. Again, she complained about how cold it was, spending a couple of hours later in bed having Hiccup warm her up. He would be sad to see her go, but it was in a not-seeing-a-friend way, not a heartbroken-lover way. Mala was good fun, bringing Hiccup out of his shell when they first began dating seriously.

"Well, it has been lovely to see you all, but I really must get back down under before I freeze to death!"

"Come visit again soon! We'll buy you a big coat."

Chuckling, Mala slid into her cousin's car so he could drive her to his home to collect her things, then on to the airport. Hiccup headed back into his home, where Astrid and Eret perched at the breakfast counter to tease him.

"I gotta say, that is an awful long trip for a booty call. Surely you guys can find someone on your own continent?"

Hiccup rolled his eyes at Eret, who grinned back shamelessly.

"Eret's got a point. You two aren't gonna move on like this."

"I'm moved. I'm on. We both know it wouldn't work between us, not without one giving up their home. But we're good friends who have good sex. If either of us starts dating, we stop. That's been
the deal from the start."

The couple at the counter rolled their eyes, but left it at that. Mostly. Hiccup went back to his current project, focusing intently on lines and shapes and adding just enough shadows. He hadn't seen much of Tyr that week, and definitely missed his little friend. But he wasn't sure Tyr would understand he and Mala, plus he had heard Valka tell Tyr "not now, Hiccup's busy" at least twice. Not that he knew why she said it; she certainly hadn't checked.

He happened to be getting back from work on Friday when Tyr was leaving with his dad, bidding the boy goodbye for the weekend. Hiccup hung back, waiting for Sven to drive away.

"Hey Valka!"

"Yes Hiccup?"

"You have dinner plans?"

She looked at him, bemused.

"I plan to... eat dinner?"

Hiccup waved vaguely in the direction of his house.

"Want to come round and be alone with me? I'll cook."

She looked remarkably hesitant to agree for a woman who trusted Hiccup with her son, the absolute centre of her universe. Eventually, she nodded. Hiccup grinned.

"Come over whenever."

Heading in, Hiccup changed out of his overalls and stood scrubbing the grease off his skin with the rough, funny-smelling soap any greasemonkey loved and hated in equal measure. He was barely done when the door knocked, Valka still reticent to let herself in. Toothless greeted her happily, running around in circles and nuzzling her legs.

"So, how is enjoying 'you' time while Tyr visits his dad going?"

Valka sighed, though Toothless kept her smiling.

"Terribly. I miss him so much."

"Well... maybe you need to find a new hobby. Or you could reconnect with friends. Go on a one day adventure to parts unknown."

She looked at Hiccup like he was mad, watching him peer into his fridge.

"Are you ok with a chicken stir fry? I've got loads of vegetables in."

"That sounds lovely."

Hiccup pulled out the ingredients, getting to chopping and dicing before they went back to Valka's lacking past times.

"Seriously though... what sort of things do you like to do? Besides hang out with your admittedly awesome kid?"
Valka shrugged, gnawing on her thin lower lip.

"I don't really know. I paint and read, I try and see friends but they aren't always available. I haven't needed a really gripping hobby for a decade."

Pondering as he cooked the chicken, Hiccup got out the specific pan to throw everything in to.

"Ok. I have a proposition."

"It had better not be a crude one."

Valka gave him a slightly suspicious look, as though she thought Hiccup offering to cook dinner was some kind of ulterior-motive thing.

"What? No! I mean... how about each week, if I'm not working Saturday, we go on a different adventure? Nothing too scary or wild, but just testing out new hobbies?"

She frowned lightly, and Hiccup worried she would flatly turn him down.

"I don't know. Won't Astrid mind you giving up your Saturdays?"

"Not really. She's a personal trainer, saturdays are her busiest day."

Plating the food now it was done, Hiccup placed one plate in front of Valka, shooed Toothless and sat himself the opposite side of the breakfast counter. Almost forgetting, he also handed her a fork.

"I'm still not sure I'm the adventurous sort. What kind of things are you thinking?"

Hiccup tapped his jaw with the handle of his fork, contemplating.

"Not telling you. Surprise. Adventure. Give me... six weeks? That's six tries for me to help you find your spark again. I won't make you do anything terrifying or dangerous. Maybe a little outside your comfort zone, but I think maybe you need that to stop you falling into a rut. So... what do you say? Ready to get adventurous?"

Chewing thoughtfully on a mushroom, Valka swallowed before she answered.

"If I do your mad six weeks, then I get to choose something for you."

"That seems fair. So.. ready? I've already decided what we can do tomorrow."

Eventually, Valka nodded.

"Then I suppose we're getting adventurous."

-HTTYD-

Who knows, you might all hate this one too but I had fun writing it.
Chapter 5

Thanks to everyone for reviewing last chapter, I was just bummed out nobody reviewed ch3 but its all good, I know you guys are happy so I'm happy. As for not covering the Hiccup/Mala escapades... I have a bad habit of putting smut from the non-specified couple in fics and I thought I'd break that habit for once.

-HTTYD-

Hiccup was at her door bright and not-too-early, knowing Valka only got two days a week she could sleep past six thirty in the morning and not daring to risk the wrath of a tired woman. So Valka woke naturally, dressed comfortably and already had a light breakfast and cup of tea in her system when the young man knocked her door.

"Where are we going?"

"I'm not telling you. Just put on some hardy clothes."

Very suspicious, Valka regretted agreeing to this bizarre deal Hiccup made with her. Sure, she needed a hobby or pastime to fill her weekends now she didn't have her son, but couldn't she find it alone?

Apparently not. And Hiccup was willing to give her a nudge. Valka desperately needed a nudge to get out of this post-divorce rut, and as many of her friends had children of their own, they weren't always up to weekend plans.

She dressed in a comfortable jumper and some of her walking trousers, lightweight but sturdy, and eyed Hiccup speculatively as she came back out. He grinned, looking excitable.

"You aren't doing this alone. Anything I get you to do, I'm doing too. And today is pretty mild, really."

At least that was some comfort; Hiccup wasn't likely to put them through serious risk. She hoped.

"Are we driving?"

"Yep. And I packed a lunch, but you can bring an extra bottle of water if you like."

Valka filled her travel bottle, still suspicious as she followed Hiccup to his car, saw him wave to Astrid where she was in the front window watching them. She felt oddly compelled to assure the young woman that the trip was platonic, but knew it would make her look completely ridiculous. Nobody else was even thinking of that.

Driving with Hiccup was more fun than she anticipated; he was engaging and chatty, played music on the radio and sang along jokingly. Valka found herself smiling despite nerves of whatever nonsense he had come up with, hoping it wasn't populated with people who were going to judge her for hanging out with a man almost twenty years her junior.

"Ok. We're here."

Valka looked out of the car, confused at the fact they appeared to be in the middle of nowhere. Only grass, rock faces and trees as far as she could see. Hiccup climbed out of the car, circled the vehicle and opened Valka's door.
"I promise this isn't as dodgy as it looks, this is just where the road ends and my car isn't an ATV."

Following him out, Valka saw another couple of vehicles nearby, and now she was out of the car she could hear voices. When they rounded a large rocky wall, she recognised Hiccup's friend Eret, and saw a few people climbing up various parts of the rock wall.

"You made it!"

Eret spotted them, came over and it was clear they were expected.

"Yep. Valka, I'd like to introduce you to this week's adventure."

"Rock climbing?"

Hiccup nodded, and Valka decided he was mad there and then.

"Eret's been nagging me to try it ever since I said I wasn't sure I could. So I'm dragging you along with me."

Right. His leg. Valka didn't really think much about it, especially as the cold weather meant Hiccup was mostly wearing long trousers. It wasn't too cold today, thankfully. Somehow, Valka was convinced in to climbing gear, having never had cause to assess whether or not she was afraid of heights before now. Fumbling behind her for the chalk ball strapped to her waist, Eret seemed to sense her reticence.

"Relax. This is beginner turf and I'm good at my job."

Her hands shook slightly as she was shown how to grip the hand holds, but Eret hung in the air from his harness to prove it could take weight, and focused solely on her before he worked on getting Hiccup and his tricky limb on the wall. As she attempted to haul herself up without falling clumsily, Valka heard Eret coaching Hiccup.

"You can get a special type of limb for this made, it's called a stubby. It would work more like a climbing shoe."

"You're assuming I'll put myself through this again."

"You'll learn to love it."

"I'm not Astrid!"

Valka's hand slipped, but she managed to grip again with only a little scuff on her palm. It was surprisingly intensive exercise, almost having to haul herself up entirely with one hand sometimes and despite the cool air temperature, Valka began to sweat quite easily. Hiccup struggled to get to grips with using his prosthetic side, but once he figured out a way he was pretty good.

Eret worked tirelessly and very, very patiently until they reached the top. Admittedly, it wasn't a very high climbing area, but it had still taken the better part of an hour for them to make it just once. Valka was sweaty and random parts of her twinged with the unusual exertion. But as she looked down, catching her breath, Valka admitted she was rather exhilarated by the view, the fact she'd done something she never would have thought to do before.

"Go have your lunch, then I'll get you back on the wall."

Hiccup retrieved the bag of food he'd brought and they set up on a makeshift bench that was really
a felled log with a little work done to prevent splinters or splitting. Valka saw Hiccup smiling at her, but let it slide until she'd eaten something.

"What?"

"You. Having fun?"

Giving him a shrewd look that probably didn't convince him at all, Valka shrugged.

"It's not terrible."

"You can admit it. You're glad I made you come out."

Rolling her eyes, she saw Hiccup chuckle as he pulled on his water bottle.

"Don't get cocky. Beginners luck."

Hiccup winked, and Valka would adamantly deny the slightly fluttery feeling that gave her even on her deathbed.

"We'll see. Ready to go again?"

The 'adventure' of the week left Valka sweaty and exhausted, but it had taken her mind off missing Tyr for a little bit, and she had had fun. Rock climbing might not become a regular hobby, but Valka had learned she didn't hate heights and the fresh air had definitely perked her up. Hiccup invited her over for dinner, but when he said Astrid would probably be back Valka figured she had taken enough of his time that day and begged off.

"I desperately need a long bath after that, and I've got projects to grade."

Hiccup seemed faintly disappointed, but that might have been her wishful thinking.

"Alright. You're welcome if you change your mind. And if you have too much work, you don't have to let me drag you out. I don't want to give you the adventure of jeopardising your job."

"Thank you Hiccup. And I did enjoy today."

He beamed.

"Then I did my job. Score one for me. Enjoy your bath."

Oh, she did. Soaking the aches of the day away in lavender epsom salts, Valka seriously considered staying in the bath all night. The water conspired against her by going cold, her skin pruning in protest and so she reluctantly exited, dressed in her pyjamas a couple of hours early and settled with a book and some dinner.

Occasionally giggles could be heard from the garden next door, presumably the two young lovers enjoying the early evening stars, winter darkening the sky much earlier this time of year. Valka was looking forward to the upcoming school holidays, knowing she and Tyr would have more time together without time constraints like school and work. Especially so close to winter... Valka did so adore winter.

While thankful to Hiccup for filling Saturday, Valka was incredibly happy to see her son again come Sunday, and her boy greeted Valka equally joyfully.

"Hi mom!"
After exchanging farewells with Sven, Valka and Tyr headed in to the house, so Valka could hear about his weekend and ensure he got a bath before bed that night.

"We watched a movie on Friday. Dad fell asleep in his popcorn which was funny. Then Saturday we went out to uncle Gunther's house and I helped cousin Olga with her homework."

Gunther was Sven's brother, so Valka supposed it wasn't strange they went to visit. And Tyr seemed to have had a good time.

"What did you do mom?"

Valka debated on what to say to him; she didn't want Tyr getting the wrong idea, nor did she want Sven questioning why Valka spent time alone with Hiccup. But it was hardly fair to drag Hiccup into some kind of conspiracy to lie.

"I went on a climbing lesson with Hiccup."

"Wow, that sounds cool. Is there apple juice?"

Supplementing her sons sweet tooth, Valka waited for him to enquire further about Hiccup, but thankfully he seemed not to have fixated upon it. That was good, hopefully he wouldn't even remember it.

"So... how was your date?"

Astrid draped herself over his shoulder, eyeing Hiccup's drawing.

"It wasn't a date. Eret chased us up and down a wall. That might be your idea of a hot date, but my friend and I" he emphasised it to make a point "just wanted the fresh air and mild thrill."

"Mild thrill? You found climbing a thrill?"

"For people who's idea of excitement is a new type of paint, yes."

Laughing to herself, Astrid ruffled his hair fondly and draped herself upon the sofa instead. Hiccup fixed the line she had accidentally jostled, then put his sketchbook away for the evening.

"I got a new modelling job. It's another sportswear one, but luckily I have great abs."

"That's good. Think you'll have to punch a photographer again?"

On one job, Astrid was changing back into her own clothes when the photographer tried to sneakily photograph her undressing. Astrid broke his nose and he lost his job... that was his little sister for them though. She didn't take anyones nonsense.

"Only if it's a slow day. You know I don't go looking for a fight."

"You just happen to find them!"

Astrid stuck her tongue out at him, then rolled up her vest top to check the definition on her stomach muscles. Hiccup doubted he could achieve her level of definition, and he was lean as it was. Still, he didn't mind being the artistic sibling. Astrid could be the buff one.

"Have you decided what your next not-date will be?"
"I'm at work next Saturday, and I think its the school holidays after that, so I have time to plot."

"Mmm. True. We could always bring her out to karaoke... seeing Dagur belt out a power ballad is definitely an adventure."

Hiccup snorted, wondering what Valka would make of such a thing. Then he thought about her singing voice, smiling to himself at the memory.

"Are you coming to dads for dinner Tuesday?"

"That is the current plan. Please don't make date jokes there, dad's itching for me to have a girlfriend so I doubt he'll realise right away that you're just winding me up."

Astrid gave him a thumbs up, then crossed her heart.

"Scouts honour."

Aside from a brief wave and 'hi' on their way in the morning, Hiccup didn't see much of his neighbours for a few days. So, it was quite a surprise when there was a knock on his door Thursday evening. Shooing Toothless away from the door, Hiccup opened it to find Valka looking very unsure. He invited her in, confused.

"Something wrong?"

"I hate to impose on you, but schools are closed for children tomorrow and I have to work. Sven was supposed to get the day off but now he-"

Noticing Valka was talking very fast, Hiccup gently cut her off.

"Do you need me to watch Tyr?"

"If it's not too much to ask? It'll only be a few hours."

Hiccup smiled, shaking his head.

"Not a problem. Just drop him off in the morning."

Valka was visibly relieved, and Hiccup felt good both that he was being helpful, and that Valka trusted him enough to ask.

"Thank you. That's such a relief"

"Hey, me and the little dragon always have fun. Just make sure you send him with clothes he can get paint on."

Hiccup was genuinely happy to be able to hang out with Tyr, and when boy and dragon toy arrived the next morning, he greeted them warmly.

"Thank you for this."

He waved off Valka's excessive gratitudes, welcoming Tyr in.

"It's no problem. Really. Oh, is it ok if I take him out to walk Toothless later?"
Valka nodded, handing Hiccup what he realised was a key for her door

"In case he needs something. Now you be good Ty."

"I will!"

Tyr promised, hugging his mother before trucking off toward where Toothless was waiting to receive attention from the new human.

"Are you sure you don't mind?"

"You know I don't. We'll be fine. Go to work."

Valka hummed and fretted, but eventually left. Hiccup wasn't worried what she would come back to. Maybe a son in need of a bath, at worst. He hung Valka's spare key on the hook on the wall, not wanting to lose it, then headed through to where Tyr was fussing the dog.

"So, what do you want to do today Tyr?"

"Uh... paint something for mom to cheer her up."

"Is she sad?"

Tyr's lower lip jutted as he thought, reaching into his little bag and taking out a case with a cloth in that he used to clean his glasses. Hiccup was chagrined to realise the boy had better decorum than him, as Hiccup would probably have just used his t-shirt.

"I know she misses me when I go see my dad. So I want something she can smile at while I'm gone."

Hiccup smiled at how good this little boys heart already was, and so they set up on the kitchen table with a sheet protecting it, and lots of paint and brushes and paper. Hiccup always drew at least a little outline first, but Tyr got stuck straight in to splashing colour onto the paper. Hiccup learned that Tyr was short-sighted, as he could paint without his glasses just about, but needed them for things like reading and watching TV.

"Did you and my mom really go out climbing?"

"Oh. Yeah. My buddy Eret is a climbing instructor, and he was always bugging me to go for a lesson. I thought your mom would like it."

Striping a thick yellow streak down his picture, Tyr smiled.

"Did she?"

"I think so. I don't know if she'll do it again, but we did have fun."

"She smiled when she was telling me. I like that my mom smiles more now. When she and dad were fighting a lot she didn't smile much."

Hiccup wasn't surprised to see that despite their best efforts, Tyr had picked up on the tension in his home between his parents. When their mother died, Hiccup and Astrid had known their dad was heartbroken no matter how he tried to hide it.

"I'm sure she always had a smile for you."
"Yeah, but now it's a happier smile. She has smiles for you too."

"Well, we are friends."

Nodding to himself, Tyr then looked up and fixed Hiccup with a rather deep stare for a ten year old who couldn't see terribly far.

"Is Astrid your girlfriend?"

Hiccup blinked, perplexed. Though he supposed nobody had explicitly said it, Tyr might just assume adults living together were an item like his parents.

"What? No no. Astrid's my sister."

"Really? You don't look very similar."

"Come here, I'll show you "

Tyr let Hiccup lift him so he could see the photos on the wall, where he pointed out the various family members.

"That's me. That's Astrid. Then that's our mom and dad. See, Astrid looks like our mom and I look more like our dad. Minus the big beard."

Squinting slightly to see the common features, Tyr nodded.

"Oh. I look like my mom don't I?"

"Yep. But that's not a bad thing."

After walking Toothless for a while Tyr indicated he was hungry, so Hiccup perched the boy on the kitchen side while he made them lunch. It certainly seemed to make him feel better to be up on level with Hiccup, discussing food stuffs he did and didn't like.

"Are you allergic to anything?"

"I got real sick eating clam chowder once, but that might have been because it tasted terrible."

Hiccup made a mental note not to feed the boy any seafood, and to clarify with Valka if he had any food allergies for the future. Chicken, rice and vegetables seemed a safe enough bet, and Tyr imbibed the meal eagerly and thanked Hiccup repeatedly for making it. He certainly wasn't lacking in manners, even offering to help with the washing up.

Tyr's painting came out rather well - it was immediately recognisable as Valka surrounded by baby dragons, anyway. When Valka returned, the two were watching a documentary about dinosaurs with Toothless dozing on the sofa next to them.

"Hi mom!"

"Were you good today Ty?"

Hiccup saw Tyr nod vigorously, and Valka looked to Hiccup for confirmation.

"He was brilliant. Helped clean up after lunch and everything."

"I painted you something mom, I hope you like it."
Watching her light up when presented with the painting, Hiccup's stomach fluttered unexpectedly at her beaming smile. Tyr waited anxiously for her verdict.

"This is lovely son, thank you. Come on, we should be getting back. Thank you again Hiccup."

"It's no problem. I'll watch him again anytime."

As they left, Hiccup chuckled as he heard Tyr raving about their day, down to the lunch that Valka had missed out on. She turned back to see him watching, offered Hiccup a smile before continuing on to her home next door. Was that the smile she had for him? Shaking off the thought, Hiccup went back in. Hanging out with Tyr had reminded Hiccup that he was kinda lonely.

He and Mala had been pretty serious, even talking about marriage and a family before Mala lost the battle to stay away from her true home of Australia. They were still very good friends, but that future of settling down with her had gone, and seeing that excitable boy made Hiccup miss that certainty, that hope.

Pulling out a photo album, Hiccup looked through the images of his childhood, before he lost a mother and a limb. Losing their mother had been a turning point for Astrid, who had hated being in pictures before that. When she realised it meant scant few memorialised moments with her mother, Astrid started appearing in more of the old photos. To consider that his sister once hated cameras always amused Hiccup, especially now it was one of her jobs to appear before it.

Returning to find him buried in nostalgia, Astrid gave her big brother a cuddle and sat talking with him about some of the events that had taken place around the pictures taken. Then, just when Hiccup thought she was about to get up and go in search of dinner, Astrid dropped something on the top of the other photos.

A sonogram photo.

-HTTYD-

**Hiccup's gonna be an uncle! Woo**
Apologies if this is late, I'm always playing catch up cus I just write too much.

-HTTYD-

Hiccup picked up the sonogram, staring at it in silent shock for at least a minute.

"You're pregnant?"

"Yep. Nobody was more surprised than me, especially since I'm on the bloody injection. Hope you're ready to be an uncle."

"Have you told dad?"

Astrid shook her head, heading to the fridge for juice.

"I'm gonna tell him when I go over next, I wanna see his face."

Stoick was going to be ecstatic. Hiccup knew he had been holding out on Hiccup and Mala having kids, as Hiccup was a little more homebody than Astrid, who was active for work and mindful of her looks for modelling. But they had separated, and Astrid - despite her surprise - was visibly thrilled about the little critter on the ultrasound.

"How far along?"

"Three months, so it's probably from a missed day between shots. The woman who did my scan said she couldn't believe how muscular my stomach still looks. Then yelled at me for my end of summer drinking and said no more ab workouts until after they come. Don't worry, they said baby is fine."

Astrid downed the juice straight from the carton, then tossed the empty into the recycling. Hiccup closed the photo album still on his lap, then crossed the room and gave his sister a hug.

"I didn't say yet - I am thrilled for you!"

"I figured you would be."

"Are you gonna change living? You more out? He moves in?"

Hiccup had never said Eret couldn't move in, but Astrid liked her freedom and hadn't been settle-down ready just yet. This newest Haddock may change that.

"Not yet. We talked about it, but his place is small and while I know you'll disagree, we aren't gonna take this place over. So, I might still be living here when I pop but we're gonna look for a settle-down spot."

"Well you know this is our place Astrid, I don't want you feeling forced out or like you can't stay."

Stoick had purchased this house with the life insurance payout from his wife's death - he always wanted Hiccup and Astrid to have somewhere to live, but gave them the independence of not still living 'at home' with him when they became adults.

"I know. But you're settled here, and it's got all the disability mods like the rails in the bathroom
and downstairs toilet. I'll be mad if you turn my bedroom into a big art studio though."

Hiccup chuckled, shaking his head.

"With all those flammables... you'd torch it."

It would be weird, Astrid not living with him. Hiccup felt bad that she felt the need, but knew there was no point trying to change a decided-Astrid's mind.

"Promise you'll come home if you need to? Even if it's because by some dreadful happenstance that Eret turns out evil and you and baby have to get away?"

"That big idiot? Unlikely. But, yeah, I know I'll always be welcome back here. Stop stressing and start cooking."

"Hungry?"

Astrid nodded eagerly, pouting and cradling her still-flat belly.

"I'm eating for two now."

"That's a myth. But I will make you dinner."

It was safer all round really - Astrid and the smoke alarm had a tumultuous relationship. And Hiccup didn't really want Tyr to hear Astrid's colourful swearing as she tried not to set the oven on fire.

"So how was babysitting the munchkin?"

"Don't call him that to his face. And great. We painted pictures, walked the dog, talked about dragons and watched dinosaurs. Oh, and he asked if you were my girlfriend."

Astrid cracked up laughing, leaning against the doorway and watching him retrieve ingredients from the fridge.

"That happens a lot. Maybe I'll get you a t-shirt that says favourite uncle."

"I find it hard to believe that kid isn't gonna be recognisably Eret's."

"Fair point."

With his Sami features very very distinct from Hiccup's Nordic, he highly doubted anyone would mistake Hiccup for baby daddy, however he supposed if he was out walking with Astrid and there was a baby stroller...

Maybe the 'favourite uncle' t-shirt wasn't such a bad idea.

Fuelling the blonde hurricane with a mound of chicken and vegetables, Hiccup fed himself and looked at the sonogram some more. He had only just been thinking about how he wasn't to be a dad any time soon, but hey. Uncle worked pretty well too.

"Can I put this up on the fridge?"

"Sure."

Grinning, Hiccup used one of his dragon magnets to put new baby Haddock in pride of place.
"So you said three months? Meaning about six months from now we have a new family member?"

Astrid nodded, chasing stray peas around her plate with a fork.

"Yeah. Eret's dad wants us to find out if it's a boy or girl, but we don't care."

"I'll stick to the standard Haddock fare for baby clothes."

"Brown, green and red?"

Agreeing, Hiccup finished clearing up from dinner so the table was clear for him to draw at. Astrid grabbed her laptop and sat at the table with him, silence comfortable and only occasionally broken by chatter. Astrid turned her screen round to him to show a daft picture, then went back to presumably researching the Hell out of how much work she could do and how safe her job was now she knew she was expecting.

"I'm gonna have to basically stop all my favourite things by six months, and work out a maximum of thirty minutes a day... yep, this is definitely gonna be an only child. I can't do pull ups when I start showing."

His sister lamented, lifting up her shirt again to check her abs were exactly where she left them.

"You, baby, stay back until absolutely necessary."

Hiccup got the feeling it would be a very long six months. Still, Astrid's irritated pout was funny.

"Anyway, enough about baby Haddock. Have you decided what your next not-date will be with her next door you definitely don't have a crush on?"

Hiccup glared. He absolutely didn't have a crush on Valka, but Astrid was saying it sarcastically, implying he had a crush. He didn't.

"Not yet. It's not easy to plan in winter. If I can't find a proper adventure then I'll take her on a hike, she said she doesn't get out enough."

"You? Hiking in winter?"

"I'll take painkillers and a leg warmer."

Astrid rolled her eyes, pushing up from the table to go for a shower.

"She must really be special."

With that, she left Hiccup to glare at her retreating form, and then consider what she had actually said. It was true; Valka was special. But Hiccup didn't have more than friendship feelings for her. He just liked hanging out with her. And her awesome little dragon-boy son.

Knowing he wasn't in the right state for drawing, Hiccup tidied away his sketchbook and headed to sit in the garden. Toothless snoring next to him as Hiccup enjoyed the night sky. As he reclined, ignoring the dull ache in his leg, Hiccup heard Valka singing next door, realised she was alone after Tyr would have gone to his dads.

Her voice was lovely. Hiccup sat listening for a while, hoping she didn't realise he was effectively eavesdropping. He didn't recognise the song she was singing to herself, but enjoyed it all the same and was a little sad when Valka went in to answer the phone he heard trilling.
They crossed paths next morning, when she was returning to her home as Hiccup was leaving for work.

"I can't offer you an adventure today sadly, but if you're bored later you can come over for dinner. Astrid's abandoning me again."

"So I'm filling in for Astrid?"

Hiccup frowned; that sounded a little cold. Maybe Valka was just tired after going wherever she had gone so early.

"No. I just thought since we're both alone... never mind."

Shooing Toothless up into the car, Hiccup supposed he could be intruding on Valka's day off getting things done.

"I'm sorry Hiccup, I've just had a bad morning. I'd love to."

"I finish at six, so I'll see you later?"

He was unreasonably happy about it, tried to hide it but there was a smile fighting its way onto his face.

"Indeed."

Heading off to work, Hiccup was in such a good mood his dad even commented on it while Hiccup was elbow-deep in the engine of a nearly-totalled car.

"What's got you chirpy?"

Hiccup shrugged; Astrid would gut him for spilling her secret, and Stoick would not believe him if he said it was just having dinner with a friend

"Just in a good mood. That not allowed?"

"Never said tha'. Just noticed you seem extra happy today."

"No reason in particular. Just... happy."

His dad eyeballed Hiccup suspiciously, then turned back to removing the engine whole from a hefty truck that had been the reason the car Hiccup was working on ended up wrecked.

"If you say so lad."

"I do. I do say so."

He got the feeling his dad still didn't believe him.

Crawling into bed in hopes of a brief respite from exhaustion, Valka cringed with guilt for being short with Hiccup earlier. He was only trying to be nice.

He didn't know Valka had spent half the night at the hospital with her parents, panicking over her dad's heart scare. Thankfully, he was fine, but it had been a long and fretful night. It would be nice to spend time with Hiccup, who had this way of putting her at ease, and never failed to make her laugh. She would definitely apologise properly though.
Valka was woken from her nap - shorter than she would have liked - by her friend Nadia, calling to check on her as she often did.

"I heard about your dad, everything alright?"

"Oh yes, he's fine. Just a scare."

"Well, if everything is alright, let's talk about something almost as important. Are you dating yet?"

Oh, Valka wasn't awake enough for this.

"Nadia!"

"What? Come on, the ink is dry, the sheets are cool. You're a gorgeous woman. It would be a waste, a tragedy, if you resigned yourself to spinsterhood."

Rolling her eyes as she reached for the glass of water on her bedside, Valka sighed.

"No. I have more pressing concerns than romance."

"Which is code for too scared to venture back out into the world of dating."

"Nadia, you are impossible. I would just rather focus on work, and on my son."

"Don't use Ty to justify your spinsterhood. He would want you to be happy just like I do."

Valka knew what this was about.

"You've already decided who you want to set me up with."

There was silence for fifteen or twenty seconds.

"Maybe."

"No."

Eventually shaking her lovely but obsessive friend off, Valka called her mother to check up on her dad, absolutely in no way watching the clock for when Hiccup would return. She heard Astrid leave around two, occupied herself with marking work to pass the time.

It was difficult to grade art work - who was she to decide how much effort went in to a piece? Some of Valka's favourite works had been absent-minded doodles to begin with. But she had a criteria for the work and marked it according to things like use of colour, adherence to chosen subject. It wasn't easy, but it was the price she paid to do what she loved.

Hiccup's car pulling up was now a familiar sound Valka recognised, like the creak of the bathroom door or Toothless barking at the postman. Her belly fluttered a little, as though daring to tell Valka she was excited to see him. Which was wholly inappropriate.

"Valka!"

Rather than come round to get her, Hiccup simply yelled over the fence. He'd been taking lessons from her son in that regard. She headed out, saw his hair damp and a few drops of moisture on his jumpers shoulders. Almost scolded him for doing that in the cold.

"Yes?"
"I'm just about to start dinner if you still want to come over. Is lasagna good with you?"

"Fine... are you making it from scratch?"

"Well, I pre bought the sheets, but yeah. You coming?"

She nodded, so he hopped off to leave the door open for her. Valka took herself around, thanked Hiccup for the drink he handed her while the kitchen became awash with delicious smells of cooking.

"I confess I'm not terribly skilled in the kitchen."

"Ah, that explains it. By the way, is Tyr allergic to anything? He wasn't sure and I don't want to inadvertently poison the little dragon if I babysit again."

"Clams, shrimp and crab. His paternal grandmother is a seafood fan."

Valka listed her boys allergies mechanically, remembering the relief when his allergen test came up clear save for those three things.

"But he can eat... I don't know, fish and chips?"

She nodded, thinking of her son's typical Sunday morning breakfast fare - fish finger sandwiches. Not that Valka made those for him anymore, since she didn't get his weekends.

"He likes fish fingers."

"So weird, since fish don't have fingers. But also weird to not be allergic to all seafood."

Hiccup offered her the spoon to taste the sauce, and it was mouthwateringly good. His eyes lit up as she 'mmm-ed', though he looked away quite quickly.

"Guessing that's ready to go. Ok. It's gonna be a little while, so would you rather watch some tv? Or talk? Or draw? Oh, I have somethings I wanna show you."

He put the finishing touches together, covered the lasagna with cheese and foil, then put it in the oven. After washing his hands, Hiccup finally satisfied Valka's fervent curiousity about what he wanted to show her.

"I made this for Tyr's birthday. Do you think he'll like it?"

Hiccup handed her a booklet, bound with a printed digitally-drawn image of Tyr and Loki, coloured in and with 'Tyr and Loki's Adventure' along the top. She flipped it open, realised it was a custom colouring book - the images were all lines, no colour or shading. They depicted things like Tyr and a much bigger Loki flying over a volcano, or surrounded by baby dragons and dragon eggs, even sword fighting against bandits.

"This is... I'm speechless."

"Is that good or bad?"

"I think he'll love it."

"Awesome. And I scanned all the images after they were done, so I can make more if need be."

"Did you really draw all these?"
Hiccup nodded, smiling. Valka couldn't believe the effort that he would have put in, and in only a handful of weeks.

"Yeah. I knew you wouldn't approve of me buying him a gift. But you can't stop me drawing."

He flashed her a playful grin, winked. Valka cursed that it made that flutter come back. And he was absolutely right that Valka would have insisted he not feel obligated to spend money on her son. But Hiccup was already spending time on them - he babysat Ty, fixed her car. Invited her over for chats, and now dinner. He took the book back and put it up on a shelf away safe.

"Hey... I don't want to pry, but you said you had a bad morning. Can I ask why?"

"Oh. Yes, I am terribly sorry for being snappy this morning. My father was rushed to hospital with a health scare, I was there much of the night."

"My gods, is he alright?"

"Yes yes, he's fine thank you. But I had been awake all night fretting, and I didn't mean to come off cold with you."

A warm hand touched hers, even warmer eyes waiting for her to look up in to.

"I more than understand. No apologies needed."

Then Hiccup was gone, checking on the lasagna and Valka felt bereft of his warm touch, ignored the niggle in her mind about why she was lying when she told Nadia she simply wasn't interested in romance.

"Still got a while... you want another drink? You can have wine since it's not a school night."

Valka took the mug of wine - Hiccup wasn't a fan of wine glasses, apparently - with thanks, sipping at it and humming happily.

"This is good."

"Yeah, I like it. Astrid prefers beer or vodka when she drinks. Dagur doesn't really drink. Heather drinks anything if its alcoholic, and Eret likes fruity cider or strong whiskey. I drink pretty much anything... but I don't drink often and even then I rarely get drunk."

He sipped from his own mug, and Valka spotted one on the drying rack by the sink with "PAINT WATER" on the side. Valka understood; she'd made such a mistake many, many times herself.

"Have you worked on anything else other than that colouring book?"

"Uh, yeah, one thing. But it's your Christmas gift, and it's not Christmas. And it isn't finished yet anyway."

Valka was immediately intrigued.

"It... what?"

"You will gain no further information from me! You'll have to wait til Christmas."

He was clearly happy to have wound her up, piqued her interest. Valka glared.

"You're a strange one."
"Yep. That's why you like me."

Chuckling, Hiccup turned away before he could see the effect his words had on her. The realisation... Gods, she did.

And he had a girlfriend. And he was about half her age. And Valka was old enough to be his mother. This attraction was wholly inappropriate.

Clearly, she was lonely. Maybe Nadia was right about getting back to dating...

Just not dating Hiccup.

"Man this smells so good. I hate waiting for lasagna to cook."

"Then why make it?"

Hiccup twirled a wooden spoon in his hands, pondering.

"Because it's delicious. Plus, this way I can impress you with my radical cooking skills. Wait. That sounds weird. I just mean this way you'll want to come back."

"I live next door and you're worried you won't see me enough?"

"Yep."

Hiccup really was peculiar. And his cheery friendliness was probably why Valka had a bit of a thing for him. If it wasn't a physical attraction, it just showed that he had qualities Valka liked - and since he was respectful, kind and got on with her son, Valka supposed that was very much what she'd look for in a future boyfriend. And she definitely wasn't physically attracted to Hiccup.

Not one bit.

Even if he had a lovely smile. And very pretty eyes... no. She wasn't thinking about that.

"If I eat a cupcake will your motherly instincts tell me off for spoiling my dinner?"

Oh, if only Valka had motherly feelings for him.

"No, I'd ask if you had one for me."

"Chocolate or blueberry?"

Hiccup delivered her a blueberry cupcake, with sweet little bursts of fruity flavour. He himself was setting in to a chocolate one, licking frosting from his fingers and Valka had to look away.

"Good?"

"Mhmm. Did you make these too?"

"Yeah... I like cooking. Baking. Painting. Sketching. And dragons."

Valka drank her wine rather quickly, nodded when Hiccup offered a refill. Then he was hunting out plates and a couple of tubs, presumably for the excess of the dish to be refrigerated to keep. When he next pulled the dish from the oven, he made a sound of pleasure at the sight beneath the foil.

"Perfect. Now I must resist while it breathes for a minute. Can you stop Toothless getting too
curious while I run to the bathroom?"

She nodded, watching Hiccup disappear up the stairs. Valka was fairly sure he had mentioned having a downstairs toilet, but maybe he didn't want to use it when she was there. Toothless slunk closer, sniffing at all the exciting smells that had Valka's stomach rumbling too. He didn't get close enough before Hiccup returned for Valka to intervene, chuckling as Hiccup shooed the dog away and dumped some soft-looking food in his bowl.

"Wait! You know it needs a little water guzzle guts. I used to mix it on the side but he would jump up and drool everywhere. Damn gummy idiot. Here you go boy."

Hiccup finished feeding his dentally challenged dog, then plated up generous portions of food for the adults. Adding salad didn't really make the meal healthier, but Valka knew it was packed with vegetables too.

"Don't burn yourself."

Valka raised an eyebrow at his chiding, surprised and opting to joke along.

"Is the rocket leaf explosive?"

"Obviously. Who doesn't lace dinner with dynamite?"

There he went making her laugh again. Valka hid her giggles in her mug, setting in to her food and it was every bit as exquisitely delicious as it had smelled while cooking. The salad came in useful to sop up the last of the sauce, and Hiccup grinned at Valka when she cleared her plate.

"Good then?"

"Amazing. I now know why Ty couldn't stop talking about his lunch."

"Glad you liked it. You wanna take the rest home to reheat? I'll have to freeze half of it otherwise, Astrid doesn't like it much."

"Are you sure?"

Hiccup nodded, already up to separate the leftovers into trays, though he left them open to continue cooling.

"These are oven safe, just promise to recycle them."

"Scouts honour."

They chatted lightly until Hiccup deemed the food cooled enough to put lids on, unable to leave them for fear his dog would get into it. Toothless whined about being thwarted, but perked up with a scratch around the ears from Valka. He was a sweet thing, affectionate and fluffy.

"Hey, can you hand me the bottle opener? It's on the fridge."

Hiccup called out, struggling with his post-dinner beer bottle. Valka turned to look for it, eyes immediately drawn to a very prominent, pride-of-place ultrasound image.

"Is Astrid pregnant?"

"Huh? Oh. Yeah. Three months."
Valka felt a lump in her throat she couldn't explain, hand tightening around the bottle opener magnet she held.

"You must be excited."

He nodded eagerly, taking the bottle opener from her with a beaming grin.

"Only found out yesterday and I already can't wait."

Of course he was excited. He had a beautiful girlfriend, his own age and they were about to have a baby.

"I'm very happy for you. Would you mind if I went home now?"

He frowned at her sudden shift. Valka needed to get out of there.

"Tired? What am I saying, of course you are after last night. Sorry for not realising... here. Lasagna."

Hiccup handed her the tubs of food, still a little warm. She swallowed as his hands brushed hers, and all but fled home as soon as possible without being rude. Placing the food trays in her fridge, Valka immediately reached for her phone and typed out a text to Nadia, agreeing that it was time to start dating again.

It was essential if she wanted to be able to stay friends with Hiccup. And given how much Ty adored him, Valka definitely wasn't about to let a wayward and fleeting crush ruin that.

-HTTYD-

Ah, I do so love Valcup.
Chapter 7

Yes, Astrid is Hiccup's sister.

No, Valka doesn't know that.

Yes, I saw the trailer. Please go to inbox if you wish to discuss it rather than reviews.

-HTTYD-

Tucking his favourite slippers into his bag to go to his dads, Tyr looked up at Valka curiously.

"Are you doing something with Hiccup this weekend?"

Valka nodded.

"I'm not sure what. He likes to surprise me."

Hunting for his glasses case to get the cloth out of it, Valka watched the cogs turn in her boys mind.

"Should I not tell dad that you and Hiccup are going on dates?"

"Definitely not, because we aren't. Hiccup and I are just friends Ty, trying new hobbies."

"Ok. Should I not tell dad that? I know he doesn't like Hiccup much. I don't know why, Hiccup's cool and not a bad influence."

That had her interest.

"What makes you say that?"

Ty blinked, then stretched up to grab a book from the top of his bookshelf.

"I heard him saying he worried Hiccup was a bad influence on me to grandma. I don't want you and dad to fight anymore, so I thought I would see if I should just not talk about Hiccup to dad."

About to turn eleven, Valka knew Tyr shouldn't be worrying about things like this, but she could hardly seperate the two firm friends now - especially when Hiccup was a good influence on her son. He really brought the boy out of his shell, and had an innate knack for building and bolstering Ty's confidence. His comment about not wanting them to fight anymore made Valka ache for the time her son had lived in an unhappy environment.

"We aren't going to fight son" Valka sat on his bed, stroking her sons soft hair "but maybe don't go into detail. Just enjoy spending time with your dad."

"Will you tell me what you and Hiccup did when I come back?"

Assuring him she would, Valka hugged him tight and smiled at her beaming son. They might not have been meant for each other, but she and Sven did manage to have a wonderful son together, whom she loved more than life itself.

They had had a wonderful few days together, enjoying the half-term with no work, no school, just the two of them hanging out together. Hiccup had been largely busy with work, but did find the
time to come round one night and cook dinner for them, looking rabidly eager to hear all about what Ty had been doing with Valka. She remembered how that sight made her fluttery, but quickly quashed those butterflies with the reminder she had a date the next week, followed by hearing Hiccup tell Ty Astrid was having a baby.

They had changed topic by the time Valka came back from the bathroom, much to her relief.

"How long til dad gets here?"

Glancing at the clock, Valka bit back a sigh of resignation. She had been spoiled by all the time they spent together that week, and now she was very unhappy to be giving him over for his dads weekend. Still, Valka counted her blessings that her job meant her time off matched Ty's near-identically.

"Half an hour. Shall we go have a cup of tea?"

"Sounds good mom. Loki, you keep watch ok? Solo missions this week."

He put his dragon toy in the centre of his immaculately made bed, smoothed the creases where Valka had sat down and scanned his room for anything out of place. Satisfied, Tyr grabbed his bag and winter boots, then padded down the stairs in his socks to sit putting on his boots while Valka boiled the kettle and made up their drinks.

They talked about his upcoming birthday, and Valka saw the mild distress in her sons face when he asked if he could invite Hiccup to his little party.

"Cus dad will be there right? But my friends from school wanna meet Hiccup."

"If you want to invite Hiccup, invite him. It's your party son."

Sipping thoughtfully at his tea while his little face scrunched up a bit, Tyr eventually nodded.

"I will. Then maybe he and dad can make friends too."

Somehow, Valka doubted that was going to happen - the two men were so very different. Aside from both liking Ty, they had nothing in common. But she wasn't about to point that out and crush her sons hopes. As she finished her tea, the sound of Sven's car outside was audible.

"Dad's here!"

Not even needing to look, he recognised his dads car and lit up with excitement. Even if his dad didn't like his new friend, Tyr absolutely adored his father and looked forward to the weekends he spent with him. Valka got lots of cuddles and kisses goodbye before walking Tyr to the door, his dragon-scale backpack on his shoulders. Sven looked surprised to see them so ready to go without him even reaching the door.

"How do you always know I'm here."

"I hear your car. Every car sounds a bit different. Bye mom, love you!"

Excitable as the usually quiet, bookish lad ever got, Ty hopped out to follow his dad to his car, waving at Hiccup and Astrid who were obviously just returning from walking Toothless.

"Have fun with your dad Tyr!"

"Thanks Hiccup. Bye Astrid!"
The blonde laughed as she was bade farewell herself, waving over to Tyr as he climbed up into the back of the car. Valka watched the vehicle pull away, already missing her son. Once they were out of sight, Hiccup was hopping the small fence that separated the front gardens of their houses.

"Hey. We still on for tomorrow?"

"Are you still not telling me where it is we're going?"

Hiccup grinned, setting off that accursed flutter in her belly.

"Is that a yes?"

Valka nodded.

"Do I need anything?"

"Well, wrap up warm but not heavy... and if you have walking boots, wear those."

"Are we walking?"

Hiccup hesitated, obviously thinking how to answer without actually giving anything away.

"I didn't say that."

Valka rolled her eyes, saw Hiccup snicker to himself.

"You're impossible."

"I try."

Still finding himself oh so funny, Hiccup turned to leave. Valka realised she needed to ask him something else.

"Oh, Hiccup?"

"Yeah?"

"I hate to impose on you again, but-"

"You need me to watch the little dragon?"

He actually looked hopeful. Maybe Valka ought to stop doubting him when he said he was happy to babysit.

"If you wouldn't mind. I'm being pressganged into a social outing."

For some reason, the thought of telling Hiccup she had a date was uncomfortable, so Valka sidestepped it.

"Sure. What day?"

"Wednesday? He only needs dinner and putting to bed really."

Hiccup nodded, grinning.

"I don't get off work until six Wednesday, is that ok?"
Valka didn't need to leave until closer to seven, so it was certainly doable.

"That's fine."

"Cool. I'll see you tomorrow... is ten too early?"

"Not at all, I'll see you then."

Still smiling, Hiccup hopped back over the fence and disappeared into his house. Tomorrow was only day two of six she had agreed to with Hiccup, and she was already wrestling with an inappropriate crush on him. Not ideal, really.

Scouring her wardrobe, Valka pulled out the closest she had to the 'warm but not heavy' Hiccup had specified and laid them over the back of a chair. Then she went for a long bath, lamenting how quiet the house was without Ty.

Hiccup was at her door at ten am on the dot, looking sufficiently wrapped up for the weather himself in a rather cosy looking red jumper and sturdy boots. Valka hadn't finished getting ready yet, still a jumper and waterproof jacket to go over her yellow dress-shirt.

"Morning. I sincerely hope you have something else to put on... it's chilly today."

"I do... do you want to come in and wait?"

Hiccup shook his head, pointing to his car where a recognisable furry head was lolling out of the back window.

"Can't trust him too long or he might learn to drive. Just came to check you hadn't overslept."

"I'll be out in a few minutes... do I need anything?"

"Nope. I have lunch and drinks and an emergency supply of chocolate. Maybe spare socks in case it rains?"

Bemused, Valka put spare socks in her pocket once her waterproof was on and headed out to where Hiccup was leant against his car, looking unfairly handsome in the wintery sunshine, cheeks kissed pink by wind chill.

"Ready to go?"

"Ready."

Hiccup waved at Astrid in the window, his friend... Eret, Valka thought she remembered right, standing next to her and waving too. She got into the car, glad Hiccup appreciated how much of a pain it was to be over six foot of all limbs and trying to get into a vehicle - her chair was already pushed back so there was no cramped squishing and fiddling. Toothless leant over, licked Valka's face in greeting.

"Toothless! If you can't behave you can stay home."

Hiccup scolded his dog, handing Valka a tissue to wipe her face. She had the sneaking suspicion the canine made a habit of it. Toothless immediately huffed and curled up back on his blanket, eyeing his owner sulkily.

"He'll perk up when we get there."
"Where are we going?"

The young man simply stayed silent and grinned to himself, leaving Valka to glare at him, then turn and stare resolutely out of the window. Hiccup didn't prompt her to talk, perhaps allowing her her childish tantrum for a while. He pulled up in a half-empty car park, stones crunching under the wheels.

"Are we there yet?"

"Kind of. The driving is over anyway."

Hiccup winced for a second as they got out of the car, and she remembered him saying driving was rough on his leg as he couldn't stretch his knee. He popped a tablet from his jacket pocket, then circled to the trunk. Valka got out of the car, saw very little in the way of other people. Or buildings, save for a little information centre with attached toilet facilities.

"Hiccup Haddock, what are we doing here?"

"Walking."

"You said that wasn't what we're doing."

"I neither confirmed nor denied. And it's not just a mindless rambling. There is a destination in mind. But you said you didn't get outside enough."

The fresh air when he dragged her climbing had been most welcome - as had the climbing itself, really. So Valka let her irritation at his winding her up fade, and after brief trips to the bathroom she took the backpack Hiccup handed her.

"This is one of those fancy water bag things, I had a spare. So you don't have to carry a water bottle, and nobody else has used the mouth bit so if you're weird about germs, you don't have to worry."

He showed her how the tube came up from a water bladder in the bag and clipped to the bag strap, meaning water was only a head turn away. Hiccup was suddenly very close to her, and Valka involuntarily tensed.

"What are you doing?"

"Making sure the straps are snug. Otherwise they'll move loads when you walk."

Hiccup was clearly making the effort not to touch her more than necessary, but he was right there in her face with some intense concentration on his face. It was strangely attractive.

"Not too tight?"

Valka shook her head, having no idea how the bag felt, so distracted by Hiccup's proximity. He stepped away, allowing Valka to catch her breath again. Toothless rolled around stretching his legs, and Hiccup even had a special bottle for Toothless in case he got thirsty.

Hiccup wasn't the fastest on his feet, understandably, but they had a nice pace going fairly soon with the dog trotting alongside them through the grass. There was - unsurprisingly - not much in the way of other people out walking in the cold, but Valka loved the brisk air and walking kept them warm.
"I realise this doesn't really class as an adventure, but I figured it would be something different and I already knew you'd like the fresh air."

"It's a lovely idea Hiccup, thank you. I haven't gone walking for the sake of walking in a long time."

He beamed, very clearly happy she liked it. Valka's stomach buzzed with butterflies, so she tore her eyes away from him and focused on Toothless, who was as excitable an hour and half in as he was at the start.

"How far to your specified destination?"

"Tired?"

Valka rolled her eyes at his smirk.

"Curious. And it's almost lunch time."

"Ah, yes. Half hour, maybe a bit longer. It'll be worth it to wait to eat, promise."

Despite her distressing crush, Valka found that they could go along in a comfortable silence without feeling awkward, though they conversed sporadically - mostly about the scenery, or the mischief Toothless was getting in to. Then there was a hill, and Hiccup apologised in advance.

"That's where we're stopping. If you need to take a breather, just say."

"I'm fine."

It was a little steep and her lungs seemed confused by the sudden shift to exertion levels, but then they crested the top and Valka was left almost speechless.

"Oh, wow."

"You like it?"

The view was amazing - Valka could see out for miles, the city they lived in looking tiny and horizons further away merely hinted at. There was a lake not yet frozen visible, the winter sun and bright, almost-white sky reflected off the waters surface in a glittering display.

"It's beautiful."

"Worth the trip?"

"Very much so."

Hiccup had brought a ground sheet for if it was damp, both dog and owner flopped down on the grass and Toothless lapped at his doggy water bottle greedily. Her own lunch picnic was in her backpack, proving Hiccup's forethought as he dug into his pack, chewing on sandwiches and grapes, the promised emergency chocolate sitting in there too.

Sat there with the incredible view, surrounded by the fresh air and chilled winter air she loved, Valka couldn't deny Hiccup had basically nailed it on a simple day out that she would love.

The walk back was a little quieter, but equally as enjoyable. Valka was relieved to see the car again though, feet starting to ache a bit by the time they'd finished. Hiccup probably enjoyed getting the weight off his leg too, taking more painkillers and wrapping something around his knee.
"Are you alright?"

"Hm? Oh, yeah. Cold on my leg isn't pleasant, but I'm going to take a bath when we get back so I'll be fine. Did you have fun?"

"It was wonderful, but you shouldn't have done something that could hurt you for me."

Hiccup looked at her, bemused.

"My leg hurts in the cold whether I'm out or not. I needed today, I feel amazing. Tired and a bit sore, but... amazing nonetheless. So don't be daft. You'll probably hate me tomorrow when your legs are hurting."

Valka hadn't realised how right he was, until she got up out of bed the next morning and felt the stiff, sore aches of muscles taxed yesterday. She was by no means unfit, but Valka also didn't climb hills or walk for nearly five hours straight on a regular basis.

"How do you feel today?"

Hiccup's head appeared over the fence when Valka was painting, intending on capturing the beautiful scenery from yesterdays trip. He almost added a hunk of grey to the sun when he frightened her so.

"Well I don't hate you, but I won't be running a marathon any time soon."

He chuckled, leaning on the fence more to eye her painting.

"Looks good. Just wanted to check you were ok, now I shall stop interrupting art."

With that, Hiccup vanished to leave her to her painting. She heard Astrid, and who she was fairly certain was Eret. Dagur was the only other regular male presence next door, and he had a very distinctive laugh. Turning back to painting, Valka lost herself in brush strokes and colours until raindrops began to patter down, the sky darkening rapidly as storm clouds moved in.

Reluctantly heading in with her art gear, she resumed at the table and lamented the loss of natural light, although the sound of rain falling was quite a pleasant soundtrack. Valka did spare a thought for Toothless, hoping he wasn't too distressed by the impending storm.

It was starting to come down quite heavily by the time Ty was dropped off by his dad, resulting in a slightly disgruntled ten year old wiping rain smudges off his glasses before Valka even got her proper hug hello.

"Missed you mom. What did you do with Hiccup?"

"We went for a very long walk" her legs were still achey "and saw a lovely view, which I painted today."

Tyr ooh-ed at the picture, sitting down for hot chocolate and a more in depth description of her day out with Hiccup, then it was bath time and homework checks and clean uniform fetching.

"I wish I got to hang out with Hiccup more too."

Shuffling around his room to ensure he was ready for school the next morning, Valka watched Tyr put his slippers away before climbing into bed and waiting for his kiss goodnight.

"Well" Valka hadn't wanted to say anything until it was sure "he's babysitting you Wednesday
evening while I go out."

There was a mix of excitement and confusion in Ty's face, eyes lighting up before his brow furrowed down in thought.

"That's cool, but where are you going?"

She debated lying, but didn't want to blindside Tyr on the off chance it went well with news she had already been seeing somebody.

"I have a date."

"Who with?"

"His name is Ben, he's a friend of Nadia's."

Ty knew Nadia well enough, so that should at least reassure her son the man wasn't a total stranger.

"Oh. Ok. Are you excited?"

Valka wasn't, not really, but she was determined to avoid her crush on Hiccup and the best way to do that was surely to find someone more suitable to catch her affections.

"Nervous, I suppose. I haven't dated since marrying your dad, but Nadia insisted I need to get out more."

"Ok then. I hope he's nice."

"Me too Ty."

Yawning, Tyr rubbed his eyes and folded his glasses into their case on his bedside.

"Night mom."

Leaning to kiss his forehead, Valka smiled.

"Night Ty."

"Most people think of babysitting as a job, or a favour. You're so excited to hang out with that kid."

Astrid commented, watching Hiccup bustle round collecting his art supplies - he was sure Valka had them, but there was something about the feel of his favourite pencil.

"He's a great kid."

"I get that. I'm just expecting the same levels of excitement when it's your niece or nephew needing babysitting."

Hiccup grinned, looking at the sonogram on the fridge.

"I'll want to babysit so much you'll complain I'm trying to steal them."

"I'm holding you to that. Have fun."

"I will. Make sure you let Toothless out if you end up going back to Eret's."
Giving his sister a passing forehead kiss and quick hug, Hiccup headed off for the minute journey to next door. It would be quicker if he hopped the fence again, but his leg was still sore so Hiccup opted not to jar it.

"Hiccup!"

Tyr answered the door, smiling up at him.

"Hey big guy. Ready to hang out?"

"Yep!"

Chuckling at the boy, Hiccup followed the little dragon into the house, looking around for Valka.

"Mom's getting ready still."

"Ah."

"Want to see my new game?"

"Absolutely!"

Peering around at the Game Boy, Hiccup watched Tyr hit the buttons and cheered in all the right places when it looked like he was winning. Both of them looked up when they heard the sound of footsteps down the stairs, watching for Valka as she came into the room.

