Kept

by persephoneggisy

Summary

“Oh, Rhys.” Vasquez actually tuts at him, the asshole. “I’m gonna start making some changes around here. Henderson was always too soft on you and your kind. He cost the Agency a lot of money, you know.”

“So?” the Omega grits out.

Vasquez, if possible, grows even smarmier. “So, starting today, you have a month to find yourself a Keeper. Or I’m assigning one to you.”

Rhys actually startles at that. “Wh- You can’t do that! That’s illegal!”

Or: Rhys is an Omega registered with Hyperion's Kept Omega Agency. Being Kept is different from courting or bonding - there are no formal attachments, just the promise of good company and the occasional bout of sex. His sisters like to call it glorified prostitution, but at least Rhys has some agency of his own, which is more than he ever would've gotten back on Pandora. Of course, that all goes to hell when Vasquez takes over, and gives Rhys an ultimatum: find an Alpha to Keep him, or be given one handpicked by Vasquez himself.
Enter Handsome Jack.
Engagement

Chapter Notes

This is my first Borderlands fic!! I'm so excited y'all

Now, to be fair, I've only watched Let's Plays of Tales, the Pre-Sequel, and half of Borderlands 2, so if there are any... weird details or whatever, let me know. Not that this is set in the canon universe, but y'know.

Also, I changed Rhys's last name slightly from Strongfork to Strongford. I know it's only one letter, and I get that it's supposed to be a play of 'Reese Witherspoon' but kfhgsjfg I hate it. I guess if you like Strongfork though you can just pretend I made a bunch of typos lol

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Being a Kept Omega anywhere other than Hyperion is a mixed bag, as far as the stories go.

The other major corporations just don’t seem to care as much – the Kept Omega Agency branch at Maliwan, for example, was notorious for signing off contracts to the highest bidder, regardless of whether the match was good or not.

Background checks? Maliwan would (probably) ask. What the hell are those?

Though Dahl’s probably the worst, as far as KOA branches go. There wasn’t an Omega in the universe who hadn’t heard some variation of a Dahl-KOA horror story. Omegas in their care either wound up dead, missing, or returned to the agency in such a state that they’d probably wish for the first two options.

At least Hyperion gave a shit. Or pretended do, which was already a hell of a lot better than some of its peers. Admittedly, under Tassiter, things weren’t much better than Maliwan, but ever since Handsome Jack took over, the Hyperion KOA improved by leaps and bounds. Jack, for all his murderous tendencies, respected Omegas; or, at the very least, he knew he value in having a happy Omega factory provide comfort for his employees.

Happy Omega, happy life, as they say.

In fact, it was solely because of the Hyperion KOA’s reputation that Rhys sought to apply there in the first place. His only other option was Torgue, but, well, Hyperion was a lot closer to home.

And, if Rhys had to be a hundred percent honest, he was the kind of Omega who picked up books and movies based solely on how pretty the covers-slash-posters were. Only the ‘posters’ in this case were the CEOs of Hyperion and Torgue, and…

Look, Mr. Torgue seemed like a hoot, but Handsome Jack literally lives up to this name. Talk about the ideal Alpha. For Rhys, at least.

Anyway, Rhys’s decision to go to Hyperion based almost entirely on his hard-on for the CEO aside, he’d been surprised by how… nice their KOA actually was.
Upon his arrival to the Helios space station, Rhys was immediately shown to the Agency’s living quarters, where the other registered Omegas resided. He was given a rundown of their policies, which happened to include a form Rhys had to fill out detailing what sort of services he was alright with providing – and wasn’t that reassuring as hell?

He was also introduced to his handler – a Beta who worked with the Agency that would essentially protect the Omega in case things went south with a potential Keeper, but wouldn’t be tempted to try anything themselves, as Betas were far less susceptible to an Omega’s naturally alluring scent.

Rhys’s handler was a gorgeous, no-nonsense woman named Yvette. He wasn’t really sure about her at first, given that she’d managed to trick him into buying lunch for her when they first sat down to discuss his registration, but they warmed to each other over time. And hey, Yvette introduced him to her other Beta friend Vaughn, who was basically Rhys’s platonic soulmate, so that was a plus to her.

So really, he quite likes Hyperion so far. It’s everything he ever fantasized about and more. He just had to convince his sister that he was alright, and then he’d be golden.

“I just… I still don’t get it, Rhys.”

Rhys chews on his bottom lip, contemplative, as he looks at the holographic image of Fiona projecting from his palm. His older adoptive sister has the same worried-angry frown on her face that she’d had when Rhys first announced his intention to go to Hyperion, and that had been months ago.

“Fi, we’ve had this discussion so many times now,” he starts. “And I’m already, like, here, so it’s not like you can change my mind.”

“Well, you sucked at explaining it to me, so of course I’m still confused,” she snaps back. “You didn’t even know everything about the place before you got on that shuttle.”

“It all worked out. It’s really not that bad a place, Fiona,” Rhys sees his sister’s frown deepen, a skeptical eyebrow raising on her face, and he sighs. “Look. I’m fine. I get a nice apartment all to myself and even a week of heat leave! Seriously, though, they had me sign so many safety forms and disclosures that I would need to be locked in a titanium cage to be any safer.”

“We could’ve arranged that. August knows a guy.”

He rolls his eyes. “Fi.”

There’s a beat of silence, save for the tinny crackle of white noise, due to the poor reception. Then, he sees her sigh, shoulders deflating.

“… What kind of disclosure forms are we talking here, Rhys?”

“The usual. What sort of engagements you prefer – full-time, renting, etc. What responsibilities you can handle, like cooking or cleaning. What sexual preferences you h-!”

“OKAY,” she shouts, startling Rhys. She looks nauseous, he notes, amused. “Waaaay too much info, baby brother.”

Rhys smirks. “You asked.”

“Shut up, oh my god.” Fiona scowls, reaching up to brush a strand of hair back from her face. “… so then what? You just wait for some knothead to request you?”

“Basically.”
“… Rhys, not to sound mean, but that sounds like glorified prostitution.”

“… I mean, I guess?” He pauses thoughtfully. “At least they vet all the clients beforehand. And I have a choice in whether or not I actually want the engagement. Can’t say I’d get the same treatment with whoever the fuck Felix was going to sell me off to.”

As soon as he says the name, he regrets it. Fiona visibly winces, her eyes darting somewhere beyond him, where Rhys can’t see. He feels his mouth twist into a grimace, though his gut is starting to simmer angrily at the reminder of why he needed to leave home in the first place.

“Rhys…” Fiona’s tone is soft. “I… I know he said some things, suggestions, but…”

“But nothing,” he cuts her off, unwilling to listen to this speech again. “He was going to sell me, Fiona. I’m an Omega; it’s all I’m good for, remember?”

The words taste acrid in his mouth. Fiona flinches.

“…And no one’s gonna hire an Omega as a programmer, so…” he laughs hollowly. “At least this way, I can have some damn agency.”

“… Yeah,” she breathes out, like it’s draining her to admit it. She keeps looking past Rhys. “I know.”

He realizes what – or rather, who – she’s looking at.

“How’s Sasha?” he asks quietly. Judging by the hour, she’s probably asleep.

“… She misses you,” Fiona replies. “We both do.”

Rhys’s lips twitch, threatening to curve up into a smile, all awful thoughts about his adoptive father starting to dissipate in the face of his sisters’ obvious care for him.

So of course, Fiona ruins it.

“I mean, our beanpole of a brother, who only became a decent shot when he got a literal computer shoved in his eye, surrounded by homicidal corporate jackasses and horny Alphas? You’re not gonna last a week, baby bro.”

Pouting, Rhys gives her the middle finger with his flesh hand. “Gee, thanks. Really feeling the love here, Fi.”

She laughs – it’s shorter and more clipped than he’s used to, but he’ll take it. “Love you too.”

They end the call after a few more minutes of idle chatter, and Rhys promises to call again in a few days, when both she and Sasha are awake and available.

He goes to sleep in his new bed, in his new apartment, that he has all to himself, and imagines for a moment that he is back on Pandora, on the caravan, getting lulled to sleep by Sasha’s snoring and Fiona’s voice murmuring a lullaby.

It takes him a little longer than usual to fall asleep, but it does the trick eventually.
Rhys has been on Helios for almost a year (take that, Fiona) when it all finally goes to shit.

See, he’d been having a good time of it, being a registered Omega. The manager of the Agency, Henderson, was a pretty nice Alpha, who treated Rhys and his fellow Omegas very kindly, almost like a doting father.

Some would argue he was too kindly, though – when it came down to it, Henderson would always side with his Omegas over the clients, no matter the grievance. Rhys liked that about him, but he could understand why it would piss some other Alphas off.

Still, he never had a problem with Henderson. His assistant (emphasis on the ‘ass’), on the other hand, is an entire bag of dicks.

For some reason he doesn’ know or care about, Hugo Vasquez absolutely hates Rhys. He seems to dislike most Omegas, to be honest, but there’s a special brand of disdain he reserves especially for the cybernetically-enhanced man.

But for nearly the entire year Rhys has been registered with the Agency, Vasquez wasn’t a problem he couldn’t handle. Sure, the guy tried to protest when he thought Henderson was showing Rhys ‘favoritism’ regarding his engagements, and he never failed to have a demeaning and often creepily sexual comment to hurl at the Omega whenever they crossed paths, but Rhys was a goddamn Pandoran; he’d dealt with worse than Assquez.

So aside from him, it’d been a great first year. Rhys has amassed a small but fairly loyal client base, with engagements greatly varying in range. Many of them, to his surprise, were non-sexual; he had a guy in Tourism who just wanted someone to have dinner with every week, and another girl from R&D who would just want to cuddle on the couch in her apartment and watch musicals.

There were sexual engagements, of course. Mainly two or three regular Alphas who would call in if they wanted him to spend the night, or week – it depended on what they were willing to pay. A few were even willing to spend his heat with him.

For the most part, Rhys felt pretty safe during these appointments, Hyperion definitely living up to its reputation of not tolerating Omega harassment. Once, an Alpha tried to force his knot in Rhys during their first time – asshole move, by the way – and all Rhys had to do was activate the panic button protocol from his ECHOeye, and Yvette had kicked down the asshat’s door, punched him in the throat, and pulled Rhys away with little more fuss.

And Henderson blacklisted that Alpha from ever using the Agency again, so that was cool, too.

Rhys receives his fair share of Keeping requests – the most important request you could ever get with the KOA. It’s honestly flattering, seeing how many people want to Keep him, but as was customary, they held negotiations before anything was agreed upon, and most of them were… lacking. So Rhys always said no thank you.

Ah, that’s another bone Vasquez liked to pick on where Rhys was concerned; he liked to accuse Rhys of wasting the Agency’s time and money, mooching off them so he could keep being a puffed-up escort (or whatever it was he said, Rhys wasn’t paying attention). True, the KOA made most of its biggest paychecks for Keeping arrangements, but Rhys knew for a fact that his regular engagements made the Agency more money than Vasquez ever had, and Rhys had only been here a year to Vasquez’s five.

Besides, Henderson never complained about it. Rhys could be as picky as he goddamn pleased. Because… Well. Keeping an Omega isn’t like courting – you cut all that middleman shit out,
jumping straight into the relationship; no muss, no fuss. And there’s no expectation of bonding or impregnating. Both of those things were expressly forbidden, and doing either would result in a personal visit from Handsome Jack (yes, really) followed by an exclusive trip out of the nearest airlock.

Anyway, Keeping is a temporary thing. At least until the Alpha finds a mate they actually want to bond and/or impregnate. And when that time comes, the contract is terminated, the Omega receives a handsome pay bonus, and the cycle can either start over, or the Omega can retire to Eden-5 and live a comfortable life on their own.