"You look really pretty mom!"

"Thank you son."

Hiccup took a minute to find his voice, because wow.

"You do look stunning."

A delicate flush stained Valka's cheeks, ducking shyly at the compliment Hiccup wasn't sure did her justice.

"Thank you."

A deep green blouse that made her eyes look amazing - even more than usual - hung over a dark brown skirt that hung just past her knees. Her shoes were simple, flat heeled ankle boots but they rounded it off nicely. Her hair was mostly back in its customary braid, but a few loose strands hung down to frame her high cheekbone with a reddish-brown glow. He could see a light coat of makeup, a shimmer on her lips and maybe a soft shade of something over her eyes.

"Are you going now mom?"

"In a minute. I still need my jacket."

Tyr turned to Hiccup, little face curious.

"Can you pick me up?"

"Sure. Now?"

Nodding, Tyr was lifted by Hiccup, and he got the idea, carrying the boy a few steps across to
Valka. He wasn't sure if he was imagining it, but Tyr felt a little warm.

"Now I can reach! Bye mom. Have fun. If he's mean then you can come back and watch tv with us."

He leant over to kiss and hug his mom carefully, mindful of her clothes and makeup, then leant back into Hiccup, holding tight.

"You boys have fun then."

"We will. But not so much that I won't miss you."

Valka smiled, ruffling Tyr's hair before heading off to find her coat. Hiccup put Tyr down and promised to be back quickly, leaving him on his Game Boy while Hiccup followed Valka out.

"I know you have work tomorrow, but I don't so don't panic about getting back for me, ok?"

"I doubt I'll be gone too long anyway. I've left money if you want to order in rather than cook for him, and my number-"

"Is already in my phone, and no doubt stored in Tyr's brain as well as on that paper. Valka, we'll be fine. Go. Have fun. You deserve it. It would be a waste for you to not go out looking so lovely."

Whatever the social engagement was, Hiccup was very jealous of the people about to spend possibly several hours seeing Valka look so incredible. Still, she was beautiful all the time and he saw her every day. He'd live.

"Hiccup! Quick! Boss battle!"

"I'm being summoned. We'll see you later."

Valka nodded, turning away and Hiccup headed back to the excitable boy, perching to watch the dramatic pixellated fight on screen. They heard her leave, and Tyr finished the level he was on, then saved his game and turned off the handheld.

"Your mom gave us the choice of proper dinner or takeout. I thought I'd let you pick."

"M'not hungry. Can I ask you something?"

Disconcerted, Hiccup nodded.

"Sure."

"If mom starts dating someone, do I have to call him stepdad?"

"What makes you ask that?"

Tyr cocked his head, looking at Hiccup oddly.

"Well, she's on a date now. His name is Ben, apparently. But I just wondered if I had to call him stepdad."

Hiccup quashed the confusion about why Valka hadn't simply said that to him, and ignored the pang of longing wishing he was the one taking her out.

"Well, not after one date, definitely not. If your mom got married again, that guy would legally be
your stepfather. But nobody would make you call him anything. No matter what, your dad is still your dad. Don't stress little dragon, this is only date one. They might have nothing in common and never see each other again, but its good for your mom to go out and meet new people. Ok?"

"Ok."

Tyr fell silent for a little bit, flicking through tv channels and settling on a cartoon about dragons.

"If you don't want food, how about a drink?"

"Can I have juice?"

"Sure."

Hiccup filled a glass with water, found the carton of juice in the fridge and filled another glass with it for Tyr. The boy was rubbing his face, which was a little redder than Hiccup was used to seeing him.

"Tyr, are you sick?"

"A little. But I knew if I told mom she would cancel and then we couldn't hang out."

Sighing slightly in exasperation, Hiccup touched a hand to Tyr's forehead. Warm, but not quite feverish.

"Tyr, we can hang out anytime."

"And" clearly, Tyr wasn't too sick to be stubborn "you just said mom should be going out and meeting people. I'm ok enough for her to go but she wouldn't have gone if I said I was sick."

Hiccup glanced at the time, and resolved that if Valka didn't call back in the next hour to check in, he would call her. A bit of tummyache wasn't going to really hurt Tyr.

"Ok. But if you feel any worse, you gotta tell me ok? If your mom thinks I can't take care of you she won't ask me to babysit anymore."

Tyr agreed, and drank his juice before curling up to watch tv. Hiccup doodled absently, but kept a close eye on the boy next to him. He thought Tyr might be falling asleep, but then he groaned and rubbed his head.

"I don't feel so good."

"Ok. Shall I put you to bed and then call your mom to come home?"

Tyr nodded - he'd stuck it out a whole hour, desperately trying - so Hiccup moved to pick him up, seeing as how Tyr wasn't making any move to get up himself. Only half a dozen steps into the kitchen, Hiccup suddenly realised he had made a mistake when Tyr retched and quite efficiently ruined Hiccup's t-shirt as he threw up. Trying not to cringe or drop the poor kid in shock, Hiccup managed to hold him over the sink until the heaving abated.

"Can you stand there just a tick Tyr? I'm just gonna take off my top."

"M'sorry."

"It's ok. You didn't mean to."
Holding his breath, Hiccup peeled the sullied cotton off carefully, wiping his bare torso down with kitchen roll and breathing in relief when there was none in his hair. He tossed the shirt in the empty washing machine for lack of better options, then checked on Tyr.

"Drink some water ok? I'm gonna find you a bucket so you can lie down again."

"Under the stairs. Blue one."

Somehow, Hiccup wasn't actually surprised to find a labelled "upset tummy bucket" in the cupboard, seeing as how Tyr liked order. Lucky for him, Tyr's clothes had escaped unscathed, so Hiccup laid him on the sofa with the bucket and some paper towels for his mouth, plus more water.

Valka was not happy to hear her son was sick, which didn't surprise Hiccup. He reassured her there was no fever or anything more scary, but naturally she insisted she was leaving immediately. Tyr turned around to rest his pillow against Hiccup's leg, reminding him very much of what Astrid would do when she was sick as kids. Hiccup stroked his sweaty hair, and it had the same soothing effect on Tyr as it had on Astrid.

He recognised Valka's car pulling up outside, heard harried footsteps up the path, the door opening almost frantically. Tyr had fallen asleep a few minutes previous, so Hiccup held a finger to his lips and slid free, beckoning Valka into the kitchen.

"He didn't..."

She gestured at his bare chest. Hiccup realised she could see his narrow frame and several aged and faded scars, stretched with time and growth. He resisted the urge to hide.

"He did. I uh, put it in your machine because I didn't know where else... I checked it was empty first. I think he was sick when I got here, he didn't want dinner."

"Oh, I knew I shouldn't have gone..."

"Valka, it's ok. Kids get tummy bugs all the time. And before you start fretting, I am happy to watch him tomorrow if he's too sick for school."

She shook her head, obviously still distressed

"I better put him to bed."

"I'll carry him if you want... in case he chucks again. That's a very nice top."

Valka hesitated, but let Hiccup go carefully ease Tyr up into his arms, braced for another episode but thankfully he didn't even stir. Valka followed with water and bucket and wipes, hovering until Tyr was laid down in bed.

"Mom?"

"She's right here buddy."

Hiccup moved so Valka could tend to her son, heading downstairs to leave them to it and smiling as he listened to them try to comfort and reassure each other. She reappeared a few minutes later, quiet while Hiccup finished the glass of water he had started earlier. Feeling eyes on his back, his skin prickled.
"Ask."

Caught out, it seemed to surprise her in to asking.

"Are those scars from the accident?"

"Yeah. Except..." Hiccup reached to feel along his back for one particularly jagged scar "that one. That was from me jumping out of a tree because I'd just drank Red Bull for the first time and expected to have wings. I was eight at the time."

Valka actually giggled at that, and it was an enchanting sound.

"Daft boy."

Hiccup smiled, then nodded toward the stairs.

"Is Tyr ok?"

"He's sleeping. Are you sure about tomorrow?"

"Totally. I'll come get him first thing, cus I can't leave Toothless all day and I feel like you don't want dog hair everywhere? I mean the little dragon can lie on the sofa with a bucket anywhere."

She agreed, seeming unsure what to do with herself.

"So, before the interruption, how was the date? Tyr told me."

"Oh. It was... fine."

"Fine?"

Valka wavered, then spilled the beans.

"He was lovely, but also dull as a brick. Not one for art or animals, and he didn't have much of a sense of humour. I think Nadia set me up because he has a daughter so she knew he wouldn't mind my having a son."

Hiccup leant against the side, humming

"So you want someone who likes art, animals, makes you laugh and isn't put off by you having a kid? That's fair."

He wondered if it was worth adding that Hiccup himself fit the bill. But then it could make things awkward. Valka wasn't interested in him, and him making unwanted advances wouldn't endear him to her, and that would upset Tyr when the adults stopped speaking...

Hiccup was really overthinking this.

"I suppose. The art is negotiable, so long as they don't hate it."

"How accommodating of you."

He joked, and Valka giggled again.

"I should get going. Do you have something I can carry my gross shirt home in?"

"I'll wash it for you. I am so sorry he-"
Hiccup waved her off.

"It's ok. Accidents happen. And besides, it's good practice. For the baby."

Something flickered across Valka's face, but it was gone before Hiccup was fully sure it was ever even there.

"I'll see you in the morning?"

"Yep. I have your spare key, so in the event he messes up his clothes I can come get clean ones."

"Quite. Goodnight Hiccup."

He left feeling a little confused. Had Valka suddenly gone cold on him when he brought up Astrid's pregnancy? There wasn't much time to think - he was shirtless and it was November. Hiccup scurried home, finding a surprised Astrid.

"Why are you half-naked? And back so soon?"

"Tyr got sick. Valka came home, but my top was a casualty."

"Gross."

Hiccup shrugged, indicating Astrid's abdomen.

"You have all that to look forward to."

"Yeah... so do you. Number one babysitter. Favourite uncle."

Chuckling, Hiccup nodded as he headed toward the stairs, needing a shower before he went to bed.

"Combine the two. Number one uncle!"

-HTTYD-

Don't worry, Valka won't not know forever.
Chapter 8

Kirbster - the last two chapters have only covered a matter of days, and it's not meant to be cute. I have a plan for the story, worry not

Crimson - we all need Valcup! But I'm not gonna rush them heh.

-HTTYD-

Hands closed on her waist, a warm mouth on her neck. Valka tilted, allowing more contact and felt stubble scrape over her delicate throat. Ragged breath condensed on her skin as he panted, nimble fingers slipping beneath her nightdress to skate over her skin, untouched for so long she shivered, hypersensitive. Lips closed over hers, swallowing her moans as those hands slid over her belly, coming up to caress her breasts...

Valka was awoken violently by her alarm, skin flushed and an all-but-forgotten tightness in her gut. Gods, when had she last had an arousing dream? Hel, when was she last aroused? It had been months, certainly. The images wouldn't leave her mind, though Valka adamantly insisted to herself that the figure had been faceless, nameless. Just an expression of her suppressed sexuality. Absolutely nothing to do with a wayward attraction.

Tyr slept in, but since he was staying off school that wasn't an issue. Valka called his school and told them - hearing that a bug was indeed going around - and got ready for work quickly, heard the front door knock. Her cheeks flushed at the memories of her dream when she saw Hiccup, the phantom burn of his hands on her thighs, his mouth on her neck...

Except it wasn't him. It was a dream. A dream he definitely wasn't in.

"Are you sick too? You look a little warm."

Valka shook her head, inviting Hiccup in.

"He's still asleep, but he's usually up with the dawn chorus so I doubt he will be much longer."

If she didn't look at him, Valka couldn't compare Hiccup's hands to those in her dream. Couldn't think of how his stubble would scrape across her skin, leaving a dizzying burn in his wake.

"Are you sure you're alright?"

Hiccup was very close to her, fingers brushing her forehead. She could feel callouses on his fingertips, though his touch was feather-light.

"You don't feel fevetish, but then Tyr was just a little warm before he was sick. Promise you're alright to go to work? Without tossing your cookies onto some kids artwork."

"I'm fine."

He surveyed her, but seemed to accept Valka's answer. He didn't move away, dangerously close and wearing on her self-control after that dream. His lower lip jutted just slightly, and Valka's still-lusting brain ached to know how it would feel on her own. Hiccup's eyes dropped to her mouth, fingers on her forehead sliding over the top of her cheekbone. Valka felt her breath catch for a second, but the sound of steps on the stairs had Hiccup taking several steps back, looking toward
the sound.

"How you feeling little dragon?"

Tyr yawned, petting down his messy bed-hair with one hand and rubbing his eyes with the other. It was probably the least open excitement she had ever seen when he was faced with Hiccup.

"Terrible. But not super sick."

Valka hugged her son, stroking his forehead as Ty sighed sleepily.

"If you want you can spend the day in pyjamas and blankets on my sofa."

Sleepy child nodded at Hiccup, squeezed Valka and made to leave for upstairs again.

"I have to go to work now son" Valka so did not want to leave him "so be good for Hiccup ok?"

"I will. But I need my glasses first."

Leaving someone else to watch her sick child was painful, but Valka knew Hiccup would make sure Ty got rest and he would call her if her son worsened.

"We'll be fine. He just needs to rest and stay hydrated."

Hiccup reassured her, and Valka knew he was right. And that if she didn't leave now she would be late for work.

"Thank you for watching him."

He nodded, still keeping his distance and Valka didn't know if she was disappointed or relieved.

"No problem."

After he confirmed he had his key to lock up behind them, Valka left, waiting until she was in her car to kick herself. What was she thinking? She wouldn't have turned him down if Hiccup had kissed her, that man almost twenty years her junior with a pregnant girlfriend and where her son would have caught them.

Her distraction was noted at work, and ashamedly Valka explained it away with Ty being off sick and her worry for him. That was true, but it wasn't the only thing on her mind. The heated dream still lingered on her mind, and guilt for daring to feel that way. For desiring Hiccup. If his own actions earlier were an indication, he felt something akin to desire for her too. By the end of the day, Valka was completely fried and just wanted to get back to her son.

Hiccup opened the door to her quickly when she knocked, letting her in without lingering there. Still a little pale and in his pyjamas, Valka found Tyr sat at the table with crackers and water looking less distressed than he had that morning.

"Hi mom."

"Feeling better Ty?"

"Yeah. I kept water down for a few hours so Hiccup gave me crackers. I did some colouring after my nap too and Hiccup liked it so much he put it on the fridge."

Valka turned her head to look, saw an image of Hiccup standing next to Tyr and holding a baby.
On his t-shirt was a message.
"Favourite uncle?"

"Yeah."

Hiccup, sat back at the table and picking up his mug, smiled over at Tyr.

"Astrid joked she would get me a t-shirt made saying that, because so many people think she's my girlfriend that there might be some confusion. I told the little dragon and he drew me that. With him there too, obviously. Two little dragons."

Oh. *Oh.*

"She's your sister?"

Hiccup's eyes widened, but then he and Ty both broke into giggles.

"Looks like you weren't the only one confused big guy. Yes, I'm her big brother. *Eret* is her boyfriend, and baby daddy to that jelly bean on the fridge."

Tyr finished sipping his water, looked up Hiccup.

"How come Eret has a tattoo on his face?"

"It's a traditional thing. His parents have them too. They're Sami."

"What's a Sami?"

Hiccup glanced at his watch, then back to Tyr.

"Eret and Astrid will be here in about an hour, you can ask him about it then? He would just be able to explain much better than me."

Valka found herself wheedled by Tyr to agree to come back over to Hiccup's for dinner so he could talk to Eret, after they went back to change now Ty was less worried to throw up on his clothes. Hiccup made the boys dinner light and easy on the stomach, though by the way Tyr ate it up it was delicious all the same.

Eret's talk of his Sami heritage was fascinating, and Valka found herself as intrigued as her son by the stories he told. Astrid had obviously heard it all before, reading a book and occasionally poking her brother Hiccup, which he glared and rolled his eyes fondly at. Every time Valka felt those eyes on her, she felt that dream wash over her again and realised her attraction was now inappropriate only in terms of age.

Or Mala. Knowing what she knew, Valka supposed it was rather more likely the Australian woman was responsible for Hiccup's lovebite bruise before. Of course, Mala lived in Australia... oh, Valka should just remember he was too young for her and stop over thinking it. She should especially not think about the dream.

"Sami is awesome."

"It's 'are', Ty. Sami are a group of people, not one person."

"Oh. Yeah. That too. Am I better enough to go to school tomorrow?"
"We'll see. You've kept your dinner down and your temperatures gone, so I should think so."

Tyr smiled; he wasn't a skiver, though she expected he had enjoyed a day off spent with Hiccup all the same. He was back to his quietly energetic self the next day, excited to see his friends and go to class. Valka was still a little distracted, but since her sleep had been dream-free and her waking free of that heat churning low in her belly, she was able to largely put it to the back of her mind.

Hiccup, despite that oddly intense moment before, maintained a respectable distance and didn't touch her again. Valka missed the way his fingers had gentled across her cheek. Couldn't ignore the way his eyes had flickered down to her lips. At least in that second, he had wanted. But that second had passed, and Valka wasn't about to chase her nonsense lust for a man in his early twenties.

"Who is she?"

Hiccup twisted his head, looking at where Mala was fiddling with his puzzle toy, quite naked considering how often she complained England was cold. They normally saw each other less frequently, but her father had business nearby and so Mala had dropped by to surprise him.

"What?"

"Who is she? Whoever it is you're thinking about now?"

Rolling on his back, Hiccup frowned.

"What do you mean?"

"Hiccup Haddock, do not play dumb with me. I always valued your maturity. I had to, agreeing to date a man ten years my junior. So kindly do not insult my intelligence now."

Damn, Mala was like a hawk.

"I'm not cheating on anybody."

"Of course not. I would kill you. Assuming Astrid did not beat me to it. We agreed this would only continue until one or both of us was interested in somebody else. Clearly, you are."

Hiccup hadn't realised he was being so obvious. He certainly hadn't been lacking desire when they were having sex, but he supposed Valka was lingering on his mind somewhat.

"She's... not interested. I'm not saying I was using you as distraction, I'm just trying not to think about her in general."

"Is it her? The woman next door? You do seem to have a type."

Rubbing a hand over his face, Hiccup groaned.

"Astrid said that. Yeah."

Part of him was loathe to lose this comfortable, easy friendship with benefits he and Mala shared. But another part of him was screaming for adventure, telling him to take a chance just in case. Yet another part of him was scared to lose Valka's friendship; he didn't want to lose out on his bond with Tyr. He adored that little boy, with his hardy spirit and quiet spark.

"You can hardly blame her for being reticent."
"I know."

Mala understood; when they were dating, there was backlash for *their* age gap. Valka was older still. Hiccup didn't care, she was gorgeous and witty and caring. Artistic, and he liked her more the longer he watched her with Tyr.

"But then, I don't think she actually *wants* me. So the age difference is irrelevant anyway."

Mala frowned, placing the puzzle aside and leaning on her hand, elbow bent against the bed.

"I doubt that. You might be a pain in the neck, but you have plenty of good qualities too."

"Gee, thanks."

She chuckled, stroking Hiccup's cheek. Mala had many layers to get through, but there was a sweet, tactile lover in there somewhere. Fierce and a little bit scary when she wanted to be, but Mala was still definitely one of his best friends.

"You know what I mean. You have a great deal to offer her."

"Maybe. But she was married to a professional type blond guy for years. What would she want with a peg leg mechanic who's half her age and obsessed with dragons?"

Mala slid her hand down his stomach, body not quite distracted enough to deny the familiar warmth of her touch.

"I can think of a few things" Hiccup felt her hand close around him "but you should also remember that it turned out her ex husband was *not* what she wanted, as evidenced by her divorce."

Really very good at distracting him, Mala convinced Hiccup not to leave his bed for another hour. Then they showered and dressed, and Mala insisted on a proper adult chat about his feelings toward Valka. This woman didn't beat around the bush, nor would she allow Hiccup blissful ignorance.

"You realise you would have to find a new friend-with-benefits if by some astronomical miracle, Valka was interested in me?"

Mala rolled her eyes, smirking lightly into her drink.

"I am certain I will find a way to survive."

"You know, you really do a number on the ego. Come on, we better walk the ball of insanity fighting an old sofa cushion."

Hiccup didn't enjoy walking when his stump ached, but Toothless needed walking and he felt better overall for the fresh air in his lungs.

"So when will you see her again?"

"Officially, Tyr's birthday party next weekend. Of course, Sven will be there and he already doesn't like me."

"Really?"

"Yeah. When I was fixing Valka's car he looked at me like I was stealing it. And when I said I was a mechanic, he gave me that *just* a mechanic' look."
"Someone with a skilled trade? Imagine that."

Mala quipped, watching Toothless gambol over in the wet grass. Luckily, he was due a bath soon.

"He's insecure. He only sees his son on weekends and I see Tyr all week."

"You make her smile."

Hiccup quirked an eyebrow at his ex girlfriend, confused.

"Tyr is a he. Until he says otherwise at the very least."

"I meant his mother. She smiles at you. I wonder when she last smiled at her sons father and meant it."

That reminded him of something the little dragon had said - that Valka had smiles for him.

"Well the lack of divorce probably does give me an edge."

"Or she likes you."

"Doubtful."

"Maybe you just appeal to Australian women."

Hiccup snorted, watching Mala lean casually against a tree to glare at the overcast sky. She hadn't complained that much about it being winter...

"Sure. One, maybe two is definitely proof I could go down under and drown in women."

She tried not to laugh at Hiccup's terrible double entendre, mostly successful while he retrieved Toothless and clipped his lead back on. They started on the walk back, focused more on moving than talking as Hiccup's leg began to ache more fiercely.

"Hey Hiccup! And... Mala!"

Obviously just getting back from school and work, Valka and Tyr were about to head in when a quick barking greeting from Toothless attracted their attention.

"Hey Tyr."

"Good day young man."

"Are you still coming to my party Hiccup?"

Tyr asked, eyes magnified by glasses as he looked over at Hiccup hopefully.

"I wouldn't miss it little dragon"

His eyes couldn't help but move to Valka, and there was a small but genuine smile on her face. One that made his belly warm. She headed in after looking at him a few beats longer, still smiling. Hiccup had one he couldn't shake either, heading in with it still pushing at his cheeks. Mala had a knowing gleam in her eye, sitting down while Hiccup rubbed a towel over his dog.

"What are you looking at?"

-HTTYD-
Guess what next chapter is?

Yep. Tyr's birthday!
Glad the last chapter went over well!

-HTTYD-

"Where's Hiccup?"

Tyr frowned, looking around the amassed people there for his birthday party - the five boys his own age, mostly, and their parents who brought them. That suited Tyr generally, not really a fan of big noisy crowds or rowdy numbers of kids. But the conspicuous absence of their next door neighbour was evident.

"I'm sure he's on his way Ty. Go play with your friends."

Almost as soon as Tyr headed off to join the other boys with his new box of Lego bricks, Valka felt her phone buzz in her pocket. Sure enough, it was Hiccup saying he was on his way over. Despite living next door, he was obviously out somewhere otherwise he probably would have announced it over the fence. Sven was doing his best to hide his irate expression as Tyr and Hiccup's friendship proved unshakeable.

It was another twenty minutes small talk with the boys mothers before Tyr jumped up, declaring he had heard Hiccup's car outside. The other boys seemed almost as excited - they wanted to meet Hiccup too apparently. When the door knocked, the little boy zipped past Valka to answer it himself.

"Hiccup! You made it!"

"Hey little dragon! I made it!"

Hiccup followed Tyr in, greeting each of his friends with a handshake before Tyr pouted up at him.

"Where were you?"

"The vets. Toothless swallowed one of his toys, so I had to take him to get it taken out."

"Is he ok?"

"He's fine. Just needs to rest up."

Valka could see the other mothers eyeing Hiccup speculatively, and she wasn't really surprised. He was handsome, friendly and made the effort to come to a little boys birthday party.

"That's good then. Want to come play Lego?"

"Absolutely!"

All but Valka looked on in surprise as Hiccup followed the young boys, sat right down with them and began playing with little plastic blocks.

"Is it true you have a metal leg?"

"Alex! It's a secret!"
Tyr admonished his friend, and Alex's mother was wide-eyed, his father blinking in surprise.

"Yeah

, it's true. You want to see?"

Hiccup rolled up his trouser leg, allowed them to prod gently at the prosthetic, looking curious as he explained how it worked to them.

"Cool!"

Green eyes found hers, but Hiccup looked away after a second and began building the foundation for a massive structure with Tyr and his friends' help. He had them occupied and happy with zero effort, leaving the adults to chat amongst themselves. The men headed out into the garden to chat, as two smoked and Valka adamantly wouldn't allow that in the house. Left alone with people her own age and children who needed no supervision, Valka was quickly roundef on.

"Is it just me or is he definitely into Val?"

"Oh absolutely!"

"He's gorgeous as well."

Valka decided their lives were clearly lacking excitement if this was their idea of gossip.

"Oh, do behave Andrea."

"Absolutely not. I'm telling you now, if you don't, I will!"

"I'll be sure to pass that along to your husband."

Maybe Valka should have revised allowing the non-designated-drivers alcohol. Andrea was a notorious lightweight, and already on her third glass of wine. She was certainly regretting the allowance.

"Valka?"

Oh. Hiccup was much closer than she expected. Valka really hoped he hadn't overheard anything.

"Yes?"

"I wanted to check if a certain little dragon was lying about when he gets his presents."

"He asked not to until you got here, but then he obviously got sidetracked."

Hiccup smiled fondly over at Tyr, the expression not fading when he looked back to Valka. She really hoped the embarrassing effects he had on her weren't clear on her face, especially to the other mothers nearby.

"Bless him. Well, I'm thinking he's ready now and I really want to give him mine."

It was hard to tell who was more excited - Hiccup or Tyr. His energy was far too attractive, drawing Valka in to his jubilant mood and she found herself smiling along with him, which did not go unnoticed.

"Oh, he definitely wants you."
Valka ignored Jacob's mother, who was far too much of a gossip. Nor was Valka in any state to think about potentiality of mutual attraction. Sven noticed too, and that was clearly unwelcome to him if that tension in his jaw was anything to go by.

Tyr was happy about all his gifts - largely and unsurprisingly dragon themed, though Alex's mother had gotten him a box of art supplies that went over equally well. Hiccup gave him two packages, only one Valka was aware of - the flat, book-shaped one. Tyr opened the other one first, holding up what looked like a boiler suit.

"Now we can match!"

Of course - Hiccup wore overalls for work.

"Well, I figured they'd protect your clothes when we do art stuff?"

"Thanks Hiccup!"

The colouring book went over even better, the simplicity of a personalised colouring book thrilling the child and earning envious 'ooohs' from his friends.

"You drew this for me?"

"Well, you drew me pictures. And I made copies of the pictures, so if you fill it up you can do it again."

Valka wasn't sure why, but the way Hiccup was with her son was enough to make her heart skip a beat as he beamed, taking a hug from an ecstatic little boy. Pretending it was totally new to her, Valka made enthusiastic noises as Tyr showed off the images, the display of Hiccup's artistic skill only fuelling the women's fire about their sudden need to speculate about some illicit romance between her and her neighbour.

Hiccup wasn't afraid to join in the party games either, larking about with a lurid party hat on his blindfolded head as they played pin the tail on the dragon - Valka was surprised by how Ty still loved the simple games. Valka was coerced into cupcakes by the twin looks of pleading and joyful smiles of victory from Hiccup and Tyr.

When Hiccup wiped icing off her cheek with his thumb and popped it in his mouth, Valka felt her knees inexplicably weakened. What was wrong with her?

"Hiccup! That has mom germs!"

Chuckling, Hiccup shrugged at Tyr.

"I'm not wasting good icing. If it was on the floor or something, that's different."

She suspected that the men were growing weary of Hiccup's accidentally charming their wives or girlfriends, and proposed a game with the kids that they could join in on. Hoisting their sons up left one conspicuous flaw in their plan, where little Nathan looked sadly up at the other boys. Hiccup didn't miss a beat, obviously seeing the absence of a father there.

"What's up little buddy?"

"I don't have a dad."

"That's ok. I don't have a mom."
"How come?"

"She died when I was about your age. I'll be your 'dad' for the game if you like?".

Nathan ended up on Hiccup's shoulders, and Valka was fairly sure if Hiccup looked at her she would melt. He was so... genuine, that pure heart that matched her sons and made them such good friends just drawing her further in to her ridiculous and inappropriate crush. Nathan's mother, Janey, looked fairly enamoured herself as her son squealed happily, tossing a ball around with the other boys from a great height.

"Hey, I finally found a sport I'm good at! Standing and holding."

"Is he always like this with little Ty?"

Nathan's mother asked, watching her son clap as Hiccup stopped him feeling left out for the fact his 'father' had ran out on his mother when she was still pregnant.

"Oh yes. Since they discovered they like the same book series and fire breathing lizards, they've become so close. And he really brings Ty out of his shell."

"Not just Ty."

Janey commented, looking pointedly at Valka. The others were taking photos of the madness outside, so they were quite alone.

"What do you mean?"

"Come on, you can't deny he makes you smile. You're practically a different person around him, especially after the last couple of years where you were just keeping up appearances, staying with Sven for Tyr's sake."

Valka shook her head, only able to tear her eyes from Hiccup's laughing face by focusing on her son. Gods, her son. He was closer in age to Hiccup than Valka was.

"We're friends. I'm old enough to be his mother."

"That isn't stopping him. He likes you. And he obviously adores Ty."

It was true; Hiccup did clearly and genuinely enjoy hanging out with the pre-teen. And he made Valka laugh. He liked art. He was pretty much everything Valka wanted if she went looking for in a new partner, if she was honest.

But he was so young.

"Like I said, we are friends. And there's no separating Hiccup and Ty, so it's good I... get along with him."

Valka almost said 'like him', but knew it would be misconstrued. And true. But mostly that Janey would misunderstand. After the dad+son games ended, the children wanted more sweets and went back to their games. Hiccup leant against the wall where the boys wouldn't see, wincing as he rubbed his knee.

"Are you alright Hiccup?"

"Hm? Oh, yeah. Cold hurts my leg. I'll be fine. Just can't get back on the floor yet."
He straightened up after a minute, heading back through to the boys much to their delight. They began an excitable and bizarre... activity, including them all picking a dragon figurine and Valka thought they might be re-enacting something from the books they liked, but couldn't be sure. Tyr didn't like the 'Happy Birthday' song focus on him, so everyone simply said the words "Happy Birthday" as he blew out his candles before everyone got stuck in to cake.

Well, Hiccup and the kids mostly. The mothers insisted they 'couldn't', despite having snacked on party food and having wine. Valka's stomach was too full of butterflies to eat anything, watching Hiccup with icing smeared on his lip, remembering his thumb swiping over her cheek earlier.

"Where are you going?"

"Just out the front kiddo, my dad is coming to get Toothless' bed cus Thor ripped up the spare at his place. He's watching Toothless while he gets better so I don't have to move him around when I'm going to work."

There was much peering out of the front window by everyone as the sound of a pick-up truck pulling up outside announced Hiccup's father arriving. Valka hadn't met him yet, and while she had seen pictures, they hadn't quite captured just how big the man was. A good head and shoulders taller than Hiccup, he was easily three or four times his sons breadth, with a bountiful beard that came down much of his chest.

"That's Hiccup's dad?"

"He's really big!"

She heard the boys whispering rather unsubtly to each other.

"Yeah. His names Stoick and he runs the garage Hiccup works at."

The father and son vanished into Hiccups house, leaving only a minute later with Stoick carting Toothless’ dog bed with him. They hugged goodbye, and then Hiccup pointed to the window where they were all watching. The two exchanged words that made them laugh, then Stoick waved before climbing into his truck again. Ty ran to open the door as though Hiccup had just got there, leading the young man back in.

"Your dad is really big Hiccup!"

"I know. Imagine people's surprise when he introduces me as his son. They must wonder where the rest of me is."

After another round of dragon fighting, it was getting on and a couple of the husbands wanted to take their tipsy wives home before they made embarrassments of themselves. Tyr was off to his dads for Saturday night still - Valka was happier to host the party than Sven, who Tyr got his love of order and tidiness from. The others filtered away, leaving Hiccup tidying up Lego in the living room while Tyr was upstairs getting his stuff. And Valka alone with Sven.

"You should be ashamed of yourself. Flirting with a boy half your age!"

Oh, she had known it was coming.

"Flirting? We're friends Sven, and he was here for our sons birthday."

"Then why were you all giggles and flutters when he was practically eating off your face?"
Rubbing at the bridge of her nose, Valka shook her head.

"I was laughing. I'm sorry you've forgotten what that's like from me."

Valka didn't want to have this argument ever, but especially not with Hiccup in the next room and Ty due back down any minute. Sven turned away, still scowling and stormed off toward Hiccup. Before Hiccup could even look up properly, Sven hauled him to his feet - their heights were about the same but Hiccup stumbled in surprise.

"Sven!"

"You, stay away from my family."

Rather than react in anger as he would have been entitled to, Hiccup was oddly calm.

"Let me go."

"Or what? You'll fetch your daddy?"

Hiccup's eyes tightened, and in a surprising show he gripped Sven's wrist and twisted it, bending it to a rather painful-looking angle.

"No. Because despite what you think, I'm not a child. And Valka and Tyr can think for themselves. I'll leave them alone if they ask me to, but you can't order me around."

Valka looked away to check Tyr hadn't come back - he shouldn't see this - and when she looked back, Hiccup had leant in close and muttered something to Sven. Something that made her ex husband very angry, judging by the way he lashed out with his free hand, hitting Hiccup in the stomach hard enough to make him stumble slightly.

"Be as bitter as you want, but so long as I can put a smile on that boys face, I will. And if you cared about Tyr, you wouldn't be trying to stop that out of jealousy."

Hiccup let Sven's bent hand go, stepping back and managing to compose himself as footsteps came down the stairs. All three adults were hardly in jovial birthday moods anymore, but Hiccup had a smile for his little friend.

"I'm ready!"

"Have fun with your dad little dragon."

Valka hugged her son goodbye, and Sven left in silence to spend the night with Tyr back at his home. She knew that Sven loved his son with absolute certainty, but it was clear he wasn't happy watching them developing new friends, new connections he wasn't a part of.

And while she imagined Hiccup's age was part of it, Sven would take issue with any man Valka may or may not become involved with. She'd probably feel a bit weird if he started seeing other women. Valka wasn't sure what was 'normal' - she had never gotten divorced before. For all she knew, her crush on Hiccup was some buried desire to sow wild oats, reclaim her youth for a minute. Just do something that showed she was more than someone's ex wife, heading for a lonely old lady life.

Then Valka realised that was ridiculous. Hiccup was no one night stand.

"Are you alright Valka?"
"I'll be fine. What were you thinking, fighting with Sven?"

Hiccup held his hands up defensively.

"Hey, all I did was use Astrid's famous wrist-twist. Gently. She would've broken bones. And I only stayed to help clean up, he was- you know what? It doesn't matter."

He got back on the floor, resumed putting plastic bricks back in their box. Valka was at a loss how to respond, so she picked up the discarded plates from that room, carrying them through to the kitchen. What was she supposed to do? Tell Hiccup her ex-husbands concerns were well founded, even if it wasn't any of Sven's business?

The sudden slam of a plastic lid closing snapped Valka out of her little reverie, turning to see Hiccup shuffling across the floor strangely. He used the sofa to haul himself up, wincing in pain as he rubbed at his leg.

"Are you ok?"

Hiccup looked up, surprised to realise she had seen him.

"Jarred my leg playing with Nathan earlier. I knew I would, my prosthetic is mostly designed for my weight."

"Then why do it?"

He looked at her strangely, then his eyes turned off to the side, distant.

"Because I had to watch my little sister cry for mothers day after mom died. I know what it's like to miss something it seems like everybody else has. I wasn't going to let a little kid stand there looking heartbroken."

Oh, he was too much. Valka couldn't help herself. He looked confused as she sat next to him, but made no move to stop Valka from kissing his stupidly attractive face. She could scarcely believe she did it, and when she pulled back, heart pounding something fierce, Valka realised Hiccup was still staring at her in confusion and she had made a horrible mistake.

Valka made to get up, run away and cringe in shame. Hiccup's fingers curled around her wrist, holding her there gently but firmly.

"Don't go."

"I'm sorry."

"I'm not. I was just surprised."

He hadn't moved his hand. Valka was still terrified, feeling very out of her depth under Hiccup's gaze. It was ridiculous; she was a middle-aged woman, a mother and a teacher. Why did she feel like a silly schoolgirl?

Hiccup kissed her, considerably more steady and sure than Valka had been. The butterflies in her belly wouldn't be calmed, heart beating so hard in her chest Hiccup could surely hear it. His thumb slid over her cheek, hand curling around the back of her neck. Hiccup pulled back slowly, left Valka dizzy, breathless.

"I need to be clear with you here."
Valka's stomach turned over, dreading what Hiccup was about to say.

"What is it?"

"I don't want a one off. I like you, a lot, but I'm not willing to sacrifice our friendship if you don't want something real."

Gods, what was she supposed to say to that? It was exactly what she wanted to hear, deep down, but it was so blunt and straight Valka could barely get her head around it.

"Ok. But we can't tell Ty. Not... not yet."

That was to be her last coherent thought as Hiccup nodded, smiled, and kissed her again.

-HTTYD-

Ah, at last! Darn shoddy WiFi and reverse SAD teaming up to make a shambles of me but we got there.
Ten chapters in already? Ah! Thanks for the positive response to last chapter!

-HTTYD-

Hiccup could easily lose himself in kissing Valka. She was curious and hungry all at once, chasing his mouth but yielding quickly as though unsure how she could take control. But he shouldn't get lost. Not yet. Even if she tasted of sweetness and cupcakes.

Easier said than done, when he pulled away and Valka pulled him back, kissed him again. Indulging for a few seconds more, Hiccup lifted his hands and slowly nudged Valka back, enjoying her dazed expression and that lovely flush staining her cheeks.

"We should finish cleaning up from the party."

"Party..." Hiccup would be lying if he said he wasn't smug as Hel about how affected Valka was "oh. Yes. Tidying."

The haze clearing, they got up and continued with the relocating of Valka's kitchen beneath party plates and wrapping paper. But when his hand brushed hers as they tidied, Hiccup caught those shy smiles playing over her mouth. Once they were done clearing up, Hiccup pulled her closer and kissed her again. Just because he could.

"This can't be real..."

Hiccup frowned.

"Why not?"

"Because I'm a middle aged divorcee with a child, and you're... gods, I'm almost twenty years older than you."

He knew it would happen, Valka doubting them over the age difference. He was happy to get it out the way sooner rather than later.

"And?"

"How does that not... bother you?"

Hiccup shrugged.

"I adore your son, for starters. And you aren't the only one with baggage. I'm an amputee with scars from shoulders to what's left of my shin bone. As to your age... I like older women. Always have."

He could see the cogs turn in Valka's mind.

"Mala?"

"My ex girlfriend, yes. I was twenty. She wasn't that far off turning thirty when we started going out. It wasn't easy convincing her I was mature enough, especially when she was basically my first girlfriend."
"Why did you separate?"

He’d asked her these things about her divorce when they had barely just met, so Hiccup supposed fair was fair.

"Because she couldn't stay away from Australia, and I couldn't leave my family. I still consider her one of my closest friends, and until quite recently we had a friends with benefits thing going on" if he was being honest, may as well be all at once "but not anymore."

Valka’s brow furrowed; it was the same face Tyr pulled when a crayon broke.

"Why?"

"Because we agreed it was until one of us was interested in someone else. Mala doesn't miss a thing. She knows I like you."

A little hesitant that it came out as though Hiccup dropped Mala because he had his eye elsewhere, as opposed to the end of that part of his life in hopes of starting a new chapter, Hiccup reached for Valka's hand.

She let him.

"It's over?"

"With Mala? Completely. I told you, I'm not looking for a meaningless fling. I've never been that type. And I'm not saying we have to rush into anything, but I'd like it if you respected me enough to not doubt my commitment to... commitment."

*That* was what scared him - that Valka saw him as immature, incapable of being interested in something serious. He'd rather stay her friend than ruin everything. Hiccup would hate himself if he hurt Tyr or Valka.

"What did you say to Sven?"

Hiccup looked away sheepishly. Valka latched on as only a mother could, searching for guilt.

"Hiccup?"

"I told him he was jealous because I made you smile. I'm sorry about that, its not like me to taunt like that. Of course, my sympathy is limited since he punched me."

Valka frowned, fingers brushing his stomach. He grimaced. It was tender.

"Show me?"

Hiccup sighed inwardly, lifting his t-shirt. Valka had seen him topless before, but it didn't change that he knew he was scrawny, unimpressive. And there was a patch of skin darkening where Sven's fist connected.

"*Please,* tell me he never hurt you or the little dragon."

He doubted it, fairly certain it was the lashing out of a wounded ego, but Hiccup had to ask.

"No, never. I'd have killed him if he hurt Ty."

Hiccup didn't doubt *that* for a second. Lowering his t-shirt again, Hiccup snagged a bit of cake
from the side.

"Now that's out of the way... we should talk about boundaries."

"Like what?"

They sat down - and Hiccup ate his cake - to talk.

"You said we can't tell Tyr yet. That's totally understandable, but I'd like to spend more time with you. Both of you. Can I come over and make you guys dinner more often?"

Valka pondered, then nodded.

"I'd like that."

Hiccup grinned.

"Then I'm good."

She eyed him strangely.

"Seriously?"

"What more do I need?"

Hiccup was happy with the idea of getting to be around them more, and they had the weekends for hiding anything more than friendship from Tyr. Granted, it would blow a little to not be able to kiss Valka again before Tyr went to bed...

But that was a small price to pay. And for now, he could kiss her as much as Valka would let him get away with.

Which turned out to be a fair amount, actually. They originally sat down to watch a movie together, but ten minutes in Hiccup didn't remember what they were watching. It wasn't a demanding, lust-burning make-out session, but it was heady and addictive and Hiccup was dizzy by the time Valka seemed sated. He gently encouraged her to lean into him, elated when she was curled against his chest.

They whiled away the rest of the evening just like that, and Hiccup wouldn't have changed a thing. Already building a solid foundation of friendship, conversation flowed easily, naturally. Hiccup was reluctant to leave, but knew that the later it got the more it could come across he was trying to 'sleep over'. He meant it when he told Valka he wanted something real.

"I should go. It's late and I live all the way next door."

Valka laughed, a sound he enjoyed immensely.

"Will I see you tomorrow then?"

"I have work, but if milady is agreeable, I can come over and make dinner when I get back?"

He got a nod, a smile. And a rather heated kiss goodbye before they opened the front door to let Hiccup out.

"Goodnight."
"Goodnight Hiccup."

He left with a spring in his step, turning to see Valka watching him to his door as he hopped the fence, waving as he let himself in.

"And where were you? I doubt a child's birthday party ran this late."

"Look at that grin babe, he got lucky!"

Astrid and Eret were sat at the kitchen table, Astrid dipping strawberries into peanut butter while Eret drank a protein shake. Hiccup rolled his eyes at both of them.

"I was with Valka. Not like that!"

"Well you aren't smiling like that after just a conversation."

"She kissed me."

The fact Hiccup had a thing for Valka was news to absolutely nobody. The fact she was receptive to it was news to them, judging by their stunned faces.

"What?"

"She kissed me. A lot."

"So you two are a thing now?"

Hiccup shrugged, smiling.

"I think so. But don't mention anything. She doesn't want Tyr finding out."

They nodded, still staring.

"I woulda thought the kid would be thrilled."

Eret said, contemplating his protein shake as though it could explain the relationship to him.

"He's eleven, as of today. And his dad isn't exactly a fan of mine" Hiccup had the bruise to show for it "so it would complicate things and make us trying to figure out if this is gonna work much, much harder."

For a brief second, Hiccup worried they would make judgement on the age gap, but after some quiet thought, Astrid's only question was about Tyr.

"Are you really on board with possibly having an eleven year old stepson? I mean, you were only twelve when he was born."

"He's a great kid. If anything, Tyr is a bonus. Nobody else is as excited about dragons as I am."

Astrid laughed, rubbing her stomach.

"So long as you're happy."

Hiccup nodded, giving Astrid his happiest smile. She got up and hugged him, reached up to ruffle his hair and returned to her food. Lifting the next strawberry coated in nut butter to her mouth, Astrid halted and turned to him with an almost evil smile on her face.
"Oh. And I definitely want to be there when you tell dad your new girlfriend is in her forties with a kid."

"I'm a dragon!"

Valka looked up from her pile of marking, saw Tyr and Hiccup parading around the kitchen, Tyr clinging to Hiccup's shoulders and laughing himself silly. With carte-blanche to spend more time with them, and Valka's permission to continue bonding with her son, Hiccup and Ty were growing ever closer even after just a couple of weeks.

"Ok little dragon, I need to focus on dinner so you go do your homework."

Tyr joined Valka at the table, setting up with his books and her heart warmed at the happy smile still on her little boys face. She kept expecting... something to not work with Hiccup. Anything. But he was so patient and caring, indulging Tyr without undermining Valka's parenting and making her smile like a complete idiot.

Honestly, her only issue was that they had to stay secret for the moment, both because Sven would blow a gasket and because Valka wasn't yet ready to let her son see Hiccup as more than neighbour and friend. She couldn't bring herself to call him 'boyfriend' yet, but Hiccup didn't pressure her to put a label on anything.

All he seemed to want was kissing and cuddling, hand holding and sharing dinner with them. And Hiccup completely respected that they couldn't let on to Ty, never pushed a boundary until Ty was tucked up asleep in bed.

But after that? Hiccup couldn't seem to help himself. Valka was little better, hooked on the way he kissed her, hands cradling her lower back or stroking over her sensitive neck until she had goosebumps. They kissed and kissed and kissed, leaving Valka dazed and wanting. She couldn't remember ever being under such ardent attention; Sven had never been the primal type. Hiccup was all teasing tongue and playfully roaming hands.

"I better go. I have to take Toothless back to the vets for a check up in the morning."

Despite his words, Hiccup was making no move from where he was only a few inches from her face, lips wet and swollen and those emerald eyes dark.

"Then go."

He chuckled, mouth pressing to her neck and sending tingles through her shaky limbs as he stifled sounds of laughter. How did he leave her like a swooning schoolgirl?

"In a minute."

Eventually they pulled away from each other, stealing last kisses before Hiccup headed home. Left Valka with a racing heart and a belly full of butterflies, unable to keep the smile from her face.

What was she doing, letting this youth steal her heart?

Oh, but he was wonderful. Mature and thoughtful, Hiccup was as happy to sit quietly, talking to Valka about their entire lives as he was to hang out with Ty. Old enough that Valka couldn't doubt him a grown man, but young enough that he didn't think playing with a child beneath him. Playfully enough that Valka forgot to feel old when she was with him.
Losing his mother - and his leg - in the accident had made him wise beyond his years, taking care of his little sister leaving him with a caring, nurturing soul.

If Valka wasn't careful, she was in real danger of falling for him. It had only been a couple of weeks, but he was adamant about the fact he was serious about her. Hadn't so much as tried to move them physically beyond kissing and the occasional playful squeeze of her backside. And he touched her just because - a brush of their hands, a kiss on her cheek, fingers toying idly with her hair when they were sat quietly together. He was tactile and affectionate in a way Valka found herself craving more of.

Really, he had no business being so bloody perfect. It scared her a little.

Hiccup waited until Sven - still rather stony with her, though he didn't bring up the altercation with Hiccup in front of their son - picked up Ty that Friday before inviting her over to him. Toothless greeted her excitedly, recovered from his vet trip save for the shaved patch of fur regrowing.

"Are you busy tomorrow?"

After his initial assault on Valka's higher brain function, kissing her stupid with a smile on his face, Hiccup had the nerve to ask her a question. It took her a minute to put together what he was asking with an answer.

"I've no plans."

"Good. We're going out."

"Is this one of your six days of adventures?"

Hiccup smiled softly, stroking her hand with his fingers. It sent tingles up much of her arm, fed that skittering beat in her chest.

"No, although if you want one of those, you can come out with me and the others tomorrow night. Seeing Dagur do karaoke is definitely an adventure. I haven't forgotten those, but my next ideas aren't all that compatible with the snow."

"Are you asking me on a date?"

He didn't falter, barely even blinked.

"Yes and no. I know you aren't ready for anyone else to know and that's fine, but you are pleasant company and so I'd like to take you when I go out tomorrow."

"Where are we going?"

Valka wanted to know what she already knew she was agreeing to.

"The museum. They have a new art exhibit."

Her ears pricked up.

"I like art."

"Really? I would never have guessed. Is that a yes to going?"

Valka nodded. Hiccup beamed, resumed kissing sense clean out of her. He was normally more careful about how their bodies encountered each other, but presently cuddled beneath a blanket
together on the sofa against the chills of winter, she realised with a thrill what she could feel pressing against her stomach as they kissed.

The fact Valka was able to elicit such a... physical response from Hiccup was enough to make her feel much warmer than any blanket, skin flushed as Hiccup appeared to realise and tried to shift himself so it was less obvious.

"Sorry."

His cheeks were reddened, whether from arousal or embarrassment she wasn't sure.

"Don't be. It's... rather complimentary, really."

Hiccup's brow furrowed before smoothing out.

"Oh, you were getting a rise out of me before you kissed me, believe me."

Valka wasn't sure how, still at something of a loss as to what he saw in her even now, with the feel of his erection not yet faded from her skin's memory. Hiccup saw her doubt, kissed her again until he left her gasping, dizzy with the heat pumping through her veins.

"I should go start dinner."

Reluctantly letting him leave their warm cocoon, Valka tried to get herself under control before she made a fool of herself and literally threw herself at him. Hiccup hovered at the doorway, then turned back to Valka, looking shyer than he usually did and talking quite fast once he got started.

"Would you... would you consider spending the night here? I'm not saying anything has to happen, I just thought it would be nice to cuddle in bed and-"

"Hiccup!"

He stopped, blinking.

"Yeah?"

"I'd love to."

Valka couldn't quite believe she said it, but truth be told she ached with loneliness when he left of an evening and she had to go to bed bereft of his embrace. *Obviously* he couldn't stay over hers while Ty was oblivious, but with nobody around to know? She wasn't going to say no.

"Really?"

He looked surprised, hopeful.

"Really."

His answering grin was enough to make Valka glad she wasn't standing, certain her knees would have buckled.

"Ok. Awesome. Uh, do you want to go get your stuff while I start dinner? I figure you'll want pyjamas and a toothbrush and stuff. You could even bring stuff to go out tomorrow so you don't have to go get it in the morning?"

He was babbling a little, but Valka found it endearing that for all his cool confidence while
reducing her to a wreck with his kisses, Hiccup was as affected by whatever it was between them as she was.

Stood in her house, Valka did know several minutes of indecision. What if something did happen? She wasn't all that certain she could let Hiccup undress her. But then, she had full certainty that if Hiccup tried it on and she said no, he'd respect that and she should stop being silly and get back over there. Tomorrows clothes packed up alongside essentials like her keys and purse, Valka grabbed her pyjamas and a wash bag before heading back to Hiccup next door.

He lit up seeing she had come back prepared to stay over, as though he expected her to chicken out. The thought had admittedly crossed her mind. Hiccup kissed her in greeting, then fed her tastes of dinner and slipping an arm around her waist to squeeze her gently.

They ate dinner - delicious as Hiccup's cooking always was - and digested comfortably watching mindless tv, talking occasionally but mostly content in a comfortable, easy silence.

"Would you mind if I showered before bed?"

"No problem. But I'll tell you what I tell Eret, which is if you wash your hair you better not leave the plug clogged."

Finding her a clean towel, Hiccup showed her how to work the temperamental shower. It only really occurred to her that Hiccup had an actual disability when she looked at his bathroom, with a grab rail on the walls next to toilet and bath, a shower chair he removed so it wouldn't get in her way. She'd known about his prosthetic almost as long as she had known him, so it was just... a stark reminder, she supposed.

"Take as long as you like, I'll be downstairs with my dopey dog."

Valka twisted her hair up out of the way as best she could, not planning to get it wet. It was something she luckily had practice in. Cleansing her skin, she shaved her legs so she wouldn't feel uncomfortable wearing her nightdress to bed and felt better for being clean. That dream she had of Hiccup and this nightie made her cheeks warm, but Valka ignored it, brushed her teeth and rubbed a light cream on. Finished, she headed down to find Hiccup stood at the back door watching Toothless chase a moth around the garden.

He turned to look her up and down, smiling as she came closer. Kissed her when she got near enough, hummed softly against her lips with a smile.

"Enjoy your shower?"

"Very much so, thank you."

Hiccup made them hot chocolate before bed, rich and warming them against the winter night. His bedroom was very his, a desk full of doodles and what she was fairly certain was the entire set of How To Train Your Dragon books on the top row of a bookshelf. There was a wheelchair folded up against the side if his wardrobe, which he nudged out of view before grabbing pyjamas.

"Won't be long."

He returned soon enough in his pyjamas, seeing Valka perched rather awkwardly on his bed.

"Are you ok?"

"Are you embarrassed about your leg?"
Hiccup frowned, sitting next to her

"Not specifically. It's more... when I have it on, it's like 'ok, this bit of me is made of metal'. But without it, it's more 'this part of me is missing'."

Valka reached for his hand, relieved not to be rebuffed as he laced his fingers through hers.

"It doesn't bother me. It never has."

He nodded at her slowly, playing idly with her fingers.

"That's sort of why I asked you to stay. I mean, I do want to be able to cuddle you in bed, but it was also me telling myself I can take my leg off near you."

They slid beneath cool covers that warmed quickly to their body heat. Hiccup reached down with a face of concentration, fumbling beneath the covers before sighing as something gave. Valka tried not to stare, but her eyes wouldn't move from the sight of his detached prosthetic, resting against the wall next to the bed.

"I'm not quite ready for you to see it yet."

He seemed worried Valka would take offense at that, but gods... it was obviously such a big deal to him, the fear she would judge him.

"That's fine."

Finally, he smiled again, reaching for Valka and she went willingly. Seeking to reassure him nothing was different Valka kissed him, finding Hiccup reticent for a heartbeat before he responded with the same fervor as before, hand on her lower back holding her to him. The fact only one of his legs knocked against hers beneath the covers didn't change the blistering heat of his mouth, nor did it calm the fire in her belly when his hand slipped to her thigh.

She shivered, sensitive, remembering the phantom scrape of stubble on her neck and hands on her hips. Hiccup mistook it for a negative, pulling away and leaving Valka breathless, bereft of his mouth and hands.

"What's wrong?"

"N-nothing."

Gods, was she so mindless she couldn't speak?

"No, really, what's wrong?"

Valka swallowed thickly, hoping the limited light hid her burning cheeks.

"I'm just... sensitive there."

She'd been taught as a teen that it wasn't 'proper' for a woman to talk about such things. She knew now that was nonsense, but the ingrained shame response still crept up.

"Sorry. But also noted."

Hiccup's mouth had curved into a playful smirk, one that promised things her body tried to overrule her mind to demand. He made her feel like a blushing virgin, barely understanding the feelings rampaging through her body. Hel, she may as well be. It had been so long, crumbling marriage an
effective end to her sex life.

Now Hiccup was inches away from her, unaware but probably being able to guess by the way her limbs were shaking that Valka's thighs were wet, arousal demanding satisfaction. He didn't push, but when her hand took on a mind of it's own and guided his, Hiccup hissed against her mouth as he found her bare and wet.

"Do you always sleep commando?"

Speechless as his fingers burned against her clit, Valka could only nod, pushing needily against his hand until Hiccup stroked her properly, pulling back to watch her face, testing speed and motion until he landed on what made Valka buck. Sex with Sven had always been *nice*, but Hiccup lit a fire inside her Valka wasn't aware she could feel, back arching and fingers curling around his shoulder, fistng in his bedsheat.

He slipped a finger inside her, the second one aching a little but Valka craved it, needed it, pleaded in her moans for him to continue. Hiccup kissed her greedily, swallowing her sounds of pleasure for himself as he tormented her beautifully. Body tight as a bowstring, Hiccup's mouth on her neck and that faint burn left by the rasp of his stubble was all it took for Valka to come undone, clutching at him as she shuddered through her climax.

Hiccup was watching her as she came down, eyes opening to find his fixed on her face. Valka fought to bring her breathing back under control, easier said than done when Hiccup kissed her sweetly, soothing her when she whimpered as his fingers left her.

"Are you ok?"

"Mmm. More than."

He chuckled, voice lower and rougher than she was used to and her thrumming body shivered. Hiccup rolled over to grab tissues from his bedside, wiping the mess from his hand. Valka excused herself from the bed, legs barely able to bear her weight as she went to the bathroom and cleaned herself up, ignoring her flustered reflection.

Returning to the bedroom, she could only assume Hiccup had tended to himself while she was gone, the erection she'd felt before conspicuously absent when Hiccup pulled her into his body, kissing her goodnight before they settled down to sleep. Soft with afterglow, Valka fell asleep almost instantly with his warmth against her back and his arm around her.

When she woke that warmth was gone, but not far - Hiccup was leant over the side of the bed, the sound of his prosthetc impacting the side of the bedframe dully a clue to what he was doing. He laid back down when done, turning sleepily toward her with a smile.

"Hey. Did I wake you?"

Valka shook her head, allowing him to pull her close and cuddle before they left the warm nest of bedding.

"Why put your leg on to stay in bed?"


Once they actually got up and he was a little more coherent, Hiccup explained properly that once he moved his amputated leg over the side of the bed, blood and fluid could cause it to swell and then his metal leg wouldn't fit, so his leg was meant to be attached basically the second his eyes
opened if he wasn't 'wheeling it'.

"Do you use the chair often?"

"My wheelchair? Not really. Only if I've hurt my leg and can't wear my prosthetic. I use the shower chair quite a bit, but that's mostly because then I never slip while washing my hair. But I may become more reliant on it in the future."

He watched Valka over his mug of tea, obviously searching her face for a reaction to that.

"Why's that?"

"Well, the human body isn't designed to walk on what is effectively a stilt forever. So as I get older it will take a toll."

Done with their drinks and not yet decided on what to have for breakfast, Hiccup looked to Valka with a serious expression marring his usually happy features.

"Do you regret last night?"

She shook her head, but felt her face heat up.

"I'm a little embarrassed. I don't usually behave that way."

Approaching her with purpose, Hiccup's hands sat on her hips as he kissed her.

"Then I'm happy to be the exception, because I honestly found it a massive turn on."

There was no hint of a lie in his face, only an insistence that Valka believe him. His mouth covered hers again before cruelly moving away.

"Breakfast and art then?"

"Sounds good."

-HTTYD-

I didn't intend to put smut in this chapter at all but these two just write themselves!
It's super fun that this story has already gotten me a couple of new unrelated!Valcup prompts, I'm glad that its catching on. (obviously it's not canonverse Valcup but each has its attraction)

-HTTYD-

Hiccup confessed himself a little put out about their secrecy that day, having gotten to indulge a want to kiss her for hours at a time, the way she'd whimpered and climaxed beneath his hands after that unexpected but entirely welcome... invitation. Their lazy cuddles in bed, playful kisses over breakfast.

Now they were standing the acceptable distance apart, where Hiccup couldn't even hold her hand? It was a tad disappointing. But he understood all the reasons why they were secret, and Hiccup knew it was a big deal to Valka to even be out with him. It hadn't been an issue before, but now they were... whatever they were, she was obviously worried about appearances.

Despite it all, he was having fun. Valka adored art as much as he, perhaps even more, and he got to enjoy exhibits and watch her get excited. Her doe eyes were acutely expressive, smile wide and matched with pink cheeks as she cooed and squealed about particularly intriguing pieces. Hiccup's focus kept slipping from exhibits to the work of art that had spent the night in his bed.

"So what's your favourite? Acrylic or watercolour?"

"Oh, that's hardly a fair comparison. Both have their place. You wouldn't use watercolour paint for those eggs you and Ty made. I wouldn't use acrylics for a soft scenery landscape."

Hiccup grinned; he loved her passion for art.

"True. But if you had to pick only one to use forever from now, which would it be?"

Valka had to stop and think, surprisingly pale - for an Australian, anyway - skin lit up by the winter sun outside as she'd halted near a window. Nothing really beat a natural light source when it came to art.

And Valka was absolutely art. All long limbs and high cheeks, hair intricately braided down much of her back. And those eyes!

"Are you ignoring me?"

"Sorry. I was distracted by how the light caught you, you have amazing cheekbones."

Said cheekbones became freshly reddened, making Hiccup smile as Valka looked away shyly, tucking an errant hair behind her ear.

"Thank you."

At least she didn't ask him not to compliment her in public; that would have been too much for him. How was he to contain the need to tell Valka she was beautiful?

"So, what were you saying? Painting?"
"If I could only pick one? Watercolours. But I would miss acrylic paints. All those bold shades."

"I'm not great at watercolours. Personally, I could never give up charcoal. Or ink."

He'd use charcoal to draw Valka. A little smudge to highlight the shadows of her cheekbones sounded perfect.

Against her protests, Hiccup bought Tyr some dinosaur-patterned crayons from the museum gift shop, waving off her complaints.

"If you hadn't come with me, I would have done it anyway. I would also have brought you something, but I know you won't let me get away with that."

Valka crossed her arms, very very close to a petulant pout on her face as Hiccup grinned. They stopped off in the cafe for lunch, and Hiccup felt butterflies when Valka brushed their hands together beneath the table. It wasn't a full hand-holding, but it was a big deal for the woman insistent on them being hidden.

Hiccup would take concessions where he could, and her shy smile told him it was intentional. A last trip back for Valka to look at her favourite painting in the exhibit, and then they were back outside in the brisk air.

"Am I having the pleasure of your company for dinner this evening?"

"If you like."

Suppressing the urge to get all giddy and happy, Hiccup settled on a smile as they headed back to the car.

"I gotta go to the shop, do you want me to drop you home first?"

Valka frowned, shaking her head.

"Of course not, that would be silly."

"Yeah, I thought so too but I also don't want you feeling worried about how much time we spend together in public."

"Oh. I hardly think neighbours going to the supermarket together is suspect."

Hiccup nodded, and so they set off. Valka watched him picking things out, scanning ingredient information more intently than most people do.

"What are you looking for?"

"Well, the little dragon has allergies and Astrid's pregnant. I just have to be a little more careful what comes into my house now. A lot of what I buy is fresh though, so it's not that tough."

He was relieved to get back to their homes, Valka following him into his and waiting only to put down the shopping before he was soundly kissed. Hiccup's stomach felt like it was doing backflips, an altogether more pleasant feeling when Valka was pressed to his mouth.

"What did I do to deserve that and how do I do it again?"

Valka laughed lightly, arms winding around his waist.
"For being patient and not pushing the issue."

Hiccup ran a hand up and down her back, liking how tall she was as it meant they were equal heights while hugging.

"Hey, I totally understand why. I just miss when I can't hold your hand and stuff. But I still had a really nice day with you."

"I did too."

He smiled, thrilled by her quiet words.

"And for what it's worth, I am very thankful you were willing to take a chance on me. I can wait for everything else."

Valka kissed his jaw, hands flexing on his lower back.

"I never dreamed I'd be interested in someone so young. But I've never met anyone like you."

"I've never met anyone like you."

They kissed, languid and lazy at first but Valka often inadvertently made everything a little hotter with her arms around his neck and those soft gasps against his mouth.

"Whoa, didn't mean to interrupt!"

Valka pulled away from him, flushing as she realised they'd been caught by Eret. Astrid was right behind him, giving Hiccup a very knowing look as he kept his arm around Valka's waist.

"Well, you've interrupted now."

Eret grinned unapologetically, and Hiccup couldn't suppress an answering chuckle. Valka was obviously still a little rattled, but he soothed a hand over her back.

"They already knew. Don't worry, they won't tell."

"I didn't go blabbing, we just knew he had a crush on you and it didn't take a genius to figure out why he was coming back from yours looking like the Cheshire cat."

Eret was lying a little, Hiccup had told them she kissed him, but he hadn't really confirmed much else. There wasn't much to confirm - they hadn't called their... thing a relationship yet.

"And you don't mind?"

Astrid raised an incredulous eyebrow.

"What? Oh, because you're... no. Couldn't care less so long as my brother is happy. But if you could stop feeling each other up in the kitchen, that would be good. Pregnant girls gotta eat."

Hiccup would have glared at Astrid, but he was too happy she had bluntly stated she didn't care about their age gap to Valka.

"I've bought stuff for dinner."

He watched his sisters interest raise.
"Can the dinner include cheese?"

"Uh, sure. If not I can include in yours specially. And I got a new jar of that reduced salt peanut butter you like."

Astrid beamed.

"See, earning that number one uncle label already. I got some bad news earlier though, I am no longer meant to do pull ups."

"Are you showing?"

"A little."

Astrid lifted her jumper, displaying where her usually solid abs were a little soft, belly a little rounded.

"Are they moving yet?"

"No kick boxing really, but some wriggling for sure."

Valka was very quiet, and Hiccup was a little worried. But he wasn't going to ask in front of the others, doubting she would appreciate prying into her privacy with an audience.

"You, go shower. You smell terrible."

Eret pouted, but Hiccup now realised what that smell was, thinking maybe Toothless was due a mouth rinse - he couldn't exactly use dental stick treats.

"Love you too Astrid."

"Oh, that was a tricky part of pregnancy for me. Everything smelled terribly strong."

Valka finally spoke, fingers flexing against his waist.

"Right? I have to leave the staff room if anyone's eating tuna. Which is often. Damn personal trainers."

"You're a personal trainer."

Astrid glared.

"Not the point. I'm going to change."

She and Eret headed upstairs, leaving Hiccup and Valka in the kitchen. He looked at her, noting there was still tension in her frame.

"Are you ok?"

"Hm? Oh, yes."

"Are you ok with staying for dinner with those two?"

Valka nodded - a new experience for all of them. She was notably on edge, but (and Hiccup was very grateful for it) Astrid and Eret were absolutely no different with Valka there than if she wasn't, cracking jokes and fighting over potatoes. They included her in conversation, not acting like
she was the oldest at the table by at least fifteen years and couldn't possibly share interests.

"Do you want to stay at your place instead? With or without me, I won't hold it against you."

"I'd like to sleep in my own bed, but you are certainly welcome."

Hiccup did an internal fist pump, unsurprised Valka was uncomfortable with the prospect of staying the night with Eret and Astrid - them sharing a bed was a brand new thing. And as it had transpired, Valka was not quiet. Hiccup didn't assume anything would happen, but if it did there would be no wisecracks at breakfast.

"Aw look at them Eret, having sleepovers!"

"Aren't they sweet?"

"Oh be quiet, both of you."

Astrid winked and hugged him, kissed his cheek and then threw a stray bit of sweetcorn at him.

"Can you let Toothless out before you go to bed?"

"Of course. Now shoo. Go be with your woman before the kiddo's back tomorrow."

Astrid actually flapped her hands at him, giggling merrily as he knelt down to say goodnight to Toothless.

"You behave yourself."

"Oof!"

"That's what I thought."

Pyjamas and toothbrush ready, Hiccup headed around next door. Valka was waiting to open the door, welcoming him in and Hiccup smiled as they embraced. He'd been in her bedroom the day they met, but this was altogether a more intimate situation. They took turns changing and getting ready for bed in the bathroom, leaving the window open a tiny crack to allow the sounds of snowfall outside in.

"Hiccup?"

Having fumbled to remove his leg beneath the covers, they were now loosely embraced beneath a thick, cosy duvet.

"Yeah?"

Valka was tracing nonsense shapes on the fabric covering his chest, not meeting his eyes.

"Would it change things for you if I couldn't give you children?"

He frowned, but kept his hand on her shoulder.

"That's not a hypothetical question is it?"

"No."

Hiccup pondered. Did it change anything? Yes, he wanted to be a dad, had been set on having
children when he and Mala were getting serious. But.. was it a dealbreaker?

"No. I mean, it's a little sad, but it's not going to change that I want to be with you. And I have no doubt I'll love Tyr as if he were my own. I can settle for stepdad to be with you."

It was very early in their fledgling relationship to be talking so seriously, but on the other hand Hiccup was glad they were getting it out of the way early. Didn't want Valka dwelling on the fear he wouldn't accept that.

"I shouldn't be asking you to. You have all the time to find someone who can-"

He shook his head, wriggling to ensure they were looking at each other.

"No. I'm not going to sit here- well, lie here, and say that I love you because it's not the truth, not yet. But I have no doubts that I could, that I will. I don't want to look for someone else. I want you, and I want to watch your son grow up with you."

Valka all but leapt at him, hauling him into a kiss by grabbing his pyjama top to yank him closer. Hiccup could do little but hang on for the ride, her being so demanding a new experience. One he rather liked, if he was honest. Hungry kisses became playful gropes, became Valka's hand slipping down under his waistband to drag needy sounds from Hiccup.

He felt like an excitable virgin again, body warm and tight from the simplicity of her hand on his cock, clumsy slide becoming steady strokes as Valka grew in confidence. Gods, it had been years since Hiccup had encountered this new learning curve, exploring a new body. But then, if it had been a while for him - it had been decades for Valka. He was more than happy to assist her learning.

Her hand was hot, slender fingers encircling him and her thumb teasing the sensitive head, tracing the edge and Hiccup groaned, hips bucking into tantalising grip. Feeling the burn build low in his belly, Hiccup reached for tissues from her beside box, not wanting to ruin his pyjama bottoms - Valka hadn't even pulled his waistband clear, couldn't see what she touched.

Managing to cover his tip as he came, Hiccup grunted and jerked slightly as Valka brought him off, wiping the mess lazily as dopamine flooded him. Valka was reluctant to let him go, a fact that amused and thrilled him a little in his post-climax haze.

"Well... certainly wasn't expecting that."

Valka smiled shyly, kissed him. Hiccup recognised the way she squirmed, knew she was hot herself now. He placed a hand on her thigh, enjoying her shiver and the new edge to her kisses, the surging forward to press their bodies together more firmly.

"Do you trust me?"

After a few beats, Valka nodded to his whisper. Rolled agreeably onto her back, let Hiccup push up her nightress until he could wriggle down between quivering thighs. She was nervous, he could tell as he pressed a kiss to a trembling muscle. Hiccup made sure to go slow, not wanting to spook her but drawn in by the smell of arousal, nuzzling gently at her thigh until she calmed.

"You do trust me?"

The next kiss was to wet warmth, tongue slipping out to taste her properly and Valka cried out, seeming surprised by the sensation as her fingers found their way into his hair. Hiccup worked her up with patience, wanting all semblance of nerves gone so there would be nothing to dull the climax.
Gods she was responsive, those fingers soothing over his scalp knotting tight when Hiccup swiped his tongue across her clit, legs shaking when he circled it. There were *indecent* sounds escaping her mouth when Hiccup sealed his lips around the little bud, suckling until he was satisfied Valka was well on her way to mindless with pleasure.

Her moans and whimpers were music to his ears, spurring Hiccup on despite the ache in his tongue and the pressure on his head from her tightening legs. When he managed to wriggle a hand down to join his tongue, Valka quickly buckled beneath the onslaught and arched, almost crushing him between her slim thighs.

Hiccup kept up teasing little licks, lapping at the wet mess she'd become until Valka pushed him away weakly, still panting and trembling upon the bed.

"Oh my..."

Chuckling, Hiccup wiped his mouth on a fresh tissue, perplexed when Valka twisted to reach in her drawer and hand him something, the something turning out to be a pack of make-up wipes.

"Thanks."

Using them instead, Hiccup's skin felt 'refreshed and moisturised' just as the packet promised. Maybe he would have to get some. Valka excused herself to the bathroom, returning a few minutes later and curling up against his chest.

"Was that... ok?"

"You really have to ask?"

"Well, I wanted to be sure. It was a little heat-of-the-moment."

Valka burrowed closer, humming.

"It was wonderful. Although I would like to know how you have *such* an effect on me."

Hiccup could only shrug, thrilled that he did but unable to explain why. They burrowed beneath her sheets for sleep, and Hiccup hoped with a half-formed thought just as he was drifting off that nobody had heard Valka through the slightly ajar window.

Waking with her still firmly in his arms, Hiccup reluctantly moved to put on his leg, tugged back into the cuddle as soon as he was done by a sleepy Valka, who proclaimed it far too early to be awake on a Sunday. Warm and comfortable, Hiccup agreed. They fooled around lazily in bed for a while, but Hiccup had to go to work and Valka had work to catch up on before Tyr came home. But they'd talked out a few things, had a fun day at the art exhibit.

And of course, Hiccup had gotten hands and mouth on her, felt Valka shiver and quake through orgasms beneath him, heady and addictive.

Hiccup just hoped his dad wouldn't be disappointed when Hiccup told him there wouldn't be any grandkids coming from him.

-HTTYD-

*Babbling sleep deprived nonsense and calling it a chapter. Well, I tried.*
Chapter 12

Polyship week had me running late for everything, but here we go!

-HTTYD-

"Oh, this is beautiful!"

Hiccup was hovering anxiously as Valka peeled off the wrapping paper over the frame, revealing protective glass over a picture. She was almost speechless with the perfection of it, no detail spared in the drawing.

"Do you like it?"

"Oh Hiccup... I don't have the words."

Valka knew he'd been working on this at least a couple of months ago, back when he'd asked what she thought of his hand-drawn colouring book for Tyr - which her son still adored. She ran fingers over the glass, tracing the intricate details of Hiccup's drawing, in which Valka was holding Tyr, the two smiling warmly at each other.

"Is that good?"

"It's amazing. I can't believe you drew this."

Every colour was perfect, right down to even the frames of Ty's glasses. Hiccup had paid so much attention to detail, even before he became Valka's... boyfriend. She had finally managed to ascribe the term to him, strange as it ought to feel calling a man eighteen years her junior her boyfriend. But it didn't feel strange. She just thought it was supposed to.

"I wanted to capture the way you two look at each other. There's so much love there."

As an art teacher, Valka was used to having to analyse someone else's work. But Hiccup's art belied analysis. There wasn't anything to break down - the entire thing was so well done it could almost come to life right off the page.

"Thank you. Truly. It's incredible."

Hiccup smiled, soft and genuine with that slightly lopsided way that Valka knew meant he was truly happy. It was one of those things she'd picked up.

"Happy early Christmas."

They weren't spending the actual holiday together - Hiccup would be with his family, and Valka with hers. But then Ty would be at his dads for a few days after Christmas, and that was time the couple intended to spend together. However, Hiccup simply couldn't wait that long to give her gift. And it truly was an amazing gift. Valka ached to kiss him in gratitude, but Tyr was upstairs packing his backpack to go visit family.

Hiccup gave her that understanding look, the one she'd become accustomed to seeing whenever they caught each other's eye in that way but her son was there. Yet Hiccup never begrudged Ty, still made an enormous fuss of her son and Tyr still clearly adored his neighbour friend.
"Wow! Is that your Christmas gift from Hiccup?"

"It is indeed. What do you think of it son?"

Tyr perused it seriously, then turned up toward the adults beaming.

"It's awesome! I mean, it could do with some dragons, but it's pretty great still."

Valka smiled and Hiccup laughed, scooping up Tyr and hugging the pre-teen. Tyr hugged him back, beaming at Valka now he was up at her height.

"You have a good Christmas little dragon, I can't wait to hear all about it when you get back."

And there Hiccup went making her melt, so sweet and genuine with her son.

"You too! Are you going to visit your dad too?"

"Yep. Me and Toothless off to see my dad. Plus Astrid and Eret."

"And baby!"

Hiccup smiled, nodding as he let Tyr down.

"Yep. Baby too. Astrid is very annoyed about no Christmas alcohol so I've been practicing making alcohol free mulled wines. Wish me luck."

"Good luck! I just hope my grandma doesn't try to convince me football is better than dragons again."

Chuckling, Hiccup agreed.

"I've been there. Of course, the whole metal leg thing helped. However, I don't recommend losing a limb to get out of sport."

Tyr pretended to be put out, then headed to the table to put his dragon colouring book and dinosaur crayons in his bag from where he'd been colouring that morning.

"Ready mom. Can I say goodbye to Toothless before we go?"

Hiccup grinned, gesturing toward the door.

"Sure, I was about to take him for a walk after I saw you off."

After some affection for the very sweet animal, Valka had to drag both her son and herself away from Hiccup. He gave her a wink while Tyr wasn't looking, and even that had the audacity to give her a flutter. How did he do that?

"See you in a few. Come on furball."

Sliding into her car, Valka smiled to herself as Tyr twisted to wave out of the window before flopping back to put his seatbelt on.

"How come I have to wait until we come back to get my gift from Hiccup?"

"Because mine took up a lot of space."

"Oh. I guess that makes sense."
The snow had eased and the roads were no longer treacherous, so the drive to her parents wasn't too bad. Tyr was enthralled to see them; they were gentle souls who loved their grandson dearly. Her father was looking much better too, no doubt thanks to her mother deciding to overhaul their diets and 'get healthy' after the heart scare not that long ago.

"How are you feeling grandpa?"

"All the better for seeing you my little Tyranno."

Tyr giggled, holding his arms up and doing 'dino claws'.

"Rawr!"

It was a warming sight to see as they laughed and hugged, Valka leaving them to bond while she went to help her mother in the kitchen. They hugged, then her mother stepped back, keen green eyes scanning her daughter.

"Are you seeing someone?"

Good gods, Valka had forgotten Rama was basically psychic - she had asked the same when Valka had first started seeing Sven.

"What?"

"You have that look. You're practically glowing. So it's either boyfriend or pregnant. Or both?"

"I'm not pregnant you mad woman!"

"So boyfriend then?"

_Damnit._ Valka had left herself open there. Sighing as she saw Rama head for the kettle - this was a tea conversation, apparently - she reluctantly admitted it.

"Yes! But Ty doesn't know."

"Oh?"

Valka sighed, sitting down and delaying the inevitable by waiting for her mother to make tea. She'd not even hinted... how was she to tell Rama about her _boyfriend_ in his _twenties_?

"So, tell me everything. Where'd you meet him?"

"I... he... he lives next door."

Rama frowned.

"I thought your neighbour was that young man little Ty is mad about. Is this the neighbour on the other side?"

Valka felt very much like a teenage girl caught doing something she knew she would get in trouble for.

"No."

"No? You're... oh. Isn't he _much_ younger?"
Burying her face in her hands rather than look her mother in the eye, Valka nodded.

"Yes. He's twenty three."

"Oh good gods Val. Twenty three?"

"Yes mother."

Using her tea to hide her face now, Valka heard Tyr giggling with his grandfather in the next room.

"Is this a mild rebellion to celebrate divorce?"

Valka blanched, shaking her head.

"What? No! He's... oh, what am I doing? I can't help it. He's wonderful. He's mature and thoughtful and he makes me laugh. And he's so good with Ty."

And when he kissed her Valka was weak for him... but she wasn't about to admit that to her mother. Her mother who was silently mouthing 'twenty three' to herself.

"That's probably because they both like dragons."

The implication was heavily laced in there - her boyfriend was immature and got along with her son because they were closer in age.

"Yes. He also loves art, and drags me out on ridiculous adventures so I don't sit at home missing Ty because of split custody, he volunteered to be 'dad' to a boy he'd just met because he looked sad. He's not a child, and he makes me happy."

Rama blinked, sipping her tea and putting her mug down before she answered.

"I'm glad to hear it. So why haven't you told Ty yet?"

Damnit. Her mother was sly, dragging out more than Valka intended to say by the power of implications alone.

"Because if Ty knows, Sven will know. And Sven... doesn't really like Hiccup."

"Hiccup?"

"It's a nickname, but Ty won't call him anything else because of the books and it's just... stuck."

"Right... and your ex husband dislikes your neighbour why exactly?"

Valka shrugged, listening to check her son was still occupied with dinosaur noises and his grandfather.

"I don't really know. At Ty's birthday he accused me of flirting with him, but he'd been on edge about Hiccup since they first met when Hiccup was fixing my car."

Granted, Valka had kissed Hiccup after that party... but she was still certain their actions hadn't amounted to flirting while the party ensued.

"I don't know Val. I don't think you'll have trouble with Ty being unhappy since he idolises the man, but-"
"Grandma!"

Tyr cut them off by bouncing into the room, on a high from playing with her father and now eager for attention from her mother. He got an equally big fuss made of him by Rama, who cooed and hugged him tight. Ty was still small and slight for his age, but he had a smile that lit up the room and a quiet excitement that seemed to follow him everywhere. And he was slowly coming out of his shell thanks to Hiccup, who taught him the things he liked didn't have to be hidden or seen as childish.

"Hello my dear little one. Excited for Christmas?"

"Yeah! Me and grandpa were being dinosaurs, but I wanted to come see you. How come you guys are hiding in here?"

"Just having some tea while you boys were playing. Shall we get hot chocolate for you and watch a nice Christmas film?"

Tyr nodded, beaming.

"Oh, and I can show you what Hiccup made me for my birthday. It's so cool! He drew mom a big picture of us for Christmas too."

"That sounds wonderful."

Plied with hot chocolate in his favourite dragon mug, Ty proudly displayed his colouring book to his grandparents.

"He drew this for you?"

"Uh-huh. With big Loki and me on adventures!"

"He's very talented."

Valka agreed, smiling as Tyr enthused. If anyone was going to be an easy sell when her relationship with Hiccup came out, it would be Ty. Hel, he had won Tyr over basically the minute he said he and his dog went by names from those dragon books.

Later that evening, with Tyr tucked up in bed and her father snoozing away in his chair, Valka was accosted by her nosy mother wanting for more details about Hiccup.

"So what does his family think of you two?"

"Well I don't know if he's told his father yet, but that might be out of respect to me asking not to tell anyone yet. He lives with his sister though, and she knows. She said she didn't care so long as her brother was happy, then her attention was on food as she's pregnant. But his last girlfriend was older than him also."

"Oh?"

"Not as old as me, but I believe she's nine or ten years his senior. Tall. Australian."

Rama - herself an Australian woman - quirked one silvery eyebrow.

"I'm seeing some similarities."

"Indeed. We look nothing alike beyond the abnormal height. He's shorter than both of us."
Her mother laughed lightly, reaching for one of the last biscuits on the plate - they would continue the overindulgence tomorrow, so there would be more biscuits then.

"I look forward to meeting him."

"So you can scare him off?"

"I would never! But if I'm to believe this youth is so special that he has won both you and your son over, I simply have to meet him."

"We'll see. It might not last."

"Oh I doubt that. You're clearly smitten, you smile every time you talk about him."

"I do?"

Valka hadn't even noticed.

"Mhmm. If he makes you and my grandson happy, then I am happy for you."

"Thank you mother."

Rama winked, draining her tea and rinsing her cup at the sink.

"I better go chase your father up to bed. Goodnight love."

Valka retired to bed not much later, smiling when she saw a text from Hiccup waiting on her phone

"I know you're with your family, but I just wanted to say I'm thinking of you and the little dragon. See you soon. H x"

Trying to fight the stupid grin from her face, Valka typed out a quick response and a goodnight before burrowing into her bed, seeing Tyr fast asleep only a few feet away with Loki cuddled up beneath the covers with him - it helped him settle to sleep in a strange place.

"Happy Christmas!"

Tyr woke her bright (or not) and early next morning, normally content to entertain himself but not so much in a house he only slept in a few times a year.

"Happy Christmas Ty. Keep the noise down, your grandpa needs his sleep."

Tyr immediately dropped his voice, thick reddish-brown hair still mussed from his pillow as he beamed at her.

"I forgot. But it's Christmas!"

His childish joy was enough to smooth away any irritation Valka had for being dragged to consciousness so early.

"Yes it is. Go get washed up quietly, and we'll go down and see if anyone visited in the night."

He didn't really believe in Santa anymore, but there was still a little childhood mystery to it all for Tyr, and he was still happy and excited. The boy padded off to the bathroom, very quiet in his morning routine before coming back to change into his Christmas jumper and fuzzy slippers. Valka did much the same, and Ty bounced happily when they got down and saw gifts under the tree
Knowing he had to wait for his grandparents to rise, Tyr settled quietly with hot chocolate - it was about all he drank at Christmas - and some toast, then his colouring book while Valka drank coffee in the hopes of more alertness.

It was their first Christmas without Sven there with them, but Tyr seemed perfectly happy despite that fact as he worked open wrapping paper carefully. His gifts were mostly practical things, like books and clothes and new boots, but there were new games for his Game Boy and paints and crayons in the mix.

"Thanks everybody! These are all awesome!"

Tyr declared - with his wrapping paper in a neatly folded pile one side, his gifts neatly piled on the other. Valka did wonder if he would transform into a messy teenager, which would be a learning curve from the boy who kept his shoes in a specific order and made his bed to an almost military standard. His gratitude was genuine and sweet, and many thankful hugs were dispensed to his grandparents delight.

Valka was sad to leave her parents, but it was Sven's time with their son and she wasn't terribly sad to miss out on seeing her ex mother in law. Ty was excited about it though, which was what mattered in the end.

"Will you take my gifts home mom? Just put them on my bed, I'll put them away."

"Of course son."

Hugging him tightly, Valka kissed his adorable little face.

"I love you. Enjoy your time with your dad, I'll see you soon son."

"I will. Hiccup said that instead of being sad that I don't get to spend time with all of you at once, I should be excited about having two Christmases! So I am. Tell Hiccup thanks when you see him?"

Would Hiccup ever stop surprising her? Now he was pre-emptively helping Tyr come to terms with a fractured family at Christmas. And if Ty hadn't told her, Valka wouldn't even know he'd done that.

"Alright. I'll see you in a few days."

She watched him up to his fathers front door, and Sven waved stiffly at her as he herded Tyr in, but she caught him smiling down at his son as the door closed. Then it was time for Valka to drive home, aching at leaving her son behind but also feeling the little quiver in her chest at the prospect of seeing Hiccup.

Valka didn't have to wait long - Hiccup was replacing a punctured tyre on a car in his driveway, one she thought was Eret's but wouldn't put money on. He straightened up when he saw her, beaming smile evident. He gestured silently to their houses, asking which one Valka wanted to utilise for their secret reunion. Valka nodded toward her house, and Hiccup nodded in response.

"I'll be about half hour yet, but once I've cleaned up I'll come see you."

"I'll see you then."

After putting away gifts, Valka's only task was to find somewhere to hang the gorgeous picture
Hiccup had made for her. Eventually hunting out some strong fixtures, it went up on the living room wall and she’d just stepped back to admire it when Hiccup let himself in, crossing the rooms until he could get his arms around her. It felt better than she’d dare admit just to be cuddled by him again, better still when his lips pressed to the hollow just below her ear.

"I missed you."

-HTTYD-

**Writing Christmas in July... because I miss the snow!**
Chapter 13

I hope everyone had a merry christmas!

And by everyone, I do of course mean the characters. Sadly it's still very much summer here.

-HTTYD-

Hiccup didn't give Valka much time to say words like "I missed you too" before their mouths clashed, making up for lost time after they'd not gone an entire day without this burning heat, only to go three days without it all at once. Her green jumper was soft on slender curves, soft beneath his hands as they slipped around her waist to crush her against him. She tasted like peppermint, painting an image of her looking cute and festive with a candycane in her mouth while with her parents.

"Did you guys have fun at your parents?"

"Mmm..." Hiccup would be lying if he said he didn't like the way Valka was a little dazed after he kissed her "yes. And thank you."

"For what?"

Valka kissed him again, softly, sweetly.

"For Ty. He told me what you said about two Christmases now."

Hiccup ducked, shy.

"The little traitor. I just didn't want him to be sad about the first proper holiday you guys weren't all together any more."

"I know, and honestly, I appreciate it more than I can say. He never stopped smiling. I was so worried..."

They moved backwards still holding each other, folding on to the sofa behind them still embraced. Hiccup breathed her in, her soft scent making his heart stutter in his chest.

"I wasn't. I know he's a sensitive soul like you, but I don't call him the little dragon for nothing. He's tougher than he looks. Tyr's just glad you guys don't fight anymore, and that you smile more now. But don't tell him I told you that."

Valka mimed zipping her lips closed, giggling as she pressed her face into his neck.

"I promise. I'm glad my son has a friend like you."

For a second, Hiccup almost felt slighted. Then he gave himself a mental scolding; no matter the state of his relationship with Valka, he would endeavour to always be in that little boys life. So friend was the right term, especially after he'd given Tyr pep talks about his mom dating and the possibilities of step-fathers.

"I'm glad I have a friend like him. And not just because his mom is hot."

Valka swatted at him, shaking her head but he saw a smile there.
"You are terrible."

"And you wouldn't have me any other way."

Her answer was to kiss him again; Hiccup had no qualms about that response.

"I told my mother about us."

Hiccup was, admittedly, shocked. He'd expected to stay a total secret for longer.

"Oh, wow. Does she think I'm some kind of rebellion after a long marriage?"

Valka raised an eyebrow, looking at him suspiciously.

"Almost that exactly, why?"

"My dad said something similar when I gave him a hint. I reckon he knows it's you, but I never gave him names. He caught me texting you, asked who'd put that smile on my face. But I set him straight that this isn't something I'm taking lightly."

"I did the same. Then I realised my mother had wheedled all that honesty out of me by simply implying I wasn't serious. She's sneaky like that."

Hiccup chuckled, pressed a kiss to her hair.

"How about your dad? I don't mean us, I meant is he doing ok? You said he had a health scare before."

Valka nodded, curling a little tighter into his chest.

"He's doing brilliantly, all things considered. Mother has them on a strict and healthy diet, Christmas was the first time he's been allowed more than one piece of chocolate in weeks. He was almost as excited as Ty."

They sat there cuddled up, exchanging daft stories about their seperate family adventures over the holiday and intermittent kisses, but Hiccup was just exceedingly happy she was back. He'd not realised how acutely he would miss her and Tyr, even as he accepted they'd become a firm part of his every day life. Both were surprised when there was a knock at her door.

"Expecting someone?"

Valka shook her head, both getting up to investigate.

"It's Astrid."

"Oh, they must be heading off."

Opening her door, it did indeed reveal his sister and her boyfriend, who gave the couple inside knowing smiles.

"Hey. We walked Toothless cus I know you don't love the snow, he's sleeping. Eret's car is good to go yes?"

"He'll need to fill his tank as soon as possible, but yeah."

Astrid smiled, reaching to hug him.
"Well, we'll be off. You kids have fun now."

"Thanks Astrid. Bye Eret!"

Waving, the Sami slid his arm around Astrid as they walked off to his car, off to see Eret's parents for the holidays now.

"Where are they going?"

"Eret's family. See? Lots of people have two Christmases."

He pushed the door closed, then turned to Valka.

"It's fine if you don't want to, but if you want to sleep over it'll have to be at my place. Can't leave Toothless all alone all night."

"Of course. Do you want to go ahead and I'll come over soon?"

Hiccup nodded, leant in to kiss her goodbye and sat to put his shoes back on - he'd not wanted to track snow and slush through her home. She ran fingers through his hair, threatening to distract Hiccup from his current task but it felt oh so nice, sending light tingles rolling down his spine.

"Will you be long? I just want to know if I should make you a drink."

Valka hummed, then shook her head.

"I'm going to take a shower, my parents only have a tub and I just don't feel as cleansed."

She'd showered at his before, but Hiccup wasn't going to tell the woman she couldn't use her own bathroom.

"Alright. I'll be waiting. Door will be unlocked."

Toothless was still napping when Hiccup got back, so he stealthily managed to make up the gummy creatures soft food before Toothless realised what was going on and immediately began drooling all over the place hungrily. Daft animal. Hiccup turned the heat on, not wanting anyone to freeze, then made himself tea and lounged on the sofa to await his girlfriends return. Done eating, Toothless came to roll about on the floor wanting attention, panting happily when Hiccup rubbed his belly, scratched behind his ears.

Washing drool off his hands, Hiccup felt thin arms spider around his waist, lips pressing to his throat. He smiled at the deja vu, felt Valka smile into his skin.

"Nice shower?"

"Mhmm. It was a little brisk walking around here, but then lovely to walk in to the warmth."

"Yeah, I didn't want you getting chilly."

Hiccup managed to dry his hands without dislodging Valka, twisting in her hold to face her properly. She was beautiful, with that soft smile and the faint blush of outsides chill on her high cheekbones.

"So, dinner and trashy post-christmas TV?"

Valka nodded.
"Sounds wonderful."

It was, the simple joy of being together making even the cheesiest of movies much more amusing, the warmth of her body against his under a blanket meaning even his leg didn't ache fiercely as it often did in winter. They had some sweet treats later on, mostly Christmas biscuits left over that Hiccup was sent back with - uncle Gobber always made too much of everything.

"Did you make these?"

"No, for once. My uncle Gobber made these, he's the reason we don't eat an entirely burnt dinner every year. Surprisingly good cook for a man with one arm."

"Oh?"

Hiccup realised he hadn't mentioned his amputee surrogate uncle, his fathers best friend who'd been around since they were young.

"His loss was from a wild animal, not a car. But yeah, he makes good food."

"I can tell."

They still changed separately for bed; neither had been naked in front of the other, and their sexual relationship hadn't moved beyond trading pleasure with hands or mouths. But that didn't matter; they were intimate and close simply when they held each other. And it wasn't like Hiccup was cool and confident; Valka hadn't seen his amputation, his residual limb always covered by either his prosthetic or clothing. Hel, he didn't take his shirt off in front of her often, knowing he was covered in scars. So he understood that Valka was shy, appreciated the concession that she let him hike up her nightdress - or in some cases, the skirt she had on that day - to delight in the way she tasted, the way she responded to him.

Still, Hiccup no longer felt strange in bed with her once his leg came off, knowing she'd returned to his bed and invited him into hers multiple times after watching him take it off. He rubbed his stump with a sigh, flexing his knee to alleviate the stiffness of a pleasant few hours spent not moving from their warm blanket cocoon. Valka patiently waited for the resumption of cuddling, warm and soft in his arms as they shuffled closer. Her head lifted, seeking his mouth with her own and Hiccup happily answered the silent plea, tasting freshmint toothpaste on her lips now as he turned to kiss her properly.

Hands played at his waist, normally the point where Valka would reach downwards and make Hiccup a happy man indeed. Instead, they nudged at his sleep shirt, questioning without demanding. Hiccup helped her remove it, feeling her hands stroke at his bare chest, tickling slightly over his lean stomach before they pushed at his waistband. He realised this was her actively trying to undress him, something Hiccup was ultimately nervous about but equally willing to concede. His hands moved down, helped her push down his bottoms and shivered as they slipped off his shorter leg. He was naked now, never bothering to wear boxers to bed with her as they only slowed eager hands down.

Valka didn't delve down and immediately make a big deal over his stump, which Hiccup hugely appreciated. His hands curled over her thighs, a whispered question against her lips.

"You too?"

She shivered, uncertain at first but allowing Hiccup to slide the soft fabric of her nightdress up until she had to take it off herself - otherwise Hiccup feared he'd have gotten stuck pulling it over her
hair. They didn't explore with eyes at first, instead pressing close beneath the covers, learning the others body with their own. Hiccup could feel the aged, faint lines on her stomach, faded evidence of when she'd carried a baby within her. Valka could feel his scars, his narrowness. She was soft and pliant all over despite the slenderness of her frame, skin yielding beneath his touch as she moaned softly into his mouth.

It was Valka who turned them over, parting her legs so Hiccup could rest between them, arms resting loosely around his neck as she kissed him while he felt his swelling cock slip over her wetness. She gasped against his lips, eyes bright even in limited illumination. Hiccup was dizzy with the heat already beginning to burn inside him, not helped in the least when Valka tilted her hips to feel his erection properly.

Unlike anything physical that had led up to now, Hiccup noticed the lack of urgency, the way it wasn't a groping, hungry tangle. Instead, it was a slow burn that fed on deep, lasting kisses, on Valka's hands on his back, mapping scars she couldn't see as Hiccup rocked against her. She arched against him, made Hiccup slip in a way they both drew sharp breaths in at.

"Careful now."

"Not trying to be careful."

Her tone was laced with implications, but he could see, could feel that Valka was nervous as well as aroused.

"Are you sure? I can wait."

"I want you. All of you."

Hiccup made to shift, but Valka held fast.

"Condom?"

"Don't need it. I told you..."

Yes, she had told Hiccup that kids weren't really on the table, hadn't she? He shushed her concerns with a kiss, felt her respond instantly. Oh, he wanted little more than to be inside her now, but Hiccup also knew she'd not been penetrated by more than his fingers in a while and so wanted to be sure he wouldn't hurt her. Valka quivered when his fingers dipped down first, found her slick and hot to the touch, drew soft whines from her throat as he stoked the heat to coax more arousal from her.

Hiccup felt her hand curl around his wrist, nudging his hand away insistently. His sheets would be messy anyway, so Hiccup wiped his fingers on them carelessly before Valka was hauling him closer, her skin sliding against his. They were still beneath the covers, whether to help them stay warm or to keep them half-hidden, Hiccup didn't know. He looked to Valka for consent; he had to be sure. She nodded, shifted impatiently and slid her legs around the back of his thighs while Hiccup guided himself into place, soft heat welcoming him in inch by inch.

"Oh gods... don't move."

He couldn't if he'd wanted to; Hiccup was too worried he'd come on the spot if he did more than breathe.

"Are you ok?"
"Mhmm, just... intense."

Hiccup couldn't disagree; gods, she was like a silken vice around his cock, squeezing and working his shaft as Valka tormented him with those low, breathy whimpers. Finally, she began rocking her hips, testing herself, eventually nodding to Hiccup that he could move at last. He did, a little unsteady with the sudden shift from their usual tentative oral to naked and entwined, but more than happy to catch up.

Valka was as headily responsive as she'd ever been, eyes wide and bright in the moonlight that crept in between the curtains, nimble fingers gripping at his hair, his shoulders. Her legs trembled lightly, head twisting to expose her throat as she moaned and bucked. Hiccup could tell her body was out of practice, but it was a quick study and soon Valka moved with him, matched his thrusts as molten heat enveloped him with every snap of his hips between her quivering thighs.

When Hiccup found just the right angle, hips jutting up to drag along the hidden pleasure spots within, Valka came further undone as she panted breathlessly in his ear. He leant up on his arms a little more, watching the way her whole body rocked with his thrusts and the flush spreading down her cheeks and neck. It was Valka who pushed the covers off them, cool air reaching his sweaty back but her heat kept Hiccup from caring, the moonlight casting the shadow of his arm over her otherwise exposed skin.

"Gods, you're gorgeous."

Her head turned away, eyes falling closed as she bit her lip and Hiccup knew she didn't believe him. His mouth chased her doubts away, capturing hers and kissing until neither could breathe. Even then, they shared groans and gasps as Hiccup's head fell forward with the threat of every muscle turning to liquid. Valka ran her hands down his chest, his back, clutching his ass as though she needed him closer, deeper. Hiccup did his best to deliver, felt her teeth scrape over his shoulder as they curled against each other tighter, feeling mutual bliss only just out of reach.

Frustrated, Hiccup pulled back and Valka whined as he slipped free, hands curling around her back to pull her on to his lap. When she got the idea Valka agreed quickly, seating herself back on his cock and riding him with a burning purpose. The position was impossibly intimate, their faces centimetres apart and if Hiccup didn't hold her tight enough he worried she'd fall. The shift worked, sending them both spiralling, falling, tumbling into the fire they'd built. Valka quaked and shuddered so violently in his arms Hiccup almost worried, losing his own mind to the bliss as she spasmed around him.

They fell to the bed in a graceless heap, breathing heavily and kissing any sweaty skin they could find. Hiccup smiled as Valka kissed his thumping heart, craning her neck to kiss his lips with the faint taste of sweat. Her face was lax, satisfied. Plenty good enough to stroke his ego.

He did have to put his leg back on in order to go clean up, but Valka watched him silently, kissed him sweetly when he was done as though reaffirming that she accepted his quirky, part-metal body. She covered herself from bed to bathroom and bathroom to bed, but Hiccup watched her nightdress hit the floor again once she was back in bed, nuzzling contentedly into his side.

"That was... incredible. My gods, is it always like that?"

Hiccup shrugged as best he could, kissed her hair.

"Might just be how good we are. We may have to run more tests."

Valka laughed lightly, arm draped over his stomach as she fell asleep. He watched her in the thin
moonlight for a bit, just enjoying how she looked so utterly relaxed. More than worth the wait, the effort to convince her to lower her guard at last.

He and Mala had had plenty of fun, and a lot of damn good sex, but Valka... wow.

-HTTYD-

Ooooh, it was so tough not to rush these two into bed but I knew Hiccup deserved a very nice Christmas present!
Chapter 14

And the heatwave keeps climbing... makes writing these guys in winter ever more ironic.

On the plus side, they had a fun time keeping warm!

-HTTYD-

Counting down those last minutes until Ty came back from his dads, Valka could still feel the residual aches of a considerable while without sex followed by the better part of three days catching up a lot. Each time, she'd half-expected Hiccup to be shocked or even put off by her wanton desire, but he seemed only increasingly thrilled, wringing every exquisite ounce of pleasure from her body that he could. Hiccup's mouth mapping her skin, desire obliterating shyness, overriding shame as those dextrous fingers stripped her, touched her.

It was Hiccup's idea to not be there when Tyr came back, to try and reduce friction with Sven, but Valka had seen the disappointment in his face at having to wait to see him too. She knew she was lucky her boyfriend adored her son so completely.

Which was why Valka was thinking of telling Ty. Hiccup had been the one to say she should wait at least a couple of months; they had only been seeing each other a month or so, and while they were disgustingly, blissfully happy thus far, Hiccup didn't want Ty to feel caught in the middle of anything if things went wrong. His mature attitude was wonderful.

"Mom!"

Ty leapt into her arms, hugging her tightly. Valka was flooded with joy to hold her son again, kissed his soft hair and squeezed him back fiercely. Sven was holding a bag Valka surmised to contain Tyr's Christmas gifts from his fathers side of the family, waiting surprisingly patiently for the two to reunite properly.

"Did you have a good time with your dad?"

"Yeah! I made the best snowman!"

Smiling at him, Valka chased Tyr inside to go and change out of his outdoor clothes so she could talk to Sven.

"We trade off next year, right?"

"Right. You have him over Christmas, and I'll take him to my parents after."

It was their agreement; Valka got him on the day that year, following the usual rhythm Ty was used to in the precarious times of the first post-divorce Christmas. Next year though, Sven would get him for the actual Christmas day, when their son was more adjusted to the break up. It was fair, if slightly saddening.

"Right. Well, I have work to get done over New Years, so I've told him I'll pick him up next Friday after school as usual."

Nodding, Valka took the bag from Sven, called Ty down to say goodbye to his dad before they were left alone again. Almost as soon as they were sat at the kitchen table, excited eleven year old showing off his new gifts from paternal grandparents, Tyr was glancing surreptitiously at the back
door, as though wondering when he could go call to his friend over it.

"Did you hang out with Hiccup while I was gone?"

Valka hoped her face didn't flush and give her away, memories of time spent with Hiccup filling her minds eye all at once with a flicker of heat curling in her belly. Gods, he wasn't even there. She needed to get a grip. Preferably on... no, Valka! Behave.

"I did, Astrid and Eret went to visit Eret's family so I spent some time with Hiccup and Toothless."

"So Astrid had two Christmases too, like me?"

"She did."

Tyr seemed quite comforted by that fact, smiling as he organised the gifts into neatly organised piles before turning hopeful eyes to his mother.

"Can you text him and see if he's busy?"

Valka nodded, feeling daft when she knew Hiccup was just waiting to be told he could come over and see them, but hardly able to tell Ty that Hiccup had only left fifteen minutes before Sven's car pulled up. Ty perked up when he heard Hiccup's front door open and close, their door knocking less than a minute later.

"Hiccup!"

"Hey little dragon!"

She couldn't help chuckling as Hiccup entered the room with Tyr attached to him like a limpet, hugging Hiccup tightly in his jubilant mood. To his credit, Hiccup gave no indication in his behaviour that he'd been inside Valka not two hours previously.

"So, how was your Christmas?"

"Which one?"

"Both, obviously. I wanna hear about all the fun you had!"

Equally interested in hearing about how Tyr had enjoyed this first double-holiday, Valka ensured she sat the respectable distance from Hiccup, trying not to think about how he'd pressed her into the same sofa she now sat on, kissing her senseless... shaking off inappropriate thoughts, Valka paid attention to her sons stories about spending time with his grandparents. Hiccup engaged with him effortlessly, appearing as excited about the new gifts as could be. He even managed to give completely innocent versions of his time spent with Valka the last few days.

"I'm gonna go put my stuff away now, you don't have to leave yet do you?"

"Not going anywhere little dragon, on you go."

Relieved, Ty tottered off with his gifts piled like a game of Tetris into the bag, allowing him to take them all up in one trip.

"He'll be a while. Everything has to find its new place now."

"I did notice he likes things a certain way, which I have a sneaking suspicion he gets from his dad?"
Valka nodded, felt Hiccup's fingers play with hers after they'd crept along the sofa without her even noticing.

"Not me?"

"No. You have your ways, like everyone, but you have that creative flow in you that stops you seeking order all the time. Sven on the other hand, is never even a minute late to pick up Tyr, and if he is he tells you the exact amount of minutes he was caught in traffic. Plus I figure he works in business or similar, but who has a shirt that neat at the end of the day? And I saw him eat at Tyr's birthday... I have never seen anyone but Tyr use a napkin so precisely."

Given that he spent almost the entire time on the floor playing with ten-and-eleven year olds, Valka was amazed he'd had the time to notice such a thing. The way Sven was didn't really register with her - she was long used to his little quirks and behaviours, but to someone like Hiccup who was a somewhat odd mix of precision and organised chaos, she supposed it might be peculiar. Hiccup could be a messier eater than Ty.

He stole risky, needy kisses from her lips while Tyr was finding proper places for his new clothes amongst his wardrobes order, leaving Valka a little breathless and cursing that now her body knew, wanted Hiccup's fingers stealing under her clothes, stoking the heat in her belly. Hiccup had that spark in his eyes when he sat back, shifting in that way that said he wasn't any less affected than her. They did their best to be composed when Tyr returned, looking between them for a second before beaming happily, showing Hiccup all the completed pages in his birthday colouring book.

"You might actually colour neater than me, definitely got your mothers talent."

"Mom is pretty good at colouring, but it is her job."

Valka bit back laughter at the way Ty put it, as though her entire days work was just endless colouring books. That would be nice some days, for sure. Hiccup looked up at her over Tyr's head, gave her a bright smile as though reassuring her there was nowhere else he would rather be than sat there watching Tyr proudly show off how he'd made Loki bright red in one picture, but purple in another. Damn him, being so sweet.

As the frost began to fade from the ground toward the end of January, Hiccup watched Valka eye him suspiciously. With the weather clearing up, he was intending to make good on the next of their adventures.

She hadn't agreed to come out to the karaoke bar to see Dagur yet, possibly wary of being the oldest there by over a decade with his sister and their friends. Hiccup had time to make her see sense and convince her yet.

"I was going to say I don't trust you, but I do. However, I still find your behaviour suspect."

Hiccup grinned.

"Good. I guarantee you will love tomorrow, I have been waiting for the snow to end for this."

It took all of Hiccup's maturity and responsibility to not let Valka tempt them into a very late night going to sleep, exceedingly difficult as it was to deny the very attractive naked woman. But they had to be up early, and Valka especially would lament not having had enough sleep with the energetic adventure planned for the next day. That didn't mean nothing happened... it just only happened once. Valka was slightly put out, but Hiccup promised he'd make it up to her the
following night. If she had the energy.

An early start included a hearty breakfast and a thermos of coffee in the car, Astrid's agreement to babysit Toothless even though she was all but moved out completely now meaning Hiccup didn't need to drop the dog off at his dads. Valka looked very surprised when they pulled up outside a zoo, quizzing him on how a trip to the zoo counted as an 'adventure'. Now they were there, Hiccup let her in on the plan.

"You aren't here to see the animals. You're here to take care of them. You, milady, are a zookeeper for the day."

Hiccup knew the woman adored animals, so he reckoned he was pretty much guaranteed a hit.

"I... why only me, exactly?"

"I'm zookeeper for half the day. I can't do some of the stuff because of health and safety with my leg, but I'm not just gonna be watching through the bars all day."

Once she'd processed, Valka was thrilled. Hiccup was pretty pleased with himself, glad he'd had the foresight to tell her to wear shoes that could get dirty. They 'checked in' and had a cup of tea while the proper zookeepers chattered about what the day would entail, and everyone filled out a health and safety checklist that Hiccup had already done - he'd booked the day in person, to check whether or not he could join in at all.

Valka looked adorably happy in her 'Zookeeper for the day' t-shirt, even laughed that hers had to come from the 'mens' stock of them because she was so damned tall. Hiccup wore a special wristband that told them he was on 'limited duties' or whatever they called it, and he confessed himself not-terribly-disappointed he wasn't able to climb in and out of the penguin pool that needed scrubbing out. Valka definitely gave him a little glare from where she was getting equipped not to get too dirty, while he watched and occasionally chatted to the people at the fence watching the penguins watch the zoo staff - they were kept separate for safety, but clearly wondered why the humans had taken their water and gotten in their pool.

"I wonder how upset you were to learn you couldn't do that part."

After they washed up and the group got ready to move on, Valka eyed him with her suspicious face again.

"Hey, if I had all my limbs I would have gotten stuck in, but rules is rules."

She crossed her arms, quirked an eyebrow and that little smirk was visible at the side of her lips. Hiccup just grinned as they headed off toward the next spot - one he could join in with. Cleaning out the giraffe spot wasn't exactly glamorous, but they looked hilarious in their protective face masks and so it was good fun. Plus, as a bonus, they then got to feed the giraffes. Valka positively lit up as the giraffe tongue rolled out, scooping the carrot from her hands.

"Oh, aren't they lovely?"

"Yeah, but we're not meant to try and stroke them. Sweet as they look, I have seen these guys fight with their necks so I'm guessing they could secretly eat us alive. Look, that ones licking its eyeball!"

Hiccup found himself having just as much fun as Valka; he didn't get out nearly enough himself, encouraging Valka to take a few adventures was helping them both. They were both hugely enamoured in the reptile enclosure; Valka even picked up tarantulas much to the gasps of
onlookers, handling them how they were shown. Hiccup didn't, but only because he had his hands full with an overly friendly snake trying to adopt him as a pet.

"Is that mom?"

A familiar voice sounded behind Hiccup when he was on his way to pick up a box of bugs for the smaller reptiles, turned to the surprising sight of Sven and Tyr peering in to an enclosure he suspected Valka was visible through.

"Tyr?"

"Hiccup!"

"Hey little guy, don't hug me ok? I've been handling all sorts."