In very, very rare cases, the Alpha can make a formal bonding request – though both parties have to agree to it, in which case, the contract is nullified, and anything that happens to the Omega beyond that point is not to be held liable to the Agency anymore. It had happened a grand total of twice in Hyperion’s history, though both incidents were way before Rhys arrived, so details on them were sketchy at best. One pair apparently had a very happy life together, while the other… not so much.

The point being, Rhys wasn’t about to shack up with someone unless he was absolutely sure the arrangement would be comfortable. That meant no hard lines would be crossed, no miscommunication, and no possibility of attachment that would probably bite Rhys in the ass later.

No one as of yet meets Rhys’s criteria; it’s as simple as that.

Unfortunately, things start going to the aforementioned shit when Rhys is called up to Henderson’s office one day, only to find Hugo fucking Vasquez sitting in the older Alpha’s chair, grinning like a smug asshole. Rhys is immediately on edge.

“Rhys! So glad you could find time out your busy schedule to see me.”

“Where’s Henderson?” Rhys blurts, not willing to play whatever game Vasquez is set on.

The Alpha sighs, like Rhys is being difficult, and shakes his head.

“Oh, you didn’t hear? Unfortunately, Mr. Henderson has opted for an early retirement.” A sharp, smarmy grin cross his face. “An unexpected early retirement.”

Rhys tenses. He’s been on Hyperion long enough to know what that means.

“… You killed Henderson?”

“What?” Vasquez affects a look of shock, but he’s a shit actor so Rhys doesn’t buy it for a second. “Rhys, how could you assume – okay, yes. Haah.” He leans back on Henderson’s old chair and eyes Rhys critically. “Anyway, with Henderson gone, I’m up to take over.”

Rhys clenches his fists at his sides. “And what does that have to do with me?”

“Oh, Rhys.” Vasquez actually tuts at him, the asshole. “I’m gonna start making some changes around here. Henderson was always too soft on you and your kind. He cost the Agency a lot of money, you know.”

“So?” the Omega grits out.

Vasquez, if possible, grows even smarmier. “So, starting today, you have a month to find yourself a Keeper. Or I’m assigning one to you.”

Rhys actually startles at that. “Wh- You can’t do that! That’s illegal!”
“Actually, I can.”

He reaches under the desk and pulls out an ECHOpad, which has blocks of text on its screen. One particular passage is highlighted, and after Vasquez sends it his way, Rhys reads it on his ECHOeye with growing horror.

“It’s an old rule,” admits the Alpha, watching Rhys’s complexion go paler with glee, “but still a rule. And I quote: ‘Any Omega not Kept after a year of being registered will be assigned a Keeper by the current head of the Agency.’ Pretty succinct, I would say.”

“That’s…” Rhys is at a loss. “That’s ridiculous! Handsome Jack wouldn’t stand for this!”

“It’s from Tassiter’s days,” shrugs Vasquez. “And look, Handsome Jack only cares if you break the rules. This, Rhys? This is perfectly, one hundred percent legal.”

Rhys is absolutely shaking with anger – and fear, possibly, because the dark look Vasquez is giving him indicates that whoever he’s thinking of for Rhys will not be a good Alpha.

As if sensing Rhys’s fear, Vasquez smirks. “Remember Thaddeus, Rhys? Henderson had him blacklisted over a silly little misunderstanding a while back… Because of you, actually. He’s really been looking forward to seeing you again.”

Rhys swallows. “… I still have a month. Right? I just need to find someone else to Keep me.”

“Yeah, sure,” the Alpha waves an indifferent hand. “If you can find anybody.”

“I will.”

Vasquez only waves his hand again, this time in clear dismissal. Rhys immediately turns on his heel and storms out, swearing under his breath. His mind is a mess of emotions – anger at Vasquez, grief at Henderson’s demise, fear for his future.

He doesn’t stop walking until he gets back to his apartment and closes the door behind him. He lets out a shuddering breath, sliding down the door until his butt hits the ground. Then he puts his head between his knees, and screams.

Yvette stops by an hour later, accompanied by Vaughn – they’ve both heard the news, since Yvette received an e-mail from Vasquez about her charge’s newest ‘development’. They join Rhys in cursing the Alpha, drinking to Henderson, and brainstorming ways to help the Omega out of his predicament.

“I mean…” Vaughn squints at the ceiling, cheeks flushed with alcohol. “We could just kill him. ‘S what he did to Henderson.”

“Please,” scoffs Yvette. “That paranoid son of a bitch won’t give us the chance. Besides, he’ll probably expect it from us.”

“I could hire my sisters,” Rhys muses, nursing the bottle of tequila close to his chest. “They’d totally kill for me. Although Fiona would probably say ‘I told you so’ about Hyperion being shit.”

“Is that worth it, bro?” asks Vaughn.

Rhys hesitates long enough that they know the answer. Yvette sighs, dragging a hand down her face.

“Okay. Okay, the easiest thing we can do is get Rhys a Keeper. Shouldn’t be hard. He gets offers all
“Yeah, but…” Rhys frowns. “I’ve never liked any of them.”

“I’m sorry, Rhys, but you’re gonna have to like one. It’s either one of them, or Vasquez’s pick.”

They all shudder.

“Guys!” Vaughn suddenly shouts. “We could kill Vasquez’s pick.”

“Plan C, Vaughny, Plan C.”

“Oh, What’re Plans A and B again?”

“Plan A is get Rhys Kept. Plan B is kill Vasquez.”

“I have a Plan D,” Rhys grimaces, taking a swig from the bottle. “I could quit and move back to Pandora.”

“Your sister would still be smug,” points out Yvette.

“Yeah, but at least I’d be with her and Sasha. Maybe I could get a job at Mad Moxxi’s after all… I think I’m cute enough.”

“You’re totally cute enough, bro.”

“Bro…”

Yvette rolls her eyes at the two men, who are now holding each other and sobbing, repeating ‘bro’ in increasingly pathetic tones. She turns to her ECHOpad instead and starts sifting through the requests for Rhys. He’d had at least three last she checked, so maybe they’d get lucky and…

Huh?

Yvette frowns, tapping her finger harder on the screen. Rhys notices, and stops his bro tirade, which gets Vaughn to notice, too.

“Vette? What’s wrong?” asks the shorter Beta.

“It’s…” Yvette shakes her head. “It’s nothing. I should go check my computer at home.”

“Check for what?”

“I thought I had some offers for Rhys on here… Maybe I deleted them.” She shrugs, trying to shake a growing uneasy feeling. “But my computer saves backups of every message I receive. I’ll check at home.”

Rhys frowns as she gets up, collecting her stuff. “You sure everything’s okay?”

“… I’ll tell you if they’re not.” She gives her two best friends her best smile. “Talk to you guys later. Rhys, don’t get too shitfaced. We’re gonna go into overtime to get you as Keep-able as possible.”

Vaughn snorts. “Rhys is plenty Keep-able! I’d totally Keep you if I was an Alpha, bro.”

“You’re a true bro, bro.”

Yvette doesn’t even have the energy to roll her eyes again. She simply smiles, and turns away,
hoping that her uneasy feeling is just paranoia, and not something much worse.

(It’s worse.)

“He’s such a fucking tool,” shouts Rhys, making quite a dramatic picture as he sprawls over his couch, hands pressed against his eyes like he’s tempted to gouge them out. Beside him, Yvette is biting the nail of her thumb in contemplation.

He’s not wrong, she thinks. Vasquez is a complete fucking tool. The asshole Alpha figured they’d try and get Rhys Kept as soon as possible, so what does he do? Bribe, lie to, and manipulate anyone he could to stop that from happening.

E-mails sent to Yvette are mysteriously corrupted, so unreadable that she can’t even begin to guess who they’re from.

Anyone who comes to her in person about an offer almost immediately rescinds it after a few hours, when Vasquez doubtless got his claws into them.

And when they tried to confront him about it? He put on the worst fucking innocent act, claiming that it wasn’t his fault that Rhys was so undesirable.

“Honestly, I don’t know why Thad’s so insistent on Keeping you,” he’d sneered. “But hey, can’t get mad a guy willing to pay mad bucks for your skinny ass.”

Yvette’s honestly willing to start work on Plan B, if not for Rhys’s sake, then for every other Omega who’s doubtless going to suffer under this absolute asshat.

“We still have two weeks,” she says to Rhys, but the Omega whimpers pitifully.

“It’s hopeless. He’s blocked every attempt we’ve made so far. I don’t… I don’t know what else I can do, Yvette.”

Setting her jaw, Yvette starts to pace. “Well, you’re not giving up, that’s for damn sure. At the very least, we’re gonna make that slimy bastard work till the bitter end.”

Rhys lowers his hands, giving her half a smile. “Not too late for Plans B and C.”

She waves her hand. “Just give me tonight. I’ll think of something, Rhys.”

But when she goes home that evening, she comes up empty. There’s… really nothing they can do. Outside of killing Vasquez (and Vaughn has already not-so-surreptitiously dropped a few names of people she has no doubt are assassins, Jesus Christ Vaughn), the most appealing option at this point
is for Rhys to pack up and leave for Pandora. And Pandora is not known for being the most hospitable place for Omegas, which speaks volumes to how desperate they're becoming.

A sudden ring on her ECHOpad startles her out of her depressed reverie, scrambling to answer.

“Hello?!?” she asks, winces internally at how frantic she sounds.

“Yvette?” It’s a familiar voice – and face – on the other side of the line. It’s Harvey, one of the other Beta handlers. Not someone who handles Keeping requests, she thinks dejectedly.

“Oh, hey, Harv. What’s up?”

“You didn’t hear? Everyone’s freaking out about it!”

“Hear what? Please tell me Vasquez died.”

It’s a long shot, but she’s still disappointed when Harvey shakes his head.

“Unfortunately no, but this is still huge!” He pauses, likely for dramatic effect, leaning into the screen. “*Handsome Jack* is putting in a request to Keep!”


“I only just found out a few hours ago, after you and Rhys left the office,” answers Harvey. “But the rumors say he’s not requesting anyone specific, just asking to look at some files. Everybody’s working themselves up into a frenzy, especially Vasquez. Apparently Handsome Jack himself called in with the request.”

“Wait,” Yvette holds up her free hand. “Vasquez is putting the files together?”

“Well, yeah. He is the manager, however much he doesn’t deserve it.”

“*Damn,*” she curses. No way Vasquez is going to put Rhys’s name in.

Henderson would’ve definitely put Rhys forward as an option; their old boss gave Rhys one of his old, limited edition Handsome Jack mugs for his birthday, knowing full well of the Omega’s infatuation with the Alpha CEO.

God, she thinks. Rhys is going to *freak out* when he hears about this. He’s as big a Handsome Jack fan as any other Omega on the station, maybe even more. He’d die for the opportunity for the CEO to even look at a *picture* of Rhys, never mind be his Kept Omega!

But because Vasquez was hellbent on making her charge miserable, he wasn’t even going to get that.

… Unless.

Yvette chews her bottom lip. “… Okay. Thanks for the info, Harvey.”

She ends the call with the Beta, mind racing, and immediately calls up Vaughn next. Her friend answers, though it’s obvious by his groggy demeanor that he’s been roused from sleep. It *is* late, she muses.

“’Vette?” Vaughn mumbles. “What’s up?”

“How much money can you embezzle from your department without raising any alarms?”
“… What?”

“I have an idea to help Rhys,” she starts, pleased when Vaughn seems to immediately become more alert. “It’s a long shot, but it’ll, at the very least, make him happy should the worst come to pass… But we’ll need money to do it.”

Vaughn swallows, scratching at his neck. “… How much money?”

“Bribe money. So, a lot.”

Seven million dollars.