"What are you guys doing here?"

Scouring his brain, Hiccup landed on a speedy excuse that hopefully would annoy Sven less.

"It's an early birthday present for your mom. I knew she liked animals."

"Mom's birthday isn't until March."

"Yeah, well, mines in February and I wanted to do this too."

Tyr nodded as though it was sage information, then turned back to where Valka had been last.

"Moms gone."

"She's probably gone to get some spider food. We have to go prep food for some other animals after this, but if you want, you can see us feed monkeys in about twenty minutes."

"Wow, cool!"

Hiccup grinned, pleasantly surprised to see Sven bringing his son out to indulge his love for animals - reptiles in particular - and pointed to where he was heading.

"I better go get some food for these guys, but keep a weather eye out."

"Aye aye captain."

Tyr saluted, beaming - Hiccup had shown him *Pirates Of The Carribean* over new years before he went back to school, and that was an in joke of theirs now.

"Good man. Go on, go have fun with your dad."

Once he'd delivered bugs to happy lizards, Hiccup relayed to Valka that Sven and Tyr were there. It had an unexpected effect; it made her look sad.

"What's wrong?"

"Oh, I just miss being able to do things with him. Sven has his weekends, so school holidays are the only times I can do day trips and take him places."

Hiccup frowned; Valka had mentioned that before - he remembered her excitement about it back when it was Tyr's first half term.
"Hey. He knows it's not perfect, and Tyr appreciates all the time he gets with you. That's what he wants from you, time and attention. It doesn't matter where that is. Now come on, this ridiculous amount of apples and carrots won't cut themselves up."

Valka did cheer again when they fed the massive amounts of fruit and vegetables to very grateful animals, and when they reached the monkey enclosure she beamed as she saw her son waving from the outside, as the monkeys crept closer in search of the tasty things the humans held. Hiccup was smiling just watching the way the animals let her pet them, despite warnings to be careful of monkey bites they all simply adored her on contact. It was a wonderful sight to behold.

They got to do the 'meet the meerkats' bit, which was a little unpleasant in that their food was still alive, and the insects had to be picked up in handfuls and fed to them, but Hiccup supposed that was how they'd encounter it naturally. Sort of. The meerkats were quite sweet and friendly, and a nice way to round off before a well-earned lunch. He left Valka to eat with Tyr - and Sven, but Hiccup wasn't bothered by that. He knew Valka and Sven were long over, and he was her sons father. Him being a brat about them interacting would be ridiculous.

"So, what's the story with you two? She's obviously not your mom, too young."

Hiccup ended up sat with the other two people on the zookeeper day thing, a fairly young couple, and both men were curious about he and Valka it seemed.

"We live next door to each other. Both like animals."

He daren't say she was his girlfriend, not when they could mention such a word in front of Tyr and Sven and wreak absolute havoc. Hiccup ate quickly, then excused himself to the bathroom before the friendly couple started asking questions he wouldn't be comfortable answering. Picking up a hot chocolate to keep his hands warm, Hiccup promised he'd put the cup in the recycling as he headed to stand outside, watching people mill about between exhibits further down the 'street' while others disappeared into gift shops or other eating venues.

"Hiccup! Me and my dad are going now, but you and mom have to tell me how much fun you had with the animals ok?"

"Promise. Have a good weekend little dragon."

He definitely related to Valka's missing Tyr - he missed the little guy like crazy when he was gone too, with his warm heart and joyful enthusiasm. Still, Tyr idolised his dad, and was trucking on through shared custody probably better than either of his parents at that moment. So Hiccup consoled himself with the knowledge he'd be able to spend time with Valka that evening alone - a very fair consolation prize, really. The only thing better was hanging out with Valka and Tyr really.

"You didn't have to leave you know."

"I know. But it meant less tension with Sven, which meant you and Tyr could enjoy seeing each other more."

Valka nodded, smiling softly at him and his belly fizzled pleasantly. He offered her his hot chocolate, since they weren't really shy about sharing each others germs. Eret had even cracked a joke the other day that the reason neither Hiccup or Valka had gotten sick over the holidays was the immune system boost from always kissing each other. Astrid had politely punched him for his blatant remark, reminded her boyfriend to be mindful what he said in case he said something he shouldn't in front of Tyr. Valka had blushed very prettily, which stuck out most in Hiccup's mind.
The undisputed highlight of the day - Tyr not included - was definitely the big cats. Valka wasn't enthralled about the raw meat handling, but she was delighted to see the tigers and lions so close, with their graceful loping and the way the younger cubs were still in play-fighting stage, rolling about and batting each other with their big paws.

"That was an incredible day, but my gods I am exhausted!"

Valka declared as they climbed into his car, smile wide and happy and tired.

"Same here. I think that penguin was heartbroken to see you go."

She giggled, leaning back in her seat. Hiccup was going to get his car properly cleaned while he was at work tomorrow, otherwise he would have had to bring sheets or something to protect it from all the dust and dander they brought with them from 'work' that day.

"By the way, I told Tyr that today was an early birthday gift for you, if he asks. I didn't know what else to say in front of Sven."

Nodding as her face shifted to pensive, Valka hummed to herself while Hiccup was starting the car. Then she turned to him, surprised Hiccup completely.

"I want to tell Ty."

-Zoo keeper for a day was the first thing I picked when choosing Valka and Hiccup's 'adventures', since I struggled to think of a better analogue for their bonding over dragons in HTTYD2. Short of disappearing off to a country full of lizards or something. But I can totally picture Valka skipping around animal enclosures befriending 'dangerous beasties' and all that.
Chapter 15

I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date...

Well, for weekly updates anyway.

-HTTYD-

Valka was still waiting.

Waiting for this... heat to wane, feeling sure that the spark had to burn out sometime. Sure that Hiccup had to get his fill of her body, though she feared that considerably; would he move on if their fiery passion dwindled? Valka doubted it when thinking logically; their relationship was more than sex, but it was easier to worry about that in bed, when they were scarcely able to keep their hands off each other and Valka felt sure Hiccup would somehow get bored.

He was so sweet and tender with her generally, and Valka could melt just watching his patience and friendship with her son. Hiccup never failed to win a beaming smile from the boy who had been rather more quiet and reserved only six months ago.

But some nights... Hiccup was an animal with her. Sex was often still slow, tactile and deliberate, where Hiccup would hold her eye contact until Valka could take no more. Sometimes though, his hands would turn her on her stomach or pull her up on all fours while he bit her shoulders and fucked her, gripping her hips hard enough to bruise with rough grunts in her ear. Valka had never experienced anything like it, but his base, primal actions only thrilled her further. She smiled to herself when the ache lingered next day, shivering pleasantly when the memories hit her.

Hiccup finally came up for air from where his mouth had been tormenting her beautifully, tongue slipping out to lick lips that were wet with her. Valka pulsed with need at the sight of him, twisting on to her front in a silent plea for something a little rougher. He growled at the sight, hands squeezing at her ass as he crawled up her body, leant against her back and made Valka shudder with arousal she thought she ought to be guilty for, hearing him pant against her ear that he loved the way she tasted. What in Hel could she say to that? Rather than try to work it out, Valka pushed back against him as best she could, desperate as ever for him.

His hands ran down her back, taking his time to push her thighs apart and hushing Valka when she whined in protest at waiting. She felt a bit guilty for her impatience when she realised Hiccup was putting something down to pad his knees; she forgot so frequently that he was an amputee, simply because it was such a part of him it didn't rear up as something to really think about.

Adjusting himself, Hiccup was quick to press against her again, leaving Valka keening into the pillow beneath her face as she was filled at last. Hiccup swore under his breath, his chest sweaty on her back as both trembled with the fresh wave of sensation. Gods, how was it possible for someone to make her burn so sweetly? He set a heady rhythm, slower than she wanted but every thrust was deep and reaching, left her breathless and hungry for more. Their bodies made lewd, filthy sounds as sweaty skin met sweaty skin, Valka well aware the sheets beneath them were already ruined. Her hands clutched at the pillow, head twisting to search blindly for Hiccup's mouth and he met her eagerly.

Heat wound tighter in her belly, spurred by the way Hiccup was grunting like an untamed beast as his hips pumped quicker, teeth scraping over her skin and his fingers digging in to the soft hollow near her hipbone. The little jolts of pain only fanned the flames, fire consuming Valka's body as
she quaked under her lover and made sounds she'd be embarrassed about if she could even think. It was a while before she came down from the floaty, spaced out bliss, dimly aware that Hiccup had found his own pleasure in her when she felt him softening, sticky.

Rolling over took considerable effort from her body, which was happy to simply lay there basking lazily in the afterglow. Hiccup kissed her again, mouth still a little sticky with her and Valka could not have cared less, not when he was so warm and inviting to cuddle with. Her fingers played over his aged scars, his tracing the sweep of her cheekbone as his lips pressed to her hairline.

"Still set on telling Tyr?"

She nodded into his chest, sighing contentedly when Hiccup rubbed her back gently.

"Unless you think we shouldn't."

"He's your son Valka. I would never dream of suggesting I know him better, but I just want to be sure you are ready for that."

It wasn't as simple as just telling her son; it was them becoming officially a couple where others (beyond Hiccup's sister and her boyfriend, that was) knew, rather than this illicit romance hidden for when Ty was at his dads for the weekend, the occasional suggestive text message sent by Hiccup complaining about all the fun they could be having if they weren't sleeping apart.

It was gearing up to face Sven over it, and the parents of Ty's friends finding out that young man who her son adored was more than just their neighbour now. And it was also answering questions her son may have about what that made of the relationship between him and Hiccup. Hiccup had already assured Valka he would never pressure Tyr about step-parent titles, but it could still be confusing for the boy.

And of course, Valka would have to meet Hiccup's father, a feat she had skillfully avoided thus far. He wasn't much older than her, so if he asked what the Hel she was playing at Valka wasn't sure how she would answer. Hiccup was remarkably relaxed about the entire affair, and left the decision about if and when their relationship would come out entirely down to Valka.

"I am. I'm tired of lying to my son."

"Then I support you one hundred percent. And don't worry about my dad. He just wants me to be happy."

"That's easy for you to say."

Hiccup chuckled, stroked her hair.

"I'm serious. I have to meet your parents. I'm only twelve years older than their grandson. If I'm not worried, why are you?"

Gods, he was right. She shrugged as best she could, adamantly refusing to move from her lovers embrace even though she knew cleaning up would be necessary soon. Hiccup seemed no more inclined to move either, caressing her skin absently. He made her feel so... comfortable, content. Cherished, even.

"So, how does getting up and taking Toothless for a walk sound?"

"Lovely minus the part about getting up."
Hiccup chuckled against her hair, nuzzling sweetly.

"Lounging around all day is pretty appealing, but Toothless needs a walk and you'll enjoy the fresh air."

Mock-grumbling, Valka watched Hiccup slide out from the bedcovers, naked as a newborn as he stood. She admired the shape of him as he stretched, all lean lines and wiry muscles. Except for his backside, which was pert and round and made Valka realise that while she'd never really looked before, she was quite taken with his cute bottom.

He returned from the bathroom quite quickly, letting Valka take her time cleaning herself up from the messy sex session before reluctantly dressing while she wanted little more than to drag Hiccup back to bed and display the wanton need he'd invoked in her. By the gods, his effect on her... it was incredible. Hiccup kissed her soundly in the kitchen, hands sliding around her waist with a smile.

"Hey there beautiful lady."

Her cheeks warmed, feeling a treacherous grin steal across her face. Hiccup was always so genuine and earnest, it had begun to feel simply rude to argue with him even if she didn't really agree. Besides which, she liked it when he called her beautiful.

"Shall we?"

Toothless was most agreeable, ambling along happily with the two and Valka hoped that soon, she'd not fear holding Hiccup's hand in public. Given how he loved to do it when they were alone, Valka imagined he would be quite agreeable too.

Hiccup couldn't help but feel nervous for a second as he stood watching Valka sit her son down, about to tell him of their relationship. Nothing so far had indicated that Tyr would take the news badly, but the only reservation Hiccup had ever had about dating Valka was risking the friendship he had with the young boy. He adored Tyr far too much to risk that.

"So Hiccup is your boyfriend?"

"Yes. Is that ok with you Ty?"

Neither Valka or Hiccup breathed for several seconds, but then Tyr started giggling and they dared to hope he was on board.

"That's funny. I knew you guys were going on dates really!"

Of course he did. Hiccup didn't know why he was surprised that Tyr at least had suspicions. He was smiling, turning to Hiccup with his usual happy expression.

"I told you mom had smiles for you."

"Yes, yes you did. Are you really ok with this little dragon?"

"Yeah. You make my mom happy. And I know that you're super nice and will take care of her."

"I'll do my best little dragon. Are we still friends?"

"Duh! Of course!"

Tyr hopped up and crossed the room to hug Hiccup, soothing concerns with his gentle heart.
"That is very good news."

Pushing his glasses up, Tyr smiled, but then his face took on a more serious note.

"Wait. What about dad? Do I have to keep this a secret?"

Hiccup looked over to Valka; that was her call.

"I would rather tell him myself, but it's ok if you accidentally let it slip. I don't want you worrying like that, ok son?"

"Ok mom."

His heart was warmed by watching Valka hug her son, seeing the bond they shared. She was such a good mother, and it showed in the happiness she inspired in Tyr. Tyr giggled when Hiccup sat next to Valka, enthralled that he could now hold her hand or put an arm around her in front of the boy.

"Mom's blushing!"

"She does that. I like it."

Rolling her eyes, Valka leant in to Hiccup's chest anyway and smiled. Tyr climbed up onto Hiccup's lap to join in the cuddle, which immediately ranked itself in his favourite moments list - his concerns for Tyr not accepting their relationship were unfounded, and they had a very important persons approval. Hel, the most important persons approval. Tyr was probably the only person who could have made the two call quits on their relationship, because Valka wouldn't choose anyone over her son and Hiccup would never have asked her to.

"Are you staying to have dinner now?"

"Actually, would you guys mind coming over? I don't want Toothless being lonely."

Watching Valka and Tyr playing with Toothless in his living room was yet another heart-warming moment, one Hiccup felt compelled to capture in a photograph. It was the sort of picture he wanted to put on the fireplace or up on the wall alongside his mother, his father, Astrid. Eret and his parents. There was even a couple of photos with Heather or Dagur with Astrid or Hiccup. They'd been friends for years after all - Heather had actually known their mother before she died, so long she had been in their life. Dagur had been almost overbearing in his eagerness to help Hiccup back when he was still struggling to walk on a prosthetic.

They were more than friends, they were family.

Hiccup saw the same in Valka and Tyr. More than neighbours. They were fast becoming part of his family too.

-HTTYD-

Short chapter, but the tone of this chapter didn't gel with what's coming next. So, apologies for the quickie, next chapter will be longer!
Chapter 16

Yessss I fell behind again to nobodies great surprise.

Onward!

-HTTYD-

"Loki, they're doing it again!"

Valka pulled away from Hiccup, cheeks still prone to flushing when her son caught them kissing even though he knew about them. He had his dragon toy in one hand, colouring book and an art case full of crayons he'd gotten for Christmas under his other arm and, dragon emblazoned on his t-shirt.

Tyr's dragon obsession showed zero sign of going anywhere.

"Sorry little dragon, but your mom is just so cute I can't resist."

Ty wrinkled his nose, giggling at Hiccup while Valka hid her face in his neck as her face heated again. Damn him.

"I'm glad you make my mom smile so much. Want to come colour?"

"I will join you in a minute, just let me finish dinner prep?"

Nodding, Ty set himself up with Loki looking over the colouring book full of them, waiting patiently for Hiccup to finish dicing vegetables and dropping them into the stew pot - he'd already cooked the meat so it would be ready to put on when Valka and Tyr were home. Having a boyfriend who loved cooking was quite a fortuitous occurrence, and watching Hiccup potter around the kitchen was great fun really - he twirled spoons and danced between sides, fed her bits and his eyes darkened if she licked his fingers or bit his thumb.

Valka sat down, realising just how at home she felt in his kitchen now. Astrid had kindly allowed Tyr to keep some things in her room, and so sometimes the two of them actually stayed over; Hiccup couldn't stay over at hers without bringing Toothless, but it just made more sense for them to go to him since the home was adapted in a few ways to accommodate his disability. Because it was a new place to sleep, Ty brought Loki for comfort, but aside from that he was equally at ease in either home so long as he was allowed to arrange things.

"No Toothless, you couldn't even chew a carrot if you tried!"

Hiccup shooed his dog away, the smell of meat cooking making both human and animal hungry. Toothless was soon placated with his soft food, Valka kissed sweetly as Hiccup passed her to join Tyr at the table with his sketch pad. He toyed with his pencil as Ty beamed for the company, then turned to Valka.

"May I draw you?"

Blinking, Valka nodded. Hiccup grinned, eyes warm and soft on her as he picked up his pencil, cocked his head and scrutinised her quite intently. She felt oddly exposed, daft really considering Hiccup undressed her regularly and had eyes on her naked body. But when he was drawing her, Valka felt like he could see deep into her soul, could see every secret laid bare. It was a quick
sketch - they only had half an hour until the stew was cooked - but Valka was left breathless by his talent yet again as she peered over his sketchbook when Hiccup got up to check food.

"Can I help?"

Tyr loved to get involved, and Hiccup was very good at finding safe things for him to do.

"You can! You can clear the table first and foremost, because nobody wants stew on their art. Then you can butter the bread?"

Valka helped Tyr tidy up, seeing her own face staring up from the page when she carefully moved Hiccup's sketchbook and pencils aside. Then, since she wasn't helping, Valka kept Toothless distracted with petting so Hiccup and Tyr could move about the kitchen, grabbing bowls and cutlery and bread. Her stomach growled fiercely as the food was ladled into bowls, placed down at the table and Tyr proudly added the buttered bread. Hiccup ruffled his hair, sharing a smile with her son and Valka felt that familiar skip in her chest; she adored how they got along.

"Hey" Hiccup prompted Valka that night as they got ready for bed, Tyr tucked up fast asleep an hour ago "my dad wants to meet you properly. I told him you were nervous, and he's trying to be patient."

Valka wasn't nervous; she was basically terrified.

"But he wants to demand to know what a woman in her forties is doing with his son?"

Hiccup frowned.

"No. He knows I'm crazy about you and wants to meet you and Ty, the people making me so deliriously happy I now whistle at work."

She'd known how much Tyr adored Hiccup, and telling her son hadn't been as scary as she expected. But Stoick was something of an unknown quality - Valka only had what Hiccup told her to go on, skillfully avoiding the man thus far.

"Alright."

Hiccup did a double take, clearly surprised she'd agreed.

"Alright? Really?"

She nodded, knowing it wasn't something she could avoid forever.

"Really."

Hiccup beamed, circling the bed to kiss her, hands slotting against her waist as their mouths slid lazily against each others.

"Thank you. I promise he's not as scary as he looks."

Pulling her into bed before Valka could get her nightdress on, Hiccup kissed her shoulder, her neck, the hollow beneath her ear. Fingers skated over her hip, sending light shivers through her body that could easily become that blazing heat Hiccup inspired in her, the heat Valka would willingly allow to consume her. But that was as far as he went, nuzzling and kissing gently at her cheek with a soft sigh before moving to remove his prosthetic.

"Are you too cold to sleep like this?"
Hiccup wasn't really asking about the temperature, she knew. He was asking if Valka was comfortable sleeping in only her briefs, feather light touches along her spine inviting her to spend the night embraced skin-to-skin but not pushing if she wasn't totally at ease with it. The regular sex and Hiccup's inability to keep his hands off of her had helped Valka feel less self-conscious, that much was true. Settling against him, Valka felt him smile against her shoulder, hand ensuring the covers were snug around them before splaying over her belly.

"Goodnight Hiccup."

"Night Valka."

He pecked a kiss on her bare shoulder again, then stillled behind her. His heart against her back lulled Valka to sleep too, waking in his arms a novelty yet to wear off as she felt his stubble rasp over her when Hiccup shifted on his way to wakefulness. Tyr knew not to come into the grown ups bedroom on 'sleepover' nights, though he was reassured that knocking on the door if he needed Valka was perfectly ok. So she wasn't worried her son would walk in to see Hiccup chuckling sleepily, voice rough and gravelled as he cheekily squeezed a sleep-warm breast before he actually started getting up.

When Valka lowered the covers so she could get out of them, Hiccup's eyes ran down her bare skin and left Valka feeling a little flustered. Even half-asleep, his eyes sparkled with desire and his morning erection was more than a little tempting to Valka. But it was a work day, and she could hear Tyr heading downstairs so it was time to get up.

"Morning."

"Good morning."

Hiccup stretched, elongating his slim torso and Valka watched the way his aged scars stretched and moved with him. They never changed how attracted she was to him - if anything she enjoyed them, the unusual texture beneath her hands and the reminder Hiccup had survived so much yet still had a heart of gold and a sweet smile.

With Hiccup's permission, Tyr made himself breakfast when they stayed over, sat at the table with tea and toast, back door ajar to let Toothless out. He turned to the adults, smiling.

"Morning!

"Morning little dragon. Sleep well?"

"Better than before, but can we sleep at home tonight mom? After we hang out with Hiccup obviously."

Rather than show disappointment for that meaning he wouldn't be able to spend the night with Valka, Hiccup ruffled Ty's hair and headed to the kettle while Valka nodded at her son.

"Of course we can Ty."

He beamed, got up to hug Valka and left her smiling in return. Such a sweet little boy. Their morning routine was still smooth despite not being at home, and Hiccup offered to drive Tyr to school, which he was thrilled about.

"Right, come on little dragon. I'm going to talk to my dad about dinner to meet you when I get to work, is that ok Val?"
"Val?"

Hiccup blinked.

"Sorry, is it not ok I call you that?"

"Oh, no, it's fine. Just new."

Her parents called her Val. It sounded strange on Hiccup's tongue, but she'd adjust soon enough.

"Anyway, you ok with me talking to my dad?"

Gritting her teeth, Valka nodded and forced herself to smile. Hiccup leant in to kiss her goodbye, making her son giggle as he waited to leave. Heart fluttering rapidly, Valka watched them leave and ran a hand over her face, sighing deeply to herself. What had she agreed to?

To accommodate their mixed schedules, Stoick agreed to come over to Hiccup's place to meet Valka and Tyr, joining them for dinner. Valka discovered Hiccup had a special chair for his dad, as the normal ones didn't exactly have a man with his bulk in mind. He had a hefty brown dog with him - Thor, she thought - who bowled up to Toothless, the two dogs clearly firm friends.

"Hey dad! Glad you could make it" Valka felt her heart pound, hands sweating so she wiped them on her jeans as she heard Hiccup answering the door to his dad "come on in."

Hiccup led his dad in to where Valka and Tyr were waiting to be formally introduced, having only encountered the man in passing until now. Beaming proudly, Hiccup gestured to them in turn.

"Dad, this is my girlfriend Valka. And the little dragon over there is her son Tyr."

His hand slipped through Valka's, a kiss pressed to her cheek as dogs gambolled around their legs excitedly.

"Hi Stoick. I'm Tyr."

Tyr held his hand out, tiny and completely dwarfed by the enormous hand of Stoick but they shook all the same. Tyr barely came up to the top of Stoick's leg, and was probably about the same width. Hiccup really didn't take after his dad in build.

"Nice to meet you lad. And you too lass. I've heard an awful lot about you both."

"Dad!"

Hiccup flushed, shooing at his dad, but the fact Stoick was still smiling through his massive beard was rather reassuring. They all turned in surprise when the front door knocked, Astrid's voice very recognisable as she shouted through it.

"I forgot my keys! Let me in!"

Laughing to himself, Hiccup headed to the door.

"It's open!"

"Is it? I didn't even think to try... shush. Pregnancy brain!"

Sure enough, when Astrid came through behind her brother, Valka could see she was quite far along in her pregnancy, belly round and even peeking out the bottom of her t-shirt when she lifted
her arm to hug Hiccup.

"Oh, hey dad! I thought I recognised your truck."

"Not that you aren’t welcome, but to what do I owe the pleasure?"

"Eret’s away for work and I was lonely. Plus I miss your cooking."

Valka watched as Astrid went to sit down, Tyr following to ask about her swollen belly and the child growing within. Hiccup turned his attentions to the food, leaving Valka feeling somewhat awkward as Stoick scrutinised her quietly, no doubt wondering what on earth she and Hiccup could base a relationship on. It was even more awkward for her when Hiccup left the room - to take his sister a glass of water, but it might as well have been leaving the country for the tension Valka was imagining.

"The baby kicked!"

She heard Tyr say, Hiccup responding while he was in there.

"They do that. How is the newest Haddock doing?"

"They are a pain the butt. And back. And stomach. And everywhere else! But hey, not long now!"

Dinner wasn’t as awkward as she’d expected - having seen a fair bit of her over the months, Tyr and Valka both got along pretty well with Astrid, and since Hiccup and Astrid got along with their dad, conversation flowed quite easily. Though Valka did still feel a little nervous every time Stoick addressed her directly, even though it was simple stuff like enquiring about what she did for work.

Thor and Toothless had set up shop sleeping on the floor, canine snores preventing too much silence even when conversation waned. Tyr was showing off his almost-completed colouring book - Hiccup had already printed off a full, fresh set for him ready - to Stoick, who was laughing at the images Hiccup drew.

"Are you an artist lad?"

"I like drawing. And painting. Hiccup taught me to make little dragon eggs!"

That felt like so long ago - back when Hiccup was that neighbour who gave her butterflies with his smiles but showed no real sign Valka ever had a chance with him. Now he was her boyfriend, her lover, someone she could increasingly envision as a long term part of their lives.

"Sounds like my boy."

Valka could see where Hiccup got his nature from - watching Stoick with Tyr was somewhat familiar, looking like he had all the time in the world for an eleven year old’s excitement about colouring.

"Are you staying here tonight Astrid?"

"Unless it’s a problem?"

Hiccup shook his head, handing the spare cushion behind him to Astrid.

"Nope. Little dragon already said he wanted to sleep in his own bed tonight."

"Honestly, you guys should just put a door in the dividing wall. It would save so much time!"
The whole time they were all sat there in the living room together, Hiccup was holding her hand, kissing her cheek, sliding an arm around her and squeezing. Valka slowly relaxed - nobody was demanding a full list of reasons why she was dating the man eighteen years her junior. Everyone seemed happy and smiley.

"I told you you had nothing to worry about."

Hiccup murmured against her jaw, hand on her back - Tyr was saying goodnight/goodbye to the dogs as Stoick prepared to leave, she and Ty planning to head back too so her son could go to bed.

"I know, but..."

Hiccup kissed her.

"You still worried. I know. But my dad really just wanted to meet you. So thank you for tonight."

A sneaky hand landed on her backside, squeezing as Hiccup winked at her. Valka tutted, but she was fighting a smile too. One Hiccup noticed, pecking a kiss on her lips.

"Ready to go Ty?"

"Well I need to say bye to Astrid and baby and then Hiccup! But after that I'll be ready."

Chuckling to herself, Valka headed to the door to wait for her son to say his farewells, suddenly approached by her boyfriends father.

"Don't worry yourself lass. He's happy, that's all I want for him. And your lad is an absolute joy."

"Thank you."

Was all she could answer with, words largely stuck in her throat. Stoick nodded, then turned and called Thor to come along so they could get going. The dog snuffled around Valka's leg, then plopped down and looked up at her expectantly. She leant down, gave him a scratch behind the ear and cooed when he leant into her hand, nudging at her for more fuss.

"Big lump. Come on you. Hope to see you again soon Valka."

Thor whined as he followed, loping up the path toward Stoick's truck. Still clutched to Hiccup in a goodbye hug, her son was delivered to Valka at the door.

"I believe this is yours."

"Yes, I do believe it is. Come on Ty, it's getting late."

"See you tomorrow Hiccup!"

He stole another kiss before they left, watching the two pick up his habit of hopping the fence. Well, Tyr needed a little help but they had stopped bothering to walk all the way around unless it had been raining, as it would mean landing in wet muddy grass on her side.

Tucking a sleepy child in to bed, Valka leant down to kiss Tyr on the forehead.

"Goodnight son."

"Night mom. Are you and Hiccup going to have a baby like Astrid?"
The suddenness of the question left Valka reeling, staring at her son in shock.

"Oh. I don't think so son."

"Oh. Ok. Night mom."

Yawning, Tyr burrowed under his covers and closed his eyes with no further comment. Valka left his room, still thrown by the way he had queried babies out of nowhere. She rubbed her stomach absently, shaking her head. No, babies weren't in the future for them, but Valka had raised that with Hiccup early on so they wouldn't ever be on different pages, and he had sweetly dismissed her concerns and said he wanted her anyway. She'd be lying if she said she didn't still worry a little - Hiccup was young, had many years to change his mind and wish he wanted his own children.

Pushing the thoughts away, Valka undressed and readied for bed, missing thin arms around her waist and playful kisses on her skin. Her phone vibrated, a text telling her Hiccup was missing her too and that Astrid had stolen one of his pillows because she'd forgotten her pregnancy pillow. She replied, then settled down to sleep. Worn by the emotional weight of stressing over meeting her boyfriend's father, Valka found sleep quite easily.

Next morning, they saw Hiccup and Astrid heading out to walk Toothless. It was impressive to her that Astrid was even willing to move so much, remembering the ache in her pelvis the last month of pregnancy as the weight of Tyr pressed down on her hips - one of those times Valka cursed her long, narrow frame. Still, walking was generally meant to be good for mother and baby.

With the 'meet the parent' worry dealt with, Valka was far more at ease at work that day, enjoying the smell of paint and clay, the sounds of pencils skating over paper and feeling the creativity swim around her in the air. Hiccup had offered to pick Tyr up from school that day, saving her the trip and giving the two time together before Tyr left for the weekend at his dads. She got home to find them sat together on the sofa, intently focused on Tyr's Game Boy until they saw her, both beaming happily at her.

"Have a good day at work?"

"Very much so, but equally happy to be home."

Enjoying that precious time with Ty before he left for the weekend, Valka sent him to make sure he had his stuff together before Sven arrived. Hiccup shuffled along the sofa, fingers sliding over her jaw as he kissed her soundly. Valka leant into him, his kiss easily capable of melting her on the spot and she knew the usual thing that happened after Tyr left was a distraction in the form of him taking her to bed...

She shivered lightly in anticipation, seeing the same in his face. They heard Tyr coming down the stairs, sharing a slightly puzzled look when the front door opened too. It seemed neither of them had heard it knock, perhaps a tad distracted by each other.

"Hey dad" oh, that was reassuring "hang on, just gonna go tell mom to stop kissing Hiccup so I can- oh!"

Ty caught himself too late, and Valka knew there was no talking away what her ex-husband had just heard. Hiccup's eyes were wide, but he didn't let it ruffle him, squeezing Valka's hand and nodding to say he was supporting her. Still... Valka had better go face the music.

-HTTYD-

I've never written Stoick meeting Valka as Hiccup's girlfriend before... still, first time for
everything for me to fuck up! Haha. Ah well, on the story rolls.
Chapter 17

Your patience is appreciated.

-HTTYD-

Sven could probably have looked angrier, but it was difficult to imagine how that would look. Tyr looked terrified, certain he'd gotten them into trouble as he had inadvertently spilled the secret.

"You're... dating?"

Valka bit her lip, but eventually braced herself and nodded. She wasn't ashamed. Hiccup made her happy, and her son adored him.

"Yes."

He seemed to consider whether or not to explode, but a small voice interrupted the thick tension.

"Dad? Are you ok?"

Ty wouldn't look up properly, obviously upset that he had let slip. Valka ached for the fear in his face. Sven's frown deepened, then creased out to leave visible irritation on Valka but not at their son.

"Fine. Let's go Tyr."

"One second Sven?"

He huffed, then turned.

"I'll be at the car."

As soon as he was a few steps away, Valka knelt down and pulled her son into a hug.

"I'm sorry mom! And sorry Hiccup!"

"Hey, don't you worry little dragon. Your mom already told you it was ok if it was an accident, and he was going to find out sooner or later."

Hiccup ruffled his hair, and eventually a small smile crossed her sons face as he looked at them.

"Go enjoy your weekend with your dad son. We'll see you sunday."

Reaching to hug Ty himself, Hiccup patted his shoulder before Tyr headed off down the path to Sven's car. Valka kept a smile for her son there until the door closed. Only then did she let the smile fade, placing a hand over her face with a deep sigh. Hiccup didn't hesitate to reach for her, tugging Valka into an embrace.

"Are you ok?"

"Just... I know that wasn't the end of it."

Heading toward the sofa, Hiccup wrapped his arm around her shoulders as Valka leant into his chest, feeling his fingers smooth over the hair by her temples as she quietly stressed about her
husband.

"You knew going in that your ex doesn't like me."

"I know, and I don't think it's the end of the world or anything. I just wish I'd had the chance to try and have an adult conversation with him about it instead of that sudden drop."

"Little dragon didn't mean it though."

Valka smiled to herself for a second; even now, Hiccup was thinking of Ty.

"Oh, I know. He'll be fretting now all weekend no doubt."

"Well, I'll be ready with some baking to do when he gets back, so he can help and play with Toothless. That always has him smiling."

Oh, Hiccup was so very good at cheering her up. Smile fighting its way onto her face, Valka sought his hand with hers, standing and pulling him to his feet - gently, naturally. He moved willingly, fingers of his other hand splaying over her back as he smiled.

"May I invite you next door?"

"You may. I just need to bag up some school work."

"Go right ahead."

Valka did so, turning to see Hiccup with his head cocked to one side, winking as she very clearly caught him checking her out when she bent over. He was ever so cheeky, but Valka could hardly complain that he was blatant about his attraction to her - it left little room for doubt when he looked at her like that. They left her home for the few steps to his, and Valka saw the sense in what Astrid had said about just putting in an adjoining door... it was a little early in their relationship for what would effectively be moving in together though.

Even if it was impossible to avoid each other completely as neighbours, Valka knew if she asked Hiccup for space, he would give that to her. He was wonderful like that.

"Food, tea, TV or bed? Ladies choice."

It was never really much of a tough decision. After giving Toothless a little attention in greeting, Valka led a very willing Hiccup to his bed, still addicted to the heat between them. His scars stretched as muscles rolled under his skin, stripping out of his t-shirt before crushing Valka against his bare torso, mouth covering hers as his hand slipped under her top. The touch of his fingers on her skin sent warm tingles through Valka, clothes all but dissolving under his hands until bare bodies fell to the bed, short stubble rasping over her skin as Hiccup mouthed over her chest.

There was a deliberate slowness to Hiccup's touch, determined to have Valka frantic with need before he finally gave her what she needed. Rough fingers left those delicious lines of goosebumps down her skin, Valka's thighs shaking as Hiccup kissed his way down her stomach with those dark eyes on her, hungry for her reactions to his touch. So used to being quiet, muted, this wanton creature Hiccup made her was still a surprise, but he responded so eagerly to her when she showed her pleasure that Valka couldn't bring herself to try and hide it.

Even with his mouth on her, Hiccup didn't rush Valka to ecstasy, drawing it out with every swipe of his tongue and lips, feathering so gently that she scarcely felt anything but warm breath and yet it was enough to make her tremble. His smile was playful when he left Valka hanging, stopped just
short of her climbing to the edge. Knowing how he operated didn't stop Valka falling for it,
shoving him on his back to climb on top of him. Hiccup's eyes lit up - he'd done it on purpose,
knew it was the best way to get Valka over any vestigial shyness about being on top if it meant she
could come at last - as she straddled him.

Once she settled on him, full and sated for the moment, Valka lost the need to rush. Couldn't help
but take the time to savour him, rocking slowly as he rubbed her thighs, peered up at her from
beneath his overlong fringe - he needed a hair cut, but Valka couldn't seem to keep her hands out of
his ridiculous mop long enough for him to get one. Unsatisfied with her slow pace, Hiccup surged
up, gripping her tight before he rolled them, hips pressing between hers before she could fully
register she'd even moved. He felt too good inside her to protest, hands going to his back to clutch
blindingly as he fucked her.

Wet, open-mouthed kisses on her neck made Valka squirm, his panting breaths sending shivers
when they hit the damp spots on her throat. Hiccup was a young man, and he fucked like one when
he wanted to. Valka had no hopes of matching his stamina, his energy, but he somehow managed
to pull a reasonable effort from her until they were both spent, catching their breath in a mesh of
sweaty, twitching limbs as Hiccup softened against her thigh before rolling onto his back with a
breathless smile.

"I miss the little dragon, but I can't deny friday nights are fun in their own right."

More often than not, they took advantage of their alone-ness quite quickly, and Hiccup never
seemed to find it repetitive or boring. He managed to keep it exciting, fresh, fanning the fire. And
in the week... now they spent the night together, and a few times before, there were frantic, messy
fumbles with bitten pillows or teeth clenched against the fabric over his shoulder. Once, Hiccup's
busy fingers had Valka biting him so hard the imprint made its way to his shoulder through his
clothes. She hadn't known herself capable of such a thing.

Surfacing from the rumpled sheets, they cleaned themselves up and headed down for a light, late
dinner, watching nonsense TV and just enjoying the others company. Valka felt her heart, restless
in her chest as Hiccup nuzzled and cuddled her, touched her face or kissed her hair when the whim
arose. He seemed to follow her around the bed even in her sleep, as she almost always woke with
him wrapped around her back.

"So, what would you like to do today? We have to walk Toothless, but otherwise the day is ours."

"And the night?"

"The night is ours too, but most people sleep at night" he gave her his impish, definitely-winding-
er-up grin "so I don't need to ask you what you want to do then."

Since Sven now knew, Valka had no compunctions about their relationship becoming increasingly
public, and so they ventured out together for a few hours. Holding his hand in public was...
liberating. People stared sometimes, but Hiccup paid them no mind and so Valka followed his
example. They were happy. Strangers minding their age gap were irrelevant.

"Hiccup!"

A small blur hit Hiccup's leg - thankfully not his metal one - in a hug, the blur turning out to be
Tyr's friend Nathan. Of course, Nathan had taken quite a shine to Hiccup back at Ty's birthday - as
had most of the boys, really, since he played with them without making it look like a chore, but
Hiccup had stepped in as Nathan's
'dad' for the games especially.

"Hey! Nathan, right?"

"You remembered!"

Nathan's mother was close behind, and the knowing look on her face spoke volumes as Hiccup patted her son affectionately.

"Valka. Hiccup."

"Hi Janey. What brings you guys out into the exciting bustle of the high street?"

"We're getting a puppy! So we came out to get stuff for him."

The mention of a dog naturally had Hiccup fascinated, dropping down to Nathan's level to talk canines with the beaming boy.

"Hiccup! Can I come hang out with your dog? For practice?"

"Nate, I'm sure he has better things to do with his time."

As soon as Nathan's face fell, Valka knew Hiccup wouldn't think of saying no. He rubbed his chin; he'd not shaved that morning, dark stubble clouding his jawline. She tried not to get distracted with memories of how that stubble felt against her lips that morning as she traced his jaw...

"That's fine with me. So long as your mom doesn't mind, that is?"

"Mom?"

"I don't want to put you out..."

"Not at all. Toothless loves new people. Hey, why not come over for dinner one day in the week? I'm sure Tyr would love to hang out. You're welcome too Janey. Or you can have some you-time. Valka will be there to keep an eye on me and the boys."

"Can I mom? Pleaseeeee?"

Somehow, the chance encounter led to an agreement that Hiccup could pick Nathan and Tyr up early from school on Tuesday, since he wasn't working that day, and be entrusted to take care of them by himself until Valka got home from work. Nathan was beside himself with glee. Ty would be ecstatic too - he loved the days Hiccup was allowed to pick him up early, the days Valka came back to find them hunched over jigsaw puzzles or video games together.

"You should be careful, or you'll get a reputation for charming single mothers."

Hiccup laughed as they headed off, his fingers twining through hers again.

"One, I'm fairly sure you aren't single. And two, two does not a pattern make. Plus, one of the married moms at Tyr's party was making eyes at me. I think she was drunk though."

Valka remembered, especially the part where she was regretting letting the grown ups drink.

Their weekend together was otherwise uneventful - Valka did some marking work, Hiccup occupying himself with a book on engines and the two sat in a companionable silence, broken only by Toothless snoring. As promised - Valka herself had forgotten - Hiccup had all the fixings to
make brownies ready to go when Tyr got home, Sven's stony face matching the tension in their young sons shoulders. She could only imagine what a tough weekend it had been, but Hiccup was all geared up to bring smiles to a young boy again.

Between the baking and the news of a friendly visit a couple of days away, Tyr did perk up, getting stuck in to the baking and somehow ending up with chocolate in his hair despite usually being so careful. Amazingly, he'd missed getting it on his glasses.

It wasn't until Valka was putting Tyr to bed that she found out anything about Sven's reaction to she and Hiccup.

"Mom?"

"Yes Ty?"

"Was Hiccup only nice to me to get to you?"

She looked at Ty in disbelief, wondering what could put such a daft idea in his head - Hiccup doted on him, plain as day.

"Why would you say such a thing?"

"That's what dad said. He said Hiccup must have used me so he could get to you."

Sitting carefully on the edge of his bed, Valka reached out and stroked Tyr's face, smoothing his hair back from his forehead and rubbing away the faint worry lines there.

"After all the time you two have spent together, all the fun you boys have, and how Hiccup took care of you when you were sick... what do you think son?"

Valka wanted to throttle her ex-husband - after all the months Hiccup had spent building his confidence up, the boys own father had managed to put a big dent in it by making Tyr feel Hiccup hadn't really been interested in befriending him after all.

"I guess I was worried. I didn't want Hiccup to become my stepdad if he didn't really like me."

Pushing aside the word stepdad for now - such a commitment was far off in the future, if ever - Valka shook her head.

"Hiccup adores you. He always says he misses you when you go to your dads, and he spent all that time on that colouring book for you. Your father is just... upset. Its a grown up thing."

"Really? He misses me?"

"So much. Almost as much as I do."

"Wow. Ok then. I won't worry about that anymore."

He was so trusting, warming Valka with his sweet smile as he took his glasses off to go to sleep. Heading downstairs to where Hiccup was still in her kitchen, making Ty lunch for the morning, Valka repeated what Tyr had told her about Sven. Hiccup swore rather colourfully.

"How dare he. Not just because he's demeaning how much I love that kid, but that must have made the little dragon feel awful."

"I assured him that it was nonsense, but I agree it was awful of Sven to say it."
Closing the lunch box and placing it in the fridge, Hiccup dusted off his hands and leant against the side with a sigh.

"I can't help but wonder if Sven hopes driving a wedge between me and Tyr will damage our relationship, as he knows Tyr is really the best way to break us up. You'd never choose anyone over him, and I would never ask you to."

Truthfully, Valka had wondered something similar. It was reassuring to see that Hiccup wasn't the slightest bit scared off, his number one emotion upset on Ty's behalf.

"Perhaps."

"Well, he failed this time. Guess we wait and see if he tries something else, but give him time to get over the bruised ego because you're moving on before I go talk to him. And before you say anything, if I don't, Dagur will. He thinks the world of Tyr too. Everyone does. And Dagur will end up busting his face."

Never had Valka envisioned those five floating heads over the fence their first day in the new house would become her friends, Tyr's friends, fiercely protective of them both and supportive of the almost two-decades age gap relationship. They didn't see much of Heather, but she was a busy lady and yet they'd had dinners with her, and she - and everyone else - had all sent Christmas gifts to Valka and Tyr.

It was like being adopted into the family.

Sven's bubbling anger didn't immediately turn up and turn her world over the next day, and instead she got to enjoy Tyr's excitement about the next day, when Hiccup would be alone taking care of two eleven year old boys for over an hour before she got home to check that no houses had been blown up, or whatever it was people worried boys did.

Thankfully, when she got there, everything was fine. Janey had opted for what was probably the first alone time she'd had in ages, since Valka assured her she was happy to let Hiccup watch Tyr by himself regularly. Hiccup had made sure their dinner would have enough for her, and while Tyr and Nathan were quietly doing homework after a delicious meal, Valka finally went home to drop off her school things.

There was a letter on the mat, with just her name. No address, so it had been hand delivered. It looked official, important with a stamp in the corner and a crisp, perfectly sealed envelope. She opened it, and immediately felt sick. Dumping her bags on the first available surface, she hastened back around to Hiccup and shoved the document at him. He frowned, seeing she'd gone white and shaky.

"Hey, it's going to be ok."

"How? Sven wants... he wants to take Ty away from me!"

-HTTYD-

*cue dramatic music again*
Sgt - you're mostly right, Ty is the age where his opinion matters, but... well, it'll be explained why that isn't the only factor in play.

Sorry btw that this is a few days late, I've been suffering chronic writers block lately but there is a trickle of creative flow sneaking in tonight.

-HTTYD-

Hiccup didn't need to even think to know what that letter was about; Sven was trying to punish Valka for being with him, by taking away the centre of her entire world. Valka shook, already looking for Ty as though she worried Sven would have slipped in and taken her son in seconds.

"Hey. Don't panic. Little dragon isn't going anywhere."

"How do you know that?"

Placing his hands on her shoulders, trying to brace Valka, Hiccup kept his voice low to stop the two young boys overhearing them.

"Because I'd agree to break up with you before I ever let anyone break you and Ty up. But regardless of that, he had no issue letting you share custody before. Any halfwit judge will see this as jealous petulance and tell him to grow up. I don't even know how he got this to rise to the level of even bothering to make a case."

Valka drew in a few breaths, seeming to regain a little composure.

"He works with lawyers in his office."

"Ah, he has connections. Look, just... try to stay calm for a bit. We'll talk after I get Tyr's friend home ok?"

She nodded, though Hiccup doubted she was in any way calm or that she'd be thinking of anything else for quite some time. It would only raise the boys suspicions if Hiccup rushed Nathan home, so it was more a case of Hiccup keeping the boys entertained - and more importantly, distracted - so they wouldn't notice Valka's upset. Given that he had a stack of movies about dragons and a very friendly dog, that wasn't terribly difficult.

The boys paid little mind to the adult couple on the sofa, perched on the floor with popcorn that they nudged Toothless away from occasionally, cheering excitedly at swooping lizards and generally warming Hiccup's heart with their childish excitement. With after school club and working mothers and weekends at his dads, Tyr didn't get much chance to do stuff like have his friends over for tea. Hiccup made a note to offer the choice more often, since it seemed to be cheering them up no end.

Assuming Valka didn't decide their relationship wasn't worth the risk, that was.

The idea of losing the chance to hang out with Tyr alone was gutting to Hiccup; they were part of his family now, and he didn't want Sven's jealousy to come in and destroy that, but he also knew if it looked like there was any chance it might actually put her custody of Tyr at risk, Valka would pick her son. And rightly so, but Hiccup wouldn't be happy about it; he'd just understand. After all, he'd picked his family over Mala - the situations were rather different, but the root choice was the
same. That had been the *right* choice too; even though they'd carried on sleeping together, time apart had taught Hiccup and Mala they could still be best friends and there was no pressure about the future. It suited them better.

"You want to come on the drive little dragon?"

Tyr nodded eagerly, meaning Valka could take some time to herself and gather, until Hiccup got back and they could talk. Strapping the two young boys into his car - after Nathan said a long, drooly goodbye to Toothless - the drool was the dogs, thankfully - and got cleaned up, Hiccup ached for having to leave Valka there but needed to get Nathan home at a reasonable hour.

"Were you good for Hiccup?"

"Yeah!"

Hiccup nodded to Janey, smiling when Nathan hugged him before pottering off to the front door.

"He was brilliant. He's welcome back anytime. Toothless loved him too. Sorry if he's covered in dog hair."

Janey smiled in return.

"Thank you."

"No problem. Catch you later Nathan."

Sliding back into his car, Hiccup saw Tyr beaming.

"Have a good day Tyr?"

"Yeah, it was great! Thanks Hiccup."

"No problem little dragon. Let's get home so you can get your bath and bed yeah?"

Thankfully, Tyr was perfectly agreeable and took himself off for his bath when they got back. Hiccup sought out his girlfriend, found her in her living room still looking scared. He sat down next to her gently, not especially surprised when she wound her arms around him and clutched tight.

"I can't lose my son."

"Hey now" he kissed her hair "you won't. Nobody is ever going to doubt how much you love him, how good you are for him. You're an incredible mother, and he is a testament to that every single day."

Tugging Valka to her feet, he led her the few steps to where his Christmas gift to her hung on the wall. Honestly, it touched him that she hung it up, but now wasn't the time to be giddy about such things.

"You understand art. So you know that when I drew this, it came from seeing how much you and Tyr adore each other. Look how much he loves you."

Valka reached out her hand, tracing her son's face over the glass. Slowly, she nodded.

"I know he does."
"I know it's scary, but nobody sane is going to dare separate you two. If you want to break us off because of that, then fine. I won't fight, I would never say I'm more important than Tyr. But what happens the next time you start dating? How long is Sven allowed to try and control your life?"

She gripped his hand, jaw setting tightly and he saw the same expression Tyr pulled when he was stuck on a particularly tricky part of a game.

"I know. You're right. And I don't... I want..."

Valka struggled to finish the sentence, but Hiccup could understand. He cupped her jaw gently, cradling her face as he kissed her.

"I know. And he's not going to scare me off."

They stood there, embraced and comforting until Tyr came downstairs, hair damp and pyjamas on.

"Are you guys ok?"

"All fine son. Finished your bath?"

"All clean! I brushed my teeth too. Will you come tuck me in?"

Valka nodded, gesturing to Hiccup to follow her up and he did so, smiling as he heard Valka put her son to bed. It was a little early, but Tyr liked to read before he went to sleep and baths often made him bed-ready anyway. Then they retired to her room to sit on the bed, cuddling loosely to chat before Hiccup headed next door for the night.

"So what do I do?"

"You wait for your date to come through. They'll probably send someone over to check your house is fit for the child and all that. Some child specialist will want to talk to Tyr. Someone else will probably want to talk to you, and will probably ask why you're dating a guy half your age and whether you think that is a healthy example to set for your child."

Lifting her head from his chest, Valka looked up at Hiccup strangely.

"You seem to know a lot about this."

Hiccup half-shrugged.

"I watch a lot of TV. You pick stuff up."

"Well, if someone asked me, I'd tell them a wonderful man who is sweet and respectful and thoughtful, who makes my son feel happy and confident in himself... he's definitely a good example to set."

He couldn't help smiling, and Valka returned it before she resumed leaning in to him. Running fingers through her hair until she sighed happily, Hiccup knew this wouldn't be the end of it, but she seemed to have left the manic panic stage, and their relationship seemed to be very much stable. For now, he was content to enjoy the quiet moment, Valka settled in his arms and occasionally nuzzling in a little closer to him. He wondered if she'd swat him for calling her cute right now, since she did whenever he said it in front of Tyr. Hiccup could hardly call Valka many of the other things he thought of her in front of her son, in his own defence.

"I better get going, because the longer I'm here the more I want to not leave and Toothless needs
attention."

Reluctant to let him go, Valka kissed him goodbye. It almost broke his resolve, but eventually Hiccup pulled himself away from her arms. Just before he went to exit the room, he turned back to Valka.

"Could you not just... talk to Sven? Because if this goes through, it's going to really upset little dragon and I figure that despite everything, he really does love that kid."

Valka sighed, shaking her head.

"If he's gone to this much trouble, a simple conversation is not going to sway his stubborn mind."

"Hm. Well, guess we'll just have to prove him wrong. See how he feels when you get awarded sole custody because he's proven himself to be more of a petulant child than his eleven year old son. Who is, admittedly, not very petulant or childish."

They talked over text a little while longer, had sleepy spoken goodnights over the phone and went to sleep missing the others presence. Well, Hiccup did anyway.

It only took a few days for Sven's little stunt to begin to affect their lives; Hiccup had to go pick Tyr up from school early, because he was upset by all the questions a supposed 'child expert' asked him after turning up at his school. He had to be the one to comfort the young boy, unsure what to say without sounding terribly prejudiced to Sven.

"Why do they think mom isn't good?"

Sniffling slightly, Tyr burrowed into Hiccup's embrace with Loki clutched under his arm, clearly in some distress.

"Because those people are idiots who don't know how wonderful your mom is. You know that. I know that. But they've never met her."

"And they asked me how I would feel about living with my dad all the time."

It wasn't really Hiccup’s place to have this conversation with Tyr, but the alternative was to leave him distressed and upset for several more hours with no understanding of why.

"Your dad has applied to take sole custody of you."

"He wants to take me away from mom? All the time?"

"Pretty much. You'd live with him and maybe see your mom at the weekend, depending on what was agreed."

Hiccup didn't think it at all possible, let alone likely, that it would happen unless Valka voluntarily gave up her son - again, impossible - but he wanted to see what Tyr had to say. At eleven years old, he was considered old enough to have an opinion on the matter that counted.

"I don't want that. I'd like to see mom at weekends more because we can't do stuff together like go to the zoo or visit museums" Hiccup made a mental note "but she's the one who tucks me in at night and draws dragons with me, and never complains that I don't really like sports. And if I went to live with dad full time, I wouldn't get to see you or Astrid or Toothless! Or Eret or Dagur or Heather!"
Hiccup was touched that he and his motley band of family and friends counted so much to Tyr, hugging the boy close to soothe him.

"I promise we'd find ways to see you, but I don't think it will happen anyway. Your mom hasn't done anything to make them take you away."

"What do you mean?"

The tears had stopped, replaced by stern curiosity that was almost alien upon the boyish face.

"I mean, these people are looking to see if your mom is an unfit parent. Your dad challenged her fitness to take care of you. And they are going to find nothing, no matter how hard they look. So the custody agreement that came in when your parents got divorced will stand, because nothing has changed."

"Then why is dad trying to change it? Oh" clarity flickered across his face, so like his mothers "is this because dad found out about you and mom dating?"

"Sort of."

Tyr frowned, then looked over at the clock before turning back to Hiccup.

"Can I borrow your phone?"

"Uh, sure. Don't read my texts though. My cousin likes to send me rude messages and your mom would hang me."

Handing over his mobile to Tyr, Hiccup really hoped Tyr took him at face value; no eleven year old needed to read the less family-friendly texts their mother exchanged with her boyfriend. He watched in confusion as Tyr brought up the dial pad, tapping out an unfamiliar number.

"Who are you calling?"

"My dad."

Unsure what Tyr was thinking, but hardly able to tell Tyr he couldn't talk to his father, Hiccup could only watch Tyr perched on his knee waiting for the phone to pick up. His dad would be at work, so it was unlikely he would answer, surely?

"Dad?"

Oh, apparently Hiccup was wrong.

"Ty? Who's phone are you calling me off of?"

"Hiccup's. And I'm telling you not to come get me today. I don't want to see you right now."

Without giving his father time to even formulate a response, Tyr hung up. Hiccup blinked, stunned.

"Are you sure about that?"

"Yeah. I want to spend the weekend with mom for a change. I just didn't want to mess anything up by trying to change the legal stuff, but if dad can do it so can I."

Sometimes, Hiccup forgot how whip-smart Tyr could be, quiet and unintrusive as he generally was.
"Well, alright then. Since we have a couple hours before your mom gets back, what shall we do?"

"Let's make her something nice? All this custody stuff must have been getting to her."

His pure heart warmed Hiccup, and he nodded agreeably.

"Go change into your messy clothes then, we'll bake her something awesome."

Hiccup wondered if Sven had any idea how much Tyr meant to him, how it was hurting him - though that would probably not concern Sven much in his jealous state - that he might lose the chance to see his little dragon friend almost every day. He suddenly understood Valka's concern; all the rational explanations in the world were tough to process when the thought he could lose part of his family was rearing it's ugly head.

-HTTYD-

**Finally! Something resembling a chapter... I hope.**
You probably already noticed but I had to take a break. Hopefully I'm back on track but... no promises.

-HTTYD-

Valka was - understandably - ecstatic about the prospect of having the weekend with Tyr, though they were all somewhat on edge that Sven would turn up and cause a scene. Miraculously, he didn't. Perhaps envisioning he would gain full custody of Tyr, he didn't want to alienate his son at this point by turning up and ignoring what he wanted there and then.

Whatever the cause, Hiccup was thrilled both for himself and his girlfriend, watching her cuddle up with Tyr and sample the sweet treats the two had made while awaiting Valka's return. He left them to it, fiddling on his laptop while dinner was cooking and Toothless snored in his bed.

"Hey Hiccup?"

"Yes Tyr?"

"Mom said she wasn't sure if you had a date thing planned."

"I did" Hiccup nodded, mostly to himself as he found what he was looking for "but I just checked and if you like, we can do that and you can come? Or we can do what you want to do all weekend. I really don't mind."

"What is it?"

Tyr looked between Hiccup and his mother, curious.

"Oh, he never tells me. But he hasn't gone wrong yet."

"It's only for the one day too, so we can go to the museum on Sunday if you like?"

Nodding eagerly, it seemed the youth was quite on board with the prospect. Hiccup glanced to Valka, who nodded too, also beaming. She was just ecstatic to be having such time with her son, after no weekends since the custody agreement reached less than a year ago. Hiccup smiled at them both, then stood to check on dinner. Personally, Hiccup was just thrilled that they didn't want to spend the weekend together without him - he would have understood if they had, but... he wasn't going to complain if they didn't.

"Coming to help Tyr?"

"Yeah!"

Hiccup would never tire of the boys enthusiasm; he wasn't explosive and excitable like other boys his age, but there was no denying his happiness and joy when it was there, exuding from his bright eyes and warm smile. The three settled down after a hearty dinner, watching a movie and at one point, getting a phone call from Astrid to complain about being 'fit to burst'. Apparently she was due any day now, would be induced a week later if she didn't deliver by then but that was little comfort to someone who was quite so heavily pregnant and eager to be done with that part.
Plans in place, Tyr went to bed in Astrid's room that evening, Loki tucked under his arm after many cuddles from both mother and canine. Hearing him settle after Valka tucked him in, Hiccup smiled up at her as she returned to him in the living room, arm open for her to nestle under so he could cuddle her.

"Not the way we usually spend our Friday afternoons, but I wouldn't change a thing."

Hiccup commented, tone teasing as he implied how they would usually spend the afternoon - and often part of the evening - in one or the others bed. She laughed lightly, nuzzling into Hiccup's jaw with a kiss pecked on the skin there.

"Thank you."

"For what?"

Hiccup quizzed, tracing the shape of her face with his finger.

"Firstly for picking Ty up. Then cheering him up. And for not being upset about it changing our usual plans."

"Happy to do it. Especially including him in tomorrow. You aren't the only one who's been missing him at weekends, you know."

Valka nodded, cupping his jaw and turning his face to kiss him. Hiccup smiled as she did so, humming happily against her lips.

"I adore how good you are with him, how close you two are."

Hiccup grinned.

"Good. Because you guys are stuck with me. I love you both."

Valka blinked, the realization of what he'd just said hitting them both. They had never said the L word before, at least not about each other to each other.

"Excuse me?"

Hiccup swallowed thickly, nodding. He didn't regret the words.

"I love you. And your son. In different ways, but still."

Valka kissed him again; hungry, desperate.

"I love you too."

He beamed, the same expression mirrored on her face as they basked in the simplicity of the joyful moment, the natural way their feelings came to the fore. Her fingers tangled in his hair as they kissed again, Hiccup quite agreeable as Valka pressed him into the sofa with his arms slung around her waist.

"By the gods, I never expected to fall for someone like you."

"One legged? Mechanic? Dragon fanatic? Or the age thing?"

Valka nodded.
"All of the above, really. But yes, the 'age thing'. I didn't ever expect to have anything in common with a man half my age, yet here you are."

Hiccup leant up, kissed her.

"Life surprises us like that. I'm just glad that it happened."

After letting Toothless out before he went to bed for the night, Valka led Hiccup to bed. They stripped each other quietly, fumbling in the darkness with moans and giggles muffled against pillows, sheets and skin.

"Shhh" Hiccup covered Valka's mouth as she keened "you'll wake Tyr."

They didn't often have sex when Tyr was home, but sometimes they couldn't help themselves... it was only an issue when Valka couldn't stay quiet, gasping her pleasure against his palm or a pillow clutched between her teeth.

"I love you."

 Whispered in the dark, Hiccup felt her hand flex against his lower back, teeth digging in to his chest as she fluttered and shuddered around him in a heady climax. Blissed out as they cuddled, reluctantly only leaving the bed to clean up and brush their teeth for the night, Hiccup curled around his lover with a smile he just couldn't keep off his face.

He woke still smiling, and Valka returned it rather quickly after she woke, humming happily when Hiccup ran his fingers through her hair, enjoying the quiet moment. He could hear Toothless in the back garden, meaning Tyr was up and had let the dog out.

"Where are we going today?"

"Come on, you didn't think I was going to change the game now?"

Valka let out a soft exhale of amusement, nuzzled into his bare chest.

"Worth a shot. We should get up."

"Yep. Whole weekend with the little dragon."

That brought an even wider smile to her face, prompted her to sit up. Hiccup eyed skin bared by fallen blankets, grinning when Valka quirked an eyebrow at him as she noticed his unabashed ogling.

Gods, she was beautiful. Soft with sleep and early morning light, lit from within by happiness. His heart pumped a little quicker, reaching a hand out to stroke her back and enjoying her faint shiver.

"Don't you have to put your leg on?"

There was no hint of disgust or even pity; Valka accepted him, metal limb and all. Hiccup was at ease with it around her, in a way he'd not expected possible with another back when he and Mala broke up. The ex girlfriend in question - who Hiccup still spoke to over Skype and online messaging, was thrilled that he and Valka were doing well as a couple.

"Yeah, probably should. I just like looking at you."

Valka smiled prettily, sliding from the bed quite naked and further distracting Hiccup from much else but watching her. Only when her nightie slid fluidly down her body did Hiccup actually roll
over, grabbing hold of his prosthetic and attaching it so he would be able to get about.

"Where are we going?"

Tyr quizzed, peering at pyjama-clad grown ups from the table where he and Loki sat.

"Secret. I promise it'll be fun."

Pouting, Tyr nodded in agreement - then assent when Hiccup asked if he wanted pancakes for breakfast. This easy morning routine was a novelty, no impending work or school to rush them. Half blueberry, half chocolate chip and all pleasantly full afterward, Hiccup knew at least nobody would be hungry on the drive out.

"Toothless! Stop it!"

Hiccup chuckled as he saw his pesky pet licking syrup from Tyr's hand, much to the giggling child's amusement even as he protested. Shooing the daft animal away, Hiccup chivvied Tyr to get cleaned up and dressed, gave Toothless a little breakfast himself and then ventured to change for the day himself.

"Come on furball, off to dad with you."

Stoick received them well, greeting Valka and Tyr as well as Hiccup, warm and genial as Toothless scampered off to greet Thor.

"Off anywhere nice?"

"Yeah. But Hiccup won't tell us where."

"If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise!"

Tyr stuck his tongue out, but he was giggling happily a minute later.

"Thanks for taking Toothless for the day, I hate leaving him by himself."

"Ah, it's no trouble. Have fun you three."

Smiling gratefully, Hiccup got back into the car and the trio headed off toward the 'adventure' of the day. It wasn't too long of a drive, and they arrived without a hitch. Both mother and son stared around as they got out of the car in a field, gravelled area clearly designated for vehicles crunching beneath their feet.

"What is this?"

"This is a Celtic festival. A little bit history but mostly a lot of food and music you might not have experienced before. However, they do do fish and chips if you don't want to try new food, ok Tyr?"

Knowing Tyr's need for familiarity sometimes, Hiccup had checked in advance. The boy nodded, shuffling closer to the adults as they headed in - Hiccup wasn't surprised, as Tyr couldn't see any other children just yet.

He also knew Valka loved experiencing new cultures - especially old ones. The Celtic fest was the ideal place for her, particularly when he knew the sort of music she liked.

The swelling music of a harp was the first instrument he heard, fairly soft yet pervasive enough to be heard over the people milling about. For Hiccup, the novelty of walking hand-in-hand with
Valka in public had yet to wear off, even though their relationship was public knowledge by now.

"Wow. This is cool!"

Tyr took very little time to become enthralled by the place, standing near a band for a while and smiling softly to himself as he listened to the music. Valka watched him, smiling at Hiccup occasionally and his heart swelled in time with the music. So far, he'd scored a hit.

"I'd like you to meet my parents soon. If that's ok with you?"

Her words surprised him, but Hiccup nodded eagerly; Hiccup knew Valka's mother knew about him, but wasn't sure about her dad, and he'd yet to meet either of them in the flesh. It was another stone in the foundations of their relationship, a statement of their serious intentions to each other.

"I'd love to."

There was a children's area near where they stopped for an early lunch, peckish after the journey and wanting to eat before they went exploring and, in Valka's case at least, possibly drinking. Tyr had his fish and chips, but also tried a little of his mother's Celtic soup... thing. Hiccup wasn't sure what made it Celtic, but Valka enjoyed it. Hiccup enjoyed his hunk of meat equally so - with a Scottish father, perhaps there was some Celt in his ancestry somewhere.

In the kids area, Tyr entered a spirited debate with a young Irish boy, discussing their differing views on dragons - the Irish boy was not very pro-dragon. Hiccup chuckled as Tyr declared himself 'little dragon', and then almost fell out of his seat when Tyr turned and pointed at him.

"That's what Hiccup calls me and he's gonna be my stepdad."

Surprised, Hiccup could only share a stunned look with his girlfriend, barely noticing the other boys answer.

"My dad said I'd make a great dragon slayer, but my stepmom says dragons are for kids."

"Nuh-uh. Dragons are for everybody. Right Hiccup?"

Still reeling from the stepdad comment, Hiccup took a second to gather and respond.

"Right little dragon."

Tyr didn't bring it up again, but Hiccup couldn't stop it lingering in the back of his mind, even as they stood watching competitive Celtic dancing. Even while Valka scolded him for buying Tyr a CD of one of the bands while the boy was distracted by the music.

"What? He likes the music. Look, I respect that you don't want him feeling like I'm buying his affection, and I'm not. But I give everyone I love gifts. So get used to it."

Despite being in her forties now, Valka could still pull off quite a petulant pout, followed by a little glaring. The irritation wore off when she saw how happy Tyr was to be taking a little part of their day out back home with him.

Hiccup tried a sip of a few things, but Valka found herself quite enamoured with a sweet, honeyed mead. At least, Hiccup assumed she was enjoying it as she consumed two whole mugs. The vendor couldn't stop laughing as Valka licked her lips, clearly approving of the sugar-laden substance.

"Mom, are you drunk?"
"Absolutely not. Which is why I will stop now, lest I do become drunk."

She wasn't drunk, for sure, but Hiccup would have put her at tipsy if she had another half glass of wine. Plus, her cheeks tinged pink from the alcohol anyway as it dilated her blood vessels, leaving her flushed and a touch giggly as they continued to peruse the festival. She even cajoled him into dancing with her there on the field, though Hiccup was never going to be a terribly elegant partner.

Still, they twirled and laughed and heard Tyr cheering in amusement from the sidelines - he rejected the idea of dancing outright, but was happy to watch the grown ups at it. Hiccup was having fun, certainly, but his real happiness on that day was being a part of their happiness, building a memory with them, seeing mother and son smile and hug and forget the stresses that awaited them back home.

Exhausted by the day out, they picked up some food that could be eaten in the car before heading back - only for Tyr to fall asleep in the back, glasses slightly askew where he'd half-heartedly pushed them up before dozing off. Valka twisted in her seat to throw the slumbering pre-teen a fond smile, then settled back properly to smile at Hiccup instead.

"Thank you for today. It was incredible."

"You are very welcome. I was thrilled to be a part of it."

Valka reached over to squeeze his hand, wide green eyes bright with emotion. Hiccup smiled back, utterly content in the moment. His phone vibrated in his pocket, which Valka helpfully reached for and answered. Hiccup waited a minute, then saw her doe eyes grow even wider.

"What is it?"

"Well" she hung up the phone after a few more seconds "you're about to be an uncle."

-HTTYD-

Aww, aren't they all adorable!
Chapter 20

Y'all know Kinktober slowing me down. I'm sorry. But hopefully the Valka+Hiccup posts on that have kept at least some of you going!

And we get to meet a new member of the clan this chapter! Plus some old members (OCs I made up for Open that I grew very very fond of, that is.)

-HTTYD-

Hiccup dropped Valka and Tyr home first, naturally, helping carry a sleepy Tyr inside while Valka got their things out of his car. His heart swelled as he placed Tyr on the bed, watching Valka carefully remove his shoes and glasses before they tucked him in, Loki placed close by in case he felt unsettled by going to bed in his clothes and needed comfort.

Thankfully, that panick-y excitement waited until they were back downstairs to rise up again, Hiccup bouncing on the spot as he realised Astrid could at any minute be a mother. Valka smiled as Hiccup enthused, before pointing out maybe he ought to get going.

"Oh, right! I will let you know when I can, yeah? And don't stay in all day with him if I'm not back. You and the little dragon enjoy your weekend."

Valka nodded, smiling softly as he kissed her goodbye before Hiccup left to rush to the hospital. His leg ached a little from all the walking, but it probably didn't compare to what Astrid might be going through right now. Though he'd only met them a handful of times, Hiccup recognised the two people also arriving at the hospital when he got there.

"Elsir! Eret, dad of Eret!"

The Sami elder couple greeted Hiccup warmly, having quite clearly made the trip in haste after a similar phone call to the one Hiccup got almost two hours ago. He smiled to himself at the tattoos on their faces, having seen the same pattern on Eret as his father, slightly different to his mothers - they were specific to families, mostly, and done at age eighteen, before Eret's parents had gotten married or even met, if Hiccup remembered correctly.

"Hey laddie. You know where we're going?"

"Yeah, it's this way."

Tapping his walking stick on the ground as they went, Eret Sr commented on the fact Hiccup looked much happier than the last time they'd seen each other. Smiling to himself, Hiccup nodded as they headed in to the hospital building, stark and bright compared to outsides night time.

"I've been seeing someone a few months now. It's going well."

"Aye, Eret mentioned. She has a young'un herself right?"

Before Hiccup could answer, Elsir was swatting at her husband.

"Behave you! We're very happy for you Hiccup."

"Thanks. Oh look, here we are."
The sight of Stoick, Heather and Dagur told all they needed to know. The sound of Astrid cursing Eret's existence nearby was additional evidence. Hiccup winced as he greeted his father, sat down next to him.

"Gobber stayed t'watch the dogs, don' worry."

"I wasn't worried. I'd have been licked to death in the car park if you brought the dogs with you."

Chortling, his father nodded.

"How was your day out?"

"Brilliant. And they had an amazing time too, which is what really matters to me."

There wasn't much more small talk to be had before everyone turned to the immediately recognisable sound of a baby crying, everyone shuffling in excitement as Astrid's threats to Eret's anatomy faded from the air, leaving only muffled words and newborn gurgles as they waited.

"Well?"

Eret hadn't even cleared the door when Dagur, nearly beside himself with anticipation, asked for an update.

"Little girl. I want to say she looks just like if Astrid had a baby with a Sami, but that's exactly what happened."

Everyone laughed as Eret turned around, looking longingly in the direction of Astrid.

"I'll come get you when Astrid's cleaned up and everything, yeah?"

They nodded, though Eret barely noticed as he disappeared back inside, no doubt besotted with the newest addition. As everyone else was liable to be, Hiccup mused. They were a sappy lot, no doubt about it.

The hospital room was a tight squeeze with brawn like Stoick and Eret and Dagur squeezing in, but Astrid was positively lit up as she cradled the fruits of all that screaming, pain and the arduous last nine months. Eret got first chance to hold his newborn daughter after Astrid, holding her up where everyone could peer furtively into the wrap. He saw exactly what Eret meant when he looked - bright blue eyes stared back at him, Eret's Sami colouring there in her skin tone, her surprising amount of dark hair, but the shape of her little button nose and the way her little lips pouted were all Astrid.

"Oh wow, she's beautiful."

"Isn't she? Hurry up and get your hello cuddles cus I want her back."

Chuckling, Eret passed the little bundle over to his parents - Elsir took hold, but Eret Sr was glued to his wife as they looked down at their granddaughter, beaming. There was scarcely a dry eye in the room. If she looked tiny in Dagur's brawny arms, then Stoick's huge, beefy limbs made her look utterly minute. Heather was openly weeping, but then Hiccup was little better and he knew that Heather and Dagur were basically their siblings too - Heather and Astrid were close as sisters, and Dagur had nicknamed them "brother Hiccup" and "little sis" years ago.

Hiccup finally got his turn, heart doing somersaults as he watched the little face stretch into a yawn, one pudgy fist coming out to wave around in search of information about this new, strange
"Finally someone Toothless has more teeth than. He'll be thrilled!"

Everyone laughed, but then Astrid was reaching up with her 'grab-hands' motion, indicating she would quite like her child back. Hiccup relented, lowering himself awkwardly until Eret took over, sliding hands under to lower baby-to-mother safely.

"Have you named her yet?"

"Yep. Meet Helena Ingrid Haddock. Deal with it Hunter, we're not married yet."

Eret pouted, but he was beaming seconds later. Hiccup noted the very definite 'yet' in Astrid's sentence, but he knew as well as anybody just how well matched the pair of them were. It was only a matter of time before they figured out some way to tie the knot that suited their quirky love.

"Yeah. We figured that naming her after family would be too tough, cus we love all of you so much, but there's a lot of H's in both sides, and Astrid kindly agreed to let us pick a Sami name for her."

Astrid smiled up at her boyfriend.

"She is Sami. I wouldn't take her heritage away. I just wasn't going to let you name a son Eret, son of Eret, grandson of Eret. Maybe that works in Norway, but here we call that child abuse."

Eret Sr pretended to be put out, but the atmosphere was too deliriously happy for even his usually stern demeanour to convince anybody.

"Is it ok if I tell Valka?"

"She's your girlfriend, of course it's ok you dolt. Hel, take a picture if you want, but we'll be visiting soon so Helena can see her second home."

"I already bought a pop up crib, baby mat and bottles."

Astrid laughed.

"Of course you did."

Heart filled with warm, joyful love, Hiccup headed out of the room to send a text to his girlfriend - she may well be asleep by now, but could wake up to the news. Astrid insisted Valka also wake up to him too - she'd be released in the morning and going straight home to rest, so Hiccup should go and enjoy the day with Tyr and Valka before real life caught up with them. So Hiccup left with a few photos snapped on his phone, warm hugs from everybody and a lightness to his steps. Even the ache in his leg did not deter. Hiccup debated letting himself in to Valka's home and joining her in bed a few times, but it was a sleepy text from her - she'd heard his car pull up, his front door close - that cemented the choice.

"Hey" he slid under warm bedcovers, voice and movements quiet as a still-mostly-sleeping Valka shuffled into his arms "go back to sleep."

"Mmm."

Was all the answer he got before Valka settled, but damned if it wasn't utterly adorable. Hiccup fell asleep clutching her close, knowing it was late and he'd be sleepy come morning, but it was
completely and utterly worth it - he'd met his niece and was getting a day with Valka and Tyr.

"When did Hiccup get here?"

Tyr had pyjamas on, so he'd either gotten up to change or changed first thing that morning, and noticed the sudden reappearance of his next door neighbour that morning. Hiccup yawned into his hot drink, but smiled tiredly at Tyr.

"Late last night after I got back from the hospital."

Both of them cooed in turn at the photos Hiccup had on his phone - in a separate folder to the picture he had of Valka, so Tyr couldn't possibly run across it. It was only one, and not entirely explicit. Valka had been lying naked in bed, and Hiccup was enchanted by the way light played over her skin, the soft smile on her face. It didn't display anything, it wasn't lewd. It was just a capturing of beauty. But Tyr was young and it was still a naked photo of his mother. So Hiccup tucked it away from the photos of his newborn niece.

"What's her name?"

"Helena. Helena Ingrid Haddock. Though one day that'll no doubt change to Hunter. Ah, her initials won't change though."

Chewing on his toast thoughtfully, Tyr pondered that as Hiccup downed the last of his drink, clicking the kettle on for a fresh one and thinking about what to do for breakfast.

"Are we still going to the museum today?"

"If you want to."

Nodding eagerly, Hiccup watched Tyr scamper off upstairs to decide what to wear that day. Valka smiled as she watched him go, face falling into something a little more pensive, but even that expression changed before Hiccup decided to call her out on it. Maybe she was just tired, or fretting about what would come after this weekend, this little slice of miracle before a storm in the shape of Sven's custody challenge came to claim them.

She'd talk when she was ready if that was the case, Hiccup knew.

"I'm ready!"

"Grown ups need to wake up a bit more first."

"I'll go read for a bit then."

After more coffee and some sustaining breakfast, the trio headed off out for the second time that weekend. Astrid texted to let Hiccup know she was home safe with Helena, soothing the lingering concern he had as her big brother. Hiccup remembered heading this way for what was sort of his and Valka's first date, trailing through the art section while he only had eyes for the work of art that was her.

It felt a more family-specific event now. Especially with the emotions still surging in him from their latest addition, Hiccup was in a very 'family' place right now, watching the boy who had yesterday proclaimed Hiccup would one day be his step-father, wide eyes behind glasses drinking in the history, the artifacts. Tyr would turn around, check they were still there, smile at how Valka and Hiccup were holding hands. Hiccup inwardly marvelled at how much Tyr had come out of his shell. Oh, he was undoubtedly still a quiet, bookish dragon geek, but there was a confidence to him
now as he led them, rather than shuffle close to Valka's side, needing to be coaxed out on his own. And Hiccup was still pretty much a quiet, bookish dragon geek now himself. Tyr was doing just fine.

"This was like the best weekend I've had in a long time. Thanks Hiccup."

"The pleasure was all mine little dragon."

After they returned and had a lazy, rich and heavy dinner, Tyr took himself to his room to relax before bath and bedtime, the soothing melodies of music that came from there telling Hiccup he was playing the CD from the Celtic festival they were at the day before. Hiccup sank against Valka's sofa, yawning a little himself after the slightly manic but utterly magical weekend he'd had. Valka was quiet, chewing her bottom lip between her teeth. Hiccup frowned, reaching to extricate it and rubbing his thumb over the reddened skin.

"What's wrong?"

Valka sighed, leaning back and dislodging his hand from her face. Trying not to feel rebuffed, Hiccup waited.

"Hiccup... do you want children?"

He'd be more thrown, but Hiccup half-expected Astrid giving birth to bring up something between he and Valka. Even so, he was a little unsettled by the question itself.

"Haven't we had this discussion?"

"No. That was about if you wanted me. I'm asking now if you want children."

Pulling his organic leg up on to the sofa, Hiccup tapped the side of his ankle as he thought - a simple yes or no answer wasn' what she was after.

"I... yes. I do. But before you start conflating that, hear me out?" Valka nodded, biting her lip nervously again 'I don't want to leave you and go find someone who can 'give me children'. If I had a child, I would want it to be our child. I don't want kids with anybody else. And if being with you means that I am only Tyr's stepdad and Helena's uncle, then I am more than happy with that. You are everything I want, child or no child."

Valka let him draw her into a fierce embrace, kissing the side of her temple and feeling her cheeks were damp against the side of his face. Pulling back to look at each other, he brushed the few escaped tears from her cheeks.

"I swear, I love you, you daft woman. I don't feel like I am missing anything. So long as I have you and the little dragon? That's all I need, ok?"

Finally, she nodded, curling back into his chest with murmurs of love from her lips. Hiccup mused as they cuddled, knowing that they had options if Valka could no longer get pregnant - surrogacy, adoption and so on. But even without those, he knew he was happier with Valka and Tyr than he had ever been with Mala. Knew he and Valka matched, fit, worked. And her son was an absolute delight who brightened Hiccup's life up with his pure heart.

What else could he really need?

-HTTYD-
Yeah, it's probably not spectacular and won't make up for neglecting you guys, I am sorry!

I plan to be back on track with my usual only-slightly-haywire update schedule before November is over.

Never let me try to do Kinktober again.
Since the last chapter went up I got two new messages from new unrelated!Valcup shippers! Welcome aboard the ship. We have cupcakes. And super adorable Hiccup/Valka.

-HTTYD-

"I'm nervous. What if they hate me?"

Valka rolled her eyes as Hiccup shifted nervously. He was usually the one to steady her when she got wound up, but now those roles were being reversed as Hiccup prepared to meet her parents. He'd asked if he should dress up smartly, which Valka had laughed outright at.

"Hiccup, they won't. I won't deny they find our age gap odd. But... I love you. Ty *adores* you. They just want to meet you."

Telling her dad had been nerve-wracking, but Valka didn't want to tell Hiccup that. So instead she kissed him, which certainly seemed to distract him from his anxieties, fingers curling around her back as Hiccup deepened it and pulled Valka tighter to him. A minute scrap of rationality surged up and made Valka pull away before they got too carried away, heart skipping as Hiccup huffed in protest.

"Spoilsport."

"Hey! Mom is not a spoilsport!"

Hiccup's face transformed into a warm smile, turning to look down at Tyr happily.

"You are quite right, I'm sorry. Promise to tell your grandparents I'm awesome?"

"Well duh! You are!"

They hugged, utterly adorable and Valka was fairly sure one look at how good Hiccup was with Ty would at least convince her parents to give their relationship a proper chance. The knock at the door made Hiccup frown, the rarity of her parents being the ones to drive down to her already a little off-setting, but Valka didn't really believe anything bad was going to happen.

"Grandma! Grandpa!"

"Tyranno!"

Valka glanced over and saw a soft smile of amusement on Hiccup's face, fondness for the nickname Ty had from his grandfather there in his face. Tyr greeted them before they'd even got in, Hiccup awkwardly hovering in her kitchen waiting. She'd wait until later to tell him he was so cute when he was awkward.

"Mom, dad. This is Hiccup."

"Nice to meet you both."

They looked him over, tense silence stretching out a little too long.

"What sort of a name is Hiccup?"
"A nickname. I was short and scrawny as a kid, like the book character. It stuck. Nobody really calls me anything else."

Before there was even a proper introduction under their belt, Rama surged forwards and yanked a very surprised Hiccup into a hug. He blinked before returning it hesitantly, side-glancing her mother as though worried she might bite.

"I hear plenty about you from little Tyr. And my daughter says you're a good man."

"Oh. Thank you."

Wanting to ensure they liked Hiccup it seemed, Tyr tugged at his grandfathers arm.

"Come see what Hiccup drew mom for Christmas."

Hiccup actually blushed as they went to admire the portrait, and looked infinitely relieved that Valka came up and slid her arms around him, reassuring.

"It's going to be fine."

"I just want them to like me."

Shaking her head fondly, Valka kissed his cheek and squeezed his middle.

"Relax."

It took a little time for conversation to not feel awkward, but once Hiccup got into his usual comfort zone he was his usual funny, oddly charming self. And then once Rama brought out embarrassing childhood stories about Valka, he was enthralled despite the fact Valka was mortified. She wasn't sure if she liked it or not when he kissed her and said she looked cute while blushing.

"I'd love to watch your parents embarrass you more, but I better go sort dinner."

"Can I help?"

"Sure. Go wash your hands little dragon."

They left the living room, so Valka's parents turned to her.

"He cooks?"

"Exceedingly well. And Ty loves helping."

Her father sat quietly reflecting for a minute, then looked up at her with those keen eyes of his.

"Are you happy love?"

"I am. I wasn't looking for... anything, really, especially in someone so young. But Hiccup is wonderful, and he enriches mine and Ty's lives."

Smiling at each other, her parents seemed to nod.

"Then that's all we need. You're a grown woman Val, you don't need our approval. But you have it anyway."
Before Valka could answer, a little voice came from the crack of the doorway between living room and kitchen.

"See, they like you!"

"Well now they know you were listening in Tyr."

"Oops!"

The door suddenly closed, laughter ringing in the air in his wake as they shared amusement over Tyr getting caught out. Before the laughter abated, Hiccup poked his head through the door again, still smiling.

"I'm just going to check on Toothless, could you keep a very distant, not-touching eye on the food?"

"You are terrible!"

Hiccup winked.

"Thanks."

Even as he left, Valka felt that warm fuzzy feeling in her chest again. He was unfairly sweet and lovely, and she knew she'd never really stood a chance of not falling for him from the minute her terrible little crush developed. Still, now they were actually just quite settled, a couple, with grown up things like overnight stays and dinners and he was good with her son. And they'd met each others parents and, so far, survived that.

All that was left to deal with now...

"So is Sven still going ahead with this nonsense?"

Ty had gone with Hiccup to see Toothless, so they could talk freely for a moment of the custody challenge.

"Unfortunately. I'm waiting to recieve another home check. Then I think it's a matter of waiting for a date."

"Has Ty been going as previously agreed?"

"No, but he's very upset with his father and said himself he doesn't want to go right now. He still misses him. And I don't doubt Sven will use it as ammunition, but what am I going to do? Force Ty to go when I know the sort of thing Sven might say to him?"

Rama rubbed her back, hugging her and Valka felt that familiar strength come through; no matter how old she got, her mother was a rock.

"It will all come good. There is not a shred of reason why anybody would say you were an unfit mother. And ten minutes with your young boyfriend ought to set anybody straight about the influence he has on your son."

Nodding to herself, Valka hugged her mother back a little tighter.

"I know that really, but... gods, Hiccup outright said he'd break up with me before he let anybody seperate me and Ty. How do I possibly articulate..."
Quietly observing and listening until then, her father joined in.

"Well, if the custody challenge includes him, you could get some legal ammunition for yourself. Get a lawyer, get them to obtain character references for your boyfriend. Prove he has no criminal record, no history of being anything other than a good person. He's financially stable, holds down a skilled job."

Valka absorbed his words, the conversation ceasing when the front door opened to admit both her son and her boyfriend, Hiccup holding a box that he placed on the side. They took turns hugging her in greeting, then Hiccup resumed tending to the food on the oven, charging duty of laying the table to Tyr. Valka mused that her son seemed quieter than earlier, but sometimes he was like that. Less so since Hiccup, but he was still a quiet type, and Valka was fine with that.

"I forgot to ask, are you guys allergic to anything?"

Her parents both answered in the negative, and Valka noticed that despite not saying anything, Hiccup had made a meal packed with vegetables and healthy things - following her fathers new diet to protect his heart health. Honestly, he wasn't allowed to be so perfect.

"Oh wow, Val wasn’t lying. This is amazing!"

Hiccup smiled, ducked his head bashfully.

"Thank you. I enjoy cooking and baking. Valka is always telling me off for making too many cakes because she can't resist."

Valka mock-glared, to which Hiccup grinned with not a trace of repentance. Finally more comfortable, he reached and squeezed her hand, leant over and pecked a kiss on her cheek. She couldn't keep the smile from her face then, cheeks warming. Tyr giggled nearby, perking up now Hiccup's cooking was within reach. Dinner was comfortable, delicious and went over very well. Dessert - which Hiccup had made low sugar and low fat but still rich and tasty - went over equally well, leaving everybody full and relaxed afterwards, and Valka felt quite sure the cooking alone had won over her father.

Letting Tyr climb up onto his lap so he could snuggle up with them, Hiccup smiled over at Valka, eyes warm and soft and full of all those dizzying feelings that probably would have terrified her six months ago. Hiccup had been so steady for her, letting her choose their pace, dictate who knew about them. And then sticking with her through the upheaval of her ex husband threatening to tear her son from her. That same son who was utterly content to curl up against Hiccup's chest, stretching his legs over Valka's lap to ensure she was included too, Hiccup's arm wrapped loosely around Tyr. Not much a fan of physical contact unless he really knew the person, the fact Tyr was so tactile with Hiccup spoke volumes. She could see that her parents recognised that too, fond smiles aimed at where Tyr was slowly growing more sleepy.

"You want to go to bed yet Tyr?"

"Not tired!"

Biting back a giggle, Valka shook her head as Tyr wriggled closer and looked set on not moving at all, flashing his mother a cheeky smile. Hiccup laughed at them both, looking equally content with the moment. He knew Tyr wasn't very physical too, and respected the boys boundaries, but he also visibly delighted in the fact he was one of Ty's chosen few. When Ty obviously had fallen asleep, Hiccup scooped him up and said he'd carry him up. Valka fretted letting him - Hiccup's prosthetic wasn't designed for extra weight, and he didn't like doing stairs on it, but he'd done it before and
would only shush her if Valka tried to stop him, then point out Tyr was not exactly that heavy.

"I got his glasses and slippers off, but he was out before his head hit the pillow and I put his slippers in their place, then his glasses in the case on his bedside."

Hiccup probably couldn't put all Ty's shoes away in their perfect order, but he was picking things up along the way and doing his best to work with Tyr's little quirks. Introducing him to her parents seemed to be making Valka emotional, all the things she simply loved about him suddenly popping up and reminding her of them over and over. Hiccup gave her a toothy, lopsided grin, then glanced at the time.

"I should get going, you can spend time with your parents before bed then. And Toothless is probably lonely."

Reluctant to let him go when she was so full of feelings, Valka nodded and followed him to the door. He kissed her sweetly, soundly, hands resting loosely on her waist.

"I love you. And your parents are... I see where you got it all from."

Valka felt her face crease in faint confusion, even as she warmed from his words of love.

"Got what from?"

Hiccup gestured to all of her, beaming.

"You."

-HTTYD-

Short but... chapter moods vary between this and next one, so I wanted to keep this happy fluffy thing all by itself! Aren't they precious?
Honestly I could write Hiccup, Valka and Tyr fluff all day every day!

But then this story would never end!

-HTTYD-

"Please don't touch that!"

Tyr was very distressed by the home check going on while he was there, watching a stranger poke around his bedroom, his little safe space, and knowing it was part of the custody challenge from his father only compounded his upset.

"Why not?"

"Because that's where it goes and I don't want you to move it."

Valka patted her sons shoulder as he hugged into her side, frowning as the person jotted some things down on their clipboard, then finally left the childs room much to Tyr's relief. Next was the bathroom, questions raised about things in there.

"Why is there a mans razor in here? He's too young to shave."

"That's Hiccup's, but you knew that. Why do we have to do this again mom? I don't like it."

"I know Ty, hush now. It's not for long."

Petting her sons hair until he calmed a little, finally the second inspection was over and Tyr visibly relaxed once the stranger was gone. Soothing fingers through messy hair, Valka waited for Ty to settle down before tapping out a confirmation that Hiccup could come back over. He returned swiftly, holding a box with all the ingredients for Tyr's favourite cupcake recipe.

"Want to do some baking little dragon?"

That was the first thing to make Ty peel himself out of his mothers embrace since the inspection had started, Hiccup somehow knowing what Ty needed without even asking. Her son cheered with Hiccup's patience and cake batter, the delicious smell filling the house to chase away the invasion of someone searching for a reason to take Ty away from her.

"Will we have to have more people come here?"

"I don't think so" Hiccup had insisted that Tyr felt better at least knowing *some* of what was going on, so Valka had followed his lead "but someone else might come talk to you at school."

Tyr frowned, but perhaps forewarning him would lessen the distress.

"If you need me to come get you again after, I will, ok little dragon?"

"Promise?"

"I promise."

Ty perked up again when it came time to ice cupcakes, sucking sweet mixture of his finger with an
innocent smile when Hiccup caught him sneaking tastes from the icing mix.

"Luckily, we're done so these just need to set a little more and then the eating can commence! So if you're done licking the bowl, go clean up and we can make dinner."

"Ok Hiccup."

They both watched him leave for the stairs, Hiccup wiping icing sugar and stray drops of mix from the side. He made a happy sound of surprise when Valka grabbed him, pressing her face into the back of his hair and hugging his waist.

"Thank you."

"For what?"

"Being so... you through all this."

Hiccup chuckled, turning in her hold and pressing a soothing kiss to her temple.

"I don't think I'm doing anything... different? But you're welcome anyway."

He pecked kisses all over her face until Valka was in fits of giggles, unsure how Hiccup could affect her so that Valka felt half her age, his energy and spark contagious as he finally kissed her properly, grinning as she still giggled a little between presses of lips.

"You are ridiculous and I love you for it."

Hiccup beamed, green eyes sparkling.

"I love you too. But I did promise dinner making with Tyr, so I will have to let you go for now."

Feigning reluctance, Valka went back to her work on the table while Hiccup kept Ty's spirits up through the simplicity of cooking together. Everyone reassured her there was zero chance of Tyr being taken away from her simply because she was dating Hiccup - there had not been any other issues raised during their divorce and custody arranging, so the change was clear - but Valka would be so very glad when the whole thing was over and they could get on with life, no threat looming.

And despite the absolute nightmare he was putting them through now, Valka sincerely hoped Sven would sort himself out and be a person Ty wanted back in his life. Because he was never a bad father, and Valka had never dreamed of even trying to obtain sole custody of their son, because she knew how the two adored each other. And she knew that Ty did desperately miss his dad - just not his dad like this, bitter and jealous and throwing something so serious as a custody challenge at them because of Valka's choice in boyfriend. If Hiccup was underage, or a bad influence on Ty, she'd understand. But Hiccup was a kind, strong and wonderful man, his example to Tyr one of self-acceptance and joy for life. She'd never intended to find someone new, to fall in love, but when it came to someone suitable for being in her sons life?

Valka could not have chosen better.

To put them through all of the strain so far was dangerously close to cruel.

"I just don't understand why my dad is doing this to us. You aren't bad!"

Apparently her thoughts were not unique, as she heard Tyr address Hiccup again. Her boyfriend sighed, placing some things aside, wiping his hands on a tea towel and sitting there on the floor to
place Tyr on his good leg.

"I don't think it's about that. I mean, sure maybe your dad doesn't like me much, but then aside from you and your mom we don't really have anything in common."

"So, what do you think it's about?"

Equally interested in Hiccup's answer, Valka listened in. Hiccup no doubt knew she was, but he continued anyway.

"I think part of it is that he didn't expect your mom to find somebody new, and not liking the new boyfriend is not uncommon after a divorce. Your mom would probably feel kinda weird if your dad started dating again, because they were married for a long time and when you marry someone, you kinda expect it to be a permanent thing. So when it's not, and then you have to see more proof that it's not, because the other person has found someone new, it can be tough."

Chewing on Hiccup's words, Ty tugged lightly at an errant strand of his hair. It was getting really quite long now, and he often fiddled with it when he was a little anxious.

"But why would he decide that means he should take me away from mom?"

"Because he's scared. And scared people do stupid things sometimes."

"Scared of what?"

"Losing you. When your parents separated, everything changed. You weren't around every day anymore, but your dad knew it was best for everyone that he and your mom not stay married if it just meant they were sad and fighting. But he still got to see you, and so maybe he figured it wasn't so bad, because this was the new normal and he could get used to it. Until I came along, and he started to get scared that everything would change again. That I might replace him. That you might not need him anymore. So your dad is scared and angry and lashing out, because he isn't thinking clearly and doesn't know what else to do."

Mouth twisting in thought, Tyr contemplated Hiccup's explanation. Valka had never considered things quite like that, but she was stunned to find that what Hiccup said actually made an incredible amount of sense. Sven didn't like change any more than Ty did, and he had always been a little stoic in the emotions department.

"So what should I do?"

"I can't tell you that Tyr. You're old enough that your opinion matters here, and it has to be your choice what you do, but I don't think your dad ever set out to hurt you."

A lump lodged in her throat, Valka had never loved Hiccup more than in that moment, reasoning so softly and clearly with her son, not pushing anything on him but a different view on the matter - encouraging Ty to make his own choice afterward. Ty hugged Hiccup fiercely tight, refusing to let go for several minutes and Hiccup didn't waver for a second, sat there and let Ty take what he needed for comfort.

"But he did hurt me."

"I know, and he needs to answer for that, but only when you are ready to deal with that and see him. Don't worry about the court stuff, that's boring old grown up business. You decide what you want, ok?"
"Ok."

"Good man. Shall we make some dinner?"

"Good idea."

After dinner and cupcakes and a little downtime with his Celtic CD, Ty was finally settled enough to sleep. Tucking him in, Valka kissed his forehead as she bade him goodnight.

"Love you mom."

"Love you too son. Sweet dreams."

Hiccup was in the kitchen, having just finished cleaning up thoroughly and Valka was very reluctant to let him go home that evening, knowing he needed to get back to Toothless. He smiled at her as she entered the room, a little surprise evident in the noise he made as Valka kissed him quite firmly.

"Wow. Ok. What was that for?"

"Just... I love you. You are incredible."

It was outrageous - Ty could catch them! - and they'd never done something so risque before, but Hiccup hit the sofa with open hunger in his eyes, that thing he did where he made Valka feel like a young woman again surging in full force as they both worked to lift her skirt, tug down his zipper, fingers clumsy with the sheer need.

Hiccup was solid and thick inside her, burning heat sending those exquisitely pleasurable jolts through her body. His fingers gripped tight at her hips, pulling Valka against him harder, quicker, his own hips bucking to push deeper on each thrust. Neither could stay silent, but the muted gasps and panting were probably a little more subtle than the way Valka usually moaned and cursed at his touch. Even so, her bowed back brought her closer to his face, one hand braced on the arm of the sofa behind his head as Valka rode him frantically, unsure what brought on the want for such a primal rut like hormonal teenagers but powerless to resist the urge.

His mouth crushed against hers messily, swallowing their sounds in sloppy kisses until it grew too hard to breathe that way, Valka burying her face against his neck as Hiccup continued to thrust with equal urgency, his groans muffled against her shirt. One hand left her hip, his dexterity shining through as Hiccup managed to undo three of her top buttons one handed, reaching beneath the fabric to stroke and squeeze, thumb and forefinger finding her swollen nipple and pinching through her bra. Potent enough to make her spasm, she heard Hiccup grunt in response, knew he was close by the way his hand on her hip tightened further.

She buckled first, unable to hold back from going to pieces atop him in that messy, frantic way. Her fingers were vices on his shoulder and the sofa, Hiccup somehow having the presence of mind to cover her mouth with his hand so she wouldn't wake Ty as she cried out and the sound muffled against his palm.

"Gods, Hiccup..."

Feeling him still solid and unsatisfied, Valka shifted, intending to move until he was done but Hiccup stilled her, hissing low.

"It's fine. I don't wanna make a mess."
Mess?

Oh.

His tensed jaw and flexing hands and shifting hips told Valka that Hiccup was barely holding back, making something of a spur-of-the-moment choice and pushing herself out of his lap, kneeling on the ground and taking his swollen shaft into her mouth before she could think too hard about it. Hiccup bit back a shout, panting harshly into his forearm and Valka thrilled in the dark, dilated eyes fixed on her when she looked up. He'd kissed her after going down on her plenty of times, but that was very different to the wet slick coating his entire cock after she'd just climbed off of him.

The way he growled and bucked and whined was well worth it though, and Hiccup was so close it took Valka little time to bring him off, the taste in her mouth now all **him** as Hiccup spilled with a choked groan, slumping to the sofa with a breathless, sated smile on his face.

"At risk of repeating myself... *wow.*"

Still a little shocked herself by... all of it, Valka could only crawl back on top of him, fumbling to fix their clothes and sharing lazy kisses. Hiccup brushed stray hairs off her sweaty face, stroked his thumb over her cheek.

"I love you. And you guys are my family, so I'll do whatever I can to keep you together."

-HTTYD-

**Whoops, guess I did accidentally just write a lot more fluffy stuff... sort of.**
Right. This chapter will not get out of hand. Honest.

-HTTYD-

"What are you laughing at?"

"Hm? Oh" Hiccup looked up from phone to girlfriend, who was working on lesson plans "Astrid complaining about how grizzly Helena is. She's just been for her first round of vaccinations and is very unhappy with her parents. I can't believe she's two months old already."

Placing his phone aside after replying to Astrid, Hiccup resumed cooking, frowning slightly to himself as he thought about how Tyr had been gone a while. He was usually excited to help make dinner, but had a bit of a headache and went for a lie down.

"Oh yes, babies do not like getting their injections."

"Most adults aren't that happy about it either."

Valka smiled, brushing a few silvery strands of hair out of her face. Hiccup watched, loving the way her hands moved fluidly through the reddish-brown hair, and equally enjoying the sprinkle of silver-grey hairs she had. She'd fretted about the obvious signs of aging, but Hiccup reminded her that he knew she was older and liked that, and then there had been quite a physical demonstration of just how attractive he found her...

"This is almost done, I better go wake Tyr."

"I can go-"

"No, don't worry, I got it."

She had a habit of offering to go up stairs for him if it meant Hiccup didn't need to, but most of the time he was his usually stubborn Haddock self and went anyway. He knocked gently on the boys door before going in, knowing that Tyr liked his safe space. Still fast asleep, his face was scrunched in a mild frown. Bad dream? Hiccup wondered to himself, knowing Tyr was under the stress of the upcoming court date to decide if Valka was fit to have custody of him. There was no doubt she was, really, but still it worried the boy.

"Hey little dragon, time for dinner."

It took a little nudge to rouse him, but eventually Tyr was blinking owlishly up at him, rubbing his face and frowning.

"M'not hungry."

Now it was Hiccup's turn to frown. Tyr was usually pretty predictable in when he'd get hungry, and liked regular mealtimes. The last time he remembered the boy being not hungry even though he'd not eaten was when he got sick before, so Hiccup reached gently for Tyr's forehead. He was a little warm, but that could be down to having just woken up.

"Well, come down and try to eat something? Even if it's only a little. If you still don't feel good we'll get you a hot chocolate and you can go back to sleep, yeah?"
"Ok."

Still a little groggy, Tyr stood up, fumbling for his glasses and slippers and telling Hiccup he'd be down after going to the bathroom. Hiccup headed down in advance, ensuring nothing was on fire and seeing Valka had cleared the table of her work, ready for food to go on it.

"He's not feeling that hungry, I think he's coming down with something. I promised him hot chocolate if he came down and tried to eat a little bit."

Valka kissed him sweetly, nuzzling Hiccup in that way that made him smile so wide his cheeks hurt.

"Thank you."

"No problem. If he's sick I'll stay home with him tomorrow."

"Are you sure?"

Hiccup nodded.

"The garage isn't busy, and it only takes one of us to make sure he gets fluids and rest."

That earned him another kiss, which left him still smiling, before Valka was reaching for plates and cups to lay the table. Tyr padded down, yawning and looking pale with the kitchen light to bring him into clearer focus.

"My head hurts."

He immediately sought Valka, mumbling as his mother tried to soothe him.

"I got some more of that strawberry paracetomol the other day, you want some of that little dragon?"

Tyr nodded into Valka's hug, swallowing the two spoonfuls dutifully before slumping into his seat and rubbing his face. He really didn't look that well. If he was up to going to school the following day, Hiccup would be quite amazed.

"Here you go, I made you an extra little plate in case you don't want much. But there's more if you feel hungry, ok?"

He nodded again, mostly pushing vegetables around his plate but eventually putting a few forkfuls of them into his mouth before pushing the plate away and drinking his water instead.

"Can I have hot chocolate now?"

Tyr waited for Hiccup to be done eating, but he nodded in agreement. A promise was a promise after all.

"Yep. Finish your water though, it'll help your headache."

The boy convalesced on the sofa until his hot chocolate was gone, and fell asleep there only a few minutes later. It was hard work to wake him enough to go and change into pyjamas and get into bed, and Tyr was asleep pretty much the minute his head hit the pillow according to Valka, who had tucked the ill child in for the night.

"He doesn't look well at all."
"I know" Hiccup drew his girlfriend into a hug, knowing she was fretting about her son "but he'll be fine. If he's still down in a couple of days, then take him to the doctor but he's probably coming down with the flu. To be on the safe side, I'll tell Astrid not to come by with Helena for a few days, but that's as concerned as I am."

The reassurance seemed to work as Valka relaxed in his hold, humming when he ran fingers through her hair. They cleaned up the kitchen together, watched TV quietly for a while before Hiccup had to head home, greeted by a very judgemental dog.

"I know bud, I know! But the little dragon is sad and needs his familiar space. I promise you're not forgotten."

He and Valka had discussed fitting a gate into the fence between their gardens, so Toothless could socialise with them and then go back into Hiccup's house. They'd also talked about getting some cover throws for Valka's sofas and chairs, because she felt bad not having Toothless over when Hiccup was at their place a lot, but he appreciated that she'd not bought furniture with a future dog-owning boyfriend in mind and didn't just stroll in with his fluffy pet who shed absolutely everywhere and didn't comprehend being careful with the whole nails thing on soft furnishings. Hiccup's furniture was all either well-worn or particularly sturdy.

"You're gonna be spending a few days over at dad's again soon anyway, so you can see Thor and get all the attention you want. Sound good?"

"Oof!"

"Thought so. Want to go before bed?"

After a brief trip to the garden, Toothless loped upstairs and got comfy on Hiccup's bed, waiting patiently for his owner to come back from the bathroom before snuggling next to him with a contented huff. Smiling at the dopey animal, Hiccup sent Valka their customary 'goodnight' text, waited for her reply before rolling over to go to sleep.

He had to get up early, to have time to walk Toothless before they spent much of the day inside, but that was a small price to pay. Valka was anxious the next morning, not wanting to leave Tyr when he was still running a slight fever and looking sickly, but the boy still had a lazy smile for Hiccup, and insisted that they would be fine.

"I have medicine, movies a cute dog. We'll be ok love."

"If he-"

"Gets worse, call your school. I got it. Come on little dragon, Toothless is waiting to be your nap buddy."

Kissing Valka goodbye, Hiccup and Tyr made the very short trip from one house to the next, perching him on the sofa with a cozy blanket and a dose of medicine. The paracetamol was supposed to help manage his fever, so Hiccup set a timer to give him a next dose, made sure Toothless was curled up near Tyr's feet and dragons were on the TV. It was a quiet day - Tyr was sleepy and not especially hungry, though he roused around lunch time for some soup and tea and medicine before going back to sleep. Valka called on her lunch break, seeming torn between relief and concern that Tyr was just sleeping the day away.

"It's good he's getting lots of rest."

Hiccup tried to reassure his girlfriend, but knew full well she'd all but break the speed limit driving
home at the end of work to see the little dragon for herself. Sure enough, she was back in record time, seeing that Tyr was exactly where he'd been all day save for when he'd gotten up for the bathroom.

"How was he?"

"Sick a couple of times, but he hasn't eaten too much and he's kept water down for the last couple hours. Still running a fever, but I've been giving him medicine and the rest of the time he's been resting with a furry companion."

The cold was certainly looking to be more of a flu virus, but worst case scenario was a week off school and Hiccup had already talked to his dad about maybe needing more time off work - his dad appreciated that Hiccup wanted to take care of the boy he loved like his own, and promised to do his best not to need Hiccup for the week so long as he worked the weekend. Valka would be off work then, so it was doable. Damn, he was lucky to have his dad as a boss.

Days ticked by and Tyr's recovery was slow, but after five days where he was largely lethargic with a limited appetite, his fever seemed to be coming down and he insisted he was well enough to go back to school. Both Hiccup and Valka had their doubts, but Tyr liked routine and it was no wonder he was anxious to get back. There were enough disruptions in his life.

Still, they hoped it wouldn't be too much longer.

"You don't have to come Ty."

"I do. I don't want to wait to find out what happened!"

Still struggling to shift his horrid cold, Ty sniffled slightly and rubbed his red eyes. He'd been to the doctors, but they just said it was a stubborn virus and would go away soon, suggesting Ty needed to eat more. That was obviously a dig at his slight frame, which Valka had to fight not to roll her eyes at.

"Alright then. Go get your shoes."

"Can I bring Loki?"

She nodded, and Ty smiled before heading upstairs to retrieve his things.

"If he needs to go I'll bring him home ok? I mean, I don't need to be there, but I want to be there for you. And prove to Sven I can't be scared off."

Gods, she didn't deserve this man. Hiccup was an absolute rock, keeping her steady and mitigating the fears of her son, working tirelessly to juggle helping care for a sick pre-teen and stopping Valka from losing her mind in general. It even meant sacrificing time with his niece at the moment, as Ty's stubborn illness made Astrid wary of visiting with her young daughter. Ty wasn't too happy about that either - he was anxious to spend more time with the little one - but understood the reasoning.

"Thank you."

And oh, he looked so handsome in his suit. Between his messy job and his hobbies being no tidier generally, Hiccup rarely dressed up. And Valka decided that was something of a shame, because he was beautiful. Wrapping her in a hug, he kissed her sweetly, running hands down her arms until their fingers could lace together.
"It's going to be alright. He's not going anywhere."

"I just want this all done with."

"Well, it's about to be."

He was right, of course. Ty came down, shoes on and Loki in hand, with a tiny little tie around the dragon toys neck.

"Look what Hiccup made for Loki so he can look smart too."

Looking to her boyfriend, Hiccup had something of a sheepish expression on his face, but he didn't really appear ashamed. Not that she expected him to be. It was just... a surreal yet adorable gesture.

"That is very nice. Everyone ready to go?"

Hiccup had dropped Toothless at his dads for a few days, so he had nothing to rush home for. They would all be glad to be able to settle again - Eret's cousin was coming over to fit a gate between their back gardens the next week. With all the time they spent in and out of each others homes, they might as well put one between the actual walls, but perhaps it was a little soon for what would really be the equivalent of moving in together.

Sometimes Valka could hardly believe it had been less than a year since she began dating Hiccup. Older men would likely have baulked at sticking around through everything, but his emotional maturity was proven again and again as Hiccup dealt with it all.

"Hang on, medicine time before we go."

"Oh, good idea."

"How's your head little dragon?"

"It's a bit achey but not too bad."

"You promise?"

Ty nodded as Hiccup spooned medicine into his mouth, cleared by the doctor to use for another few days before she was supposed to take him back if Ty was no better. Bundled up in his favourite jumper, clutching Loki and clinging to Valka's side all the way to the car, it was clear how anxious Ty was. Hiccup was ready for that too, loading up the boys Celtic CD into the car stereo, and the melody definitely soothed him during the drive, eyes closed as he hummed along in the back seat. They let the song finish before Hiccup cut the engine, turning in his seat to check on Tyr.

"Ready to go in little dragon?"

He squeezed his toy, but nodded.

"Ready."

After a brief difference of opinions with a pay-and-display machine, Hiccup finally stuck the thing in the window of his car. He owned a disabled parking badge thanks to his prosthetic, but he scarcely used it. Valka could see Sven's car, so he was already there. Tyr took her hand, nerves regressing him slightly as he sought comfort from his mother. Figuring their way around the official building, Valka stilled outside the door when she saw Hiccup kneeling down to Ty's level.
"Listen to me Tyr. Your parents might say some harsh things in there, and other people might say some stuff too, but I don't want you to let it upset you. They both love you, and that's what matters ok?"

"Do you love me Hiccup?"

"Of course I do little dragon."