That’s as much as Vaughn can scrape away from accounting without making anyone suspicious. Fortunately for them, it’s more than enough to bribe Vasquez’s assistant into letting Yvette slide Rhys’s file among the ones meant for Handsome Jack.

Rhys, to their gratification, is over the moon when he hears what they did.

“You guys are my best friends in the world,” he’d said, whimpering a little as tears started to gather in his real eye. “God, Handsome Jack is gonna see a picture of me…”

Yvette nods, a pleased smile on her face. At least she could do this much for her charge. “I picked the best pictures of you, too. The headshot is the one where you’re wearing that black silk shirt with the top two buttons undone. He’ll get quite a tantalizing peek of your tattoos.”

Vaughn is humming, equally satisfied as his fellow Beta. “Bro, if Handsome Jack doesn’t want you after seeing that, then he’s either blind, or has no taste.”

Rhys flushes, cheeks pinks at their praise.

Yvette continues, “The full-body shot is the one of you in those tight jeans you bought a few months ago. From the back.”

Rhys grins, and Vaughn throws his arms up towards the heavens.

“Seriously! I am gonna have words with that guy if he doesn’t pick you!”

“No, you’re not. But thanks, bro.” snorts the Omega. Then his gaze softens, and he looks at the two of them with just the gentlest hint of a smile on his lips. “… Really, guys. Thank you. Even if Handsome Jack doesn’t pick me, I’m so grateful for everything you guys have done.”

Feeling uncomfortably sentimental, Yvette averts her gaze. Vaughn, on the other hand, opens his arms wide to the both of them. Rhys instantly falls into the shorter man’s embrace, who has one arm already curling around the Omega’s shoulders. The other outstretched hand beckons to Yvette.

“C’mooon, ‘Vette,” the other Beta says in a sing-song tone. Rhys copies him, singing her name in that stupidly cute way only an Omega can. Plus, his happiness is affecting his scent enough that she can smell the fragrant aroma of flowers and sandalwood from where she sits.

Yvette groans. But they know her well enough to know that she’s only pretending to be exasperated. As she tucks herself into Vaughn’s other side, they all sigh contentedly.
The worry over Rhys’s fate still hung over their heads, but they were counting this as a small victory. For now, they would wait, and see if anything would come of their little adventure in embezzlement and bribery.

Two days later, Rhys is at the Agency’s headquarters, trying to figure his next move – he’s only got half a week left, at this point – when Yvette bursts in, eyes wide and posture stiff.

He opens his mouth to ask what’s wrong, but the Beta woman strides over to him, grabs him by the wrist, and starts tugging him along. She’s not stronger than Rhys, but he’s so bewildered by her behavior that he doesn’t fight back.

“Yvette, what the hell?” he asks as they trudge through the hallways of the KOA. They pass other Omegas and their handlers, some eyeing Rhys with odd looks. Some even look angry.

“Handsome Jack is here,” Yvette says, not halting her pace, even when Rhys freezes. She just keeps pulling him along, forcing him to make his legs move to keep up.

“What?!?”

“Handsome Jack. Is here. In the meeting room, with Vasquez. And he wants to see you.”

Rhys’s eyes grow impossibly wider. “W-What? Why?” They’re approaching said meeting room now – is Handsome Jack really right freakin’ there?!

Yvette stops just before the door, whirling around and putting her hands on Rhys’s shoulders. Her gaze is deadly serious.

“Rhys. He’s here for you. At the Kept Omega Agency. Why do you think he’s here?”

“Oh god.”

“This is the literal opposite of the nightmare scenario, Rhys,” Yvette says, adjusting Rhys’s clothes for him, and smoothing back his hair. He’s too dazed to thank her for it. “You’re gonna go in there, show off your cute little butt, get Handsome Jack to Keep you, and Vasquez can fucking suck it.”

That startles a laugh out of the Omega, whose stance relaxes marginally. “O-Okay. Okay, yeah, let’s do this.”

He gives Yvette a thumbs up. She nods, turns, and opens the door for him.

Rhys walks inside, and oh my god.

Sitting languidly on the meeting room’s plush velvet couch, looking for all the world like every Omega’s (read: Rhys’s) hottest wet dream, was the epitome of Alpha. Broad-shouldered and muscular, but not overtly so, clad in casual clothes that still somehow conveyed power and wealthy beyond anything Rhys could ever imagine.

Two eyes, one green and the other blue, glance up as the door opens and Rhys steps inside, and when they land on the Omega, something sharpens in his gaze.

Handsome goddamn Jack stands, a smirk slowly crossing his masked face as he looks Rhys up and
down. Rhys can barely register the sound of Yvette entering behind him and clicking the door closed. The room is just him and Jack, and literally nothing else matters.

Until Vasquez ruins it.

Rhys certainly hadn’t noticed the other Alpha there, his presence easily dwarfed by their CEO, but he coughs politely into his fist, regrettably drawing Rhys’s attention away from Jack.

“Mr. Strongford,” Vasquez introduces, his smile obviously fake. There’s anger in his eyes, to Rhys’s immense satisfaction. “I’m sure you know our guest.”

Rhys’s eyes flick back over to Jack, who’s gotten closer, a mere few feet away from the Omega. He’s got his head cocked to the side, smirk still on his lips. Rhys licks his own lips, wetting them, and Jack’s smirk only grows wider.


Jack takes another few steps, and then wow, he’s right in front of Rhys. This close, the Omega can’t help but lift his head and smell him. His scent is – powerful, and not in the overwhelming kind of way. He smells dangerous, like gunpowder and musk.

Rhys could honestly die right now and not be upset. It could not get better than this.

Except, it does, because Jack opens his mouth, and…

“Damn, pumpkin. You’re even prettier in person.”

Rhys squeaks, warmth flooding his face. He’d be embarrassed, except his reaction only elicits a fond grin from Jack, and a furious glare from Vasquez. He thinks he can hear Yvette fist-pumping behind him.

Jack starts to circle around him, taking Rhys in from every angle. He whistles, pitch low and appreciative.

“I thought for sure your pictures were ‘shopped, but no. Fuck, those legs…” Jack spends a moment admiring said legs – Rhys is glad he put on one of his tighter pairs of slacks today – before he finishes his walkaround and stops, once again directly in front of Rhys. “It’s… Reez? That how you say it?”

“R-Rhys, sir,” he corrects, afraid for a half a second that he shouldn’t correct Handsome Jack, but the Alpha only nods.

“Rhys,” he replies. He raises a hand brushes the back of his index finger against Rhys’s neck, making the Omega’s heart start pounding even more rapidly in his chest. “Mind if I get a whiff, Rhysie?”

Rhys bites his bottom lip to keep himself from making another stupidly embarrassing noise, and nods, baring his neck submissively.

Jack grins and wastes no time in leaning down, dragging his nose against Rhys’s scent gland. He doesn’t have a strong scent, per say, except when he’s in heat, but Yvette and Vaughn and all his clients say they like the way he smells. He prays to whatever god is out there that Jack will like it, too.

Just as Jack takes another inhale, Rhys catches sight of Vasquez over Jack’s shoulder. The other
Alpha looks downright murderous, glaring daggers in Rhys’s direction. Rhys’s lips curl into a smug smile that he makes sure the asshat can see.

Then Jack steps back, blocking Rhys’s view of Vasquez once more.

“Yeah, that’s the stuff,” he sighs. “Man. The legs, that arm, the ECHOeye, and now you smell like fucking heaven on top of all that? It’s like you walked right outta my dirtiest rut dream, kitten.”

Rhys is overwhelmed, because holy shit. People do not just say things like that. Then again, Handsome Jack isn’t people.

“T-Thank you, sir.”

Jack’s smile is more leisurely now, though his gaze is no less intense. “I need to talk to you alone, sweetheart. About our… arrangement. That alright with your Beta friend over there?”

Rhys swallows, tearing his eyes away from Jack to look at Yvette. She frowns, glancing at Jack – she’s happy the guy is here, and that he seems pretty into Rhys, but she’s also supposed to protect her charge.

Still, Rhys doesn’t want to fuck this up. He nods imploringly at her, and it takes just a few seconds, but she eventually sighs and walks out of the room, leaving the door open behind her.

Jack looks pleased, and he snaps his fingers, startling Rhys. “You too, Wallethead.”

The omega frowns. Who the f –

“Handsome Jack, sir,” Vasquez answers – Wallethead? “It’s not really our policy…”

“Don’t care. Get out, or I shoot you.” Jack’s hand hovers dangerously close to the gun holstered on his thigh. Vasquez audibly gulps, and hightails it out of the room in short order. A few seconds later, and Yvette’s hand is closing the door, giving Jack and Rhys complete privacy.

Jack takes Rhys’s cybernetic hand and gently starts pulling him back towards the couch. “Come sit with me, cupcake.”

Rhys follows easily, practically in a trance. Maybe he’s already dead, he thinks, and he’s in heaven.

After they sit down, Jack doesn’t release Rhys’s hand. Instead, he softly plays with his fingers, watching the way the joints move effortlessly, almost like a real hand would.

“Pretty old model,” says Jack. “Looks like you take good care of it, though, Rhysie.”

Rhys smiles. “Y-Yeah, I… My sisters chipped in to help pay for the arm, so I better take good care of it, y’know?”

Jack’s lips twitch up. “Sisters, huh? Not Hyperion, I’m guessing. Even the lowest salary on Helios would be able to afford you a better model.”

“Well, they’re…” Rhys hesitates for a moment. “They’re back on Pandora. So no, not Hyperion.”

The CEO blinks. “You’re Pandoran?”

“Yeah…” Rhys squares his shoulders. Everyone knows Handsome Jack isn’t… fond of Rhys’s home planet, which is fair, considering all the bandits and cannibalism and horror stories that float back up to the space station. It’s still where Rhys is from, though, and even if he doesn’t love it
either, it’s also where his sisters are actually proud to call home.

But instead of looking disgusted or even just disappointed, Jack only says, “Huh,” and strokes his thumb over metal knuckles.

“Gotta be honest, cupcake… a hot, young Omega like you? Figured Pandora would eat you alive.”

Rhys swallows, clenching his cybernetic hand into a fist, looking down at it instead of the Alpha.

“It tried,” he admits quietly.

Jack is quiet for a moment. Then, he raises his other hand and uses it to tilt Rhys’s head up, making the Omega meet his eyes once again.

“Here’s the deal, Rhys,” he begins. “I really wanna Keep you.”

Rhys almost breaks down crying at that – because thank god he hasn’t screwed this whole thing up by now – but he keeps himself in check, because clearly Jack isn’t finished.

“But before we can sign any of that official shit, there are a couple of… conditions.”

“W-… What sort of conditions…?” Rhys asks, breathless.

“I’m a very high-profile man, Rhysie. I mean, duh,” he moves his hand from Rhys’s chin to gesture at himself, though tellingly, his other hand is clasped over Rhys’s cybernetic fist. “And being with me, even as just a Kept Omega, is gonna make you pretty high-profile, too.”

Rhys nods slowly. “I figured… On the way over here, everyone was just staring at me…”

“Gonna be ten times worse once you’re mine, baby. I’ve got some crazy-ass fans; Omega, Beta, Alpha, they’re everywhere. So, for your own protection, I’m gonna need you to carry a weapon. I mean, best case scenario you never have to use it, but in my experience, a lot of attacks are halted when the attacker knows their target is armed. Since you’re Pandoran, I’m guessing you already know how to shoot?”

“I’ve… fired a gun before, yeah,” Rhys admits, shifting awkwardly. “Not really a fan of it, though.”

Jack quirks a brow. “You can’t tell me you survived your whole life down there without firing off more than a few rounds.”

Rhys shrugs. “My older sister gave me a stun baton when I turned sixteen. I preferred using that.”