Tyr smiled tightly, nodding and switching his hands so he could hold Hiccup's instead after Valka helped her boyfriend straighten up. They headed in, Sven and a bunch of people Valka didn't really recognise there, except for the solicitor she'd hired for herself after her father reminded her it could only help at that point. It wasn't a proper 'court case', as it were - there were a few steps along the route before a real court room would come in to it, but what was said and agreed to in that room they entered could and may well be considered legally binding.

The look on Sven's face seeing Hiccup walk in with Tyr's hand in his, their son clutching the toy Sven lamented his attachment to... it wasn't promising for an easy, painless resolution.

"Hi dad."

Valka watched her ex-husbands face, seeing the flicker of pain there before anger settled back and she knew Sven, at his core, just wanted his son in his life. But there was bitterness and jealousy twisting it up, and so there they were.

Almost immediately, Sven had his list of reasons why Valka was unfit for sole custody, and Valka could hear Hiccup quietly reassuring Ty, reminding him that they could go, that the grown ups could deal with it all and that no matter what, his parents loved him.

"She's dating this... child. Who has been trying to come between my son and I from the start. I've been denied the chance to see Tyr for weeks now."

"Because Ty thinks you're going to take him away and he'll never see me again. And that child you talk about is the man over there, comforting our son through this ordeal. Ty is the one who chose not to see you, because you hurt him so badly and he's afraid of what will happen, if he'll be able to come back home or if you'll pick him up and keep him. The only thing Hiccup has done is encourage Ty to make his own choices, which nobody else has given him the chance to do. Courts decided our custody arrangement before, and now here we are all over again. And you only have to see them together for a minute to know he thinks the world of Ty, to see he really brings out the best in our son."

"By encouraging him to play with toys and colouring books?"

"You mean letting him be himself? Supporting his hobbies and interests?"

Before Sven could answer, Hiccup's voice cut through.

"Tyr? Hey, you ok?"

Turning around properly, Valka laid eyes on her son, pale and sweaty and leaning heavily against Hiccup, who was trying to rouse some reaction from him.

"Ty?"

"Uh, I think he's about to be sick, anybody got something before it's on me again?"
The waste-paper bin was quickly handed over, and almost too late, barely under Ty before he retched into it. Hiccup held it with one hand, the other catching glasses that were sliding down his sweaty nose before they landed in the mess. Valka was there in a second, helping hold Ty up since he seemed to be struggling to manage that himself. The heaving stopped, Ty letting out a pitiful sound and reaching to clutch his head before going entirely limp in Valka's arms.

"Ty!"

-HTTYD-

Trying to find information on custody cases in UK is surprisingly hard, I contemplated going with American models out of ease but, well, too late!
Twenty four chapters already? I'm *aiming* to have this story wrapped up by chapter thirty, but we all know I'm awful at sticking to plans. However, I am in the market for new unrelated!Valcup story ideas. And I do mean *stories*, I am good for one shots.

-HTTYD-

Hiccup had to follow behind as Tyr was whisked off to hospital by ambulance, assuring Valka he was right behind her while shooing her in behind her son. Sven *clearly* wanted to tell him not to, but for once his actual concerns for his son overrode the negative emotions he had for Hiccup, and they just went their separate ways to get cars and get to the hospital. Valka was pacing, frantic and all but fell into Hiccup when he reached her, heart pounding anxiously.

"What's happening?"

Sven had beaten Hiccup there by seconds, but he had all four of his limbs and Hiccup's leg was stiff from all the sitting and cramped seating earlier.

"I don't know, they think he's got an infection of some sort but tests have to be done and, and, and-"

He could see her beginning to spiral into panic, squeezing Valka tighter into his arms for a minute, kissing her hair and making soothing noises.

"Shh, just breathe love. There we go."

There was a lull of silence while hospital noise filled the background, all three of them on edge of panic for Tyr.

"Why are you even here? He's not your son."

"No, he's not, but I love him. And regardless of anything else, Valka is my girlfriend and I'm here for her. If the idea your son is sick isn't enough to make you stick your bruised ego on a shelf for five minutes, then honestly I don't think it's Valka's parental fitness that should be challenged."

Before Sven could answer, Valka cut them both off.

"Both of you stop!"

Biting the inside of his cheek, Hiccup turned his attentions back to Valka, Sven scowling but also silent. He could feel the tremor of panic in Valka's shoulders, wishing there was more that he could do for the woman he loved and the boy he loved as his own other than *wait*. A few tense minutes later, a woman Hiccup guessed was doctor based on clothing exited the room, pulling off a surgical mask from her face before turning to Valka.

"Family?"

"This is Sven, Ty's father, and Hiccup, my partner."

"Alright then. He's awake, but not incredibly lucid, and based on his symptoms we're going to do a lumbar puncture."

Hiccup's lower back twinged at the mere mention; he knew what that meant.
"You think he has meningitis?"

The doctor looked surprised at Hiccup's comment, but gave a short, severe nod.

"It's possible. Has he been ill recently?"

"He's had what we thought was the flu for a few weeks now."

Nodding again, the doctor glanced between he and Sven.

"How close contact are you to the boy?"

"I see him pretty much every day. Pick him up, hug him, that kind of thing. And I've been taking care of him when he's been off school sick so his mom can work."

Valka had wanted to take more time off, but her school was approaching exam season and while Art exams weren't quite so intensive as other subjects, it was a sort of expectation of all teachers that only genuine emergencies or ill health kept them away at such a time. And Tyr hadn't been off the entire time, only when his headaches or sickness were too much - he might be quiet, but Tyr had his mothers stubborn streak and hated being off. With evening and weekend shifts and his dad being understanding options for Hiccup, he'd stepped up to take care of Tyr.

"And you?"

"We're in the middle of custodial disputes, I haven't seen much of my son at all."

"I see. Well, then you two" she gestured to Hiccup and Valka "will probably need to take some preventative treatment if he tests positive. I don't suppose either of you have had the ACWY vaccine?"

Valka raised her hand.

"I work as a teacher with teenagers."

That left Hiccup as the most exposed to Tyr, and the least protected. Still, he felt fine physically, aside from the stiff leg. And they hadn't confirmed meningitis yet.

"I am curious, how did you know what a lumbar puncture is for?"

"I've had one. Turned up negative for meningitis, but it's not something you forget."

"You can go in and see him before we do the LP, but two at a time. Quietly. No upsetting him."

Sensing Sven about to assert himself and his right, Hiccup headed it off, kissing Valka's temple and gesturing to the door. He wanted desperately to see Tyr, but it wasn't worth upsetting him with the sounds of fighting, with the bad energy around it.

"Go. I'll be right here."

Almost as soon as the door was opened, he heard Tyr's voice calling out "I want my mom!", though his voice was notably strained, weak, tired.

"It's ok my love, I'm here."

The door closed before Hiccup heard much more, leaning against the wall with a sigh. Gods, his little dragon could be seriously ill and they might have missed it until it was too late, dismissing it
as flu or custody-related stress. Tyr had obviously been trying to grit his teeth and bear it out. Dragging a hand through his hair, Hiccup debated calling his dad only to be interrupted mid-thought by Valka and Sven coming out.

"He's asking for you."

"Me?"

Valka nodded, and judging by the look on Sven's face, she certainly wasn't lying. Hiccup headed in, heart seizing in his chest painfully at the sight of Tyr, pale and sickly and with beeping things around him. It was horrifyingly familiar to when Hiccup was around his age, someone trying to convince him he could lead a pretty normal life with an amputated limb. Of course, Hiccup had also lost his mother, so he'd had bigger problems.

"Hey little dragon."

"Hiccup, you came!"

Making a mental note to wash his hands before he touched his face, Hiccup brushed messy hair off Tyr's face and squeezed his hand gently.

"Where else would I be?"

Tyr smiled, coughing into his other hand and the rattle of his chest concerned Hiccup greatly - it seemed like the boy had declined quite a bit in only the last hour or so. Or maybe that was the setting and Hiccup's own concerns projecting... either way, he was terrified.

"My head hurts."

"I know, but the doctors are going to figure out what's going on and you are going to get better."

"They want to put a thing in my back. Mom said you had it too."

Hiccup nodded, feeling Tyr's fingers tighten on his own; the boy was scared.

"Yeah, I had one done before. I won't lie to you, it isn't fun. But you gotta be a tough dragon right now, and then all these guys in white coats can work out what's wrong, and you'll be back home playing with Toothless in no time. Deal?"

"Deal."

"Good man. I better go so the doctors can do their thing, but I'll be right outside ok?"

"Can you tell mom to come back?"

"Sure."

Hiccup reluctantly left Tyr there, looking for the alcohol hand cleanser on the wall outside and pumping the dispenser to ensure he wasn't harbouring anything before he went back to where Valka was standing a few steps away.

"He wants you back in there. We had a little pep talk about his spinal tap."

"Thank you Hiccup. I know he appreciates you being here."

Smiling at his frantic girlfriend, Hiccup shrugged.
"Where else would I be? Go on, he needs you."

Only after he insisted on Valka going back in did Hiccup realise that meant being left outside alone with Sven. Sven didn’t look too thrilled about it either. Hiccup contemplated an attempt at clearing the air between them, but reasoned that now was not the right time; if an argument broke out, Tyr would hear and he did not need that kind of distress.

The silence was horrendously uncomfortable, but nothing on the pain of not knowing, the terror of the very real possibility that Tyr could be seriously ill. Trying not to panic - it could be anything yet - Hiccup sank into a chair, sending a text to his dad rather than call, in case his dad was working. A reply a few minutes later assured Hiccup that he was exactly where he was supposed to be - with his family. And of course, that Toothless was welcome to spend more time there while Hiccup was obviously needed by Valka and Tyr more.

Now all they could do was wait.

Watching Tyr drift off, Valka barely noticed the team cleaning up after the lumbar puncture, just relieved her son was finally getting some rest. They'd already taken blood from his arm - Ty wasn't afraid of needles, but she doubted it was fun and he was already unwell.

"Hey" Hiccup's voice sounded from near the door, and Valka looked up to see him coming in "they said he's going to be in at least overnight, so I'm just going to run home for a couple of things but I'll be right back. Half hour tops. You need anything?"

Valka shook her head, saw the love and pain in Hiccup's eyes when he glanced over at Tyr, sleeping but not free from worry. At least while he slept there was no confusion or delirium, and it didn't look as though he were in terrible pain. Which was small comfort, but comfort nonetheless.

"I asked, but they said I can't bring Loki in until we know what's wrong with Tyr. Dad and Astrid and Eret... basically everyone sends their love."

Nodding at her boyfriend, Valka watched him leave, then turned eyes back to her son. How had they missed him getting so sick? She was scarcely aware time had really passed, lulled into a haze of the machines that monitored Ty beeping, until Hiccup came back. He'd changed out of his suit, and brought her comfortable clothes to change in to - Valka hadn't even thought about it, but they were still in court clothes.

"Go change, I'll stay with him."

Reluctantly, Valka agreed, taking Hiccup's bag to put her removed clothes in to and changing in the bathroom. Because he was so unfairly perfect like that, Hiccup had even brought her favourite jumper, an oversized yellow one that was years old and wearing out, but Valka adored it and it felt safe, warm and comforting. Hiccup smiled softly up at her when she returned, still sat where she'd left him watching Ty sleep.

"Hey. A doctor was looking for you, I said you wouldn't be long and I think Sven went to get a drink. Honestly, I think he just didn't know what to do with himself."

"That sounds like Sven. Thank you, by the way."

"Huh?"

"For these" Valka gestured to her clothes "and for tolerating my ex."
Their voices were quiet, talking softly to each other as Ty slept on.

"He's Tyr's father. He's always going to be around in some shape or form. I resent that he has hurt you and the little dragon, but I don't resent him being Tyr's dad or being in his life. He has every right to be here. I just won't let him pick a fight at his sons bedside."

His Viking blood really showed when Hiccup was passionate about something, and gods he was passionate about Ty. Valka nodded, let Hiccup draw her into a hug, felt him stroke her hair tenderly. They were still like that when the doctor came back to find Valka, talking about doing scans to look at her sons brain.

"It won't hurt, but it can be distressing."

"Ty doesn't really like enclosed spaces if they aren't his bedroom."

"Unfortunately we can't sedate him until we know what's causing his symptoms... forgive me for prying, but is your son autistic?"

Valka shrugged. She could understand why she was asked - anyone who spent time with Ty could see he had habits and rituals, a discomfort for strangers and disruptions. Even the lights in his hospital room were dimmed down.

"I've never had him tested for it. I love my son as he is, it never seemed important."

That and Sven had dismissed it the one time Valka brought it up, but that had been back when Tyr was six and Sven insisted he'd grow out of his peculiar ways. He hadn't wanted there to be anything 'wrong' with Ty, and Valka knew it wouldn't change how she loved her boy, so she simply resolved to indulge her sons quirks, see how he grew up and perhaps seek out some formal diagnosis if it became problematic later on. But it hadn't - Ty knew he was a little different, but he was happy to be so.

"I see. Well, we'll need him to lie still for possibly half an hour. Do you think he'll be able to?"

"Maybe, but he'll need to be talked through it first and I don't want to wake him."

"M'wake."

His voice was so small and sleepy it made Valka's heart hurt, green eyes fluttering open but closing again against the harsh lights, Ty covering his face with his hand.

"Sorry buddy, were we talking too loud?"

"No, my back hurts."

"That's fairly normal, but again, we're wary of giving him anything until we know what's going on."

Hiccup had already sat back down next to Ty, getting on his level.

"The doctors want to take you for a scan. It's not going to hurt or anything, but you gotta lay still for a while and it's in a big tube, so it might feel a little enclosed. But there's space in there enough that nothing will be touching you, and it shouldn't make much noise."

He knew all the things that might concern Ty, and since Ty knew Hiccup had been through quite a few hospitals with his leg, he trusted his judgement on things like that.
"I don't like my clothes. Can I get changed first?"

"I'll check" Hiccup looked up to the doctor, who was watching them closely "I brought clothes for him, will that be alright? They were fresh out the wash, we wanted to make sure he had his favourite hoody for after court."

"Ideally we'd have him in a gown, but if it will make him settle, then we do sometimes allow that."

Hiccup left Valka to help Tyr change, since he was sluggish and his movement slow. He'd picked out Tyr's most comfortable hooded jumper and loose bottoms, ensuring as best he could that Ty wouldn't feel overstimulated by his clothes. The smart attire was soaked in sweat and Ty was still running a fever, but Valka could see his familiar attire was soothing.

"I'm scared mom."

"I know my boy, but once you have the scan the doctors will know better how to treat you."

"Will you be there?"

"I think I have to wait outside, but I promise I will be as close as they let me be. Alright?"

"Ok. Is dad still here?"

"Yes, would you like to see him?"

"After, maybe. M'tired. Can I go back to sleep?"

Having seen the way the others interacted with Ty, Valka was pleasantly surprised by how the doctor got down to Ty's level too, and spoke directly to him.

"If you can tolerate having the head brace instead of a pillow, so you keep your head still, then you can sleep for the scan."

"Will it hurt?"

"Not at all. It might be less comfortable than a pillow, but we don't want to hurt you."

After a minutes thought, rubbing his tired face, Tyr agreed.

"I'll go get that set up for you then, and send someone in with the consent form."

The ink had barely dried on paper when Valka signed to consent for his spinal tap, but that was a little more urgent, she supposed - the more time they had to figure out what was going on, the better, and those kinds of things could take longer than the scan. Kissing his clammy forehead, watched Ty shuffle back and curl up in the position least uncomfortable for his back, and was asleep in under a minute. Whatever it was going on inside him was clearly draining his energy, any colour sucked from his skin and barely even able to muster simple things like speech and movement without serious effort. The coughing fits came and went, but his breathing didn't sound all that healthy and only the steady beep of a machine reassured Valka of his heart rate and oxygen levels.

Still fast asleep, Ty missed any possible stress from the scanner, though Valka did plenty of fretting for everyone and how Hiccup didn't lose patience with her, she'd never understand. Sven was stone-faced and silent the entire wait, only occasionally even looking at where Valka had slumped against her boyfriend, mostly twisting inside her own head but sometimes catastrophising out loud,
only for Hiccup to quietly reassure her over and over.

*Finally,* there was news. And none of it good.

"The results are back. Tyr has a moderate pneumonia, which accounts for the worsening flu symptoms."

"And? What about his head?"

They were the first words Sven had uttered in hours, and his tone was more affected than Valka had heard in a long time.

"And... we found swelling. Tyr has meningitis."

-HTTYD-

*I know! but if we don't torture our characters writers would become serial killers!*
Chapter 25

I know, I know, I'm behind on everything, including life.

And nope, HTTYD3 isn't out here yet. We can only wait. And yell at people who post spoilers without warnings.

-HTTYD-

Grimacing as the needle finally pierced his arm, Hiccup cursed his reluctant, uncooperative veins. The medical person stealing his blood muttered something about dehydration, and they were probably right - he hadn't been paying attention to much beyond Tyr being sick and Valka being sick with worry, let alone whether he was drinking enough. She'd had her blood taken too, and Sven, just to be on the safe side, but right now they were looking at Hiccup as the most likely to have been exposed to whatever infection Tyr was battling.

Tyr was put on some heavy duty antibiotics, aimed largely at his pneumonia infection - they might help with his other issues, but there was likely to be a more specialised antibiotic or treatment for what was causing his meningitis. Until his spinal tap results came back though, they couldn't be certain what it was.

"These aren't going to be pleasant. He's likely to be quite sick and lethargic, and his cough won't totally abate until his lungs start to clear."

"He's been sick and lethargic for the last few weeks now. At least now we know what's going on. Sort of."

Hiccup's voice sounded a lot calmer than his mind did. Valka lowered her arm to check the small needle site at her elbow, then left it cotton-free and reached to toy idly with Hiccup's hair, something she often did absent-mindedly when they were watching TV or simply talking in bed. He liked the way her fingers felt sliding through his ridiculous mop of hair.

"He's asking for you, but you need to wait until you've had some preventative treatment first."

Feeling the sting in his throat begin to rise again and resisting his attempts to swallow it back, Hiccup had a feeling that 'preventative' was going to be a misnomer. Glancing at the door to Tyr's isolation room, Hiccup made a snap decision and headed in there, barely making it before he started coughing.

"Hiccup!"

Valka was looking at him through the glass, where Hiccup was now technically under quarantine.

"Mr Haddock, I will have to insist you leave-"

"Not until you clear me. Otherwise I'll be sat in the hallway possibly infecting Valka too. And anyone who passes when I cough. Besides, I'd rather get sick than leave Tyr by himself for hours."

Said boy was still sleeping, having barely woken up when they put the canula in for his IV antibiotics before going back to sleep. Well, sleep was better than coughing his lungs out or being violently sick, so Hiccup didn't think Tyr getting all the rest he could was a bad thing. Trying to stifle his next coughs so he didn't wake Tyr up, Hiccup was soon followed in by a doctor in full gown and mask.
"I need to listen to your chest."

"Knock yourself out."

Valka was watching him through the glass still, observing the doctor as Hiccup hissed with the cold metal of the stethoscope against his skin. Was it colder than he remembered, or was he warmer?

"Deep breath in" Hiccup did so "and out again."

The process was repeated on his back, and there was a thing stuck in his ear to read his temperature.

"Slightly high, and your chest sounds a little congested. How do you feel?"

"No worse than earlier, but I've been panicking about Tyr this entire time. I'm not gonna feel on top of the world until he's home and well again."

Hiccup was given oral antibiotics and told to wait while they got a portable chest X-ray, which then involved him having to wear a hospital gown and he envied Tyr's own-clothes, although since he was still running a fever he was probably sweating in them and would need something fresh.

"Yours is much milder, but you are displaying symptoms of an infection."

"So, I'm in here too?"

"Assuming you aren't willing to go home and rest."

Hiccup shook his head.

"Not going anywhere until Tyr can."

The isolation bay had another bed, seperated by heavy plastic-feeling curtains that were presumably easy to sterilise and prevented someone from spreading infectious bodily fluids around. Hiccup would only go there if they made him, instead sitting by Tyr's bed for a while before getting up to talk quietly to Valka through the glass seperating them.

"You're ridiculous, you know that?"

"Hey, now the little dragons not alone and if you aren't already sick, I can't infect you. Win-win."

"How is he?"

Valka's frantic eyes roved over to where her son was still out cold, and Hiccup sighed as he saw the sweat bead on his face.

"Still sleeping. Hang on."

Hiccup crossed over, getting the damp cloth from his bedside and dabbing the sweat from his little face, seeing a minute amount of tension ease though Tyr didn't wake.

"He's probably going to want fresh clothes if he wakes up. Or at least pyjamas. Because this feels hideous" Hiccup plucked his hospital gown "I doubt he'd be able to tolerate this for long, even less so when he's upset and sick."

She looked over at Tyr again, frowning.
"I can't just leave him."

"He's sleeping. I can't leave. If he wakes up I promise I'll tell him you just went to get some more clothes for him. Go. Eat something. Take a shower. I'll be right here. If anything changes, I will make them call you. Promise."

Valka had been up for what Hiccup realised was the whole day and half the night now, and he sort of hoped she'd take a nap too but doubted his stubborn girlfriend would. Sven had fallen asleep in his chair in the hallway, but if nothing had changed by morning he'd probably need to leave for a shower and a change of clothes himself, as Hiccup knew Sven was somewhat obsessive-compulsive when it came to neatness.

"Alright."

"And while I have no problem with you using my car, don't drive. You're too tired. Take a taxi. My wallets in my bag if you need it."

After a few stubborn flickering expressions, Valka eventually softened.

"Thank you."

Their hands splayed either side of the glass, as close as they could get while Hiccup was an infection risk and Valka's status unknown. She took another look at her son, offered Hiccup a tired but loving glance before moving away, the effort it was costing her clear. Now safely alone, Hiccup let the grimace on his face come back, the prolonged time wearing his prosthetic beginning to wear on him but if he took it off, he probably wouldn't get it back on without rest and there was no wheelchair in the room to use should he need to get to Tyr quickly from his bed.

He made a mental note to ask next time a nurse came in, limping over to the chair next to Tyr's bed and lowering himself into it with gritted teeth, cursing his leg silently the entire time. Tyr slept on, chest still unhealthy-sounding but it would take time for the antibiotics to kick in, Hiccup reasoned.

"Has he woken up?"

"Nope."

The nurse came back in to check on Ty, and since he'd settled sitting down Hiccup almost forgot to ask before she left.

"Hey, can I uh, get a wheelchair in here? I'm not meant to wear my prosthetic for so long but if I take it off I can't get around."

"Oh, gods of course! I can't believe nobody even thought- I'll go sort that right away."

With her surgical mask on to protect from contagious things within isolation, Hiccup was amazed how clearly he could see surprise and concern on her expression. Still, he was fairly used to people forgetting about his having a disability - even Valka confessed she forgot sometimes, and she watched him take it off for bed most nights. Now he knew he'd be mobile, Hiccup reached down and released himself from his leg, biting back an audible groan of relief as the pressure eased. Knowing he'd be tender, Hiccup still needed to massage the area, biting his lip as he rubbed his residual limb.

"Mom?"

Tyr finally stirred again, first word on his lips calling out for his mother. Hiccup reached his hand
over to the boy, prompting Tyr to look toward him.

"Hiccup?"

"Hey little dragon. Your mom just popped home to eat and get you some pyjamas."

Eyes forcing themselves open properly, still heavy and hazy with sleep, Tyr rubbed his face and looked at Hiccup's gown, squinting without his glasses on.

"How come you have that?"

"They found out I have a bad chest too. And I'm not as cute and charming as you, so I don't get my own clothes."

"I made you sick?"

His voice, already weak, sounded guilty as could be and Hiccup's heart broke for Tyr.

"Hey, don't you think like that. Tyr, I'd give anything to be the one in that bed instead of you, and I would still jump to take care of you if I'd known I would get sick. I love you little guy, and now I get to be in here with you."

A small smile flashed across his face, frowning at the canula in his arm before glancing up at the IV bag, only to begin searching around him.

"Where are my glasses?"

"In here" Hiccup pulled open the drawer of Tyr's bedside table "they wanted to make sure nobody knocked them off while you slept."

Tyr pushed them on to his face, blinking owlishly and shuffling on his bed.

"I feel sick."

"That's the medicine. I don't feel too hot either. That's why they gave us these" Hiccup held up the little disposable bowl-things, effectively waiting to be puked in to "just in case."

The nurse returned with a wheelchair in hand, looking pleasantly surprised by the fact Tyr was awake too.

"Thank you."

"Is your leg ok Hiccup?"

"Fine little dragon, just can't wear my prosthetic all the time so I asked for a set of wheels."

"Oh. Ok then."

That seemed to settle Tyr, who sank back to his pillows, wiping his clammy face down and not really wanting to answer the nurses questions - her mask hiding her face unsettled him, but Hiccup quickly explained it was part of his quarantine - and the nurse got a little info on Tyr's symptoms before he was yawning again.

"When's mom coming back?"

"Soon. It's late and I told her she's too tired to drive, so she might have to wait for her taxi but we
both know she's not going to be away from you any longer than absolutely necessary."

That brought a new smile to Tyr's face, a soft glow of happiness as he pondered how much Valka adored him. Hiccup watched him take his glasses off, wriggling around to get comfortable again. Well, as comfortable as possible when restricted by his IV.

"Wake me when mom comes back? I want to get changed."

"Sure."

Within a minute, the lethargic boy was asleep again. Hiccup resumed rubbing his sore leg, hoping Valka took the time to have a proper shower and eat something substantial before she came back to fret some more. Time ticked by rather slowly, only the machines monitoring Tyr and the rattle of the little boys chest for company. Sven slept on too, still in the exact same position when Hiccup wheeled himself over to the window and peered through.

It was over an hour later when Valka came back, wearing her yellow jumper still but fresh bottoms and Hiccup's backpack on her shoulder. Her first port of call was to check on Tyr, and Hiccup swelled with love when he saw that she barely missed a beat over her boyfriend being considerably shorter than when she left, towering above him but not making him feel like she was looking down on him.

"Has he woken?"

"Once, but just for a few minutes. He asked me to wake him when you got back so he could change."

Valka nodded, smiling softly at Hiccup for a second before looking for a nurse - she technically wasn't allowed to break the isolation, and so needed a medical person to deliver Hiccup's bag to him.

"Did you eat?"

"I did. There was leftover pasta bake in the fridge."

Hiccup was relieved; he'd loaded that thing with vegetables, so he knew Valka had eaten something hearty and healthy. She located a nurse, explained, and Hiccup was handed his bag a moment later. There were three pairs of Tyr's pyjamas squeezed in, but she'd also brought Hiccup's muscle balm for his leg, a fresh liner sock and his sketchpad too. Clearly, she knew he'd probably be bored.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. And thank you for convincing me to go, I felt much more human after a shower and a meal."

Nodding to her, Hiccup wheeled himself over to Tyr's bedside, seeing his face was sweaty again and sighing inwardly.

"Tyr?"

He half-hoped for no response so Tyr would continue resting, but big green eyes fluttered open sleepily.

"Moms back?"
"Yep. With pyjamas. The nurse will have to help you change your shirt because of the tubing though. I can't stand up, and I wouldn't want to pull on your needle."

That was less-than-happy news to Tyr, but the prospect of peeling off his sweaty clothes was too appealing.

"We'll just give you a wipe down while your shirt is off, alright Tyr?"

"Do you have to?"

Hiccup gave the nurse a look, letting them know to let Hiccup talk Tyr round.

"You can't take a bath right now. This way, you won't be all sweaty."

He wasn't happy, but Tyr let them change his top over his IV, and give him a quick bed-bath in between but began to wriggle and grumble by the time they were done. Still, he was much happier to be a little cleaner, and to be in different clothes not damp with sweat, running a hand over the familiar fabric of his pyjamas.

"Better now?"

"A little. Why'm I so tired?"

"Your body is working hard to fight off your infections. You need rest. If you wanna sleep, sleep."

"M'kay."

He needed little convincing, and Hiccup smiled as Tyr settled again, offering his mother a sleepy wave before he was out again. Hiccup waited to be sure he was asleep before rolling himself over to the window again, looking up to see the doctor from a couple of hours ago, who was looking for Valka rather urgently if the quick of his step and the concern in his eyes was anything to go by.

"Do you have Tyr's results yet?"

"Not yet, cultures take time to grow. However, your blood was checked under a microscope and there is no significant white cell response, so it doesn't appear you're fighting an infection although the full tests will still be run. Of course, it would have been helpful to know you were pregnant earlier, since-"

"Excuse me?"

"She's what?"

-HTTYD-

"My brain is made of some form of incredibly useless jelly and I'm really struggling to produce anything and I'm sorry and I appreciate all your patience and ongoing support."
I loved the mix of responses to last chapter, I had a bunch of messages and the split between "surprised at pregnancy" and "called it!" was almost even. So I'm a mix of surprising and predictable. Guess I can live with that.

Onward!

-HTTYD-

Pregnant.

Pregnant.

Pregnant!

"Are... but... I don't understand."

"Had you begun to go through the menopause?"

Valka shook her head. She was in her forties, that wasn't a completely unrealistic question.

"I was told after having my son that I couldn't have any more children."

"Well" the doctor flipped a page, nodding as though that would make more sense to her "your hCG levels suggest you're at least six, perhaps eight weeks pregnant. Did you not notice a missed period?"

"She has an irregular cycle."

Hiccup piped up out of nowhere, looking surprised himself that the words came out. Valka quirked an eyebrow at him, but he merely winked.

"What? You don't think I notice?"

Well, he wasn't wrong, and Valka supposed they had been having sex for months now - he probably would have noticed that some months, her body didn't require a few nights off from sex. Even so, he didn't look nearly as thrown as she felt.

"You seem calm."

"Well, two things. One, I don't want to wake Tyr. And two, I'm thinking they're gonna confirm things since you just told them you're not meant to be able to... so I'll reserve my emotions for if its confirmed, and then when I can a) jump up, and b) hug you. Neither of which are presently possible."

He was confined to a wheelchair, on the other side of glass and in isolation with an infection that was also likely to be the reason her young son was drifting in and out of consciousness. Oh gods, what on earth was she going to say to Tyr? How would Sven react? Hel, she'd have to tell her parents!

Oh. Right. Hiccup had said they'd probably want to confirm it.

"Is there anything else that could be causing those hormone levels?"
"Yes. Particularly in a woman of your age. Which is why you'll need an ultrasound to confirm. If that doesn't show something, then we'll investigate the other causes. However, those are incredibly rare. I'm expecting the ultrasound to simply confirm that you're... expecting. It's imperative you stay away from those infected."

Valka nodded absently, mind turning over a multitude of thoughts. Gods. She was too old for a baby! There were... risks. And after the trouble before, she was terrified that something could go wrong.

"Hey" Hiccup tapped the window between them, just enough to get her attention "go. Stop panicking when you don't know anything for sure yet. I'm not going anywhere. My leg is over there, for starters."

Valka felt a laugh bubble up in her throat, unable to help but smile at her lover. Hiccup was... she couldn't even describe him. He'd been everything she needed before she knew she needed it. Even his age - he didn't make her feel old. He made her feel young. Fresh. Alive. And apparently, fertile.

His hand splayed over the glass again, eyes fixed on hers.

"I love you."

Her smile widened; damn him.

"I love you too."

The doctor led her toward the radiology department, muttered to a nurse nearby that she needed to be checked for pregnancy and soon - without her full bloodwork, there wasn't a guarantee she wasn't sick, the doctor explained, and pregnancy would alter how they treated her. As they shooed her into a side room, unforgiving gaze of a slightly terrifying nurse leaving no room for argument as Valka undressed, she ached to have Hiccup there. He'd keep her calm, hold her hand.

He should have been there to possibly see their child for the first time.

Valka grit her teeth as the ultrasound probe was inserted - this was not something she'd expected to be doing! - but focused on what it was supposed to be detecting. She could be going back to tell Hiccup he was-

Her brain stopped dead when Valka heard the first heartbeat. Gods. She really was pregnant!

Twisting her head to look at the scanner, she saw the messy white noise of everything else, but there was a tiny little thing, just discernible from the rest. The rapid swishing sound would have made Valka's legs give out if she'd been standing.

"That's... oh my gods!"

"I take it this wasn't planned?"

"I didn't even know it was possible."

The tech looked at Valka like she was ever so slightly mad.

"Well, unless you're suggesting an immaculate conception here..."

"What? No. I meant because I was told I couldn't have more children after my son, and he's twelve this year."
And it wasn't as though there'd been no chance for her to get pregnant - having been told she wasn't going to conceive again, she and Sven had stopped using contraception for the better part of nine years, before a fizzling-out of their marriage put the end to their sex life.

She and Hiccup had never bothered with protection either, since Valka was so certain. And, well... they were a pretty active couple.

"I see. Do you know why?"

"I had a placenta increta with Ty, which left a lot of scarring behind. I've not used a preventative measure since, and I was married for most of that time too."

The ultrasound confirmed, Valka was allowed to get dressed, fingers curling around the print-out of the tiny little thing inside her.

"Given your age too, I'm honestly going to admit I'm stunned. You'll need to be set up with a specialist who can talk you through this, as between prior complications, your age and so on, technically we'd consider your pregnancy to be high-risk."

Valka nodded, rubbing her stomach.

"I need to get back to my son. Could I have a second one of these? My boyfriend is in quarantine, if I give him this one I can't have it back."

Hiccup had indicated he wasn't averse to having a child with her, but Valka had been open from the start about the fact that wouldn't happen. So to now be about to present him with the evidence she was really, actually pregnant, Hiccup might not be so thrilled.

"Here you are."

"Thank you."

Tucking the images into her pocket, Valka hastened back to the isolation room, intending to tell Hiccup right away.

As it turned out, she couldn't - he was no longer by the window, instead wheeled over to where Ty's bed was, hoisted himself up and the little boy had curled up on Hiccup's lap, and it looked as though both of them were asleep. She knew a pang of guilt - there was nothing she could do from outside, but her son was in distress and Valka wasn't even there to see it. Everything had seemingly conspired to happen all at once.

"What's he doing on Ty's bed?"

"Comforting him, by the looks of it. He's the only one that can, we can't even go in there."

Sven huffed, then looked over at Valka.

"You seem antsier than earlier."

She was not telling Sven. Not before Tyr, and certainly not before she'd given the confirming images to Hiccup.

"I'm just tired Sven. And worried."

That was probably the longest conversation they'd had without legal representation in a while. Valka wished it wasn't under such dire circumstance.
"Are his tests back yet?"

"No."

After a few more minutes terse silence, Sven gruffed that he was going home for a shower and a change of clothes. Valka waited for him to leave before sinking into a chair, pulling the sonogram from her pocket and staring at it again for a moment. She hadn't totally processed it yet.

"Val!"

Turning her head, Valka looked up and - rather surprisingly - saw her parents. She'd let them know Tyr was sick, but hadn't been aware they planned to make the trip. Her fathers health concerned her - if what Ty had was particularly aggressive...

"What's that you have there Val?"

Oh. Yes. She was still holding her sonogram picture. Valka didn't have time to shove it away before her mother had worked it out, cooing.

"Oh! You're... are you?"

"Gods, be quiet mother! Ty and Hiccup are sleeping. Yes! I literally just found out."

Relinquishing one copy of the picture, Valka watched her parents peer at it, both looking stunned.

"I thought you couldn't have more children?"

"So did I. They took my blood to see if I've caught what Ty has, and the doctor came to lecture me for not telling them I was pregnant. When I said I didn't know I was, they sent me to confirm it in case my hormone levels were caused by something else. And, I just got back from that now. I'm waiting to tell Hiccup."

She gestured, her parents looking around to where Hiccup and Tyr were sleeping still, seeing the IV hooked up to Tyr and the isolation warnings on the glass.

"How bad is it love?"

"We don't know yet. Hiccup's not nearly as sick as Ty from what we can see, but he went in there voluntarily and said he won't come out without Ty. They didn't diagnose Hiccup with pneumonia until after he was in there."

He'd begun coughing almost the second he was in there, so Valka suspected he'd been feeling off anyway, but it wouldn't have surprised her if her stubborn boyfriend had just made himself an infection risk so Tyr wouldn't be alone. Valka had certainly considered it - the doctor dropping the pregnancy bombshell had given her second thoughts. Valka didn't know what she'd have done - or what it would have done to Hiccup! - if she'd gone in there and gotten sick, lost the little surprise in her belly. Would she even have realised it? Well, the doctors probably would have. But perhaps not before it was too late.

Oh Hel, she was already facing the struggle between her son and her foetus. Ty seemed to accept that Valka shouldn't go in there in case she got sick, but a delirious boy who was already fiercely attached to his mother may not always be so logical.

When she next looked up, Valka saw green eyes open, Hiccup looking at her over the top of sleeping Tyr's head. She offered him a tight smile, saw a nurse coming along with a protective
mask and what looked like Hiccup's next dose of medicine.

"Excuse me, would you give this to Hiccup for me?"

The nurse nodded, took the little polaroid-sized life-change from her hand with gloved fingers before heading in. Hiccup managed to take his medication one handed, the other still around her son, and then she watched his face anxiously as he received the sonogram image. For a minute or two, he didn't move. Just stared. Valka was just starting to panic when his face broke into a wide grin, looking up at her with happiness writ clear across his features.

"Really?"

He mouthed it, not waking Ty - for her to hear him from there, he'd have to be shouting anyway - and Valka nodded. Well, he didn't look upset about it. Eyes fell back to the little sonogram, what looked like the word 'wow' mouthed several times as he examined the image of the tiny foetus.

"Seems like the daddy is happy. It is his, right?"

"Mother! Yes!"

"Just checking. For all I know, your young lover gave you a want to sow some wild oats."

Before Valka could die of mortification - she was too old for embarrassing parents, surely? - her father chimed in.

"I don't need to hear this!"

Tutting at her husband, Rama went right back to cooing about the new grandchild.

"I'm not sure if it's a good thing he's so excited or not."

"What makes you say that love? You're not... are you two having trouble?"

"What? No! Of course not. He's... perfect, as ever" she gestured vaguely to where Hiccup was cradling her son "but I've already been warned that between my age and everything else, that this is technically high risk. What if I..."

"Hey now" Rama squeezed Valka tightly, petting her hair and making her feel five years old again "don't think like that. You're strong, healthy. You have that wonderful young man taking care of you. Everything will be fine love."

"Oh look, Tyranno's awake."

Valka looked up in time to see Hiccup's eyes widen, placing the scan picture on the bedside table face down so Ty wouldn't see before gently brushing his hair from his face, looking to be speaking in a hushed tone to the boy. Hiccup turned, pressing the nurse call button on the wall behind him and Valka immediately panicked, unable to do or know anything until Hiccup had moved back to his wheelchair, rolled over to the window while the curtains were pulled across Tyr's bed by the requested nurse.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing. He just needed to go to the bathroom, but he said his legs don't feel good."

That wasn't terribly reassuring, Valka mused, but she fought not to get too panicked. It could be that Ty was fatigued. Or it could be that the swelling in his brain was worsened. Oh, she was
terrified. After a couple of minutes, the nurse had pulled away the curtains and Tyr was calling out to Hiccup, who immediately wheeled himself back over. Oh how she wished she could be in there, tending to her sickly boy.

"When was the last time you slept love?"

"Before court, I suppose."

"That was yesterday, technically."

Valka shrugged, plucking at her jumper.

"I went home for a shower and food."

"That's not enough. Especially when it's not just you now love."

It was so hard to even think about taking care of herself when Ty needed her, but her father was right - Valka wasn't just caring for herself now.

"I'll... think about it. When I know what's wrong with my son."

There was little news before Sven was back - Tyr was awake, but judging by Hiccup's expressions while they talked, not terribly lucid. The delirium was normal, for both his fever and the infection in his brain. One doctor had even commented it was good Ty wasn't combative and difficult, which was apparently common for people with swelling around their brain. Valka idly commented that Tyr would be much worse if they put him in a hospital gown.

Hiccup had secreted the sonogram to his bag, but Valka caught his eyes going toward it constantly, obviously itching to look at it again. She imagined if he could see it, he'd be looking at her stomach, as though wondering if she was 'showing' even though he'd seen her body the night before. Well. The night before the night before now.

"Anything?"

"He's in and out of it. We're waiting for results."

Sven barely acknowledged Valka's parents, but that didn't surprise her much. He was there for Tyr, nothing more.

Finally, the doctor came looking for them again.

"We have the cultures back from his spinal tap, and now we've identified the cause of his illness we can begin to treat it."

"I hear a 'but' coming."

"Tyr has an aggressive strain of bacteria, and the medication for it is stronger than the one we have him on currently for his chest infection. This may well not be pleasant to watch, I'm sorry. And since your partner is so likely to have contracted the same infection, he'll be given stronger medication too, so neither of them will be feeling good, but it's obviously preferrable to letting the infection run untreated."

Valka fretted as the doctor went on to instruct the nurses, then something occurred to her that she did not need to deal with right now, following the man along the corridors until she thought they were out of earshot.
"My ex husband doesn't know about the pregnancy, and honestly I'd like to keep it that way."

"Of course. Confidentiality holds me to it."

Relieved, Valka let him go do his job, getting back in time to see the antibiotic IV Ty was on being changed over. They'd tried to get Hiccup to go to his own bed, but he was having none of it, adamantly staying by Tyr's side except to chat at the window or roll himself off to the bathroom. When he got out of the hospital, Valka was going to have serious words with her boyfriend about his reckless stubbornness.

For a little while, it didn't look as though they had anything to worry about. Tyr dozed off again to the sound of Hiccup's voice, looking to be enjoying a story Hiccup was reciting to him. Either that or just a very one-sided conversation.

Then Hiccup turned rather pale, clutching his stomach and clapping a hand over his mouth. Expecting problems or perhaps by luck, the nurse was watching and had one of the disposable bowl-type things under Hiccup in record time, preventing him from simply vomiting all over himself. He'd managed to angle himself so the window-watchers didn't see much, but it was enough for Valka to feel a rising bit of nausea herself. She fought it back, swallowing some water and ignoring the cold sweat prickling on the back of her neck.

"Well, at least he'll be able to sympathise with your morning sickness!"

As her ex husband turned toward them, face a picture of quick calculation and the emotions that came with realisation, Valka realised she ought to have told her father not to mention she was pregnant in front of Sven.

-HTTYD-

Dun dun dunnnnnnnnnn

-Dun dun dunnnnnnnnnn-
Chapter 27

Sorry for the delay, my weekend was largely eaten up by seeing HTTYD3 (was pretty good yanno!) but it isn't out everywhere yet so no spoilers in reviews please and thank you.

-HTTYD-

"He... that child knocked you up?"

Valka, still feeling a little sick, had to stop for deep breaths before she could answer Sven.

"He is not a child Sven. He put his own life at risk to make sure our son wasn't alone in there. I know you're wounded, and jealous, and you will always be a little emotionally stunted, but Hiccup was right. If this isn't enough to make you stop all this nonsense, then it isn't me who should be challenged."

Turning back, Valka watched Hiccup take a paper towel from the nurse to wipe his mouth, another to wipe his sweaty face. He was still pale, but his immediate next act was to check on Tyr, who was thankfully still asleep. She wanted him more lucid, but if those same antibiotics were being pumped into him, she was somewhat relieved by the idea he could sleep through the symptoms.

Her parents did not let Sven get off so lightly.

"You leave that lad alone. He's young, but I've seen him with Tyr and you would never know he hadn't been there all his life. Sven, the only way you will truly lose your son is if you push him away, and that's what you're doing right now."

"How do you think he'd feel if you took him away? Do you think he'd thank you for removing him from his mother, from a man he's bonded with? From his future baby brother or sister?"

"He would... understand in time, that I was doing what was best for him."

Until that moment, Valka had never truly wanted to throttle her ex husband. But she'd had enough.

"All you have done is malign Hiccup, when he's never had a bad word to say about you. He went to our sons birthday party, took care of him when he was sick, picked him up from school when he was upset after your custody challenge had scary people turn up and question a confused little boy who didn't understand why they want to take him away. He's had to watch you try and make Tyr doubt how much he cares, had to put up with this whole thing centered on calling him a bad person. And still, when Tyr was sad and scared about going to court, do you know what Hiccup said?"

Sven's frown grew deeper every line, until finally he shook his head.

"What?"

"He told Tyr that you still love him, and that you're just hurt and scared to lose him, that people who are scared do stupid things. And that, no matter what, the choice of who he has in his life is down to him. Hiccup doesn't want to take Ty away from you, he's the one who comforts Ty when he misses you. You are the reason you haven't seen him. Not us."

The silence that fell after that was heavy, almost absolute save for the distant sounds of voices and the squeaking of something on wheels a hallway away.
Valka rather wished it had stayed so quiet. Even through the glass, the shrill beeping of machinery in the isolation room was menacing, blaring alerts that something was wrong. Hiccup barely got away from Tyr's bed in time for medical staff to swarm the boy, rolling himself backwards as the go between from son to mother.

"What is it?"

"His vitals are dropping, they're not sure why" Hiccup turned back to the bed, and Valka barely heard his next words "come on little dragon, you can beat this."

She felt like she could barely breathe, clutching the ledge of the window that separated them and if this had happened before Valka knew she was pregnant, there wouldn't have been a seconds doubt about storming in there for answers.

If Hiccup wasn't in there with Ty, Valka might have done it anyway.

After several minutes where they could see little to nothing through the crowd - it was impossible Tyr was coherent at that moment, else she'd certainly have heard him complain about being so hemmed in - the beeping stopped, evening out as people began to step back from Tyr's bed, though one tried to stop Hiccup getting closer.

"What happened?"

"It's a side effect of severe infections. His blood pressure and breathing fell, which is why he's on oxygen now. He'll be on fifteen minute observations now until we see improvement, and we're adding a new medication that should speed up his body's ability to clear it a little bit, and fluids for his blood pressure."

Valka thanked the doctor before he left, turning back to see where Tyr was blinking sleepily at Hiccup, hand grabbing at the mask on his face but Hiccup gently stopped him, presumably explained why he needed it. He moved away for a minute, but only to get his bag, placing his sketchbook and pencil on the bed for Tyr to write on. It pained Valka to watch him struggle - he loved to draw and colour, so it was so unlike him to have unsteady hands. Hiccup nodded at something Tyr wrote, grabbed the book and rolled over to hold it up to the window.

_Tell my mom and dad I love them._

It just about broke her heart to read it; Tyr was obviously so scared he wasn't going to make it out of there. There were tears in Hiccup's eyes too as he glanced over to Sven, who was still silent and stone-faced but he'd seen the scribble too. Hiccup moved back to the bed, Tyr dragging another word out and Hiccup brought it back over to them.

"Music?"

"He wants his Celtic CD. If you go get it, there's a portable CD player in that box of old electronics I keep by my TV. Might need to grab batteries, but I have those in the kitchen drawer."

Hiccup could tell Valka didn't want to leave, his voice wary but he also probably knew Valka wasn't about to say no to what little she _could_ do for her son.

"I'll drive you love. You're too tired."

Her mother wouldn't take no for an answer, though Valka wasn't sure leaving Hiccup, Sven and her father alone was the best idea. Still, if she went home she could get Astrid's number from the emergency contact list on Hiccup's kitchen noteboard, and let her know how her brother was doing.
It felt like things had barely stopped since Tyr was rushed to hospital. She was more thankful than ever that Hiccup had the foresight to tell Astrid not to bring her baby daughter over; she couldn't imagine how Tyr would have felt if the babe had contracted his illness too.

"Where's Tyr's CD?"

"It'll be in its case, next to his stereo. Be careful not to-

"Move anything. Oh, I know how the little one is. You go get the things from Hiccup's house."

Eternally grateful her mother had let the drive back home go on silently, Valka let herself in to Hiccup's house, hunting out the old disc player and attached headphones, grabbed new batteries from the drawer, jotted down Astrid's number and met her mother outside. His home felt off without Toothless. Still, it wasn't really a bad thing the dog wasn't home, since everything had happened so fast and he'd have been quite alone.

"His CD wasn't there."

Valka frowned; Tyr was very predictable with things like that. Then she realised.

"Oh gods, no, of course not. It's in Hiccup's car, back at the hospital. He put it on for the drive to court. Oh, we'd had have had to come back for the CD player anyway."

When everyone was back home, safe and well, Valka was talking to Hiccup about putting that adjoining door in. They were all getting a brutal reminder that life was fragile, and Hiccup could only be more blatantly serious about her if he proposed. Not that Valka hoped for that; her divorce was barely cooled off yet for starters. But they basically lived together anyway; a door and throws for her sofas could make it official.

Mother caught daughter yawning as they got back in the car, chiding Valka about how she needed to get some rest for the sake of the baby.

"Mother, it was hard enough leaving for this after watching Ty... yes, I'm tired, but I'm eating and staying hydrated. If Ty stabilises, I might consider going home to rest, but for now? No."

Retrieving the disc and case from Hiccup's car, Valka hastened back to her vigil. The nurse who was about to go in looked bemused when Valka handed her the things Hiccup asked her to get, but her boyfriend got to work immediately while Ty was getting his checks done. Nothing had changed while she was gone, and it didn't appear some kind of male showdown had occurred either, which was a relief.

After a little fiddling with batteries and wires, Hiccup tested the headphones on himself and nodded, rolling himself over to Tyr and sliding the headphones down over his head. They'd been adjusted so they didn't sit too close to his ears - Tyr wouldn't like it, and Hiccup knew that. But soon enough the Celtic music seemed to soothe her boy, who visibly relaxed after a couple of minutes and he stopped picking at the oxygen mask.

The doctor came by a little later, with something close to good news.

"Your blood tests came back negative for any sign of infection."

So Valka was ok. But Hiccup wasn't. Ty wasn't. They were still in there, fighting this invasive illness all but alone. Hiccup though... he barely left Tyr's side, still touched him and cuddled him and soothed him. He'd been doing that for a while, and it was likely what caused Hiccup to contract the infection in the first place. But there was no resentment in Hiccup.
They were all on tenterhooks, but there was some hope Tyr was beginning to turn a corner. He was still sleeping a lot, and he couldn't walk unaided, but after six days in and out of lucid consciousness with aggressive antibiotics and steroids pushed into him, Hiccup was just glad he was alive at that point. There had been a couple of close calls, and they weren't out of the woods yet. Hiccup was effectively considered fine, but since he'd put himself in the quarantine, he wasn't officially clear until Tyr was in case he picked the bug back up - Tyr still curled up on his lap sometimes, so being coughed or sneezed on was high risk. Especially since when he left, he'd be around his pregnant girlfriend.

Hiccup's doses had been lowered, but he was having his blood taken constantly to check that the lower dose was working to stop him getting sicker. The antibiotics made him ill, so his symptoms weren't a valid guide there. Tyr had lost weight, which he couldn't really afford to lose, but he'd actually eaten again for the first time that day. Valka's parents had been helping drag Valka home for sleep and food and self-care, though she was stubborn about it. Hiccup doubted they'd have had any leverage at all to make her if she weren't pregnant.

Gods, pregnant. He hadn't even been able to really tell her how ecstatic he was. He'd missed that first ultrasound, missed hearing the heart beat. But those things could all be repeated; he couldn't go back and undo leaving Tyr by himself if he'd never gone in to begin with. Hiccup resisted the urge to tug out his canula; he was dehydrated from the antibiotics making him sick, so he had a saline bag constantly hooked up - and what was called a wheelchair IV... something, but Hiccup called it an annoyingly long thing that kept the bag above him without rendering him bedbound.

"Now where did I leave my leg?"

Hiccup heard a giggle, looked up to see Tyr grinning and gods it was the most amazing sound.

"Hey there, you're awake."

"Uh-huh."

He was still on the oxygen mask, but could take it off in short breaks to speak now - a good sign his lungs were starting to clear at last. They were hoping to get him out of bed to try more walking, but he was still weak and fatigued easily.

"Oh, here it is. At least in here it can't have gone far."

Hiccup reattached his leg, standing with a grimace and moving his saline bag from his chair to the IV pole on wheels. He hadn't been walking as much the last few days, and it showed in his leg protesting being weighed upon again. Stretching - carefully - Hiccup headed over to Tyr's bed, scratching at his stubbled face.

"Think you can sit up properly?"

Tyr nodded, letting Hiccup help him and taking the damp paper towel to wipe his face down. His fever had broken eventually, but he was still sweaty, achey and just generally unwell. Tugging his mask away, Tyr looked up at Hiccup.

"When can I see my mom again?"

"Soon, buddy. She's only outside, but you know us sick guys gotta stay in here for a bit."
Drawing deep breaths from the mask, Tyr still looked sad - Valka was off getting food, and Sven had to leave to take calls, though he was officially on leave from work to stay with Tyr as much as he could.

"I know. I miss her. And dad."

"They miss you too. Once you get up and moving, you can go sit by the window and talk to them. But right now you gotta focus on getting better."

Tyr shuffled along, patting his bed to indicate Hiccup should sit next to him.

"Am I really gonna be ok soon?"

Hiccup debated his answer; he didn't want to lie when he knew Tyr liked to be prepared and armed with knowledge.

"I don't know Tyr. You're going to get better, but both of us are gonna be tired and have to learn to use our lungs properly again for a while. And your meningitis can have some after effects, like hearing loss or sight problems. You'll need to get your glasses and your ears checked when you get outta here."

He had to take breaks himself between sentences, drawing in breath and Hiccup knew that was a side effect of his own congested chest. Tyr nodded as he took in what Hiccup said, tapping idly at the hem of his pyjama top.

"What else?"

Hiccup glanced over to his bag; he had something he knew would motivate Tyr more than anything to get better, to get stronger every day. But he hadn't asked Valka if he could tell yet. He knew Sven knew. It didn't take a psychic to know he wasn't happy about it, but he seemed to be focused on Tyr and little else in the moment, so they were leaving it at that for now.

"You'll probably have to get a flu shot every year, but so will I."

"How come?"

"It's just... recommended for people who get pneumonia. But there's a lot we'll only know when the medicine has had time to do its thing, and we can work out what was the bad stuff in your brain and what wasn't. How are your headaches?"

"Bad. But the doctor told me that's normal."

His heart ached for Tyr's suffering, brushing his hair from his face gently.

"You need anything, or shall I leave you to get some rest?"

Tyr pondered.

"Will you tell me a story until I fall asleep?"

"Of course."

It was all of five minutes before Tyr was fast asleep again, but the heavy sleeps were getting shorter and being replaced a little more by brief naps and more lucidity between those. Tomorrow would be a week of treatment, and so the tests would all be re-run to see how Tyr was doing at fighting his illness. They were warned not to get too hopeful - Tyr could very easily take a turn for...
the worse, and they were talking about putting in something to drain the excess fluid in his brain. It
would have been done already, but they knew Tyr was unlikely to tolerate it happily, and so it
would be paired with sedation - not ideal when they needed to be able to assess his mental state.

Valka was back soon after, and seemed relieved to hear Tyr was talking a little.

"Can I tell him?"

"About... oh. You mean" Valka gestured toward her stomach vaguely "that?"

"Yeah. I think it'll be good for him to have something to aim for, time-wise."

He knew Valka really wanted to be the one to tell him, but she also seemed to be considering
Hiccup's reasoning.

"Alright. Don't wake him though."

Hiccup agreed, seeing the exhaustion writ over his girlfriends features. He knew it must be pure
torture for her to be stuck out there, unable to help her son. Struck with an idea, Hiccup crossed
over to the nurse, asking if it would be ok to put Tyr in the chair for just a little while, so he could
speak to his parents when he woke up.

"I suppose a short trip out of bed won't hurt. Think you can convince him to let us take him for a
shower?"