The Alpha blinks, then barks out a laugh. “A stun baton! Fuck, that actually suits you, I think. Alright, I can get you one of those, no problem.”

Rhys is actually kind of excited at the prospect. He’d had to sell his old one (with Fiona’s blessing) to help pay for the shuttle ride to Helios. It’d be nice to hold a baton in his hands again.

“So I need to be armed,” he says, mostly for his own clarification, but appreciates that Jack nods anyway. “Anything else?”

“Yeah. So… Your file said you were good at all that housekeeping shit?”

“Mmhmm,” he hums, trying to not let his bitterness show. Since he was the only Omega in the family, it was all Felix would let him do. Fiona and Sasha gave him more freedom, but whenever dear old dad was around… Rhys was nothing better than a free maid service.
Jack’s eyes are piercing into his. “Including babysitting?”

It’s Rhys’s turn to blink. “I… Yes?”

“Cool, cool.”

Jack fails to offer up clarification right away, as he stares down at their joined hands as if in deep contemplation, so Rhys has to clear his throat a little to get his attention again.

“Why do you, uh… need a babysitter?”

All of a sudden, Jack’s gaze is cool. He looks much more like all the posters and promotional material plastered all around Helios. It makes Rhys want to shiver, but Jack’s answer makes him freeze.

“Because I have a daughter.”

...  

“Wait, what?”

“Yep,” Jack says with fake cheer, popping the ‘p’ at the end of the word. “Light of my life, my little girl. Now, like I said, Rhysie, I’m a high-profile guy. When I took over this company, I made the decision to erase any and all mention of my baby to help protect her. So, to answer your unasked question, that’s why you’ve never heard of her before.”

“I… O-Oh.” Rhys’s head is spinning – Handsome Jack has a daughter? “How… How old is she?”

“Turned ten a few weeks ago,” Jack replies. His tone goes a little tighter. “She just presented, too. An Omega, just like you, sweetheart. ‘S part of the reason I decided to look for a Kept Omega.”

Slowly, Rhys starts to understand. Presenting can be a confusing time, especially when one was younger. Rhys himself presented at nine, and he’d had no one to tell him what was happening to his body. Fiona and Sasha thought he’d gotten sick; it wasn’t until Felix got home, three days later, that he took one whiff of the air and said, with obvious disdain, “Great. You turned out to be an Omega.”

And still, even with his sisters’ help, he had to suffer through puberty alone. On Pandora. He wouldn’t wish that on his worst enemy – except maybe Vasquez.

“You want someone to be there for her,” Rhys says softly, affection swelling for the man he already idolizes. “But you can’t just hire an Omega nanny without someone noticing and wondering why. A Kept Omega would be a way for you to look out for her, and make it seem to the rest of the station that you just wanted an Omega for yourself. I understand.”

Jack gives him a look – calculating, Rhys thinks – and then smiles, but it’s sharp and not at all the lustful, amused one he’d been giving the Omega earlier.

“I’m glad you do.” He leans in close, mouth close to the shell of Rhys’s ear, and Rhys’s heart stops for a minute. “Because I love my baby girl more than anything in the world. If people found out about her, and that put her in danger, and I find out you’re the reason why… I don’t care how pretty you are. You get me, Rhysie?”

Rhys shudders. Worryingly, he can’t tell if it’s out of fear or arousal. Probably safer to say fear. “Y-Yes, sir.”
“Good.” Jack sits back, the coldness in his demeanor gone, evaporated like smoke. Rhys is going to
get whiplash being around this man, he can tell. “And, just for the record, I’m not Keeping you
solely for my daughter’s benefit. The things I’m gonna do to you, Rhys… You in?”

Aaaand Rhys’s blush was back, full force. “Ohmygodyes.”

Jack winks at him, then stands up, striding over to the door. He opens it, sticking his head out, and
yelling.

“Yo, Wallethead! Draw up that paperwork! I’m Keeping him!”

Rhys hears Yvette’s ‘In your face, Assquez!’ and Vasquez’s wobbling voice next.

“S-Sir, I think it would be in your best interest to pick someone more… suitable.”

There’s a beat of silence. Rhys closes his eyes. Dumbass.

“‘In my best interest’?” Jack repeats, incredulous. “The fuck do you know about my best interest,
Assquez? That’s a good one, by the way.”

Rhys imagines he’d said that last part to Yvette. Gathering his wits, Rhys stands up and goes to join
Jack at the door. Yvette and Vasquez are out in the hallway, the former looking smug and the latter
looking constipated. Spotting him, Yvette flashes him a grin, which he returns with one of his own.

“S-Sir,” Vasquez continues, “I’m only saying – I just – him?”

He gestures his arms towards Rhys, whom Jack now notices is behind him.

Jack growls, slipping an arm around Rhys’s waist and pulling him forwards to stand beside him.
Rhys preens at the obvious display of dominance. And, feeling a bit brave, he lays his head on Jack’s
shoulder and raises a brow at Vasquez’s sputtering form. Yvette looks proud. Jack, for his part,
seems pleased with Rhys’s boldness.

Go on, his expression tells the asshat who’s made the past month of Rhys’s life absolutely miserable.
Say something else. I dare you.

“Yeah, him,” Jack says, emphasizing his point by squeezing his hand at Rhys’s hip. It earns a
startled little gasp from the Omega, and Jack grins. “There a problem with that?”

“I just – we have another Alpha interested in Keeping him, sir, and it doesn’t seem fair - !”

Jack’s grin drops. “Too bad. I own this little enterprise of yours, you know that, right Assquez?”

Vasquez is trembling. “I-I… Y-Yes, sir…”

“Then you can tell that other Alpha, whoever the fuck he is, to piss off, because Rhysie here is mine.
Now, every minute you make me wait for that damn paperwork is a minute I could be spending with
these,” he slides his hand down just enough to pat the top of Rhys’s thigh, “gorgeous legs wrapped
around my waist, so I’m kind of pissed you’re making me miss out on that.”

Quick as a flash, Jack draws his gun with his free hand, and Vasquez is staring down the barrel of it.
Yvette gasps, Vasquez screams, and Rhys leans forward, eager.

Jack seems to notice the Omega’s reaction the most and aims a smile at him before turning his
attention back to the sniveling Alpha.

“So either you hurry the fuck up, or I shoot you and wait for your replacement.”
Vasquez holds up his hands. “I-I’ll get right on it, sir!”

“Good. Chop chop, dickbag.”

As Vasquez flees, Jack lowers his gun with a snicker. Rhys deflates, a little disappointed. Jack notices this, too.

“Not a fan of your boss, sweetie?”

“Not really, no.” He sighs, sharing a commiserating look with Yvette. Would’ve been great to get both Plan A and Plan B done.

“Well, you don’t have to worry about him,” Jack continues. “After today’s performance he’s totally getting demoted.”

Rhys can’t help the startled laugh that tears out of his mouth. “Awesome.”

Yvette, who’s been watching them carefully, a small smile on her face, finally speaks up.

“Handsome Jack, sir?”

“Hm?”

“Will Rhys be staying with you while you Keep him, or would you prefer he stay at his apartment.”

Jack’s brow furrows. “Uh, he’s staying with me, obviously. Who Keeps an Omega and doesn’t even let them stay with them?”

Yvette shrugs. “Some Alphas are weird about it. How soon would you like Rhys to move in?”

“Soon as possible. You got people for that, right?”

She nods, already whipping out her ECHOpad. “Should I have the movers directed towards the penthouse, sir?”

“Yeah. Tell ‘em to leave everything outside though, they won’t have the clearance to get in and just get shot by the turrets.”

Jack looks amused when she only nods, tapping away at her device. Then to Rhys, he says, “Efficient chick, your Beta buddy.”

Rhys sighs happily, watching her work. “Yvette’s the best.”

An hour or so later, after all the t’s are crossed and i’s dotted, and Rhys, as a newly-Kept Omega, savors the look of abject horror on Vasquez’s face when Jack tells him he’s fired, the pair are entering Jack’s penthouse suite, while a group of small assistance bots carry Rhys’s things in for them.

“You’ll have your own room,” says Jack as they walk in. “But, ah, you’re gonna spend a lot of time in mine, if you know what I mean.”
Rhys rolls his eyes fondly, but before he can reply, a young girl’s head pokes out from behind a corner wall that leads into a hallway.

“Daddy?”

Both men’s attention goes to her. Jack grins, opening his arms with aplomb.

“Angel! C’mere, baby, Daddy’s got someone for you to meet!”

Rhys’s stare is fixed on the young girl – he can’t tell if her name is actually Angel, or if that’s just one of Jack’s nicknames for her. She… doesn’t look like Jack, to be honest, save for her bright blue eyes, which resemble Jack’s right one. She’s pale where he’s tan, her hair is black instead of brown, and her frame is skinny instead of broad. Still, she’s a cute kid, especially as she shuffles out of the hall and shyly approaches them. Her eyes are on Rhys, watching him carefully.

Jack kneels beside her once she’s within appropriate range. Putting one hand on her shoulder, he points at Rhys with his other.

“This, sweetpea, is Rhys. You remember, right? He’s my Kept Omega now.”

Rhys blinks at that. Remember? They’ve never met before.

But apparently not, because his daughter’s eyes light up with recognition. A wide smile overtakes her face.

“You really picked him, Daddy?” she asks excitedly. Without awaiting his response, she bolts forward, staring up at Rhys with awe. “He’s even prettier in person!”

Rhys blushes and Jack snorts.

“S what I said, too.”

Rhys is horribly confused. “Uh.”

“Your arm is so cool!” the girl chatters away. “And your eye! Didn’t that hurt? Daddy says only 30% of people survived the procedure, but you’re still alive, so you must be really tough, right? That’s awesome! How fast is the processing speed on it? Can you scan things? Daddy says that’s one of the coolest features!”

Rhys stares down at the girl, blindsight by the sudden interview. Still, it’s sort of endearing. And he’s never been called tough before. He smiles at her, lowering himself to his knees so he can address her better. As he does, he gets a faint whiff of something sweet, like fruits and flowers. She’s definitely an Omega, though her scent hasn’t quite set in yet.

“Well, uh – thank you, Miss…?”

“Angel!” she replies.

Rhys chuckles. Jack is watching them, he notes. “Miss Angel. The eye did hurt, but only for a bit while I was recovering. I don’t know about me being tough, but the processing speed is pretty fast. About 15 gigahertz, last I checked. And I can scan things. It’s pretty cool.”

Angel’s eyes are round with wonder. “Wow. Is it connected to your arm? How did that happen, anyway? Was it voluntary, like your eye?”

“Alright, sweetpea, hold on,” Jack finally stands, scooping Angel up in his arms. “Let the guy settle
in before the interrogation. Jeez, no manners on you.”

Angel looks abashed. “S-Sorry, Daddy.”

“Don’t apologize to me, apologize to Rhys.”

She turns her eyes towards Rhys, peering up from under her bangs. “Sorry, Rhys.”

Adorable. Rhys’s heart squeezes. “It’s fine, Angel. I’ll answers all your questions after I’m settled, okay?”

She grins and nods. “Daddy, we’re gonna help him with his stuff, right?”

Jack pretends to groan, pointing at the robots still moving in and out of the apartment with Rhys’s things. “Ugh. Why do I even build robots if you never wanna use them?”

Angel’s response is to jump down from her father’s arms, run over to one of the smaller boxes left in the doorway, and run back into the penthouse, carrying the box further in. She looks back at Rhys.

“Your room’s this way!”

And then she disappears around the corner.

“She’s adorable,” Rhys says, mostly to himself. Jack chuckles.

“Isn’t she?”

The Omega glances at him. “She… knew who I was already.”

“Hm?” Jack looks at him, smiling lazily. “Oh, yeah. Well, she was the one who picked out your file first.”

“What?”

“C’mon, Rhysie, I’m not gonna pick a Kept Omega without my little girl’s input. What if they showed up and she hated them? Then I’d have to do the whole stupid thing over again.”

“And she… picked me?”

“Yes. Said you looked pretty and cool.” Jack’s gaze turns into a leer, his smile into a smirk. “She wasn’t wrong. I took one look at that photo of your legs and bam. No way we were gonna pick someone else.”

Rhys has to look away then, because he feels full to the brim with gratification.

Angel pops back out from around the corner, running to grab another box.

“Come on, slowpokes!” she yells, disappearing yet again in her rush towards Rhys’s new room.

Jack sighs. He picks up a box and shrugs at Rhys. “You heard the little lady.”

Rhys smiles, copying Jack and picking up one of his own boxes. He follows Jack down the hall, eager to see what his life as a Kept Omega is going to offer him.

If it’s given him Jack and Angel already, then he can’t imagine it getting any better.
Jack rubs at his face, fingers carefully avoiding the scar. His mask sits, face-up, on the corner of his desk, but since he’s the only one in his home office, he doesn’t really care about anyone seeing him.

That’s when the office door opens, naturally, and Jack tenses for a moment before relaxing, seeing Angel’s face peering from behind the door.

“Hey, sweetheart,” Jack greets. “Something wrong?”

“No,” she shakes her head. “I just wanted to know what you were doing, Daddy. I’m bored.”

“Bored? Well, we can’t have that.” He pats his lap, and she grins, bounding up to him. In no time at all, Angel is seated on her father’s lap, looking at the papers he has strewn all around his desk. There are several photos, all of different people, and Angel frowns at them.

“Daddy? Who are they?” she asks, pointing to the photos.

Jack sighs. “They, Angel baby, are Omegas. I’m looking into Keeping one.”

“Really? Why?”

“Because you need another Omega around, darling,” he says gently. “I know I’m awesome, but there are some things only certain endotypes can do for each other, y’know?”

She frowns, her little brow creasing as she thought. “I guess… So you’re hiring me a babysitter?”

“It’s not like that, baby.”

Jack adjusts her in his lap, picking up one of the files. Vanessa Carsten, it reads, showing a pretty redhead and a confident smirk. Reminds him of Lilith, actually. With a grimace, he tosses her file to the floor, earning a giggle from Angel.

“See, sweetpea, if I hired a babysitter, then people would get curious. ‘What? Handsome Jack doesn’t have any kids, why does he need a babysitter, or a nanny, or whatever? Unless he does!’ and oh, geez, the conspiracy theorists would go nuts. A Kept Omega, on the other hand, is like a nanny, except they do a lot of other stuff, too. It’s basically like… hiring somebody to be yours and Daddy’s friend. But people will think they’re just Daddy’s friend.”

Angel blinks. “Oh… What other stuff do they do?”

Jack pauses, considering. “Oh, they could cook or clean, or just hang out. Y’know.”

“Do they do the nasty with you?”

Jack splutters. “Wh – Who taught you that phrase?”
She swings her legs back and forth over his knees, innocent as a baby. “I read it on the ECHOnet, Daddy. I know what it means. I looked up lots of stuff about Omegas since I… y’know.”

Jack frowns. “Okay, you’re totally getting a restriction placed on your ECHOnet usage.”

She sticks out her tongue. “I’d like to see you try.”

Rolling his eyes, Jack picks up another file, studiously avoiding her eyes. A minute ticks by in silence, and not once does Angel look away from her dad. Persistent little lady.

“… Fine, yes. They would also ‘do the nasty’ with me. You get an Omega to hang around with, I get a maid-slash-bed-buddy. Everyone wins.”

“What do they get?” Angel continues, relentless.

“I… A lot of money? Getting to stay in the penthouse? Basking in my glorious presence?”

“Hmm.” Angel looks down at the files herself, considering. “Well… If you’re gonna… Keep an Omega partly for me, I should help you, right?”

“Knock yourself out, baby.” Jack tosses the file he’s currently holding – Trent Ventas, who looks like a tool. Seriously, were these the best Wallethead had to offer?

Angel pushes some files around, pretending to methodical, though Jack knows she’s just waiting for something to jump out at her. After a minute, it does. Her tiny hands dive into the pile of papers, pulling one up from the bottom, accidentally sending a bunch of other files sliding off Jack’s desk and to the floor. Not that she seems to care, as engrossed as she is with the file she’s reading.

Curious, Jack looks over her shoulder.

Oh. Oh wow. A headshot of a gorgeous male Omega looks back at him. His smile isn’t salacious or secretive, like some of the others’ were, but just a simple curve of his pink lips. His eyes were heterochromatic, like Jack’s own, though it isn’t until he sees the gray neural port at his temple that he realizes the blue eye is one of Hyperion’s own ECHOeye devices. Damn.

Somewhat more importantly (at least to Jack), the guy’s obviously a bit of a show-off. Pale, smooth skin peeks deliciously out from an unbuttoned collar, and even more tantalizing than that are the hints of blue tattoos showing here and there. There’s a black, circular tattoo on his neck, too, filling Jack with the overwhelming urge to bite there.

How did Jack miss this guy?

“Look, Daddy, he’s got more cybernetics!” Angel exclaims, pulling out a full-body photo. She shows it to him, pointing to the full-armed cybernetic where the guy’s right arm should’ve been, and that was cool, but Jack’s attention was currently glued to those fucking Legs. Legs with a capital-goddamn-L.

“He’s… Wow, sweetie. You know how to pick ‘em, don’t you?”

Angel grins, satisfied with herself. “It says his name is… Ris Strongford.”

Jack looks at the name. R-H-Y-S. Huh. He’s pretty sure it’s not pronounced like that, but whatever.

“He’s pretty,” his daughter hums. “And those cybernetics are so cool.”

“Yes and yes, Angel. May I?”
He holds out his hand, and Angel gives him the file, though she keeps the full-body photo, presumably getting a better look at that arm.

Jack reads the whole file, in the meantime. Good at cooking and cleaning, which is awesome. Excellent cuddler, according to some of his past clients, also awesome. Generally good at housekeeping and other ‘typical Omega stuff’, as it was written down. Jack’s eyes wander down further to the ‘Personal’ section, where the Omegas usually wrote quick little passages to help sell themselves.

Rhys’s read:

“I’m probably not going to accept right off the bat, because apparently I’m very picky. Honestly, unless you’re like, Handsome Jack or something, you’re gonna have to try harder than just showing up and asking. If you are Handsome Jack, though, then the answer is yes. :P”

Jack laughs, nearly startling Angel off his lap. He murmurs a quick apology to his daughter, but his lips are still quirked up with mirth.

Gorgeous, skilled, and a fan of his. Like he was handed down from the gods themselves.

“Daddy, this is a lot of files,” whines Angel.

“Oh, don’t worry about them, sweetie.” With one hand, Jack swipes most of the other files off his desk, photos of random Omegas now strewn across his floor. Angel gasps. Jack grins at the photo of Rhys.

“I already have my choice.”

Chapter End Notes

I imagine Rhys totally forgot what he wrote in his ‘Personal’ section lmao. When Jack reminds him he’s gonna be mortified. Also, Jack assigns Yvette to be the new manager of the KOA. Efficient chick, indeed.

Sooo. This was mostly me trying to work out how to write these characters. I may or may not continue it, but if I do, the chapters won’t be, like, sequential? More like a bunch of connected one-shots.
The room is huge, easily bigger than the shoebox the Agency had him living in. The queen-sized bed is covered in luxurious-looking sheets, there’s a walk-in closet bigger than his old bathroom, and best of all, there’s a large, circular window cut into the wall, with a breathtaking view of Elpis and the stars just beyond it.

In his peripheral, Rhys can see Jack’s smug expression, so he probably looks as awed as he feels.

It doesn’t take much time for three of them to move all of Rhys’s things into his new room. Once they do, though, Angel also insists on helping him unpack, and the little girl looks so earnest that Rhys is immediately charmed into letting her.

Angel’s grin when he agrees is bright enough to blind him.

She turns to open a box, one labelled ‘miscellaneous’ by the movers who had packed up his old apartment for him.

He moves to go help her, when Jack grabs him by the arm and whispers in his ear.

“Just letting you know: if there’s anything you don’t want her going through, hide it now. Because she will ask questions.”

Rhys blinks, then follows Jack’s pointed gaze to a smaller box placed at the foot of the bed, that has yet to catch Angel’s attention. It’s labeled ‘Omega Aids’, which of course, means it’s full of sex toys. Rhys flushes a dark pink, earning a chuckle from Jack.

The older Omega swiftly walks over and pushes the box under the bed with his foot, as surreptitiously as he can manage, and fortunately Angel doesn’t see him. Jack is still snickering behind him. He shoots the Alpha a half-hearted glare, which he of course, shrugs off.

Sighing, Rhys returns his attention to Angel, who is carefully laying out the contents of the ‘miscellaneous’ box on the over-sized bed. It’s basically all of Rhys’s knickknacks and other items
he imagines the movers didn’t know where else to put. His cybernetic arm’s charger station is in there, for example, and he smiles when he sees Angel marvel over it for a few moments before placing it reverently in its own spot on the bedside table.

He helps her move some of the items to the designated places, while Jack moves around them, opening the other boxes scattered around the floor.

“Oh!” says Angel, holding up the last item in the box – a small picture frame, two sizes too large for the small, battered polaroid photo inside it.

In the photo, Rhys instantly recognizes the three figures of himself, Fiona, and Sasha, though they’re several years younger – he must be twelve or so. Fiona is in the middle, her arms slung around both her younger siblings’ shoulders, her teeth showing in her wide grin. Sasha is laughing at Rhys, who’s making an obnoxiously silly face at the camera.

Angel holds out the frame to Rhys, who takes it with a small smile. “Rhys? Who are they?”

“These are my sisters,” he explains, pointing to them each. “Fiona and Sasha.”

“Oh. They don’t really look like you,” Angel replies, though her tone isn’t mean-spirited. More matter-of-fact.

He chuckles, setting the frame next to the charging station. “I was adopted. Well, we all were, technically.”

Angel blinks her wide, blue eyes. “What happened to your parents?”

Rhys pauses, looking back at Jack – but to his surprise, the Alpha is staring right back at him, eyebrow raised in what he assumes is an inquisitive manner. He takes a deep breath.

“Oh, well… Bandits attacked our home, basically. My dad managed to get me out, and I wandered around for a bit until I found another town. Then, uh, after a while, my foster dad found me and took me in. That’s when I met my sisters.”

Angel smiles gently at him. “That was nice of him! I’m glad!”

Biting back a grimace, Rhys does his best to return her smile. True, Felix had been kind to take him in. But that had changed quickly enough.

Luckily, Angel doesn’t seem to want to continue asking about his family, as she goes back to unpacking his things. Rhys risks glancing at Jack again, only to find the CEO also returning to task. Relieved, Rhys follows their leads.

Because he doesn’t have much, they finish after about an hour – an hour that consists of Angel asking random questions about each of Rhys’s belongings, which he answers obligingly, and Jack making fun of his novelty sock collection. But it seems the activity has tired the younger Omega out – the intervals between Angel’s yawns have grown shorter and shorter, until Jack scoops her up and starts heading for the door.

“Alright, bedtime for you, sweetpea,” he mumbles into her hair. “Say g’night to Rhys.”

Angel waves sleepily over her father’s shoulder. “Goodnight, Rhys…”

Rhys waves back, grinning, “Night, Angel. Sleep tight.”
At the door, Jack stops, turning to look Rhys in the eye. “Go ahead and change into something more… comfortable, cupcake. I’ll be back in a minute.”