The shower in their little ward was already set up for someone who couldn't stand, so Hiccup could
keep himself clean without help, though he supposed a shower chair wouldn't have been hard to
find in a hospital anyway. The nurses were all becoming familiar with Tyr's different needs, though
they didn't have much choice if they wanted him not to be screaming and fighting them, which had
happened when one new nurse tried to put a hospital gown on him between clothes changes while
Hiccup was sleeping.

"I can try, but he's not going to like it."

Now Valka could tell him. Hiccup headed back over to relay that to her, and she seemed a little
happier.

"Thank you."

"No problem. Could you call my dad and check on Toothless while we're waiting?"

Valka did so, and Hiccup was thankful to hear his companion was doing fine, though apparently
missed Hiccup a lot. He missed his dog too, even the being woken up by dog breath at 5am.

As predicted, Tyr was not happy about a shower, but relented eventually on the condition Hiccup
come with him and that he get to sit by the window after. Dried and clad in clean pyjamas, Tyr was
perched in the wheelchair again, wheeled over to where he could see his mother.

"Where's dad?"

"He's outside on his phone, but a nurse has gone to get him for you. Hiccup, could you get the
picture?"

Nodding, Hiccup retrieved the sonogram from his bag. Tyr peered at it curiously, then looked back
up at his mom.
"You're having a baby?"

They waited tentatively - Hiccup knew Tyr had been a little put out about the idea he'd never be a big brother like Hiccup was to Astrid, and he adored Astrid's baby. But Tyr wasn't a hundred percent, so there was a slight chance he'd take the news badly.

"Yes son. How do you feel about that?"

Tyr struggled to draw enough breath in without his oxygen mask, his voice quiet but the tone carried nonetheless.

"That's awesome! I'm gonna be a big brother?"

"Yep. Which is why your mom can't come in here, it would put baby at risk."

"Keep baby safe mom."

Tyr gave his mother a very serious look, which Hiccup could see she was fighting not to smile too widely at by the twitching of her lips.

"I'll do my best son. Oh, here's your father."

"Ty!"

"Dad!"

For all the trouble and angst between them all the last couple of months, Tyr and Sven looked every bit a typical loving father and son, aside from the glass, for a minute.

"How are you son?"

"Scared. When I... get out, are you still..." Tyr's breathing was still laboured, but he was determined "gonna try to take me away?"

Everyone was looking at Sven then. It was impossible not to; they all wanted to know if they'd be fighting again as soon as Tyr was out of danger. Sven looked around, eyes eventually landing on where his son was holding the sonogram of his future sibling.

"No son. I won't."

-HTTYD-

**Well, the boy needed some good news!**
Chapter 28

Hilariously, when I said I was aiming to have this done by chapter 30, I was adamant Valka wouldn't get pregnant. But you'll know, if you write, that things don't always go to plan. (seriously, that was not the original plan)

So, the aim is to be done by 35. And I do have the next unrelated!Valcup story planned. (for the usual related!Valcup, please see Unknowingly)

-HTTYD-

There were scary days and agonising days and days filled with hope and smiles.

There were nights none of them slept, when Tyr took bad turns and they all just prayed he'd make it to morning.

There were hours that felt like years, decisions that made Valka's chest hurt as she made them, like sedating Tyr for more treatment, or for another ultrasound Hiccup couldn't be there for - he begged her to go all the same, to check on the baby.

There were times she sobbed in her mothers arms, exhausted and overwhelmed and probably hormonal. Other times, her parents had to drag her home to sleep and eat and shower.

There were conversations that should have been had months ago with Sven, some of which were conducted with Hiccup and Tyr on the opposite side of the window, both in wheelchairs though sometimes Tyr climbed out to perch on Hiccup's lap for comfort.

Then finally, there was relief. Sven confirmed the custody case was dropped. Hiccup's bloodwork came back clear, his chest x-ray close to normal. Still, her stubborn boyfriend refused to leave her son, and got away with it by refusing to put Valka in danger until they were certain.

And then there was the moment Valka had been starting to fear would never come.

"We need to take him for a scan to confirm, but I'm quietly optimistic about the results."

With a clear test and a promising result of his new scan, Valka got the news she'd been all but dying for.

She could take Tyr home.

There were warnings about how he'd be tired, need rest and fluids and precautionary medication. He had to keep the device they'd put in to drain the fluid from his brain - a shunt - for at least the time being, and that too would require monitoring for signs of infection and blockage and gods only knew what else. But when they put Tyr in the wheelchair and brought him out, no mask, no IV bag, just her sleepy-smiling boy, Valka knew she'd take any number of extra measures to have him back.

Hiccup, stubborn as ever, refused to be wheeled out, though they were adamant about hospital policy meaning he couldn't leave the building on his own two feet. Instead he walked out, and despite the fatigue clear in his face, he picked up Tyr so Valka could hug them both, not certain she could bear to let her little boy go ever again as he laughed into her neck, Hiccup bearing Tyr's weight so he could use both arms to squeeze Valka.
"I missed you mom!"

"I missed you too my boy, so much!"

After a minute Ty shifted, looking down with a confused expression.

"Your tummy feels different."

It had been weeks - Valka's flat stomach and six-to-eight-weeks pregnancy was now a small but solid bump, now approaching four months pregnant. And apparently, Tyr could feel the difference when he hugged her.

"Can you pass me to dad so I can hug him while you hug mom?"

Chuckling, Hiccup turned toward Sven. There was a tense moment - just one - where the two men eyed each other, but then Sven was reaching behind his back and proving that he was, in some ways, still the man she'd married years ago.

"Someone wanted to see you."

"Loki!"

The toy dragon Sven had resented for years was in his hand, still wearing the tie Hiccup made for court - that felt like a lifetime ago now - and Ty reached for his father, clutching Loki to his chest as he was cradled by the blond man. Valka caught a glance at where they'd shaved his head for treatment, though they'd been mindful to do it in a way Tyr could hide if he wanted when the wound had healed. She'd seen Hiccup stop Ty picking at it countless times.

He was a little thinner than when he went in, and both Hiccup and Tyr would need more treatment and more meals and probably a slow re-introduction to sunshine on their pale, freckled faces, but her boyfriend had never looked more beautiful than when he beamed at her, reaching to pull Valka close, burying his head against her neck and murmuring that he loved her between giddy giggles.

His hand landed on her belly, flexing against the little bump there.

"How far along are you now?"

"They think sixteen weeks, give or take a week."

Hiccup shook his head, eyes wide but his smile wider.

"I can't... gods, I just- oh!"

He jumped, and Valka knew exactly why. She'd felt it too.

"Was that-"

"It was! That hadn't happened yet!"

Hiccup beamed, completely lit up as he cradled her belly properly, waiting for another jolt.

"Someone knows daddy is coming home, I take it?"

Her mother commented, and Valka nodded as Hiccup pressed a little firmer, laughing aloud in his exuberance as their child kicked again.
"What's happening?"

"The baby kicked!"

Tyr wriggled, turned to his own father.

"I wanna feel!"

It wasn't the sort of situation Valka expected to find herself in, but Sven brought Ty over, Hiccup guiding the little boy's hand to where he'd felt the kicks before. Tyr's face creased in focus, but then he was beaming along with Hiccup too.

"Wow!"

For a minute, Valka looked up at Sven. His face was a mix of tightly concealed emotions - he hadn't wanted a second child after they had a son, and Valka hadn't expected herself able, nor had she fallen pregnant in all the years of unprotected sex with her ex-husband. But there she was, pregnant with Hiccup's child, Sven holding their son as he felt the kicks.

"I'm happy for you Valka. Truly."

Even Hiccup tore his eyes away to look at Sven, but his smile didn't fade. Valka smiled too, nodding at him.

"Thank you Sven."

Looking as though it took monumental effort, Hiccup pulled his hands from her belly.

"Well, we better fill out our discharge forms and get lots of really boring advice that's very important. My dad's coming to get me cus I'm not allowed to drive, so can you drive my car back Val?"

He looked tired, even though he was radiant with happiness, but Hiccup's tone still carried a sweet timber of love with it and she caught her parents smile at him calling her Val.

"Of course."

"We'll go on ahead, make sure there's a hot kettle and somewhere for you boys to rest waiting."

"Thank you mother."

Kissing her parents goodbye, Valka felt Hiccup hold her hand, stubbornly refusing the wheelchair until she herself asked him to. Grumbling, Hiccup perched in the chair, crossing his arms and pulling faces at Valka and the nurses until Ty was in fits of giggles. They all worried slightly when his breath came up short, but the nurse told them it was normal, that he'd be going home with an inhaler amongst other medication to encourage his lungs healing.

There was a dizzying amount to take home - medication, instructions for his shunt, information on the physio Ty would need to deal with his wasted muscles and weakened lungs, a list of other things he'd need checked like his eyes and hearing. Up close, it hadn't seemed an issue, but nurses had commented there was a change overall to Tyr's sound response. There was also a couple of recommendations - like Valka getting Tyr assessed for autism, and another for someone who would be able to distinguish those traits from residual issues of the meningitis if he developed any behavioural changes.
"All that time Astrid tried to get me into yoga, and now I find out I should have been better at breathing exercises."

Hiccup lamented as he took his own care instructions, something seeming to occur to him as he glanced over them.

"Hey, I know we've been cleared and all, but am I alright to be sleeping in the same bed as Valka?"

The doctor nodded.

"Of course. Although I would recommend a little time recovering before anything more... strenuous."

Valka felt her cheeks flush as Hiccup stifled laughter in his hand, Tyr thankfully not listening in as he sat being instructed by the nurse about when and how to use his inhaler, Sven next to him - he'd be helping care for Tyr while he recovered, they had agreed.

"I really did mean for sleeping, but noted."

It wasn't much longer before Stoick arrived, greeting everyone with his booming voice and vast presence, congratulating Valka on her pregnancy and Tyr on his release. Almost not believing it despite being able to see it happen, Valka saw Hiccup and Tyr squinting against the sunshine, high-fiving each other and joking about finally escaping.

"Will Astrid be able to visit now?"

"I think so, but we should probably rest a day or two before we hang out with Helena. Apparently she's really energetic and well, we are not."

"Good idea. See you back home Hiccup!"

They shared a laugh before Hiccup was hauled up into his dads truck, Tyr strapped into his fathers car and Valka aching as she made herself get into Hiccup's car. It was a short trip, but still she was thrilled to see Tyr the other side, giggling to herself as Hiccup insisted to his father that he could walk. There was no discussion before everyone piled into Valka's home, though Stoick did head next door to get Hiccup some more clothes and his own heavy-duty chair.

Sven looked particularly uncomfortable - he hadn't actually been in Valka's home save for Tyr's birthday party. Only ever outside, picking Ty up and dropping him off. And of course, that one time, he'd had an actual physical altercation with Hiccup. All but draping himself across Valka, Hiccup yawned and smiled sleepily up at her, clearly exhausted but also so very happy to be back.

"Your hairs getting long lad."

"Oddly enough dad, they didn't offer a full salon service in quarantine."

"They might have done if you'd let one of those pretty nurses help you shower."

Hiccup quirked an eyebrow up at Valka, shaking his head.

"Pretty? Compared to you? Not a chance."

He had no business making her blush in front of everyone, surely? Valka covered her face, feeling Hiccup wriggle closer, splaying one hand over her belly until she finally looked at him again. She ran her fingers through his hair, now hanging just a little past his shoulders and he had to push his
fringe out of the way more often.

"I like it."

There were warm drinks and a little conversation exchanged, but the two recoverees were very much ready for a rest already, Ty barely keeping his eyes open.

"Is my hoody clean?"

"Yep, ready and waiting for you on your bed Tyranno."

Her parents had been helping keep an eye on both her and Hiccup's homes, including the cycle of washing and drying Tyr's pyjamas since Valka wasn't supposed to handle them, and Tyr didn't want them washed at the hospital. When Valka brought up that her parents were not the prime of health - though fit for their age, certainly - they shushed all complaints and told her to worry about her baby.

"Can you walk upstairs Hiccup?"

Stoick would be a snug fit on her staircase, but he was easily the most capable of carting Hiccup around if he couldn't walk. After a minute, Hiccup reluctantly accepted his fathers help, though since Valka was carrying Tyr, it was an amusing parallel. Helping change Tyr into his fresh comfies, Valka tuck in after giving him his medicine, leaving water and his inhaler nearby, promising to check on him soon.

Hiccup had managed to change himself, just removing his leg before crawling beneath the covers on her bed when she went to check on her boyfriend. He pulled her close, kissed her sweetly, stroking her stomach again.

"I love you. Gods, I missed you so much."

"I love you too. You wonderful, stubborn, mad creature."

He smiled, leaning in to Valka's touch. He'd shaved in hospital, but not as often as he did at home and so there was raspy stubble on his cheeks that she paid little mind, too relieved to have him home.

"Couldn't leave the little dragon alone. And besides, I really was sick."

Knowing any argument was pointless - especially when Valka couldn't really insist that Tyr should have been alone, because she knew it would have been even worse for her boy by himself these last few weeks - she simply leant down and kissed Hiccup again.

"Rest now love. I'll check on you in a little while."

"Does this service include bedbaths?"

He waggled his eyebrows, laughing softly. Valka rolled her eyes.

"I specifically remember the doctor telling you that you had to recover first."

Hiccup pouted.

"Spoilsport. Don't let me sleep too long, else I might not sleep tonight and it would practically be a crime not to sleep next to you at last."
Shaking her head fondly, Valka stood up and crossed the room, glancing to see Hiccup fighting to keep his eyes open to watch her go, serene smile on his face. She peered into Tyr's room to see him fast asleep, Loki held tight under one arm. It was a relief just to hear him breathing easy, though he had a ways to go to on the mend there was no unhealthy rattle in his chest, no sickly feverish pallor to his face.

"I will uh, head off now then."

"Alright. So you'll pick him up Friday?"

Sven nodded tightly, Valka walking him out. His eyes flickered down to her stomach, then back to her face.

"I really am... happy for you. Even if I still think he's too young for you."

Valka smiled; she couldn't help it.

"I thought that too, believe me. But he's not a child."

"I know, I know. Tyr's happy. That's what matters, really."

She wished it hadn't taken their son almost dying to see that, but Valka supposed that it didn't matter so much anymore. Ty would get better, and Sven would get to see him again, and everyone was on better terms than they had been before he was hospitalised.

Stoick left shortly after, joking that he didn't trust Gobber not to cave to puppy-dog eyes begging for treats. He promised to check back soon - Hiccup was, unsurprisingly, excited about reuniting with his beloved canine companion. Gods, he'd sacrificed so much - time with his niece, his sister, his father, his dog. He'd not be fit to go back to work until his lungs were better equipped to handle the garage. Valka had no idea how she'd possibly ever be able to express adequate gratitude to him for everything he'd done for her, for her son.

Though once he was feeling better, Valka certainly had ideas on how she could try.

-HTTYD-

Wow this chapter was done remarkably quickly once I sat down and started it.

Who's happy our boys are home?
Chapter 29

Well, you can't say this update was too soon! I spent like five days crying over a ridiculously huge one shot. So I had lots of time and now I'm way behind...

-HTTYD-

"Honestly, I leave you alone for a few months! You almost die and you get your girlfriend pregnant."

Hiccup laughed, feeling Mala squeeze him into a hug. Her tan didn't stand out so much now, as it was summer even in the 'cold country' as she called it, but she still felt several degrees warmer than him. And of course, he was presently white as a sheet.

"I didn't almost die! I'm basically fine."

The other thing was utterly true though, and Hiccup couldn't resist immediately seeking Valka out, sliding his arms around her waist to rest his hands on her little belly bump. She was slow to show, but he could feel it and touch it and he was utterly enraptured by the small swell.

"You look radiant Valka."

Hiccup smiled at his girlfriend, watching her evident surprise at the compliment from Mala - they hadn't seen Hiccup's ex since a couple of weeks after Helena was born, and that was several months back now, and so Valka hadn't had much chance to feel slightly awkward around his younger ex-partner.

"I don't feel it. I'm too old for this!"

Nuzzling the side of her face, Hiccup kissed her cheek.

"You're incredible."

He was still early in his own recovery, barely able to be out of bed for more than a couple of hours without being tired again, but Hiccup wasn't starting from as sickly as Tyr. The little dragon was at his dads for the weekend, and everyone was tentatively hoping that all the negatives were done with. So far, Sven was perfectly cordial to them and he and Tyr were rebuilding their relationship while Sven helped with taking care of Tyr now he was out of hospital.

Valka was sometimes a little despondent about how little she felt she was doing for Tyr, but there was little they could do but help him get his strength back and wait - both pneumonia and meningitis had a long period of getting better. Both started physio the next week - Hiccup was back on his feet, relatively speaking, but he'd lost weight and muscle after so much time in isolation and, as an amputee, that meant he had to ensure his walking and prosthetic were alright.

The door knocked, then opened a few seconds later.

"Only me!"

"Astrid!"

Mala turned to greet her first, being closer to the door the blonde came through. They hugged, still firm friends despite the time since Hiccup and Mala seperated. Hiccup and Valka got hugs next, in
time for Eret to appear behind, holding the real star of the show to his chest.

"Helena! Ah, you're so big!"

"You're definitely alright to hold her now, right?"

Hiccup nodded, itching to greet his little niece.

"Yeah, I checked. I'm safe enough to sleep with pregnant girlfriend, so definitely safe enough to hold baby."

Eret relented, waiting for Hiccup to sit down before handing over a sturdy little bundle of joy. Hiccup had missed weeks of her development, so much growth happening while he could only see photos on phones. He'd seen Astrid since he got out of hospital, but not Helena until the parents were assured Hiccup was no longer contagious. Astrid did acknowledge that Hiccup was obviously fine to see Helena, if he felt safe sleeping next to Valka while she was carrying his baby.

Valka looked to Astrid for assent in silence, eventually approaching and petting the soft black hair atop Helena's little head, smiling as she gurgled happily.

"Oh you are beautiful little one."

Despite everything, Valka was clearly still adjusting to being such an easily accepted part of Hiccup's family - she obviously understood she was accepted as Hiccup's girlfriend, but despite her own pregnancy she was reticent with Hiccup's niece. He'd be having words with her about that later.

"So, how is life in the sun Mala?"

"Well, it is certainly preferable to visit you with summer approaching than winter, I will say that much."

"I can imagine. Hiccup's practically see through after all that time in the isolation ward."

"Surely the important fact is that he is now home and, all things considered, well?"

Hiccup smiled at Mala, eyes turning back to his niece who was presently entertaining herself by drooling on his t-shirt, gnawing at it with her irritated gums. She was so very obviously Eret's, Sami features evident, but there were little things like Astrid's nose that Hiccup could pick out easily.

"Ooooh."

"You ok Val?"

"Mm. Just a little active today."

Ecstatic as he was about her even being pregnant, Hiccup wasn't naive, knew Valka was in the 'high risk' category a couple of times over and that they had to be careful, mindful, watchful. He handed Helena back to Eret, rubbing his hand over Valka's back as she rubbed her stomach.

"Why not go lie down love?"

"I think I might. Excuse me everyone."

"Oh, don't mind us, go get some rest. Take Hiccup, he looks terrible."
"Charming!"
Astrid winked.

"Seriously. Go take an hour. We're not going anywhere."

Giving his sister a grateful smile, Hiccup nodded, following Valka along to the stairs and up. He'd be unsteady on stairs for a while, but it was well worth the climb to get into bed, taking off his leg and snuggling up with Valka.

"I love you."

"I love you too. You didn't have to leave them for me."

"You do know I'm getting over a chest infection and need rest right? I won't deny the cuddles are a bonus."

She smiled, settling in his hold only to tense when Hiccup's hand drifted down to her stomach.

"What is it?"

Quiet but still tangible, Valka sighed and he heard her breath catch at the end before she rolled over to face him properly.

"I... I'm afraid."

"Of what? Are you in pain?"

"No, I mean... I'm old Hiccup. I'm not talking about us, I'm talking about the baby. It's risky and dangerous and I worry that I-"

Her voice stuttered, something halfway to crying there in the last sound she made.

"Hey" Hiccup leant forward, kissed her forehead the way she usually liked "don't... I guess I can't say don't worry. I'm worried too. But since I know what you're like, if part of you is worried that if that did happen, that I would leave because this" his hand cupped her bump "told me I want a baby, you're crazy. I get it. You're worried something will go wrong, and because it took you eleven years to get pregnant that we wouldn't get another shot, and that was assuming you even wanted to try again. I'm scared of all that too. But I am not going anywhere, no matter what."

She burrowed into him, a little wet on his neck telling Hiccup there were tears, but she didn't really seem to be crying so he just tried to soothe her until she settled down, though they stayed tightly embraced for a while longer. Hiccup didn't really mind. He could cuddle with Valka forever. Slowly, she loosened up a little, cuddling up to his chest more comfortably and relaxing.

"I love you, you impossible creature."

Hiccup chuckled. It was the sort of thing she called him when he surprised her somehow, as though she had no other words for how she felt.

"I love you too, even though you're mean to me."

Valka tipped her head back, craning slightly until she could kiss him. She jolted, gripping Hiccup's hand and he worried for a beat before she was guiding him to feel little kicks and quivers, the two sharing an indomitable smile of joy.
"See? They are doing just fine. I know this is huge, but that's us in there. We didn't get this far to not keep going."

"I know. It was just seeing Helena and how she's so strong and healthy, and remembering Ty being early and small and."

Hiccup kissed her, cutting her off gently before she talked herself into a tizzy.

"Hey, so was I. I basically fit in the palm of my dads hand when I was born, though he does have enormous hands so that means less than for most dads. You just need to accept that I will obsessively take care of you and Tyr... but I don't think that's new."

"No, that isn't new. Honestly, you're just... how did I get so lucky?"

"Pfftt, I'm the lucky one. You and Tyr... you guys are a part of my family. I feel privileged every day I get to spend with both of you."

They got some rest eventually, though Hiccup didn't fall asleep he felt heaps better just for the comfortable embrace, the quiet time and the resting of his worn out body. If Valka noticed he was even less impressive physically than before the illness, she didn't show it. Hiccup was wary of taking his shirt off in front of her all the same. If he told her, she'd probably roll her eyes.

"Feel better love?"

Making a soft, sleepy sound, Valka nuzzled him.

"Mmm, much."

Smiling, Hiccup was fine to stay there for a while, but Valka nudged him to get up since Helena was visiting and he'd already missed so much time with her. Reluctant to let go of warm, pliant girlfriend, Hiccup drew her back to the bed to kiss her soundly, only relenting when he started to get a little short of breath. Valka checked he was alright before laughing at his frustration, which was nice of her.

"Just you wait until my lungs work again!"

Valka cracked up giggling, giving him a fond smile when Hiccup turned from attaching his leg to glare at her. He couldn't help but smile back, heart fluttering with love. She lifted her shirt in front of the mirror, drawing Hiccup's attention as she examined her bump properly. Gods, she was gorgeous.

"What?"

She noticed him staring, probably completely doe-eyed for her.

"You. You're so beautiful."

Valka tsked, turning back to her reflection and plucking at things like her grey hairs, the fine lines around her eyes.

"Hardly."

Hiccup growled, climbing up from the bed and crossing to stand next to her.

"I mean it. Gods Valka, I could never put into words how much I love everything about you. You're beautiful inside and out, and if you think something like grey hairs is going to change the
way I feel about you, then I have been wasting my time all these months with you."

Valka frowned, eyes eventually turning to his as her hands curled over her belly.

"You haven't. I suppose I just feel very old, I wasn't yet thirty when I had Ty and this pregnancy is already taking more out of me, and I'm not even halfway through."

"All the more reason for me to take care of you. Which means it is time I fed you, unless you want to stay up here and rest some more?"

"Food sounds good."

Grinning, Hiccup only let go of Valka's hand to hold the banister to go downstairs, then resumed touching her gently while they settled in the kitchen. Astrid heard them come down, appearing with Helena at her breast, the babe clearly thinking of food herself and nobody in the house even slightly phased by the sight of nursing.

"Anyone else hungry?"

"Eret's always hungry. And I could eat."

"Mala?"

"Well, I have missed your cooking more than anything."

Feigning insult, Hiccup laughed as he nodded and commandeered Eret as a kitchen helper - if Hiccup stumbled, Eret was strong enough to catch him. As were Mala and Astrid, but Astrid was busy and Mala was a little too aggressive with ingredients to be terribly helpful unless Hiccup was making soup and fine-dicing was what he needed. Valka could too, but he was supposed to be helping her relax.

"How long is Toothless staying with dad?"

Astrid asked between mouthfuls of pasta, chasing a sauce-coated chunk of vegetable around her bowl.

"Uh, basically until I'm up to walking him again. I miss him! But dad is coming over to sort out my sick leave from work tomorrow and he'll bring Toothless with him."

Nodding, Astrid chewed thoughtfully, eyes flicking around as she did so, landing on something before turning back.

"So Valka, when is your next ultrasound? They're giving you more frequent ones aren't they?"

"Indeed. Next week, now that Ty and Hiccup can finally come along."

"Oh man, you must be jazzed H!"

Hiccup nodded, beaming. He'd missed them all so far, only seeing sonograms but not hearing the heartbeat, seeing them move for himself. Valka had been offered one sooner, but Tyr wasn't up to it and he was as desperate to be there as Hiccup, so they pushed it back a few days.

"Yeah, I am. So is the little dragon."

"Well he idolises you, no wonder he thinks being a big brother is gonna be the best thing since sliced bread."
"Well, Ty was asking if Hiccup and I would have a baby after finding out about your pregnancy Astrid. I just never imagined it being possible."

"Enter Hiccup and his super sperm!"

Astrid punched her boyfriend squarely on the arm as Valka choked on her drink. Hiccup made sure she was breathing before he rolled his eyes at Eret.

"I'm sorry. I found him feral, I've been trying to make him fit for society but it's slow going."

Eret pouted, but lowered his eyes to his plate when Astrid glared.

"It's... fine."

Mala was quiet, but Hiccup could see her shoulders shaking with suppressed laughter at the whole situation. Helena began crying in the next room, and Eret was out of his seat before Astrid could think about it.

"I'll go!"

Shaking her head in exasperation, Astrid turned back to them.

"I really am sorry."

"It's fine. Really."

After they finished eating, Hiccup regained hold of his niece, tickling her pudgy belly and watching her kick and squeal in his lap. Valka cooed over the little girl, smiling when Hiccup caught her eye.

"I'll bring her by again in the week when I have a couple hours, I know Tyr wants to see her."

"Thank you Astrid."

Seeing everyone off that evening, Hiccup was already exhausted. Valka was most agreeable to some lazy snuggles on the sofa, nudging Hiccup awake when it turned out he drifted off after settling with his hand on her belly.

"Found something you like, I see."

Hiccup nodded, crawling up her body to kiss her.

"Do you know how incredibly sexy I find you?"

Valka sighed against his mouth, fingers tightening and loosening against his upper arm and he recognised the light flush on her neck, the way her eyes grew wider, wanting.

"Hiccup..."

He'd never tire of hearing his name on her lips, but Hiccup knew he was too tired to really follow through with anything his mind was conjuring up even as he felt himself twitch. Valka seemed to know too, restraining herself to a soft, gentle kiss against his mouth.

"Bed?"

"Bed."
There were a few kisses, but they managed to restrain themselves to that and some cuddles before sleeping. He had his dad and Toothless to see in the day, and Tyr would be back on the evening so really, Hiccup needed his rest. Unlike earlier, when Hiccup slid his hand down to Valka's stomach she made a soft, happy sound, lacing their fingers together over her rounding belly.

He was certainly looking forward to when he was strong enough to enjoy her changing body properly.

-HTTYD-

The fluffiest family to ever fluff!
Chapter 30

Thirty chapters!? Ahhh, I'm so glad for all the love and support for unrelated!Valcup (and of course Tyr!).

-HTTYD-

Despite tired, weak bodies, Valka could see the excitement practically vibrating in both Hiccup and Tyr as they waited for the technician to squirt the helpful goo upon her belly. They'd seen only the print outs from afterwards until now, never been at an actual appointment what with their time in quarantine. Tyr was still in a wheelchair, but Hiccup gently reminded him he used one plenty too and Tyr was soothed by the fact he wasn't alone.

"Ready?"

"Yeah!"

Tyr clapped, broad smile on his face putting paid to any concern Valka had about his excitement toward the future sibling. She had heard the heart beating before, but each time it was still a little unbelievable to her. Valka really was pregnant. There was quite possibly going to be a newborn in her life in a matter of months, and not simply Hiccup's little niece. Hiccup was hypnotised, staring at the image that flickered up onto the screen accompanied by the rhythmic whooshing of rapid foetal heartbeat.

"Around sixteen weeks, yes?"

"Thereabouts. There's no concrete date of conception to go from, but they've measured me a few times now."

She had more frequent, watchful ultrasounds, so they had plenty of data to work from. Hiccup turned to Valka, kissed her with far more intensity than he really had any right to when he was still not recovered enough for anything strenuous.

"Hiccup! You're making mom blush!"

"Sorry big guy, I couldn't help it. Look, that is your little brother or sister in there!"

"I know, but the scanner man is giggling instead of moving the thing!"

Hiccup was smiling broadly, both at Valka and the screen as he sat back down and waited patiently. Well, mostly patiently. The technician resumed examining the development of the baby, pointing out the hazy shapes of limbs and the head as they moved.

"Do you want to know the sex?"

"Oh, no, we agreed it would be a surprise."

Nodding in agreement, Hiccup beamed at Valka.

"Absolutely. Besides, we're not really strict on gender roles. All the hand me downs are in neutral colours anyway, and we won't be painting a nursery pink or blue."

Astrid had already dropped several things to Hiccup - all the stuff Helena had grown out of, some
handmade by Eret's parents but Eret assured them that said parents wanted the clothes to be used again, that they weren't made to just be left in a box somewhere now Helena was bigger.

"Organs look good. Size is a little on the small side, but not worryingly so. And, as it says in your notes to take an extra look, the placenta looks fine too."

Valka sighed in relief, though she knew it wasn't an all clear - there would be an edge to it all until she was full term. If she made it there. Hiccup squeezed her hand, smiling reassuringly - she'd explained to him only very recently about her problems of before, thinking he wouldn't really want the full details but instead Hiccup listened avidly, kissed her sweetly and comforted her when Valka had a weepy moment or ten over the fear of losing their baby.

Gods, she loved him so.

"Here we are. You'll be booked in for two weeks time, but if you experience any pain or bleeding, call your specialist."

Nodding in understanding as Hiccup took the ultrasounds, Valka scurried off for the bathroom before picking up her next appointment letter. She smiled as she saw Tyr wheeling himself along resolutely, trying to pretend his arms didn't get tired easy.

"Come on little dragon, let's get home and have a really good nap."

Hiccup took over pushing the wheelchair along, and Tyr was strong enough to get out of his chair and climb into the car. The trip back was quiet - both Hiccup and Tyr were happy but tired. Valka didn't need much convincing to take a nap with him really. He was adorably snuggly when they woke up, nuzzling her belly before sliding up to kiss her sweetly. His soft green eyes made her warm inside, leaning up to catch his mouth again until he was panting slightly.

"Better go wake little dragon up, we're meant to do breathing exercises."

"Mmm. I'll go get him up."

Hiccup nodded, brushing a kiss over her cheek before he rolled over to put his prosthetic back on while Valka reluctantly left the warm, cosy bed and an equally warm, cuddly boyfriend. Ty was sleeping, but stirred easily enough when Valka shook him gently.

"Hi mom."

"Hello darling, how do you feel?"

"M'ok."

Valka helped him sit up, handed him his water, reminded herself over and over that he was home and just starting to recover when he stumbled standing up. Hiccup had already taught him how to shuffle up and down the stairs if he was too weak to stand, just as Hiccup would if he didn't have his leg on, and despite his own struggles Hiccup was happy to carry Tyr around if it was needed. His excuse, whenever Valka scolded him, was that he'd moved by chair more than walking and his arm muscles were fine.

Which, Valka had to admit when watching the shape of his biceps move, was quite true. And quite distracting at times... oh, gods, her hormones were off again.

Hiccup and Tyr were lying on the floor, both with inhalers next to them, doing the exercises they'd been instructed to perform to encourage their lungs to recover. And somehow, Hiccup managed to
make it fun for Ty, his giggles interrupting them until Hiccup did his 'serious face'.

"If we don't do this right that scary nurse will have my head, and I need my head. It holds in my brain!"

Valka observed them quietly, smiling to herself as she saw the young man that slipped under her radar and burrowed into her heart with her son, a boy she genuinely believed Hiccup loved no differently than he would the baby in her belly. She supposed she could understand his fascination with her bump, the fluttering life in her belly that he'd accepted would never happen before their relationship had even really started.

Physiotherapy was heartbreaking to watch for her, seeing how Tyr's face scrunched in pain as he fought his weakened muscles. Hiccup saw a different one, who was better suited to an adult amputee, but he still came to each of Ty's appointments, encouraging and promising that it would get easier, that the pain would stop in time. His experience of hospitals and aftercare was utterly invaluable, and Valka marvelled at his strength time and time again.

"How is your physio doing?"

"I got told off for losing weight, which I promised them I was trying to rectify with a lot of cake but I've never gained weight that easily. But my walking is improving and thats the important thing."

When it came to having his eyes checked, Tyr was the one to ask for it and Valka knew that meant he was struggling - he hated eye tests. And sure enough, his glasses needed the prescription changing to something stronger. Valka thought Tyr might be more upset that they didn't make the same frames anymore, and so he had to have new ones that didn't feel familiar to him.

"You'll get used to them. Just think how much more colouring you can get done now you aren't squinting all the time."

"I guess so."

The boy and man shared a smile as Tyr blinked through his new lenses, no longer peering and struggling to see clearly. He couldn't colour without them anymore, the lines too blurry and his dexterity not returned enough to compensate, but there was a silver lining to Tyr when he looked at the sonogram pictures of Valka's ultrasounds - he could see them better, and spent a while just tracing the little shapes of limbs and head with a soft smile on his face.

"I'm gonna be the best big brother! Well, I guess Hiccup is a good big brother too."

"We can tie for first."

"Deal."

They shook hands on it and everything. Valka couldn't help laughing at their very serious expressions. Feeling a shift in her stomach, Valka splayed her hand there, kicks and wiggles seeming to get more consistent every day.

Gods help her, she already couldn't bear the thought of losing them.

"Hiccup."

"Shh. I'm asleep."
"Then how are you talking?"

"I'm... not."

Valka did laugh at him then, but he knew she was still likely to tell him to move. He was comfortable cuddled up to her, but pregnant women had to get up to pee more and so Hiccup sighed reluctantly before rolling over to free her.

"Fine! Heartlessly abandoning your one-legged boyfriend!"

"You really are a drama queen. I'll be back in a minute."

Hiccup flopped back down, lifting his leg to rub at his knee. Tyr was off at his dads for the weekend, and spending a lot of time with Valka in bed was never a bad use of said time, so they were having the quintessential 'lazy day'. He'd gotten up for breakfast things and fed them to Valka in bed, they'd read for a little while and then taken one of those not-quite-naps, just lying silently in each others company, resting but not really asleep.

As promised, Valka returned after her bathroom trip and allowed Hiccup to resume snuggling up to her.

"You're very affectionate lately."

"Well, you're extra adorable lately."

Valka rolled her eyes, smiling all the while.

"That's what you're going with?"

"Yep."

At best guess, Valka was twenty weeks along now. Tyr was walking again, though he was a little unsteady at times and he had the chair again when tired, and while they expected he ought to be able to attend secondary school when term started, he'd need an assigned adult to keep an eye on his physical and mental wellbeing. He was still in recovery, but Hiccup could not be prouder of the boys strength and determination to start school with everyone else.

"Have you talked to the school about maternity leave?"

"I have. I can take up to a full year, but I honestly think I would go crazy without work for a year. I have warned them I have a risk for pre-term delivery, so I leave when I'm seven and a half months gone and go back when the baby is four months old, which ought to have me back in plenty of time for exam season whilst giving *us* time to work out childcare options beforehand."

"Yeah. Dad said he's happy to give me time off if you need taking care of, and he'll sign me off for a month of paternity leave and staggered shifts after that. In his words, 'ye can make up lost hours, but not lost time with the ones you love'. Which is really nice of him. I doubt I'd be so lucky to have just gotten out of quarantine and recovery, then back a few months before baby time without employer trouble."

He hadn't been able to go back to work until his chest was healthy enough to handle a smoky, dusty garage for hours at a time. Hiccup had started back, but in short bursts to test himself once his lung function tests came back almost normal. He was still so tired though, and napped at least once every day. Often with Valka, who didn't always sleep but let Hiccup snuggle her.
Which sounded like an excellent idea right now, so he resumed the snuggling, fingers worming under her shirt to stroke her belly. He heard her sigh in a sort of indulgent exasperation, but she allowed him.

"I think baby is sleeping."

"Well, I still like touching you."

Her skin was wonderfully warm to the touch, almost ticklish under his fingers as he rubbed and kneaded gently. Unable to resist a second longer, Hiccup moved until he could kiss her, smiling when Valka responded so happily, eagerly. He had her shirt most of the way up her front before Valka pulled away, cheeks pink and eyes suspicious as Hiccup played innocent.

"The doctor said-"

"That I needed to recover a bit. And I am. I feel fine, and I have missed you. So unless you aren't in the mood I wouldn't mind finding out how recovered I am."

Their sex life had ultimately stopped since Hiccup and Tyr were placed under quarantine, and as Hiccup got out of breath so easily and tired so fast, they hadn't gotten to rekindling yet beyond a couple of clumsy handsy fumbles.

When he pulled at her sleep shirt again, Valka helped him take it off of her, watching Hiccup's attention slide downward to her stomach, enraptured by the rounding shape, the way her body was changing. He placed a reverent kiss there before moving back up, dropping more kisses over her bare chest before he found her mouth again, Valka humming against his lips and curling up against his body before tugging at his sleep shirt in turn. Hiccup shed it, feeling loving caresses over the scars on his back as Valka drew him close again.

It might have been a while, but Hiccup's hands knew her body and mapped her without sight, stroking spots that would make her shiver and moan. Valka squirmed, sensitive beneath his hands. Hiccup wasn't sure if pregnancy or the waiting had made her so, but he wasn't complaining either way as she arched up into his roaming fingers, nipples swollen and straining for attention before he even really touched her there. He considered cracking a joke about how Valka seemed to be more breathless than he was, but his mouth found itself occupied with tasting her skin, his tongue winning soft, needy sounds from her.

He briefly remembered the shy, in-the-dark trysts of the early days, thrilling in how much less inhibited Valka was now, that she didn't try to cover herself or hide her want for him. Tugging her underwear off, Hiccup watched as her hips pushed up into his hand, eyes open and on him as she moaned and bucked, nothing like the way she used to close her eyes and turn away, biting her lip to stay quiet.

"Gods, look at you."

She was gorgeous, all shaky and wanting and flushed with arousal, wet against his fingers as Hiccup stroked her, hungry to watch her devolve. Valka wouldn't be teased though, equally hungry for him and reached to pull him back up, hot little kisses pressed to his mouth as her hand slid down, squeezing his cock through his boxers until Hiccup was panting against her lips.

"E-easy now" Valka's hand slowed, letting Hiccup catch his breath "or this will be over before we start."

Valka giggled, bright-eyed and smiling and Hiccup fell in love with her a little more at that sound.
He never wanted to lose this mad, wonderful woman. Hiccup moved to kick off his boxers, barely
getting chance to move back before Valka was pushing him down and straddling his waist, looking
down at him with a teasing smirk on her lips.

"I wholeheartedly approve of this brand of bedside manner."

Valka rolled her eyes, but leant down and kissed him all the same. Hiccup hummed, felt her
shifting her hips until they were better aligned, fumbling until Valka swallowed him into her soft,
hot wetness. Hiccup groaned as she mewed, both sighing happily as she came flush to his hips.

"H-hey" Hiccup wasn't sure why his brain came up with it at that moment, but he thought he
should check "after this" his fingers brushed her belly "are we going to have to start using
contraception like responsible adults?"

Rather strangely, Valka began laughing.

"What?"

"Just... the idea of being in my forties when someone finally uses the words 'responsible adult'
toward me. Yes, I rather think we will have to."

Hiccup chuckled, shrugging as best he could while lying down.

"Hey, you're only as young as you feel. Or there is 'you're only as young as the man you feel', if
you want to go that way instead."

Valka rolled her eyes, swatting playfully at him before she braced her hands on his chest, began to
move herself on his cock in slow, steady motions. He appreciated the gentle build up, worried if
she'd gone too hard and fast Hiccup wouldn't have lasted more than a minute. That, and he really
appreciated the time he got to watch Valka in the state she was in, naked and free and in the throes
of pleasure. He adored every inch of her, with her little belly bump and the freckles across her skin,
the messy hair down her back with a few strands hanging in front of her face.

He tried to move with her, but Valka pushed back down and made him stay, a teasing tone
implying he might get out of breath and honestly, Hiccup wouldn't have cared if he had done so.
Oxygen seemed like a small sacrifice when Valka was on top of him. He'd missed the feel of her,
slick and soft and welcoming, but he'd also missed the intimacy of seeing Valka lower her guard so
completely and being able to see the way she'd blossomed from shy and nervous to open, wanting.
Hiccup adored the way her lips parted on sweet little moans, the way her back arched as pleasure
rolled through her.

And when it was over, Hiccup adored curling up with her, kissing the lovely flush on her face and
neck, stroking trembling limbs until Valka came down from the hormone high. She was definitely
more sleepy and satisfied than he remembered, and they stayed snuggled up for quite a while
before conceding they ought to clean up, then get up for lunch.

"Ooooh, someone is awake!"

Valka bent slightly, cradling her belly and Hiccup worried for a minute - they were on watch for
any pain, after all.

"You alright?"

She nodded, letting out a deep breath.
"Mhmm. They just like to wake up with some fierce wriggling. Tyr was *never* this active until right at the end."

"Well, maybe that's the Haddock blood. My mom said Astrid was clearly going to be a martial arts expert with all the kicks she got when pregnant. And between Astrid and Eret? I bet Helena was a real little kickboxer."

Hiccup let her guide his hand, never tiring of feeling the baby move.

"Well, I can only hope that sort of strength is along for the ride then."

Looking up at Valka properly, Hiccup smiled.

"With you for a mom? Definitely strong."

-HTTYD-

**Ahhhh this family! So cute! I will miss them!**
Chapter 31

Ah! We're in the final stretch here.

-HTTYD-

"Oh, don't you look so handsome!"

"Mom!"

Hiccup grinned as he watched Valka fuss, knowing today was an incredibly big day for Tyr - first day at secondary school, and it had been a while since he was in any school at all after his illness had stolen the last few months. He was a smart kid though, and had been granted his 'predicted' grades in those special circumstances, since it wasn't fair to make a child recovering from a brain infection take exams in the summer.

But there he was, dressed and ready to go. Valka was even able to see him off on his first day properly, as the youngest year started a couple of days before older, and the same was true at Valka's school so she wasn't urgently required first thing in the morning. Ecstatic, Valka was all but bouncing on the spot, rubbing her stomach with one hand and Tyr's hair with the other. Hiccup was equally proud, and he smiled to himself at the healed relationship when Valka took a picture of Tyr - back on his feet, though he was still 'in recovery' and would be for a few months yet - and sent it to Sven via text.

"We better get going then, can't be late on your first day!"

"What if I don't like my grown up?"

"If it's really bad, we would probably be able to get you a new one. But you gotta give her a chance, ok big guy? She's there to help."

Tyr nodded, only frowning a little and Hiccup knew he was uncomfortable about having to have a new adult in his life, but it was important somebody was there just for him, just in case. His handwriting was legible again now Tyr was back drawing, and he had gotten used to his new glasses. His hearing was impaired, but not so much they opted for any device yet. It was something that would be monitored for the rest of his life, and might yet get worse.

Hiccup could not have been prouder to be in the young man's life, watching him straighten up and nod, mostly to himself. Tyr had really been through the wringer in the last twelve months, but he had a sweet smile and a warm heart still to share. They headed out to the car, Tyr's Celtic CD on the music player to help relax him on the journey. Holding his girlfriend's hand, Hiccup swelled with love for his growing family and they walked Tyr down together since Valka wanted to meet the adult assigned to Tyr for herself.

"You must be Tyr?"

"Yeah. Hi."

"I'm Alex, your learning assistant. Anything special I should know about you?"

"I have autism and I was real sick a few months ago."

With a few appointments and a detailed history of Tyr's behaviour before the meningitis, he'd been
diagnosed with autism in time for school starting back up. It meant his teachers could know, as could his personally assigned assistant. They chatted with her for a little while, but then the bell was ringing and Tyr had to get going. There were final hugs and well-wishing, a promise Hiccup would come pick him up from school that day.

"Remember to use your inhaler if you get any shortness of breath, the teachers won't stop you."

"I will."

"Good man. Have fun little dragon."

Hiccup felt like he could burst with pride watching Tyr head off, feeling Valka squeeze his hand as she watched her son take his first steps off into the 'big school'.

"Do you regret not having him go to your school?"

"No. Not that I wouldn't have loved being able to keep such a close eye on him, especially now, but I think it was amazing that he asked to apply to other schools, so that he couldn't just rely on me being in a classroom nearby. My brave little Ty."

Valka wiped away a couple of stray tears, Hiccup leaning over to kiss her temple before thinking they ought not to just be hanging out in the reception the whole time.

"Come on love, I better get you to school now. Don't want to be late on your first day!"

She rolled her eyes, but followed Hiccup out and back to the car, his heart skipping a beat watching her cradle her belly as she lowered herself into the car. He nudged the cushion over to her, smiled as she wedged it between the seatbelt and her stomach. Hiccup didn't mean to get quite so fixated on watching her grow, on the way her body changed with pregnancy, but he also knew it was a one time thing, and Valka didn't seem to mind his fascination and attraction to her changing body. If anything, she seemed to like it...

"Have fun at school! Love you."

"I love you too, you ridiculous man."

Hiccup grinned, took his goodbye kiss happily and watched his pregnant girlfriend straighten out, grab her bag from the back seat and wave before she headed in. Like his father, Valka's school had been incredibly understanding about her time off while Tyr was sick, and now her pregnancy. He knew she was excited to be getting back though, knew how she loved art, helping people create. He leant back in his seat, sighing happily and thinking. Hiccup had only known this woman and her son for a year now, and already she was his girlfriend, someone he could easily envision spending his life with, carrying his child and her son openly referred to Hiccup as his future step-father. They got on with his father, his sister, everyone Hiccup had already called family taking on the new additions. He and Sven were even forging... Hiccup wouldn't call it friendship, but perhaps a tentative understanding that they were going to be in each others lives, and the animosity had faded since Hiccup and Tyr left the hospital.

Hiccup headed to work himself, chirpy and happy to be greeted by Toothless, who barreled up to him and began drooling excitedly.

"Hey buddy! Yes, I will be taking you home soon!"

"Back to normal then son?"
"Yeah, my physio cleared me. Said I could do with a little more weight and muscle gain, but I can walk Toothless again so he can come back with me."

"That's good. Thor'll miss him though."

Hiccup laughed, scratching behind Toothless' ears.

"Yeah, but Toothless will still come to work with me and then he'll be back for a few days when the baby comes."

"Aye, true. C'mon then, better get to work!"

Changing into his overalls, Hiccup buried himself in engines and grease and the familiar way his hands moved through the parts before him. He didn't realise until he went back how much he'd missed the sounds, having grown up with a mechanic dad and uncle, the sounds of metal being worked was practically the soundtrack of his childhood.

"How was seein' the kid off today?"

His father asked over lunch break, enquiring after Tyr now they had the time.

"Nerve-wracking. It seems like only yesterday we were just hoping he would live, and then watching him basically learn to walk again and the constant doctors appointments and specialists and checkups... gods, he's so tough."

"He has a good example."

"Yeah, his mother. Honestly, I could not love that woman more if I tried."

Stoick laughed, patting him on the back.

"There's nothin' like family, and you picked a good lot."

"Thanks dad."

"Hey, soon that'll be you!"

Hiccup grinned, mind drifting off to think about the baby growing in Valka's belly.

"Yeah... but I'm already a stepdad, according to Tyr."

"Aye, he's a good lad. Smart."

"That he is. I better get back to work, so I can be done when I need to go get him."

The drive to pick Tyr up was a little nerve-wracking too; Hiccup knew Tyr had some trouble with bullies at primary school, and now he stood out more than ever with an assigned adult and his recent recovery from life-threatening infections. But when he got there, Tyr was grin­ning, jumped and hugged Hiccup happily.

"Hey buddy, you have a good day?"

"Yeah. Nathan goes to this school with me too, so I'm not by myself."

"Ah, sounds good."
He spotted Nathan and his mother nearby, offered a friendly wave before ushering Tyr into the car.

"Are we going to get mom now?"

"Yep."

"Cool!"

Smiling in the rear-view mirror now Tyr was strapped in, Hiccup took them off to get Valka, who looked equally happy to see them as Tyr did to see her.

"Mom!"

"Hello darling! Have a good first day?"

"Yeah! I'll tell you and baby all about it at home."

Talking to his future sibling was one of Tyr's favourite things to do, and it was just about the sweetest thing Hiccup had ever seen. Sure enough, he got home and changed his clothes, took his inhaler and stretched out on the sofa to chatter away to Valka and her bump about his first day back at school.

Valka just sat smiling at him.

Oh, she was getting too old for this. Valka groaned as she pushed herself up, quite certain she hadn't grown this quickly with Ty when she was pregnant with him, not even just before he was born.

Hiccup, having been reading quietly next to her, was bolt upright in seconds, concern all over his face.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, Hiccup. Just getting up."

"You sure?"

She loved her boyfriend dearly, but he was constantly on edge and Valka knew he was worried as she ticked by to seven months. He was premature at birth, as was Tyr, and Valka wasn't a fit twenty-something with no history of issues this time around. It was only two weeks until she left work for maternity leave, by which point she wholly expected Hiccup to be beside himself daily.

"Positive. I'm a woman in her forties, I will experience random unexplained pains whether or not I have a baby in my belly. Right now, it's just a sore back."

"I'll give you a massage when you come back if you want?"

Valka certainly couldn't complain about him not taking care of her though, he was so wonderful to her. She nodded, ambling off to the bathroom and, not for the first time, being incredibly thankful for Hiccup's modified home. The bar next to the toilet was a great help, made her worry far less about falling over or struggling to stand. Once she was in the bathroom, the shower looked incredibly inviting, and the warm water running over aching muscles was divine.

Hiccup looked up from his book on baby food when she walked back in naked, raised eyebrow giving way to wide smile.
"I wondered where you'd gotten to."

For all that Valka felt incredibly heavy and uncomfortable, and honestly not even close to attractive as her body changed and stretched and aged, Hiccup still looked at her like she was the sun in the sky, kissed her like she was a young woman in her prime.

"I thought a shower would ease these old bones a little."

"You're not old. Just finely matured. Come on, I'll give you a rubdown. Don't make me chase you, cus that's cheating since I have to reattach a limb."

It was strange to remember a time Hiccup wouldn't even let her see his leg without the prosthetic, only taking it off under covers and reattaching before they left the bed. Now he took it off with impunity, both in front of her and in front of Ty - after all the time in the hospital where Hiccup used the chair more, Tyr was used to it. He wore the liner most of the time still, but that was largely to keep his residual limb warm.

Valka lay on her side, felt Hiccup shuffle behind her, dropping a kiss on the back of her neck before his hands were working tension from her lower back - he'd actually researched pregnancy-specific massages, one of those little things that said 'I love you' without words. Hiccup had her pliant and relaxed under his skilled fingers before she rolled onto her back, felt those same fingers caress her rounded belly, saw him smile so softly as he stroked her tenderly.

"Hey there baby dragon" Valka rolled her eyes, but it was sweet in a way "can't wait to meet you. Well, I can, I want you to stay in there as long as possible, but after that I can't wait to meet you."

His answer was a firm wriggle, a kick that was sort of uncomfortable for Valka. She bit back any sign though, well aware that she was at a point the baby was getting big and strong. It wasn't painful, and that was the concern. Hiccup seemed to notice something was amiss, eyes flicking back up to her face.

"You alright?"

"Yes, yes. I want to walk around, but my hips are sore today so I'm reluctant to move too much."

"Can I get you anything? I'm thirsty anyway so I'm getting up."

It wasn't the most productive use of their weekend, but Valka supposed since Tyr was at his dads and they would soon have a newborn, days she could just rest were going to be few and far between. Hiccup agreeably went to retrieve snacks and drinks for them both, then returned with those and a DVD. They didn't often use the TV in his bedroom, but now and then it was nice to simply stay in bed and watch a movie.

Hiccup certainly noticed Valka hadn't bothered to dress again, but his only response was to strip down to his shorts and snuggle up with her, which she rather enjoyed. Baby wriggled for attention, settling when Hiccup rubbed her belly and resumed talking to her bump and she joked that 'daddy was already the favourite', which Hiccup vehemently protested but she caught his happy smiles. Valka believed he'd been truthful when he said she and Tyr were enough, but she also understood how miraculous and thrilling it was that there would be a second child, that Ty would be a big brother, that there'd be a child half her and half Hiccup in the world.

That there'd be a child who would call Hiccup dad. Tyr referred to him as his 'future stepdad', but with Sven in the picture Ty was unlikely to ever call Hiccup 'dad', and Hiccup firmly agreed that was right, that he had no designs on replacing Sven in the boys life. Still, Valka knew Hiccup was
ecstatic about getting to raise a child from baby, to see and influence the early years. But mostly, they were both just happy they were going to see their family grow.

-HTTYD-

31 down, 4 to go!
Chapter 32

Chapter 32... I'M NOT READY FOR THIS TO END...

I haven't been this unprepared since Open ended. In fact, that was easier. I love these guys too much damnit!

-HTTYD-

"Hiccup, you have checked and re-checked that bag four times now. The baby clothes have not spontaneously disappeared in the last two hours."

Shoulders sagging, Hiccup nodded and placed the bag down, rolling onto his side to look at Valka where she was doing much the same, though her belly rested upon a pregnancy pillow for support. Hiccup was at final-anxious-stage, while Valka was just over eight months pregnant, bored witless now she was off work hoping not to pop too soon and so uncomfortable all the time. Her narrow frame meant her hips didn't like the excess weight of the baby, and between achey breasts and back and ankles and hands and legs... if it weren't for it being too soon, Valka would be pleading with the gods to let her go into labour there and then.

"I just want to be sure. We both know it could be any day now and I don't want to forget anything if we have to rush to hospital."

"I know love" Hiccup had been a rock for her over the last year, Valka could calm him for five minutes "but honestly, we're fine. There's little to do now but wait and hope my body doesn't opt to go too soon."

He kissed her sweetly, smiled before turning over to the sound of his phone vibrating.

"It's Astrid, asking if you feel up to visitors?"

Valka nodded eagerly. Something to break the boredom!

"Absolutely."

He smiled again, obviously happy about getting to see his niece and his sister. Valka appreciated Astrid's forethought in asking if Valka was up to it - she'd been pregnant herself recently, obviously remembered striking the balance between being too tired to entertain and not going mad with loneliness or boredom. Hiccup helped her up, rubbed her back as he kissed her again before they headed downstairs, Valka's pregnancy pillow close at hand - they were wonderful inventions, she nodded to herself as she obtained food and drink from the kitchen, then let Hiccup set her up comfortably on the sofa while she cursed her old body and its aches.