The Alpha’s gaze is filled with intent, Rhys realizes with a jolt of arousal.

*Right. That’s what he’s here for. The whole interaction with Angel had been so bizarrely domestic, he’d nearly forgotten. He was Handsome Jack’s *Kept Omega* now. Suddenly Rhys’s mind is flooded with every single innuendo the older man had managed to fit into the few hours they’d known each other, and he shivers in anticipation.*

Striding over to the dressing room, where he and Angel had carefully laid out most of his casual clothes, he pulls out a soft yellow Hyperion-branded t-shirt, which he’d purposefully bought two sizes too big, and lays it out on the bed. He makes quick work of the clothes he’s wearing, tossing the shirt and pants into the hamper beside the dresser. Then he turns to pull on the yellow nightshirt – it’s long enough that it just barely goes past the hem of his boxer briefs, giving off the illusion that he’s not wearing anything underneath.

After a moment’s deliberation, and remembering the Alpha’s reaction to his collection, Rhys decides to leave his socks on. They’re bright pink with cartoon sunny-side-up eggs printed all over. He kind of wants to see what Jack might say about them.

As he moves to sit down on his new bed, Rhys lets himself wonder what Jack will do to him first. Probably something to do with his legs. The CEO seems very fixated on his legs. Smiling, Rhys stretches out said legs in front of him, almost giggling to himself at the image; long, smooth, and creamy pale columns of shapely skin, enough to make any fashion model weep with envy, and then you see the dumb cartoon egg socks that Rhys adores.

“Do you own a *single* pair of normal socks?” Jack’s voice startles Rhys out of his reverie. He looks up to see the Alpha leaning against the doorway, smirking. He pushes off the wooden frame and, after closing the door behind him, stalks towards Rhys, his bi-colored eyes half-lidded with what the Omega hopes is lust.

Rhys swallows, leaning back on his hands as he spreads his legs ever-so-slightly. He’s rewarded with the way Jack’s nostrils flare, and the way his gaze grows sharper, more determined.

“Nope,” he says in answer to Jack’s question.

Jack chuckles, stopping right at the edge of the bed. He’s standing in between Rhys’s legs, looking down at the Omega. His gaze rakes approvingly over his lithe form. Then Jack reaches out, his rough palm cupping the side of Rhys’s face. Rhys leans into the touch, eyelids fluttering.

“Damn,” Jack says, quietly, as if to himself. “I really hit the jackpot with you, huh?”

Rhys can’t help but snicker at the – likely intended – pun. Then Jack’s hand slips lower, until his fingers are tugging at the collar of Rhys’s nightshirt.

“Off,” the Alpha orders, and Rhys scrambles to obey. The Hyperion tee comes off as quickly as he’d pulled it on, leaving him in just his underwear and socks before the CEO.

“Off,” the Alpha orders, and Rhys scrambles to obey. The Hyperion tee comes off as quickly as he’d pulled it on, leaving him in just his underwear and socks before the CEO.

Jack’s hand returns to his body, now tracing the patterns of his blue tattoos on his chest and shoulder. Rhys bites his lip at the featherlight sensations – it’s nice, yes, but it’s also not nearly enough. He’s fantasized about being taken by Handsome Jack (what Omega on Helios *hadn’t*?), and in his mind, the CEO would be rough, demanding. Not slow and, dare he say it, gentle, like he’s being now.

Not that he minds, Rhys realizes. Honestly, Jack could just breathe on him and he’d probably find a
Just as Rhys thinks that, however, Jack suddenly presses his palm flat against the center of Rhys’s chest and pushes, hard. Rhys yelps, his back hitting the bed with surprising force, and he opens his mouth to protest, but whatever he was about say dies on his tongue when Jack climbs over him and presses his lips to the Omega’s in a bruising, claiming kiss.

_Oh yes, Rhys thinks, dizzy. This is more like it._

Jack kisses exactly how he’d imagined, and more – it’s hard, bordering on brutal, lips and teeth and tongue all threatening to overwhelm the Omega. Though Rhys tries to give as good as he gets; his flesh hand finds its way into Jack’s hair, fingers fumbling for a grip to try and give himself some leverage.

It’s a valiant effort, evidenced by the way Jack grins against his mouth, clearly pleased, but ultimately, it’s for naught. When the Alpha finally pulls away, Rhys is panting, cheeks flushed, and pupils blown wide. Rhys shudders as he feels the first trickle of slick begin to slide out of his hole, dampening his underwear.

In short, he’s wrecked. _And they’d only kissed._

Jack growls – whether at the sight of Rhys or the scent of his slick, he’s not sure. The CEO straightens his back, dipping his fingers past the waistband of Rhys’s underwear and yanking them down in one smooth, fluid motion.

Rhys hisses, feeling the cool air hit his erection, which bobs as it’s freed from the cloth. A bead of precum smears against the bottom of his stomach as Jack tosses his underwear somewhere over his shoulder.

“Look at you, baby,” murmurs Jack, hands now rubbing at Rhys’s sides. “Fuckin’ grade-A gorgeous…”

Bolstered by the Alpha’s admiration, Rhys adjusts himself, hooking his hands under his knees and spreading his legs wide. The resulting effect is a clearer view of his hole, leaking and pink, for the older man, who actually _groans_ at the sight.

There’s something so – _erotic_ about this, Rhys thinks. Him, on his back, almost entirely naked, baring himself to the Alpha’s hungry eyes, while Jack is on top, still fully dressed. But a quick glance downwards tells the Omega that Jack isn’t nearly as in control as he looks. There’s a _sizeable_ bulge in his jeans, and Rhys leaks just a little more slick at the sight of it.

Jack laughs, but it’s a strained, hoarse sound. “Oh? You want my cock, baby?”

Rhys whimpers, nodding his head. “Yes, please, Jack…”

The Alpha bears down again, kissing Rhys firmly. As he does, Rhys feels him moving, and suddenly there’s a finger prodding at his hole. He gasps into the kiss, the sound swallowed greedily by Jack’s mouth. Then the finger is pushing _in_, sliding all the way to the knuckle, and the Omega whines.

Any trace of slowness or gentleness from Jack that might have been there earlier are all but gone now; the Alpha, while still careful, is moving faster than Rhys thinks he can keep up with. The finger inside him doesn’t take long to start pistoning in and out, and it’s soon joined by a second, then a third.
His head is spinning from it all – the sensation of Jack’s relentless fingers, the wet, sucking sounds they make as they pump in and out, the smell of his slick and Jack’s own arousal filling the air. Rhys bites down on his bottom lip to keep himself from moaning obnoxiously loud.

“Ah, ah, Rhysie,” Jack says, lips brushing against Rhys’s own. “I wanna hear every delicious sound you make.”

As if to punctuate his point, Jack crooks his fingers just so, the pads of them rubbing against that special spot that almost rips a scream out of Rhys’s throat. Almost. What actually comes out is a muffled, closed-mouth noise that makes Jack huff against his skin.

“C’mon, Rhysie, you’re killing me here.”

“Nngh,” Rhys tries, not quite trusting himself to speak, especially when Jack is still fucking fingering him like a man possessed. “Wh- What about – A-Angel?”

Jack’s fingers pause for a long moment. Rhys is almost afraid he’s done something wrong, but then the Alpha laughs, pressing his lips against Rhys’s neck.

“Oh, you sweet little – the rooms are soundproofed, pumpkin. Unless there’s an emergency, she’s not gonna hear a thing.” There’s a nip at Rhys’s earlobe. “So be as loud as you want.”

He does that thing with his fingers again, but this time Rhys takes his words to heart. He tosses his head back and moans, hole spasming wildly around the older man’s digits.

“Fuck, that’s it,” Jack says. “Tell me how much you want it, Rhysie. Beg for me.”

“God, Jack, please…” Rhys whimpers, tears gathering in his real eye. “I want you, please, please…!”

“What do you want, baby?”

“Your – your cock! Please, Jack! Alpha!”

The three fingers abruptly withdraw from Rhys, leaving him thrusting his hips against nothing, and a pitiful mewl escapes his lips. Above him, he hears shuffling; the telltale sounds of a belt unbuckling, and a zipper being undone.

Finally, finally, there’s a hot, heavy pressure budging against his slick entrance, pushing and pushing until the head of what is obviously Jack’s cock slips inside him. Rhys’s breath hitches, his body momentarily tensing – because fuck. He can’t see Jack’s dick, since the Alpha is hunched over him, but it feels huge. Certainly, the biggest Rhys has ever had.

Jack’s lips are dragging against his jaw, the Alpha pressing open-mouthed kisses to the Omega’s overheated flesh. Rhys’s begging hasn’t ceased – a cacophony of “please” and “Jack” spill from his mouth like water from a fountain. Jack is responding in turn, murmuring gentle assurances and praise as he slowly, oh so slowly, bottoms out.

“God, baby, yes, you feel so fucking good,” he says, breathless. “Knew it from the minute I laid eyes on you – it’s like you were fucking made for me.”

Each inch sliding inside is hot, thick. Rhys feels stretched to his limits – and then, dazedly, he wonders what being knotted by Jack is going to be like. The thought makes him clench, which results in Jack moaning above him, his hips making a small thrust against Rhys’s ass.
The CEO buries his nose in Rhys’s scent gland, taking a deep breath. Rhys decides to do the same, tucking his face into Jack’s neck and inhaling, body flushing warmer as the gunpowder-musk smell washes over him.

“Are you ready, Rhysie?” Jack voice, low and gruff, asks, just barely audible through the haze Rhys has found himself in.

He thinks he nods, or says something in the affirmative, because the next thing he knows, Jack is pulling out and slamming back in, the loud *slap* of skin meeting skin startling Rhys into a wide-eyed shout.

As soon as he starts, Jack doesn’t relent; he sets a steady, brutal pace that would’ve almost certainly fucked Rhys off the bed, had the Omega not had the foresight to wrap his legs around the Alpha’s waist, keeping them locked together in a way that could only be rivaled by a knot. Jack’s hands roam all over him; his chest, his stomach, a special focus on his thighs, though frustratingly, he only ever brushes past Rhys’s weeping cock with his fingers.

Rhys thinks it’s intentional, that Jack’s teasing him, but he’s too busy getting his brains fucked out to complain.

Of course, that’s when Jack pulls back, settling himself on his knees as his hands holds Rhys up by the waist. Rhys briefly whines, mourning the loss of Jack’s warmth plastered against his front, but the noise is quickly transformed into a moan as he realizes the new position results in a new angle.

“Goddamn, Rhysie,” Jack is grinning, but to Rhys’s gratification, he’s obviously affected, too. Beads of sweat are forming at his temples, his mouth is hanging slightly open as he pants – not to mention his scent.

Rhys wonders if, behind the mask, Jack’s face is as red as his.

A large hand curls around Rhys’s thus-neglected cock, and he jolts at the touch. Jack starts jerking him off in hard, tight strokes, timed to match perfectly with each of his thrusts. Rhys’s toes curl as he howls, feeling every nerve in his body spark off, building to a crescendo until –

“Jack! I-I’m, oh fuck, gonna – !”

“*Hell yeah, c’mon Rhysie…!*”

Rhys comes with a strangled mewl, back arched and muscles seizing with the intensity of it. Hot, sticky fluid splatters onto Rhys’s chest, white marring the deep blue of his tattoos. Distantly, he hears Jack swearing up a storm, and his pace staggers.

The younger man can only stare dazedly at the ceiling. He takes several, heaving breaths as he tries to regather himself, but it’s a difficult task when an Alpha is still plowing into you, and your body is still jolting with pleasant aftershocks.

Then, just as Rhys is getting *too* overstimulated, Jack pulls out of him. Confused, the Omega raises his head to see why.

He’s greeted with the sight of Jack furiously pumping his own dick with his hand, and – *ah*. Rhys sees his Keeper’s cock properly, now. It’s a gorgeous thing, all long and thick and curved up, the bulbous head glistening with Rhys’s slick and Jack’s own precum. Rhys licks his lips, the urge to get a taste quickly growing within him.

That action must do it for Jack, because he finally succumbs to his own orgasm, and Rhys watches
with fascination as long white ropes of the Alpha’s come join the mess on the Omega’s body.

His cock actually gives a little twitch as he smells their intermingling scents drying on his chest. But Rhys knows his limits – a session like that has exhausted him, he can’t get it up again that soon.

God, what’re his heats gonna be like with Jack?

He notices the Alpha shifting on the bed, his hand still clamped around the base of his dick. Rhys realizes that he’s gripping his knot, swollen to the point that Jack’s fingers can’t close completely around it, and he whines again, tipping his head back onto the mattress.

“I wanted you to knot me…” he mutters, though his voice is raspy.

“I know, baby,” replies Jack, sounding winded.

Well. It’s a moot point, now. The Alpha’s knot will deflate quickly, once his body realizes there’s no Omega to tie himself to. Still, Rhys is kind of put out.

“Did you not wanna come inside me?” he asks, pouting, though he can’t bring himself to lift his head again, so the pout is directed at the window, instead.

“Oh, no, don’t get me wrong, sweetheart,” Jack crawls over and collapses next to Rhys, pulling the pliant Omega into a half-embrace. “I don’t think I’ve ever wanted to knot anyone as badly as you. But I forgot to ask if you were on some kinda birth control or not. Better to be safe than sorry.”

Rhys raises an eyebrow, turning his head slightly to look at him. The Omega raises his cybernetic hand and taps one of his fingers against the inside of his upper flesh arm.

“I had a contraceptive implant put in when I first got to Helios.”

“Cool,” says Jack. “Still have to make sure it’s real and working, though. You would not believe the shit people have tried to pull on me in the past.”

Rhys only hums – he supposes he gets it. Someone trying to scam child support from a wealthy Alpha wouldn’t be so strange, were it not for the fact that you’d have to be a stupid son a bitch to try it with Handsome Jack.

“Still,” Jack continues, “that was a helluva ride, Rhysie. We’re gonna have so much friggin’ fun together.”

The younger man smiles. “Can’t wait,” he replies, a yawn caching him at the end of his sentence.

Jack sits up, tucking his now softened and deflated cock back into his jeans. “Lemme get you cleaned up, kitten.”

He walks into the bathroom and comes out a minute later holding a damp yellow washcloth. Running it over Rhys’s body, the Alpha carefully and methodically cleans off their combined releases, as well as the remnants of Rhys’s slick. By the time he’s done, Rhys is dozing off on his supremely comfortable new bed.

“Need anything else, sweet thing?”

Rhys forces his eyes open. Jack is looking down at him with his usual cocky smile, though it’s tempered equally by satisfaction and exhaustion.

The younger man wills himself to sit up – a surprisingly difficult task, considering his limbs feel as
heavy as lead. After a moment, he reaches for the connectors at the shoulder of his cybernetic arm. It takes him a few, pawing tries, but he’s done this hundreds of times before. Soon enough, the locks click and disengage, allowing Rhys to take off his arm.

He holds it out wordlessly to Jack, who, to his credit, doesn’t react to someone literally taking off their arm – though he supposes the man’s seen far, far worse – and just takes the prosthetic, plugging it into the charging station.

Rhys, meanwhile, flops onto the bed properly, curling up against an illegally fluffy pillow. He starts dozing again, sleep calling to him in its honey-sweet voice, when he feels familiar lips press into his hair.

He’s pretty sure he hears Jack mutter, “Still got it,” to himself before he leaves the room, but he surrenders to sleep shortly after, so he doesn’t think much of it.

It’s true, anyway.

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to write smut for this one, buuuut the next chapters will probably be more fluff/slice of life. I have a lot of feelings about Angel and Rhys bonding haha
Exploring

Chapter Summary

Rhys explores his new digs and spends time with Angel.

Chapter Notes

boy howdy was this one a grind to get out lol

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Rhys wakes up, his ECHOeye tells him it’s almost seven in the morning, and that he has an unread message from Handsome Jack.

Blinking himself into consciousness, the Omega runs his flesh hand through his hair, wondering for a moment why the CEO of Hyperion is messaging him. Then, in a rush, he remembers.

Rhys sags into the mattress with relief – it hadn’t been a dream, if the soft sheets and elaborate room are anything to go by. And perhaps the most prominent proof, besides the message from Jack, is a dull ache over his body and dark-ish stains on the bed.

He quickly opens the message, before his thoughts can drift too far to the night before and get him aroused all over again. What he reads is, quite frankly, an atrocious bastardization of the English language, but then he figures Jack probably isn’t the type to care for or appreciate proper grammar in texting.

‘hey bb,’ the message starts, to Rhys’s mix of horror and amusement. ‘had 2 go in2 the office early. idiots cant do anything w/o me lol. n e way, Angel should be up by 8 (if ur not awake by then – i kno i t Tuckered u out ;) ) so just hang out w/ her until i get back, k?’

It’s signed with an eggplant emoji (Rhys can’t help it; he giggles) and ‘HJ’, though Rhys doesn’t doubt its authenticity. He’s only known Jack for, what, not even a full 24 hours, but the idea of Hyperion’s CEO and the Galaxy’s Greatest Badass being an absolute gremlin at texting just seems to fit.

Rhys stretches out his limbs and throws back the covers of his bed, getting up and padding over to the en suite bathroom. A quick shower later, he dresses in his previously-abandoned Hyperion t-shirt and a pair of soft grey sweatpants. He figures he doesn’t have to go anywhere – most Kept Omegas tend to stay in their Keeper’s homes, and only ventured out with their Keepers accompanying them.

There have been a few cases where Kept Omegas were allowed to go out on their own, but it isn’t typical. Unlike with bonded Omegas, there aren’t easy ways of identifying who’s Kept and who isn’t, and most Alphas are paranoid that their Omegas will be attacked – and on Helios, this is a pretty valid concern, considering the number of assholes who work here. Though, Rhys figures that
if Jack wants to give him a weapon, he’ll probably be one of the rare cases allowed to come and go of his own free will.

But today, he doesn’t yet have a weapon to protect himself with, and he’s quite content to spend his time exploring his new home.

Plus, spending time with Angel sounds delightful. So.

Checking his clock display in his ECHOeye, he notes that it’s fifteen to eight. He picks up his cybernetic arm from the bedside table and deftly reattaches it, moving it around and wiggling his fingers to test the motor function, as he does every morning. Finding nothing amiss, he moves to walk out of the room, when his eyes catch on the photo of himself and his sisters on the desk.

Right. He should probably call them and tell them that he’s Kept now. That’s the sort of thing you let your family know, right? Though, to be fair, he also hadn’t told them about Vasquez’s ultimatum, mostly because he’d been worried about A), Fiona being smug and B), them both being worried about him. But telling them that he’s Kept now…

And by Handsome Jack, of all people.

Rhys’s mouth twists. His sisters know all about his crush on the CEO – they don’t get it, of course, but they know about it. Sasha had once shot at a propaganda poster of Jack, both for target practice and to tease her brother, but it upset Rhys enough that he didn’t talk to her for a good few hours, and she had to apologize.

So while they never approved of his infatuation, they’d stopped giving him shit for it years ago. Still, he’s kind of dreading letting them know that the ‘Ultimate Corporate Bastard’ is fucking their brother now. They’ll likely think he’s being abused, or taken advantage of – stories about Jack that spread on Pandora tended to portray him as… almost comically villainous, though Rhys never bought into them.

Fiona and Sasha definitely wouldn’t believe him if he told them about Angel. From an objective viewpoint, Handsome Jack does not scream ‘family man’, so the idea of him having a daughter and absolutely doting on her? It’s so far out of the ‘Handsome Jack’ image, he might as well have been talking about someone else entirely.

Not that Rhys would tell them about her in the first place; Angel isn’t his secret to tell, even to his own sisters.

A knock at his door startles him out of his thoughts.

“Rhys?” Speak of the devil – er, Angel, in this case. The young girl’s voice calls out from the other side of the door, slightly muffled. “Are you awake?”

Rhys feels himself smile, and he decides to push the issue of telling his sisters to the side for now. He walks over and opens the door to be greeted by the sight of Angel, clad in lilac-colored pajamas, her hair a messy disarray of black curls.

She blinks up at him, with a grin slowly spreading on her face.

“Good morning!” she chirps.

“Good morning, Angel,” he replies.

“Daddy says I should give you a tour of the penthouse today!” grabbing Rhys by his flesh wrist, she
turns and starts tugging him along with her. “But first, we should have breakfast! What d’you like to eat, Rhys?”

Rhys laughs, allowing himself to be led. “Hmm. I’m not very picky. What do you like, Angel?”

They stop at the kitchen, which Rhys had only gotten to glance at when he first arrived. Now, though, he can stop and appreciate the luxury of the place – sleek black cabinets and a large island in the center, along with a bar-like counter that has several seats lined up alongside it. Not to mention the various top-of-the-line equipment he sees; he used to think the little stove and fridge at his KOA-given apartment were fancy, compared to what he’d grown up with on Pandora, but wow. There’s even a separate section off the side of the kitchen with a circular dining table, lined with four chairs.

Angel meanders over to the fridge that probably costs more than Rhys has ever made in his life to date, still holding onto the older Omega’s hand, but instead of opening it like he expects, she leans in to inspect a small list fixed to the fridge via a unicorn magnet.

“Hmm…” Angel hums, eyes going up and down the list.

Rhys leans in to inspect it, too, finding nothing more than the names of a few restaurants Rhys knows exist on the station. Almost all of them are so expensive he’s never once considered going to any, at least beyond a wistful sigh.

The little girl purses her lips. “Usually, when Daddy’s here in the mornings, he makes pancakes. They’re the best in the whole universe, so that’s my favorite. But since Daddy’s busy, we’ll have to order breakfast from somewhere else.”

Rhys blinks. “Takeout for breakfast?” he asks incredulously, and Angel shrugs. “Daddy gets bots to deliver to our house, since I can’t go out on my own and no one else is allowed to come here…” She pauses, smiling up at Rhys. “Except you, now!”

“That’s…” Rhys flusters. That’s honestly a bit sad. Rhys doesn’t doubt that wherever Handsome Jack orders food from is more than good enough, especially if Angel is the one that has to get takeout so often, but still. He can imagine how busy Jack gets, meaning he’s probably not home often around mealtimes…

Then again, isn’t cooking one of the items in Rhys’s job description?

“Angel, do you have any actual food in your fridge? Like, proper ingredients?”

She looks at him with confusion evident in her young features, but nods and opens the fridge for him. In it, he can see the standard assortment of a carton of eggs, a jug of milk, and various fruits and vegetables. They all seem fresh enough, so Rhys smiles to himself and looks back at her.

“How about something homemade? Like an omelet?”

Her eyes go wide. “You can make omelets?!”

“Well, yeah,” he chuckles. “Can’t your dad?”

“No,” she shakes her head vehemently. “He can literally only make pancakes! Everything else Daddy tries to make ends up burnt and gross!”

Rhys tries not to giggle at that even as his mind stores that particular tidbit away for future reference. Handsome Jack, can’t cook a damn thing. Except pancakes, apparently. It’s oddly endearing.
He turns his attention back to the little girl. “I can show you how to make omelets, if you want?”

Her eyes light up.

After breakfast – in which Rhys managed a decent omelet for Angel, and she in turn made him a lopsided (but still very well executed, thank you) one for him – Angel insisted on giving Rhys the grand tour of the penthouse.