Of course, she also marvelled at its resilience, and the determined way she continued to surprise everybody by making it so far along - the fact she'd fallen pregnant astounded most of the doctors she'd seen, and making it eight months along with no more serious complaints than she'd had with Ty, like sore hips, sickness, general soreness and tiredness, was even more incredible. The regular ultrasounds she'd had meant they had a comprehensive list of sonogram images taken one or two weeks apart from six weeks all the way up to then. Valka had one more checkup written down for in a few days time, to see if letting her go to nine months was a risk to old scars or not, and after that it was simply a case of waiting.
Astrid and Helena were not long to arrive, and Valka couldn't suppress a grin at the sight of the girl growing up so fast. She smiled even as she teared up, blaming hormones when Hiccup looked concerned, while Astrid laughed.

"Yeah, I remember that one. I almost stabbed Eret with a fork when he laughed at me crying over puppies on TV. This adorable thing I made is a perfectly valid reason to well up. Want to say hi Helena?"

"Hi!"

She'd mastered "mama" and "dada", before picking up "papa" presumably from Eret calling his own father 'pops', and now was starting to get to grips with more words - like her heart-melting, toothy-smiling greeting. Hiccup relieved Astrid of her daughter, carrying Helena over to where Valka was sitting and perching next to her so they could both greet the infant in return.

"You are the sweetest thing!"

"Until you have your own. Then they are the sweetest thing... until they wake up at 3am for lots of adorable screaming. Have you worked out what you're gonna do about that?"

"Yeah. We have the adjoining door now, Tyr can go back to his room and it won't feel like he's alone in another house. And that puts your room between us and him, so the baby crying shouldn't wake him."

Astrid dropped to the floor to play with Toothless, who was very happy to have someone else to drool on. Thankfully, Astird was used to it.

"That's good. How is maternity leave treating you? I was bored out of my mind!"

Helena was invested in trying to pull Hiccup's hair, so Valka was safe to turn her attention to Astrid.

"I confess I am a little bored, but I know that obviously I will miss all the free time and kick myself for not making more use of it at some point."

"Yep. The curse of maternity leave when you feel like you're about to pop any minute, even more so for you since you have all the doctors telling you to take it easy."

Valka nodded; yes, she was bored and restless, but she'd known early on that keeping the baby meant not overexerting herself. It would all be worth it, even if she felt like she'd go mad from the lack of excitement. Rubbing her belly, she felt a wriggle, smiled to herself when she saw Hiccup and Helena both watching her.

"Alright?"

"Very much so."

His soft, sweet smile still made Valka warm inside, and she wondered if that would ever change. Astrid left to wash Toothless off her hands and face, returning in time to somehow mentally predict her daughter was hungry, setting up to nurse her with a serene expression on her face. Hiccup's attention was back on Valka, his hand splaying over her belly like a thousand times before. There was still that awe in his face, like he couldn't quite believe it. Valka could understand; she was still in disbelief some days herself, having never expected to be a mother of two, let alone have a new child after hitting the big four-oh.
"You sure you're alright? Nothing hurting?"

"I'm fine. Usual aches, no pain here" she placed her hand over Hiccup's own "and thats what I'm meant to be looking out for."

"Good."

He kissed her cheek, nuzzling her gently before relaxing in time to feel a firm kick against his hand. Valka winced, and he panicked.

"What is it?"

"Just... it's normal. They are getting bigger and stronger and don't have as much room to move. Kicks can be a little uncomfortable."

Hiccup turned wide eyes to his sister, who nodded her confirmation.

"She's right. The last couple of weeks especially, Helena was non-stop and I had to keep moving to rock her to sleep in there for a break."

"And that's definitely all it is?"

"Hiccup, I will never forget those moments when I thought I was going to lose baby Ty. I know what feels wrong and what doesn't. Please, trust me. I want them to make it just as much as you do, and I wouldn't ignore something I wasn't completely sure was benign."

Hiccup finally relented, nodding his acceptance and cuddling her close.

"I love you. And I'm sorry I'm a bit of a basket case lately."

Valka rubbed his hair, kissed his forehead since it was in reach.

"I know you worry love, I do too. But there is nothing we can do but wait now."

"You have a scan in a few days right?"

"I do."

Hiccup relaxed a little more then, obviously glad they'd be able to check up properly. Done with her meal, Helena was deposited back on her uncles lap to distract Hiccup from his fretting, and since Helena would not be ignored for a second, it worked rather well. She giggled when Hiccup bounced her on his good knee, pulled herself up his lap until she could plant drooling kisses on his face that made Hiccup beam. Astrid watched her brother and daughter, fondness in her eyes.

"We went to see dad the other day, you should have seen her with Thor."

"Ah, I bet he was absolute putty in her hands."

"Completely. But he's always like that."

Gnawing insistently at her fist now, Helena was clearly teething and presently unhappy about it. Hiccup directed Astrid to his fridge, where cucumber was at the ready almost constantly for just such occasions. By the time Hiccup had to leave to pick Tyr up from school, Helena was napping and Astrid making them tea.

"So now Hiccup isn't here, how are you really feeling?"
Astrid blew the steam from her cup, peering over it at Valka before glancing over to her daughter curled up on a baby pillow. Valka debated answering honestly or not, but supposed Astrid knew the answers anyway and was simply telling her to voice them.

"I'm scared. Every time they kick, I worry all that old scarring will... I don't know, break? But I think I'd be more scared if they stopped kicking."

The blonde nodded, sipping her tea and frowning at the too-hot beverage.

"Yeah, Hiccup said basically the same thing to me the other day. You guys should probably talk to each other about it, cus both of you doing all this worrying in secret isn't gonna do anybody any good."

"I know. I will. Later though, I don't want to frighten Ty."

"Yeah. He's a tough little guy though. Almost as excited as Hiccup."

Valka nodded, hand cradling her belly again out of habit.

"Indeed. I'm glad he's happy to be becoming a big brother."

"Helps that he thinks Hiccup is so cool, and he's a big brother."

Astrid grinned, proud as punch of her older sibling.

"Yes. I am glad Ty has such a good role model in Hiccup. I'm glad of Hiccup in general, really. I can't imagine what the last year might have been like without him."

Humming, Astrid tested her tea, taking another sip without frowning that time.

"Yeah. I mean, it's easy to say if you weren't dating Hiccup Sven wouldn't have challenged you for custody, but I feel like he might well have done it even if you'd dated someone your own age, and he just needed to deal with the fact you were moving on. Not that I approve of how he went about it, or the fact he punched Hiccup. But Hiccup asked me not to break his arm, and everything is good now, so I guess we just... let it be."

Motherhood had mellowed Astrid a little. Not hugely - Valka could still see the spark in her, same as ever. But since Helena was born, she seemed a little more inclined to consider bigger pictures before jumping in to the fray. Hiccup admitted he'd not told Astrid about that incident at Ty's birthday party for a while, because he knew exactly what Astrid would have done about it.

"I appreciate that."

They finished their tea in relative silence, and Valka heard Hiccup's car outside as she placed her empty mug to the side. They entered her homes side, likely so Ty could go change out of his uniform and drop off his bag, but they were through the adjoining door - it really had been incredibly useful already, and Valka had stopped being nervous of what it meant the minute they actually agreed to do it - soon after, Tyr grinning at a still-sleeping Helena, a smiling Astrid and then turning to his mother.

"How are you and baby?"

He kept his voice low, crossing over to hug her in greeting.

"We're good. How was school?"
"I had a headache and had to go lie down, but it went away and I told Hiccup about it in the car."

Valka immediately felt a little on edge; Tyr had been relatively symptom free for a while - still signed off Sports, though - but headaches were a concern since he still had his stent in place. Really, the school should have called.

"He's due a stent check up soon anyway, but they said we could always call to bring it forward if we're worried right?"

Hiccup asked, and Valka nodded.

"Yes."

"So, shall I see if I can do that? Is that alright with you little dragon?"

"Yeah. I want to make sure I'm not sick again before baby dragon comes along."

Brushing hair from his face, Valka gazed over her son.

"If you feel anything else, you let us know alright?"

"I will mom, promise."

Astrid stayed for a while so Tyr could play with Helena after her nap, but she did have a husband to get home to and so she bade them farewell a little later, declining to stay for dinner. Hiccup saw her off, returned to kiss Valka with a smile before ruffling Tyr's hair.

"I better go make dinner. Anything you feel like? Or don't feel like?"

Her tastes had been up and down constantly, and Hiccup never took it personally that sometimes she couldn't face the thought of something she'd had been eager to eat only the month before.

"Nothing too rich, I don't want to be knocked out by it."

Hiccup chuckled.

"I will do my best, but if you need to rest then take a nap by all means."

After some back and forth with the receptionist who thought Hiccup was being ridiculous, they managed to get transferred to the right person and then bring Ty's appointment forward. He'd not had any other headaches, but with Valka ready to pop pretty soon, it would have been irresponsible not to check beforehand rather than just ignore it and hope for the best. The doctor had a little poke and prod and ran a couple of small tests, which Tyr didn't like but sat quietly through, holding Loki in his arms as much as possible.

"Obviously it would be better to look inside properly, but I'm not seeing or feeling any signs of infection, and the scan showed no blockages so I'm content to say he's fine. I'll have him back in a couple of months for another check, but if he stays symptom free for a year then we can talk about removing it so this won't be a concern any longer?"

"Will you have to shave my head and give me stitches again?"

"Yes, but once it's out you won't have to worry about having to come back for any more. We can even go through the same place so you won't have any new scarring."

Valka hugely appreciated every medical professional that worked so hard with Tyr, knowing he
wasn't the most easy or agreeable child when it came to what some might consider peculiar things. Tyr pondered for a minute before nodding.

"I guess that would be ok."

"Good. Well, I will see you for your next check up, and good luck with the remainder of your pregnancy Valka."

The amount of time she'd spent with various doctors for all Tyr's checkups, she was no longer concerned by them using first name basis.

"Thank you."

They left the consultation room, Hiccup and Tyr waiting patiently while Valka detoured to the nearest bathroom - a near constant state now, baby weighing on her bladder more and more. She immediately missed Hiccup's bathroom, with its supportive bar that helped her up and down. Aching something fierce, Valka managed to stand up, but she was feeling increasingly off by the time she was out of the cubicle. In the mirror, she could see she was white as a sheet, splashing water on her face and thinking she ought to rest a little before they left. Her legs didn't really want to support her, grip a little numb on the door handle as she exited the bathroom. Hiccup turned toward the sound, and she could see in his face that he was immediately worried.

"Valka? Are you alright?"

Valka opened her mouth to say she just needed a little sit down first, but the words wouldn't come out. Her knees finally gave out, Hiccup barely catching her as pain lanced across her stomach.

It might have been almost twelve years, but Valka knew that pain.

-HTTYD-

Should I go hide under my rock?
Chapter 33

Not totally sure I ended last chapter to come across the way I planned, based upon response, but we'll see.

Talk of birth and stuff (nothing really graphic but) if you're incredibly squeamish, you might wanna skip to the line break half way down?

-HTTYD-

If Tyr wasn't there, Hiccup might have just panicked himself stupid. But he couldn't; he couldn't just freak in front of the boy - Tyr would panic something was wrong. Hiccup was quite sure something was wrong, given that his girlfriend had effectively passed out in his arms, but he didn't want to upset her son. Basically out cold, Valka was dead weight but he got her to the nearest chair, flailing internally as he tried to work out what to do.

"Hiccup? Everything alright?"

They'd spent so long in that hospital, between departments for quarantine and check ups and everything else, that several staff members knew them by first name. Before he could answer, the nurse glanced over Valka and saw the pallor of her skin, the worry in Hiccup's face.

"I'll go get someone, we'll get her to the right ward in no time. You're looking well Tyr."

"Thank you. Is my mom ok?"

"She'll be fine. I'm sure she just needs some rest."

Grateful to the nurse for her reassurance to Tyr while Hiccup fretted about the fact he couldn't do anything other than wait, hope. He placed a gentle hand on Valka's stomach, felt a roll there and drew a quiet breath of relief. Porter and nurse returned with a wheelchair, and Hiccup winced before using his body to block the sight from Tyr of blood on the seat, knew something was wrong and just hoped he could protect the boy from the worst of it. Valka was soon being moved to a hospital bed, and Hiccup reluctantly moved to the other side of the protective curtain, taking Tyr with him so he'd not see anything to upset him.

"I'm gonna call your dad, have him come get you Tyr. Alright?"

"I wanna stay with mom!"

"I know, but we might be here a while and you don't really like hospitals. Remember when we were sick before, you always wanted your mom to go home and rest and take care of herself?"

Hugging Loki to his chest and peering over the toy dragon, Tyr nodded.

"Yeah."

"That's what I want you to do now. Take care of yourself so your mom can get taken care of here, and we don't have to worry that you can't get to school or to bed on time."

After a minute of intense thinking judging by the crease between his brows, Tyr agreed.

"Ok then."
"Good man. Come on, we can't use phones right here."

Hiccup hated every step he took away from Valka, but he knew if she was awake enough to ask, she'd demand he prioritise Tyr. Handing him money to get some juice from the vending machine, Hiccup scrolled through Valka's contacts, tapped on Sven's number. It was a strange task to undertake, but needs must.

"Hello?"

"Uh, hi Sven. I don't have too much time to explain, but I need you to come pick Tyr up."

A quick relay of as little detail as Hiccup thought would convince Sven, he had agreement from his girlfriend's ex-husband.

"I'll have someone ready to meet you at the house, I can't give Tyr my key because Valka doesn't have hers."

"Alright. I'll be there soon."

Hiccup called his father next, explained again quickly and thankfully his father was free to go let Sven in so he could get Tyr's things from the house.

"Please be civil."

"I will! Let us know what's happening yeah? I'll pick Toothless up while I'm there. Don't worry."

"I will dad. Thanks."

Tyr looked up from his juice carton, leaning against Hiccup since he didn't have a free hand to hug him with.

"Is mom gonna be ok?"

"Of course. But we're gonna make sure, and if we have to stay here so she can get taken care of properly, then at least she knows somebody is taking care of you."

Heading back, Hiccup didn't hear any alarm bells ringing from behind Valka's curtain, but did see a curious nurse hovering nearby - looking for him, obviously.

"You're her partner, yes?"

"Yeah, that's me. And this is her son, Tyr."

"I see. Well, we aren't quite sure what's going on, but there's a doctor on his way to assess whether or not we should deliver the baby soon. Anything we should know about right this minute?"

"Is the baby coming?"

Hiccup knew it would be even harder to peel Tyr away from his mother if his new sibling was about to be born, but thankfully the nurse responded in an ambiguous enough manner that it didn't sound as certain as Hiccup felt it was - Valka was due another scan only a couple of days later to determine exactly what a doctor was meant to come and assess now.

"Maybe. Maybe not. But we'll take good care of both, I promise you that."

Sven was at the hospital incredibly fast - granted, Hiccup didn't know where he worked - and there
was even a hair out of place on his head, a possible testament to his rush there.

"Is Valka alright?"

"Yeah. My dad is waiting at my house for you guys. He's picking up Toothless too, so you just need to worry about getting your stuff ok little dragon?"

"Ok. Will you tell me if mom has baby?"

"You'll be the first call I make. Well, your dads phone, but you know what I mean."

Hugging Tyr goodbye, he refused to leave until he'd seen for himself Valka was alright. She was still out, but a gentle touch of a small hand on her cheek seemed to soothe Tyr, who nodded back at Hiccup.

"Take care of them."

"I will. Have fun with your dad. Thank you Sven."

A gruff nod and a sort of agreeing sound was all the answer he got, but Sven had come right away to get his son, and Hiccup couldn't fault him for that just because the man didn't really have any love for Hiccup personally. They were gone a minute later, leaving Hiccup to drop into the seat by Valka's bed, rubbing his face and feeling anxiety set in now there was no Tyr to stay stable for.

A lady in a white coat appeared, glancing over Hiccup and Valka for a beat before she crossed over to the bed, scanning the information and reviewing notes on a clipboard at the end of the bed.

"Placenta increta with a previous pregnancy... was one confirmed with this one?"

"Not that I know of, but at her last scan they said it looked like she might have another, which is why she was going to be assessed for early delivery this week. I'm guessing baby had other ideas."

"Does your girlfriend want to have more children?"

"Uh, I... don't know. Why?"

"Because with her age and the risk of complications attached, there's a chance we'll need to perform a hysterectomy."

"Do it."

Her voice was a little weak, and when Hiccup looked she was struggling to open her eyes. But when he wrapped his hand around hers, she squeezed back quite firmly.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I don't think I'd have it in me to go through this again anyway, if it's necessary then by all means."

Sea-green eyes turned to Hiccup, pain and exhaustion clear on her features but there was something of a relief there too - whatever happened, it was about to be over, they could both feel it.

They moved quickly to test the foetal heartbeat, and it took little time at all for them to have a consent form in front of Valka. They were really about to deliver the baby. Hiccup was about to meet their child. He was given sterile scrubs to put on while they gave Valka the epidural, her hand squeezing tight to his as she felt the needle in her back.
"You know, we probably should have talked more about names by now."

Hiccup laughed despite himself at that wry grin on her face.

"There is plenty of time for that. Let's focus on getting them here first."

Barely a blink later to Hiccup's mind, they were in the operating theatre, big curtain between them and seeing the gory bits as Valka was asked if she could feel any of their touches. She shook her head, hand clasped tight in Hiccup's.

"You'll probably feel some pressure, but just try to relax. You're about to meet your baby."

His heart was in his throat, but Hiccup was fit to burst with excitement all the same. Knowing Valka was at risk for a preterm delivery was very different to heading to the hospital for Tyr's check up, only for Valka to be delivering via a c-section less than two hours later. He kept his eyes on Valka's for a while, seeing the worry and the wonder in her eyes at the moment she'd expected never to happen. His ears picked up comments like "scar tissue" and "bleeding", but there didn't seem to be any urgency and Valka's machines all said her vitals were doing alright.

"Congratulations, it's a girl!"

"Is she ok?"

"See for yourself."

They both looked over, gloved hands cradling a sticky, goo-covered creature that began to wail. It was the most beautiful thing Hiccup had ever seen. She was small, but that didn't matter.

"Oh... she's perfect."

Valka murmured, eyes following as the babe was handed off to a nurse to be cleaned and swaddled for warmth. Hiccup was little better, but the noise he heard ripped him back to where he stood, sounding eerily like all those warnings every time they'd come close to losing Tyr.

"What's happening?"

Valka felt like her head weighed a ton, and the hand she tried to lift to rub her eyes was just as heavy. And everything hurt. Especially her stomach, feeling sore and bruised and a little...

The baby!

Forcing her eyes open, Valka looked down to see her stomach looking a little flatter, and the little flutters of life had gone.

"Hey, hey, it's ok" Hiccup's voice interrupted her starting to panic, his hand warm around hers "our little girl is just fine."

"Girl?"

Her voice was croaky, but a straw soon pressed to her lips and Valka pulled at it until cool water filled her mouth, easing the dryness of her throat while she blinked away the haze that blurred Hiccup's face.

"Where is she?"
"Right here, hang on" Hiccup leant over, and Valka realised there was a little cot next to her bed "here we are."

He lifted a bundle wrapped in a dark green blanket, one Valka vaguely recognised as a hand-me-down gift from Eret and Astrid.

"All that time fussing over the baby bag and we didn't even have it when she was born. Astrid dropped by with it yesterday."

Yesterday?

"How long was I asleep?"

"About a day and a half. We were starting to worry, but you started showing signs of waking up about two hours ago. There was a lot of blood... they had to put you under and do the hysterectomy after all. Kicked me out, but they let me spend time with baby dragon so I guess it was a compromise."

Hiccup shifted, pushing blankets aside until Valka could see a tiny little face amongst the blanket cocoon, eyes closed and mouth puckered out slightly.

"She's so beautiful. Just like her mom."

Valka tried to reach for her, but her arms didn't quite obey her.

"Yeah, they said you would probably be weak when you woke up. When the nurse comes back, I'll ask her to sit you up better so she can lie on your chest ok?"

A little dejected about waiting, Valka still nodded her agreement and saw Hiccup place their daughter down, holding water up for her again.

"I thought I lost you for a minute there. Don't scare me like that again."

"I'll try. How's Ty?"

"I called him, said baby dragon was here but asked Sven not to bring him by until you woke up. I didn't want Tyr seeing you yesterday... you were so pale, so still" Hiccup's voice cracked a little "I could barely handle it, I wasn't about to put it on him."

The nurse thankfully returned before Valka had to think of an answer, checking the incision across Valka's stomach - not a pleasant sight, but apparently she was healing well.

"Glad to see you awake at last. Lets get you sitting a little better so you can meet your daughter shall we?"

With her surgical incision, Valka couldn't bend at the middle very easily, had to let the nurse do it all. But then Hiccup was lowering a warm, solid little weight to her chest, pulling blankets away so Valka could touch the baby's bare skin, felt a minute hand touch to her chest and tears sprang to her eyes.

"Oh, she's so perfect."

"Yeah. A little on the small side, but heart and lungs check out fine. Ten fingers, ten toes, and all ours."

Hiccup was beaming, eyes wet with unshed emotions himself but the happiness was literally
radiating off of him like a bright light. The pain and uncertainty felt worth it to make the man she loved that happy, even before Valka then considered the reward of their child too. She turned her face, pressing a kiss to a soft, hairless head.

"I'm sorry I missed the first day of her life."

"You didn't. She was right here with you basically the whole time. And anyway, you don't need to apologise for that. Gods Valka, the last eight months, everything you've gone through just to bring her into the world... if anyone deserved that long nap, it was you."

"My little miracle baby... I can't believe she's here. I spent so long worrying I'd lose her."

"Me too. But... we didn't. You both pulled through. Now it's just a case of getting you better and getting you both home."

Hiccup insisted she rest more before he would call Ty to come see her, and Valka very reluctantly agreed, if only because she doubted she could keep her eyes open much longer anyway. He promised he'd be close by with their daughter, who they hadn't even named yet but like Hiccup said, they had time for that. The rest was very much needed, even though Valka had only just woken from a day-and-a-half of 'napping' as it was. She conceded her body had been through a lot, but that didn't mean she had to like it.

"I'll go call Sven, ask him to bring Tyr up."

"Thank you."

The baby was left close by her, allowing Valka to gaze upon the perfect little surprise. Most babies had blue eyes at birth, she knew, but she'd be amazed if they didn't turn a shade of green sometime in the near future with two green eyes parents.

"Done. They'll be here soon. Tyr asked what we called her, I said it would be a surprise."

After having banded many names back and forth - mostly neutral names, as they'd left the sex of the baby a mystery - but when Valka thought about it now, an idea came to mind quickly. Hiccup nodded his agreement; he liked it. He jokingly asked her not to tell the nurses yet, because the baby's little ID tag around her ankle currently read "baby dragon".

"Daft man."

"Love you too."

Valka was incredibly relieved to see her son, though it was also relieving that he didn't leap on her in a hug, instead circling the bed and cuddling her gently before he was shuffling around the other side to peer at the swaddled newborn in Hiccup's arms.

"This is your baby sister little dragon. Pretty cool huh?"

"Yeah... wow. She's so little!"

"Tough though. Like you and your mom."

Tyr smiled at Hiccup, touching one finger to a slightly pudgy cheek.

"So what's her name?"

Hiccup glanced to Valka, who nodded to say the one they'd picked was still the right choice. Then
he turned back to Tyr, smiling.

"Tyr, meet Freya."

-HTTYD-

After naming one kid after a god, you can't just name the other one a human name now can you? It must be a goddess!
Chapter 34

So close, the end, and I will miss them dearly. (if you haven't checked this story in a few days, make sure you read Ch33 first!)

-HTTYD-

Feeling something like deja vu for when her boys were coming home after a sickness spell in hospital, Valka smiled gratefully at Hiccup when he held his hand out to help her over the step. He looked ecstatic to have her home, equally so for the new arrival they brought with them. He made sure she was sat comfortably first, before turning to face his sister. Astrid handed over the carrier Freya slept in, Eret behind her holding their daughter. Her parents were there too, practically ready to burst as Hiccup reached into the carrier, extracting the newborn babe.

"Welcome home Freya. I promise you are going to be so happy and so loved here."

Seeing him cradle their daughter, Valka was so very grateful her body had held out, been strong enough to carry Freya until she was strong enough to be born. Early, yes, but not as premature as either her brother or her father, and definitely healthier than either. If anything, Valka was the one who had to fight her way back to full health - she'd been in the hospital for a week before they felt she could leave, and so Hiccup had been a fairly permanent fixture of the hospital. He'd kept her sane, really, reassuring Valka when she bawled over hormone-induced fears she was already failing her child.

"Alright, anybody who wants to hold her better get it done now, cus I'm calling Sven to bring Tyr home and none of us will get her back after that."

Sven had been good to them too. He'd brought Tyr to visit every other day, getting him to school and taking care of him for the whole week after the unexpected and tricky delivery. It was hard to believe he'd been trying to break their family apart some six months or so before.

But Valka was just glad to know that was all in the past. Now they could all focus on going forward with their lives. Freya was fairly quiet as she was passed around various family members, all cooing and smiling at her beautiful little face while she took it in with a wide-eyed stare of vague confusion. Hiccup took her back, brought her over to where Valka was sitting and placed the baby mindfully in her mothers arms.

"Hey, Sami looks good on her dontcha think?"

Eret grinned - Freya was wearing one of the items Helena had grown out of, that his parents had made themselves for their grandchild.

"It's like a month or two too big, but since its more of a tunic rather than a babygro nobody can tell the difference."

"She likes it and it's warm, that's what counts."

Hiccup left the noisier room to call Sven, returned with a smile and let Valka know Tyr was dying to come home and see her and Freya.

"I'm gonna put Helena down for a nap, she's grizzly."

"Ok babe, make sure she's warm. It's chilly."
Eret nodded to his girlfriend, carrying Helena to the pop up cot in the next room, coming back with one of two baby monitors that he placed on the table nearest his seat. Freya shuffled and gripped at Valka's top, blinking slowly up at her mother and Valka was fairly sure her heart might melt just looking at her. Hiccup smiled over the two of them, the expression seeming permanently affixed to his face now.

"You feeling alright love?"

"I'm fine. Tired, but that's to be expected."

Hiccup kissed her cheek, then dropped another kiss on Freya's head. Freya yawned, but Valka didn't think the two things were connected. She felt she could easily stay there for hours and never tire of just looking at Freya. A year ago, Valka was certain she'd never have another child, had asked Hiccup if it mattered to him enough before she dared fall in love with him. And he'd reassured her countless times that it didn't change anything for him, that he wanted her, biological child or not. And then... somehow, Freya decided she wanted to come along anyway.

They talked quietly of Valka's time in hospital, and joked about things like sleepless nights and 3am feeds and changes, but even those things seemed to enthrall Hiccup, like he couldn't wait to be a hands-on father.

"And you are gonna do what the doctors said and take it easy. You took care of me and little dragon when we got back from hospital. Now it's our turn to take care of you and baby dragon."

Valka rolled her eyes at her boyfriend, who grinned unapologetically before turning toward the front window, the low sound of a car just audible over voices.

"That's Sven's car, I better go open the door so they know which house we're at."

He pecked another kiss to Valka's cheek, then got up. Valka savoured cuddling Freya, knowing Tyr would be keen to have his turn - a proper cuddle time, after limited time visiting in hospital. She heard his voice before she saw him, unusually loud for Tyr but it showed how excited he was.

"Careful now, don't jostle the sofa little dragon."

"I won't. Hi mom, I'm glad you're home."

"Me too son."

Hiccup helped move Freya from mother to sons arms, and Tyr's face lit up as he held his little sister. Sven hovered by the doorway, not intruding but obviously wanting to ask what the situation was now regarding childcare and the like.

"Ty, would you rather be here this weekend?"

Tyr looked up at his dad, face creased in thought.

"Is that ok dad?"

Sven nodded, and Valka knew he was uncomfortable with everyone looking at him, waiting for him to agree to shift their custody agreement without a fight. It was a testament to how hard her ex husband was trying that Sven offered. In person.

"Sure son. I'll pick you up next Friday?"
"Yeah. Thanks dad. Here, hold Freya for me Hiccup?"

Tyr headed over to hug his dad goodbye, warm smile on his face. Valka nodded to Sven, smiling herself.

"Thank you Sven, I know it was rather short notice."

"Things happen, and I enjoyed the extra time."

"Me too dad."

Sven left, Tyr immediately turning back to where Hiccup was holding his new baby sister.

"While you're up, why not go sort your bag out? Then you don't have to do it later."

"Good idea Hiccup."

He headed up the stairs, Loki and backpack in his hands. Valka smiled over at Hiccup again, the expression returned before he wrinkled his nose and chuckled.

"It's a good thing you are very cute. The baby changing stuff is next door cus of Helena, I'll be back in a minute."

Astrid watched Hiccup go, then turned to her own boyfriend.

"Why are you never that quick to offer to do nappy changes?"

"In my defence, you yelled at me for putting the first one on backwards and made me let you do it instead."

Astrid huffed.

"Not the point."

Valka giggled to herself at them, her mother crossing over to sit next to her and hug her gently.

"I'm so happy for you love. Especially since Sven seems to have straightened himself out."

"He loves his son, I never doubted that. It's in the past now mother, I'm happy to be looking forward. Especially to the part where I'll be able to move more."

"Need a hand up?"

Eret offered, and Valka reluctantly accepted so she could go to the bathroom. It was still a little funny to simply walk through one door and be in Hiccup's house, though Valka certainly could not have hopped the fence as she normally would have out front in her current condition. He'd finished changing her, turning from the change mat to smile at Valka.

"Everything alright?"

"Yes. Downstairs bathroom is this side."

"Ah, yeah. You gonna be alright getting up or do you want me to wait just in case?"

He waited, though Valka managed to get up without hurting herself thanks to Hiccup's mobility-aided bathroom, using the bars to move with her arms more than her middle and didn't seem to
damage anything in the process. Gods, she'd be glad when her stomach was healed. Before they could move to go back through, a small face peered around the adjoining door.

"There you are!"

"Hey little dragon. Don't worry, you only missed nappy changing time."

Wrinkling his nose up in disgust, Tyr giggled.

"That's not so bad then. Are you coming back now?"

"Yep."

Helena was still sound asleep as they left her to her nap, Freya immediately the centre of attention again when they returned.

"Who do you think she'll look like?"

Astrid pondered, blue eyes fixed on where Ty was once again claiming cuddle time. Valka didn't mind a jot; Tyr was so happy to be a big brother, something they'd worried about a little sometimes with his distaste for change. But then, that was why they kept him involved in the pregnancy, talking about the baby and letting him feel her stomach, connecting with the idea of a new person in advance.

"Valka, if she's lucky."

Hiccup answered, winking playfully at Valka when she looked over to him to roll her eyes.

"What? Little dragon looks like you, I think baby dragon will too."

"Are you gonna draw a picture of her too Hiccup?"

"Sure, when she's a little bigger. If I drew her now it would just be a blanket with eyes. Plus she has no hair yet, I don't want her to see the drawing when she's twelve and yell at me for drawing her when she was bald."

Tyr giggled, his smile seeming to be as permanently fixed as Hiccup's. And everyone elses, really. Astrid glanced at her phone, nodding to herself.

"Heather wants to know when her and Dagur can come visit properly, though she said no rush cus she knows Valka has only just escaped from hospital."

Hiccup hummed. Both Heather and Dagur had visited the hospital to meet Freya, as had Stoick, but time had been short while Valka recuperated.

"Tell her I'll call her tomorrow, we have appointments for Valka and Freya to get sorted before we start making plans."

Astrid relayed the message by text, tucking her phone away. Her parents were spending the night, but Astrid and Eret headed off a couple of hours later, after Helena got to meet Freya officially herself and everyone had had a good catch-up. Valka was relieved, really, as their timing meant she didn't have to nurse Freya in front of them. Not that she expected them to care if she did - Astrid breastfed Helena with impunity all the time, but it was nice to have that quieter moment, bonding with her baby at her breast while Hiccup and Tyr were discussing food and Rama and Cain were going over the plans for the next day.
"Boys, come back here a moment?"

Hiccup and Tyr reappeared, Hiccup looking faintly bemused.

"Did you just call me boy?"

"You are more than four decades younger than me, so yes, boy."

Rama said, no trace of venom in her tone as she smiled at Hiccup, an expression he returned.

"We have returned, what's up?"

"Group photo! I need something to take back with us tomorrow."

Despite Valka's protests that she looked terrible - Hiccup kissed her until she quieted down and told her she was beautiful, dragging a smile to her lips against her will - the four of them posed obediently, Tyr incredibly happy to be boosted up onto Hiccup's back and beaming over his shoulder, Freya carefully placed into Valka's arms as they all did their best cheesy smiles for the camera.

When she looked at the picture, Valka forgot to see that she looked a little old and tired, that her clothes were baggy for comfort and her hair shoved back out of the way until she could get a proper bath. Instead she saw radiant happiness from all of them, the love in Hiccup's eyes and the pride in Ty's face.

She saw her family.

Hiccup groaned as he heard those little gurgles, knowing that if he wasn't there in approximately three seconds some full scale wailing could start. Given that it took him longer than that to put his leg back on, he usually lost the race. Freya seemed to be feeling kind though, and he made it in time to pick her up before she could wake Valka.

"Shhh, it's ok. Let's go for a walk yeah?"

Holding her to his chest, Hiccup slipped from the bedroom and carried Freya downstairs, failing at suppressing his yawn while the clock on the microwave blinked a menacing "2:45" at him. She was sleeping longer, at last, but Freya was still up at least twice a night, and Hiccup was more prone to waking with her and seemed to do better on less sleep than Valka. There was a couple of bottles of expressed milk in the fridge, waiting to be warmed up to pacify the hungry creature in his arms.

After feeding, she liked being rocked or bounced or generally given lots of attention. Freya was not one for falling asleep at random, and loudly protested not being held if she wanted a cuddle. Hiccup did his best not to fall asleep as he sat down with her, bottle drank down and only a little burped back up onto his shoulder. One fresh nappy and some tickles later, Freya finally decided it was time to go back to sleep. Hiccup managed to get her back in her crib without waking her, crawling back into bed and barely remembering to take his leg off as he did so. A warm arm snaked across his waist, Valka burrowing into his body with a sleepy sound and Hiccup was out again before either could try to say a word.

As usual, Freya pretended to be the sweetest, most well-behaved baby in the world the next morning, as though she hadn't gotten Hiccup up just before midnight, or again at close to three in the morning. Valka insisted it be her turn the next night, and Hiccup wasn't going to argue - she was off work on weekends, and he was exhausted.
But it was so worth it. Every second. From watching Tyr greet his little sister with the same enthusiasm every morning, to those gummy smiles Freya gave whenever somebody tickled her feet or blew raspberries on her belly. Her low birth weight was a concern long past, now she had a pudgy little belly and soft, rosy cheeks. Her hair was a nearly untameable mess of a quite bright red, and big green eyes rapturously took in all the world had to offer. Hiccup was besotted by her, even when he was tired, unable to resist giving her one last cuddle before she was in her high chair for breakfast.

"Morning little dragon. I made your lunch and packed you extra water since it's warm today."

"Thanks Hiccup."

Tyr hugged him, gave Hiccup his usual soft, serene smile. There’d been a little adjustment period when Freya first came home, where the boy had worried Hiccup and Valka wouldn't have time for him, but they had worked all that out and they did their best to spend lots of their time together. It probably helped that he idolised his baby sister and wanted her well-cared for.

After a quick breakfast - and lots of goodbye kisses for Freya and Tyr - Hiccup kissed his girlfriend goodbye and got Tyr and Freya bundled into the car. Freya, as it turned out, was quite a fan of Tyr's Celtic music CD too, and would almost exclusively sit quietly in her seat when it was playing. He dropped Tyr off at school first, then reluctantly parted company with his daughter at her childminders for the day.

"Morning sleepyhead."

"Nah, Freya only woke me twice last night, I am practically well-rested!"

His dad laughed as Hiccup ambled into work, letting him fuel up on coffee before burying himself in an engine and getting started. It was remarkable how having a baby taught people just how little sleep they could survive on. Valka often joked he had almost twenty years advantage on her, and if Tyr wasn't there Hiccup always answered back with "you're only as young as the man you feel", which never failed to make Valka roll her eyes at him.

Gods, he loved her.

"So, you still set on doing it son?"

"Yeah. I think it's time. Well, I hope it is. Guess we'll find out soon."

Stoick nodded, nudged Hiccup's shoulder gently with a warm laugh before heading off to continue working. Hiccup smiled to himself, equal parts nervous and excited. Hopefully, everything went according to plan.

Sven picked Tyr up an hour later than he used to on Fridays, to give him time with Freya after school before he left for the weekend. Freya seemed determined to set a record for her longest time awake ever, grizzly and refusing to be put down or go to sleep for hours, and Hiccup was about ready to try bribing her - how, he wasn't sure yet - when she finally drifted off in Valka's arms to the soft lullaby she sang. They put her in her crib half expecting her to wake up any second and resume demanding snuggles, but she stayed sound asleep as her parents quickly got ready for bed, keen to get all the minutes of sleep that they could.

As promised, Valka got up for the night feed and change that night, but Hiccup was stirred by the noise and stayed awake long enough to hear that noise of contentment Valka made when she pressed her face into his chest, holding each other loosely as they drifted off again.
Hiccup plotted quietly through the morning, exchanging texts with his sister until she answered to let him know she was on his way, which meant Hiccup should probably let Valka know.

"Hey, Astrid and Eret are on their way over."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. They uh... they're taking Freya to visit dad."

Valka looked up, blinked, then eyed him in confusion.

"They are? Not us?"

"No. I asked them to take her for a couple of hours because you need a break. I need a break."

She was initially very much against the idea, but Hiccup managed to talk her round before Astrid arrived. Helena toddled in holding her mothers hand, obviously quite proud to be walking and immediately made a beeline for Freya, greeting her excitedly. She was growing out of the baby fat a little, but with her healthy appetite Helena was by no means small. Hiccup wouldn't be surprised if she had her fathers build.

"Wow, you guys look like you have a six month old baby and forgot what sleep is."

"Charming. Nice to see you too Astrid."

"Hey, I was there too once, and you were very rudely under quarantine so I couldn't even ask you to babysit."

He chuckled, hugged Astrid and conceded her point.

"I will do my best to avoid any and all future serious illnesses."

"Good, I'm glad to hear it."

"Thanks for doing this. Really."

"Hey, your kid is adorable and dad is cooking. I'm thrilled."

Astrid had a knowing look in her eye, and Hiccup wasn't surprised. His sister could probably read minds. After a catch up chat and - Hiccup was just as bad - very reluctant parents handing over their child for a couple of hours. Valka stared at the door for a solid minute, sighed deeply and turned back to Hiccup.

"I miss her."

"Me too. But we're both tired and haven't had much 'us' time in months. I don't mean like that" he caught Valka's slight smirk "I just mean... we're always either at work or on baby duty while making sure Tyr doesn't feel neglected. A breather will do us good."

Valka sank into his arms, sighing again against his neck but he felt her arms move to hold him too. They stood that way for a few minutes, just breathing in her scent, feeling her warm weight against him before Valka's stomach growled, making both of them chuckle.

"I did some dinner prep last night, come along Val and I shall feed thee."

She sat at the side, watching Hiccup root through the fridge and pull out various things, most to
make for dinner and one, slightly more special plate. Valka eyed it with curiosity as Hiccup placed it down, shaking his head when she looked for answers.

"That's dessert. No peeking or no pudding."

"What a very parent-y threat."

He laughed, placed the biscuit tin near Valka so she could at least nibble something with her cup of tea while Hiccup cooked. A full, hot meal with neither having to tend to their daughter was something of a novelty, and both took the time to enjoy it, talking between bites at their leisure. They smiled and joked and basked comfortably in each other's company, and if Hiccup wasn't gearing up for something more he might have just retired to the sofa with her to lazily cuddle until Freya came home.

Instead, he got up and retrieved the dessert plate, Valka's curiosity piqued again as she eyed the covered dish, wondering what could possibly be under there that Hiccup felt the need to hide. Heart pounding somewhere in his throat, Hiccup watched her lift the cover and heard her gasp as she saw what awaited beneath.

He wasn't brilliant at words or grand gestures, so Hiccup went with something that he thought suited them.

And so, alongside the ring he'd been given by his father - his mother's ring - Hiccup had written a short, simple question.

"Ready for a new adventure?"

-HTTYD-

I mean... she wouldn't say no right?
Chapter 35

(if it's been more than a week since you checked in, read 33 + 34 first)

Well, it's been one heck of a ride folks, and I appreciate everyone who joined our little family along the way.

Here's hoping the final chapter does not disappoint!

-HTTYD-

Valka said yes right away. She had no doubts about Hiccup. But getting married again itself seemed like... tempting fate, for a while. Valka had been sure about Sven, and they'd had a child and got on for the better part of fifteen years. And that marriage hadn't lasted.

Hiccup didn't push for things like setting a date or even planning it. He seemed quite happy to have put a ring on her finger - his mothers ring, Valka knew, and that meant so much she could never truly put it into words - and commented that he was happy to wait as long as it took. It wasn't like they weren't busy anyway. raising two kids and both holding down full time jobs. But whenever there was a wedding in a TV show or movie, Valka found her eyes wandering over to the man next to her, and each time it seemed a little less daunting to imagine actually marrying him.

"Daddy!"

"Yes baby dragon?"

Freya giggled as Hiccup picked her up, the three year old toddling over to her father for attention. That hadn't changed since she was a baby - the girl was spoiled for cuddles from absolutely everyone. With Hiccup's warm, lopsided smile and her big green eyes, Freya enchanted all who met her, even when she was misbehaving. Valka watched Hiccup nuzzle his face against Freya's, adored her little happy giggles.

"Ty said dinner!"

"Well he's right, it is almost dinner time. You go over to your mom and I'll get started yeah?"

Valka happily reached to take Freya, still feeling blessed by the gods every day that she'd had this small, scrappy child who was more into rough-housing than her older brother would ever be. Thankfully, she had a willing buddy in that regard, her cousin Helena equally keen to roll around in paint or mud or anything else messy. Freya did have her quiet time though, liked colouring or being read to by her brother.

Speaking of...

"Hey mom. Hey dad. And baby dragon!"

It had taken a while, and Tyr asked for his fathers blessing first, but now he referred to both Sven and Hiccup as dad, and he felt quite proud and special to have a father and a father figure who both wanted him to grow up happy and healthy. Ty was fifteen now, still quirky and 'different' by most peoples standards, but he was starting to grow into himself both physically and mentally, finding his place in the world and catching up on his peers in height.

Freya beamed at her brother, doing her best (admittedly not very intimidating) dragon roar and Ty
laughed in response, ruffled her wild hair. Hiccup smiled over at the three of them, welcoming Tyr over to help with the cooking - he was a very keen cook under Hiccup's guidance, something he definitely couldn't have gotten from Valka. She'd never be a master of culinary arts.

Toothless sniffed around their legs hopefully, shooed away by Hiccup with a laugh as he moped in his bed with big sad eyes, pleading for something tasty until Valka caved and tossed him a few of his soft treats.

"Ah, you spoil him."

"He deserves it!"

Hiccup chuckled.

"True."

When people new to their lives first heard about Valka and Hiccup's age gap, they almost invariably expected something along the lines of Valka having to act like a mother to her boyfriend. The fact Hiccup was not only a responsible, self-sufficient adult, but also a sweet, caring stepfather to her teenaged son and an equally wonderful father to their toddler daughter, and that he cooked and cleaned without a tirade of nagging? That usually threw everyone who pried for a loop. Even more so when they learned the couple were engaged. It only confirmed what Valka had known a long time ago - his age was just a number, he was a grown man and he loved her as she loved him. They worked. They fit.

"Freya, you cannot take my leg while I'm wearing it!"

"Whyyyyyyyy?"

"Because I'd fall over."

Having grown up with her part-metal daddy, Freya was not fazed by the leg. Instead, if she saw it off, she tried to steal it, and thought it the most fun game ever to get far enough away that her daddy couldn't grab for it. Valka retrieved the curious toddler, sat down with her in her lap and tickled under her chin until Freya dissolved into giggles.

"Mamaaaa noooooo!"

"Come on then, lets go get washed up for dinner."

Standing over Freya at the sink while she perched on her little booster step, Valka glanced at her reflection in the mirror. The three years of her daughters life were written on Valka's features, in more fine lines creasing her skin and more white-grey hairs scattered over her hairline, the dark circles of tiredness under her eyes that felt permanently etched sometimes. But the happiness was there in her bright eyes, her easy smile, the warmth in her chest growing when Freya turned around and gave her her best gap-toothed smile, holding her wet hands up for a towel.

Carrying Freya back through, Valka caught a glimpse of the past when Hiccup had to gently get Tyr's attention, his hearing never fully recovered from his brush with meningitis. Most of his other after-effects had been managed, through physio and the like, but it had made his glasses permanent and left the scar on the back of his head, and at his last hearing check up there was talk of him needing further treatment.

Hiccup took it on board and bought a book to learn sign language the next day. Freya could do some of the basics too, and according to Ty, even Sven had done the same thing. They adapted.
Adaptation was in Hiccup's nature, after all. It wasn't so bad Tyr couldn't hear, yet, but they were ready if it came up, and honestly watching Hiccup and Tyr teaching Freya was one of Valka's favourite sights.

Unwilling to settle that evening, Freya took some time to put to bed, finally settling enough that Valka could tuck her in, kissing her sweet little face goodnight and hearing Hiccup's steps creak at the door, watching with a smile on his face. They headed back downstairs to finish tidying up, Hiccup making Ty's lunch and tucking it away in the fridge, ready for the next day before the two finally sank onto the sofa with identical sighs of tired relief. Toothless padded over for some fuss, panting happily at getting scratched behind the ear.

"I'm too old for a toddler."

"Then please explain the tiny human you just put to bed, where did you find her and will the police come looking?"

Shaking her head at him, Valka was easily convinced into a lazy cuddle, hearing Ty potter about in the other kitchen, getting himself a drink and sticking his head through to say he was heading up to read in bed.

"Night guys."

"Night Ty."

"Night little dragon."

Tyr might not be so little anymore, but the nickname still made him smile as he headed off. The couple stayed in their spot for a while longer before agreeing they too should head up to bed, as they could rest if not sleep easier up there. They rarely spent time in what was once Valka's bedroom - now Astrid's room, because Freya had the room closest to her parents and Hiccup was insistent Astrid always have a place in their home - anymore, not since Freya was very small and still sleeping in their room...

A mindless movie on the TV filled the quiet as they undressed and slid beneath heavy covers, cool sheets quickly warming to their skin. While Hiccup had been full-grown before they began dating, there was no denying time had matured him more in the near-five-years they'd been together. His scars were still there, but more faded and flat than they'd been those first nights Valka mapped them with her fingers. His lean frame was still lean, but there was a little more corded strength to be seen in him. Possibly from all the time he spent carrying their precocious little girl around.

"Hiccup."

He turned, curious.

"Yeah?"

"I... I'd like to start looking. For a venue."

The light in his face was so pure and genuine Valka almost felt guilty for not saying anything before, but knew until now that she'd not truly been ready to say it, to commit to such an event.

"Really? Are you sure? I mean, we can always just look, it doesn't mean we have to pick a date and-mmph!"

Valka covered his mouth with her hand, quieting his babbling before kissing him in apology.
"I'm sure. I know how patient you've been with me" her thumb rubbed at the band of the ring on her finger "and I love you for it. But yes, I'm sure, I'm ready to move forward."

He beamed, shuffling closer until he could kiss her properly, cradling her face as he continued to look like she'd made him the happiest man alive.

"Then lets do it."

Searching hands and teasing touches were not as common as they'd been before they had Freya to keep them in a state of permanent sleep-deprivation, but they found time when they could and Hiccup never stopped looking at Valka like he had all the years before - before she'd aged almost half a decade, before pregnancy and surgical scars and whatever else shifted on her body.

His comment about contraception back when she was pregnant had never came to fruition, since Valka really could not get pregnant after the complications of Freya's birth, and so there was never concern any longer as Valka laid on her back, feeling warm lips on her neck and warm fingers on her hips, pushing up her nightdress she might as well have not bothered wearing. His shorts were discarded soon after, though Hiccup's haste was nowhere to be seen when he kissed his way down her body, always paying extra attention - or appreciation, as he called it - to the scar from Freya's delivery, as though he sought to remind Valka that no, it didn't make her less attractive to him.

The next contact from his mouth was decidedly less sweet and innocent, though equally intimate as Valka writhed under his tongue, fighting to stay quiet already so as not to wake the sleeping child nearby. She bit her lip as Hiccup worked her up with the skill of a practiced, knowing lover, bringing her arousal up steadily until Valka was panting, trembling, needing.

There was less time and energy for those drawn out sessions, where he'd bring her off repeatedly until Valka felt wrung out in a truly blissful manner, but that didn't mean Hiccup would stint on foreplay or ensuring Valka's pleasure as much as his own - a perk of a younger man, he'd joke. Satisfied she was sufficiently turned on, Hiccup slid back up her body to kiss her, smirking against her mouth when Valka bucked her hips into his, seeking to be filled by him now he'd gotten her so worked up.

Hiccup didn't leave her waiting long, hand between them guiding him into place, panting into her neck as they came flush to the other. Hands roamed exposed skin, tracing familiar routes they knew would win themselves small moans and sighs of pleasure, Hiccup rocking into Valka the way he knew she liked when they took it slow. His hair tickled her cheeks when his head fell forward, made her giggle lightly which had Hiccup moving to kiss her smiling mouth, murmuring how much he adored her in between deep, reaching thrusts.

The winding heat that pooled in her belly worked its way through her body, warmth reaching the tips of her fingers and toes, left her feeling flushed and shaky with the tempting climax just out of reach. Hiccup urged her there with a steady pace, victory in his eyes when he saw Valka break under the mounting pleasure until she shuddered beneath him with a cry muffled against his shoulder. Hiccup was not far behind her, gasping her name as he stuttered to a halt, ragged breaths condensing on her skin as they both came down from the high.

A lazy clean up was all Valka could be bothered with, feeling quite drained and perfectly blissed out as they settled back in bed properly, the movie some half an hour in already when she looked up. Hiccup nuzzled her cheek, kissed her jaw.

"I love you."

"I love you too."
He didn't seem to mind that she yawned a little as she said it, asking if she wanted the movie on and switching it off when she declined. Hiccup flipped the light switch next to the bed - so he didn't have to get back up, naturally - and the room fell into darkness, but Valka was still aware of his moving, their sleepy cuddle drawing her to slumber with the thought that yes, she really was set on marrying him.

Even when they'd set a date, they didn't rush. Freya had her fifth birthday before her parents tied the knot, but Hiccup kinda liked it that way, as it meant she was old enough to remember the day and be a proper part of it.

"Daddy!"

Freya called out, arms held up to be lifted for the next photo and Hiccup happily obliged her, gesturing for Tyr to come stand between he and Valka for a proper group picture. The photos soon dissolved into mischief and playfulness, Astrid and Eret leaving their assigned 'close family' spot so Eret could grab Hiccup and pretend he was also the groom, looking bright and proud in his Sami gatki, which Helena and Eret's parents also sported. Astrid couldn't climb all over her brother as she usually would for a lark, since she was five months pregnant with the next member of the family.

Dagur and Heather weren't long in joining the madness, Dagur pulling faces and complaining he was too short to stand completely in Eret's way and obscure him, several pictures no doubt capturing eye-rolling and Astrid and Heather's group effort to remove the redhead from centre frame, as the newly wedded couple laughed themselves silly.

"Regret joining my family yet?"

"Not for a minute."

Their wedding was pretty simple, really. They picked a venue that had an emergency 'indoor' for if it rained, but the weather co-operated and Thor took a day off to let them marry outside, sun and sky bearing witness to one of Hiccup's happiest moments. It was a tie with many things - Freya coming home, the first time Tyr called him 'dad', Valka saying yes when he proposed... he had so many joyful memories, and their wedding was yet another.

Aside from the cake - and even having that done to order was simply due to size - most of their food hadn't been done by professionals, but by Tyr and Hiccup and various relatives, giving the spread a very homely, familial vibe that Hiccup loved. Toothless and Thor were very pleased to be included, with their canine-friendly meals and inclusion in some of the photos, as were several other dogs currently loping around the outside space with abandon.

The biggest surprise for Hiccup throughout the day was definitely that Sven turned up. He doubted he and the man would ever be bosom buddies - aside from Valka and Tyr, they had nothing in common, after all - but they'd invited him, and he'd turned up, and he actually seemed to be having a good time. It wasn't like Valka inviting her ex-husband was something he could judge anyway; Hiccup had invited Mala, after all, and she was currently engrossed in a conversation about Australia with Valka's parents, her two year old son perched on her knee making a mess of a tiny child-sized bit of cake.

Everywhere he looked, Hiccup saw family and people he loved, all turned out to celebrate bringing new people into their unit.

Slim fingers slipped through his, Valka at his side nodding over to where Tyr was smiling, discussing with his boyfriend whatever it was they were eating. They'd met at the cooking class
Tyr started taking on Wednesday evenings, and Hiccup could not have been prouder when Tyr didn't even 'come out', just asked if he could bring someone home and presented a boyfriend. He was that sure that they'd accept and love him no matter what. And Jack was a lovely boy, sweet and a little awkward much like Tyr, but they could talk for hours about cooking and baking. Jack was less a fan of dragons, but that was what Tyr had Hiccup for.

"They met because of you, you know."

"Me?"

"Yes, if you hadn't gotten Ty interested in cooking, he might well never have taken that class and met Jack."

"Oh. Yeah. I guess so. Well, I'm happy to take the credit then."

He flashed Valka a playful smile, which only grew when she kissed him soundly, the rings on her finger cool on his cheek where she held it. Gods, she was his wife. They had really, actually done it. After a five year long engagement, and every minute he'd waited had been worth it to know she was ready and happy to stand there with him at last.

"Congratulations Valka."

A voice cut into their moment, turning to find Sven looking extremely uncomfortable.

"Thank you Sven. And thank you for coming."

"Aye. I must say, you look much older dressed properly lad."

Hiccup held back on rolling his eyes, knowing his age would always be a mild point of contention for Sven; if that was the worst of it, Hiccup would take it.

"Well, this isn't practical for work, but I think Valka likes it."

*She* rolled her eyes, shaking her head at Hiccup.

"Behave yourself!"

"Never."

Freyra raced over to let Hiccup know all about the cakes she'd been eating, and Hiccup was already envisioning the tummy ache she'd have later. Not that it would stop her. Sven left them to it after another minute, heading over to where his son was to talk to the young couple there. He wondered if Sven had struggled with Tyr's sexuality, but if he did, Hiccup hadn't heard about it from Tyr. Valka slipped her arm around his waist, leaning in to his side.

"You know, I don't think we ever did finish those six days of adventure you suggested."

Hiccup laughed, mind cast back to what felt like a lifetime ago, back when he thought Valka being interested in him was nothing but a pipe dream.

"I don't know about you, but I have all the adventure I need right here."

-HTTYD-

Ah! It's over! *cuuudles the characters* I DON'T WANNA GO!
But we must say farewell sometimes. And I must say thank you.

To everyone who gave the the unrelated!AU a chance. To everyone who's followed and favourited and commented/reviewed. To everyone who read this story, truly. It's been wild, and while I'm sad to see this go, I'm thrilled with the journey that brought us here.

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