The first stop, naturally, is her room.

Rhys honestly didn’t know what he was expecting, but her room is just like any other young girl’s, or at least what imagines a young girl’s bedroom to be. Bright pastel colors, mainly purple, pink, and white, cover the large area from top to bottom, and on her walls are various posters and other such decorations. Toys are stacked neatly on shelves and in little cubbies – not surprising Rhys at all, Angel seems like a really organized kid – and there’s an impressive computer set up on a pretty desk next to her large bed.

He whistles appreciatively. “Nice set up you got there.”

She preens, bragging about how she set it up all by herself, even though Jack was persistent in trying to assist her. The thing started up perfectly on her first try, she smugly recalls.

After her room, Angel points out the various bathrooms (there are four on this floor alone – also, there are multiple floors in the penthouse, Christ), as well as the common area, which is as far as most people get, whenever Jack does have anyone else over.

There’s also Jack’s bedroom, and his office which apparently adjoins to it, but Angel doesn’t go inside, to Rhys’s disappointment. That quickly disappears when she tells him that Jack wants to show Rhys those rooms himself, and then he’s just giddy with anticipation.

Downstairs, she shows Rhys the gym and swimming pool, which – wow. Each area takes up half the space, and of course, because Jack is not the kind of person who skimps when it comes to his living quarters, everything is state of the art and designed to look so expensive it intimidates you.

And Rhys is intimidated, so it works.

Then Angel drags him upstairs, to see her favorite place in the penthouse: the entertainment room.

The entire floor, while smaller than the others, is essentially a built-in movie theater for a small group of people. The biggest TV screen Rhys has ever seen in his life takes up an entire wall, and a large, comfortable-looking couch is set up a respectable distance away from it. Video game consoles are lined up in a cabinet off to the side, and next to that is a large dresser containing hundreds of video games and movies.


Angel seems pleased by his reaction, if her smug grin is anything to go by.

About an hour later, the two of them are settled on the couch, watching an animated film that Angel claims is her favorite – and she’d been absolutely scandalized to learn that Rhys has never seen it,
nor heard of it – when a thought occurs to Rhys.

“Hey, Angel?” he asks, and waits for the young girl to tear her eyes away from the screen. “Is this… what you do everyday?”

“Oh?” Angel blinks. “Oh, no! Usually I’m stuck doing my lessons until Daddy gets home. But Daddy said I could take the day off from them today to hang out with you!”

Rhys shares her smile. “Lessons, huh? I guess your teachers can’t really complain to your dad if you miss class.”

“Yeah,” she nods. “Daddy built them, after all.”

“… He what?”

She tilts her head to the side, looking at him like he should know what she’s saying. “Well, y’know. Daddy wrote the teaching programs himself.”

“No, I mean,” Rhys struggles. “Your teachers… are computer programs?”

“Yep. Why do you ask?”

“I just…” The older Omega thinks for a moment. Maybe that sort of thing is common with richer folk? “I’ve never heard of it before, that’s all. I’ve only known people being teachers.”

Angel frowns. “But people are stupid.”

The blunt response startles a laugh out of him. “Some of them, yeah. But some are knowledgeable, about certain stuff. Though I guess you can’t really compete with a computer.”

Still frowning, but with a curious look in her eyes, Angel scoots closer to Rhys.

“What were your teachers like?”

“Well…” Rhys pauses. “Honestly, Pandora didn’t have much by way of an education system, so things like writing and grammar I learned from my mom. Dad was an engineer, so he taught me the basics of math and science, and a fair bit about programming. And after I was adopted, my, uh, foster family taught me everything else.”

Sort of, anyway. Everything Felix ever taught him dealt with cheating and-slash-or lying to get money out of other people, and that had basically stopped when he presented as an Omega. Fiona and Sasha at least taught him how to defend himself, and they scavenged electronics for him to tinker with until Felix inevitably found them and sold them off, ignoring Rhys’s sobbed protests…

But Angel doesn’t need to hear about all that.

The young girl leans forward, looking eager. “You know some programming?”

“Mmhm. Ended up being for nothing after I presented, but I still dabble, occasionally, mostly doing maintenance for my cybernetics.”

“Why was it for nothing?”

Rhys shrugs, the next phrase rolling off his tongue with bitter, practiced ease, before he can think about who he’s saying it to. “Omegas can’t be programmers.”
Angel’s expression twists. “That’s stupid! Daddy says I can be whatever I want. Even if I’m an Omega!”

Placatingly, Rhys holds up his hands. “Of course you can, Angel.”

“So why can’t you?”

“Things are kinda… different, for me.” Or, more specifically, for people who don’t have the universe’s richest and most powerful Alpha as their father. Rhys doesn’t doubt that Jack is raising Angel to be a total badass, and she could very well take over Hyperion one day, regardless of her endotype; no one would dare say a word in protest. “At the very least, on Pandora, Omegas aren’t really seen as… capable? People there would usually laugh when I told them I could fix their electronics for them.”

“Pandora sucks,” Angel intones wisely. It honestly sounds like she’s just repeating something she’s heard a thousand times before, probably from Jack. “But, if you weren’t an Omega. What then…?”

Rhys shrugs. “I’d probably be a programmer right now. Maybe work in data-mining or something equally exciting.” He sighs dramatically, and feels gratified when the girl grins. “Just another cog in the Hyperion machine. A lowly code-monkey. Make middle-management by the time I’m thirty, if I’m lucky.”

Angel releases peals of giggles, tilting over to lean against Rhys’s side. “Well, I’m glad you’re an Omega, Rhys. It means Daddy found you and we can be friends!”

Rhys’s smile softens. He pats the top of Angel’s hair affectionately. “Yeah. I’m glad I’m an Omega, too.”

And for the first time in a long while, Rhys thinks he means it.

Jack finally comes home much later in the evening, and by that point, Rhys and Angel had lunch – grilled cheese sandwiches, which Angel found incredibly fun to make – watched an entire season of a TV show they’d both never heard of, and gotten started on dinner.

In fact, Rhys doesn’t actually know Jack is home, as focused on the stove as he is, and he only realizes it when Angel turns from his side and lets out a happy cry of ‘Daddy!’ before rushing off. Rhys turns to see the Alpha standing in the entryway to the kitchen, leaning against a counter, which he pushes off to greet his daughter with a hug.

“Hey, princess,” Jack picks up Angel and gives her a noisy kiss on the cheek, earning a fake expression of disgust from the younger Omega. “Have fun today?”

Angel is quick to drop her disgusted expression and nods brightly. “Yeah! Rhys taught me how to make an omelet, and grilled cheese, and now we’re making spaghetti!”

“Oh, really?” Jack raises an eyebrow, turning his amused gaze on Rhys, who sheepishly smiles back. “Making a chef outta my little girl, huh, Rhysie?”

Rhys shrugs, turning his attention back to the pot in front of him, stirring its contents. “She seemed interested in learning, so…”
“Cooking is fun, Daddy,” Angel interjects. “And Rhys says I’m really good at it.”

“If not for your tendency to add way too much cheese to everything,” quips Rhys. “Her grilled cheese was seventy percent cheese, thirty percent bread.”

“It was not!”

He’s not facing her, but he imagines Angel’s sticking her tongue out in response. Jack laughs at their exchange and sets his daughter down.

“Why don’t you go set the table, sweetie?”

He hears Angel agree, and her footsteps taper off to do just that. Not moments later, Rhys feels the Alpha’s broader body at his back, scent filling his nostrils. Rhys shivers pleasantly, even more when Jack puts his hands on Rhys’s hips, fingers dipping under his t-shirt and rubbing softly at the skin they find underneath.

“Looks like you’ve taken pretty well to this,” Jack murmurs, smirking against the Omega’s ear. Rhys smiles, mostly to himself, and turns off the heat on the stove. “This is technically my job, you know. You’re not the first Alpha I’ve cooked for.”

“Ah-ah,” Jack says, grip tightening on Rhys’s hips so suddenly it makes his breath hitch. “No talking about your past clients, alright sweetheart? You’re mine now. Every Alpha before me doesn’t matter now.”

Rhys finds himself chuckling. “You know damn well that none of them compare to you, Jack.”

“Damn straight,” grins Jack. “Now, where’s my welcome home kiss?”

“I don’t recall that being a part of my contract.”

“It was in the fine print. You gotta read those things real close, Rhysie.”

Rolling his eyes, Rhys nonetheless turns around to meet Jack’s gaze. The Alpha keeps a steady smirk on his face, his eyebrows raised expectantly.

“Well?”

Rhys leans in, eyes slipping closed as his lips meet Jack’s. The Alpha lets out a pleased growl, hands sliding around the younger man’s hips to press them closer together. It’s really not even that intense of a kiss, just a simple closed-mouth affair, neither of them really feeling the urge to push it further – perhaps attributed to Angel’s obvious presence not too far away – but Rhys still feels light-headed with glee when they do eventually part.

“Mm.” Jack hums, licking his lips. “Y’know, you’re not supposed to eat dessert before dinner, but…”

Rhys snorts, pushing lightly at the Alpha. “I can’t believe people are afraid of you. You’re so cheesy.”

“I can be both fearsome and cheesy, thank you.”

After that, dinner is a surprisingly straightforward matter. Or, Rhys supposes he should stop being so surprised that Handsome Jack is so… domestic when not working. Of course the man would act differently when not putting the fear of god (or, well, himself) into his employees. Now Rhys mostly
just feels prideful at being among the few to see the CEO’s domesticity up close.

He smiles as Jack and Angel exchange stories on their day – with the older man obviously omitting some of the more boring details of business to keep his daughter entertained. Rhys does wonder if he’s leaving out gory details, too, especially when he mentions an emergency meeting with R&D. The Omega’d heard that things could get… messy at those, particularly if Jack was in a bad mood.

But, when they all finish their dinner – with Jack officially ending the meal with an obnoxious, “My compliments to the chef, cupcake” – Angel has spoken much more than her father, and she’s only now finishing recounting all the major plot details of the TV show she and Rhys had binged earlier.

“Is that really all you two did today?” snickers Jack. “Binge TV and use up all the cheese in the penthouse?”

Angel pouts. “No. We also talked.”

“Oh?” The Alpha raises a brow, glancing at Rhys with amusement. “About me?”

His daughter sticks her tongue out, and Rhys smiles to himself as they banter.

“No. We talked about way more interesting stuff.”

“Now I know that’s a lie. I’m the most interesting thing on this station.”

“Nuh-uh,” Angel insists. “Rhys is waaay more interesting.”

Jack looks at Rhys again, who holds up his hands.

“I didn’t tell her to say that,” the older Omega placates.

Jack sends him a grin, then turns to address Angel again. “How is that, princess?”

“Did you know Rhys had human teachers? Like, a lot of them!”


“I don’t,” she protests.

“You’re special. Nobody on this station, ‘cept me, is smart enough to teach you anything.”

She purses her lips. “Well, Rhys knows about programming and stuff. He’s really smart, I bet.”

“Well,” Rhys laughs a bit, shaking his head, “I might be. But I’m pretty sure you could still code circles around me, Angel. I’d learn more from you than you would from me.”

Angel stares at him, blinking. Then, her eyes go wide, and she turns to her father with a gasp. “Daddy!”

The Alpha raises an eyebrow, sharing a curious glance with the older Omega beside him. “Yes?”

The young girl’s grin stretches from ear to ear as she speaks:

“Can I teach Rhys?”
Chapter End Notes

I should point out that I have only the vaguest outline for this story, like I literally only have a list of scenes I wanna write and nothing else lmao

Next time: Rhys finally talks to his sisters, gets a neat new stun baton, and fulfills one of his lifelong fantasies in his Keeper's office (wink).

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