More Than Words

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More Than Words

by NotEvenCloseToStraight

Summary

Omega! Peter Parker is chasing a story about mutants and war time secrets and his search leads him to the time-jumping mutant Cable. A freak accident with the cyborg ends with Peter thrown 150 years in the past, and he wakes up in a world he doesn’t know.

Alpha!Wade hadn’t expected to find an Omega on his land and he certainly didn’t expect the Omega to scent like MATE. But Peter is sassy and sweet and despite their differences, it’s all Wade can do to swallow the instinct to claim, and keep his fangs hidden so he won’t
scare the pretty Omega away.

There are brushes with death and awful winter storms, a hidden mutant town that changes all Peter's opinions, and as winter nights grow colder, the Alpha and Omega huddle in the one room cabin and decide to trust the connection sparking between their souls.

Then Cable snatches the Omega back to his own time, and even though Peter begs for just one more day with his Alpha, Cable refuses to break the time travel rules to reunite them again.

Alone in the past, Wade vows to do whatever it takes to see Peter again. Their love is More Than just Words, and even if it kills the Alpha, he'll find a way to his mates side one last time.

Notes

Welcome to the story! This will be a time traveling shenanigan ft. Modern!Omega!Peter and Mountain Man!Alpha!Wade! Settle in for 25 chapters (and growing!) of all the sass, sweetness and smexiness we love about Spideypool!

(For anyone new to my Spideypool: None of these characters are SM:HC/FFH. I pick my faves from Tobey Maguire/Andrew Garfield movies, and everyone else pretty much comes from the comics!)

Keep an eye out for cameos from X-men, Avengers and various Spiderman characters!

Buckle up! This one will be a doozy!
“To Peter, who managed to not only expose a terrible corporation for it’s greed and lack of morals, but also managed to shake Tony Stark’s hand without melting into a puddle of fan boy goo—”

“Harry!” Peter pinched the Alpha in the side and Harry oopped theatrically. “Either give me a proper toast or shut the hell up!”

“I got one, I got one.” Gwen stood and raised her wine glass. “To Peter, who literally changed the world with his expose on Hammer Tech, and proved that the little guy can and does make a difference.”

Peter rolled his eyes over the little guy comment but raised his drink anyway, and Gwen blew the Omega a kiss. “We are really proud of you Pete. Way to get famous.”

“Way to get famous!” Johnny cheered and clanked his cup with Peter. “Also? Way to land that hell of a check. How many zeroes were on that thing?”

“I counted three before the decimal.” Mary Jane tucked a strand of red hair behind her ear and leaned close for a quick kiss on Peter’s cheek. “Way to go, Tiger. Taking on powerful corporations, writing inflammatory exposes and catching the attention of Tony Stark? Not bad for a punky kid from Queens.”

“It’s not bad.” Peter echoed, tugging the other Omega in for a one sided hug. “And meeting Tony Stark was pretty amazing, even though I think half the reason he gave me the grant was to rub it in Hammer’s face. Apparently those two hate each other.”

“Look at that.” Johnny drawled. “The rich and famous are just like us, they have petty rivalries and everything.”

“Hey, if their petty rivalries mean Peter doesn’t have to pay rent for the next year, then keep the bullshit coming!” Gwen decided loudly and Mary Jane murmured an agreeable, “I’ll drink to that.”

“Was it really enough to pay your rent, Pete?” Harry raised his eyebrows. “All because of your story?”

“Mr. Stark said something about how I couldn’t focus on saving the world if I was worried about my rent.” Peter shrugged off his friend’s wide eyed disbelief. “So he cut me a check from the Stark Foundation and told me to keep searching for the truth. And now—” despite his attempt at modesty, Peter’s smile stretched wide. “And now I’m not worried about my rent.”

“So I’m thinking you and I should be roomies now since I would love to not pay rent for a year.” Gwen chimed in and Johnny snorted a laugh. “But let’s circle back to that later, because I found you something amazing when I was out thrift store shopping and this seems like a wildly inappropriate time to give it you, so here we go.”

Peter shot a curious and maybe suspicious glance towards the usually prank happy Alpha, and tore the wrapping off the box while Harry protested, “I didn’t know we were supposed to bring
congratulatory gifts tonight! That’s not fair, way to show us all up, Gwen!”

“Well Har, I’d say give Pete a chunk of those famous Osborn millions, but I think he’s got the money part covered now.” Johnny leaned back in his chair and cocked his head in a clear challenge to the Alpha. “Which means you got nothing to give him, don’t it? Nothing to offer the Omega at all.”

“And what exactly are you gonna give him?” Harry retorted, and Johnny bared his teeth as he replied, “Well a kiss, of course. Exactly what every Omega wants from a good lookin’ Alpha.”

“Giving something I can get anytime isn’t really a present.” Peter deadpanned and Mary Jane giggled at Johnny’s affronted expression. “You give away kisses like you’re going out of business, Johnny. No Omega wants kisses that cheap.”

“Brat.” Johnny huffed, scowling when Harry chuckled at Peter’s sass. “You’re just irritated you didn’t think of it, Harry. Gwen got Pete a present, I’m offering to give him kisses, so you’re the only Alpha around that doesn’t think enough of Pete to treat him well.”

Harry’s lip curled in a snarl and Johnny echoed with one of his own, and just as Peter started to look annoyed, MJ cleared her throat and announced, “Boys! Alphas who act like knot heads won’t be invited to any more parties!”

“Yeah, cut it out.” Gwen gave each of the other Alpha’s a swift kick beneath the table and scowled at them. “Stop ruining Pete’s big day.”

“… sorry, Pete.” Harry deflated first, Johnny’s muttered apology coming next. “Sorry. Open your present and we’ll behave.”

“Thanks.” Peter gave each Alpha a sweet smile, and went back to his present, quietly and wholeheartedly grateful for things like scent blockers.

Nothing was worse for an Omega than getting a nose ful of hormone heavy Alpha scent, and today of all days, Peter didn’t want to play patient with a couple of jealous, horny Alphas. Usually Johnny and Harry were low key about their interest, but lately Johnny’s jokes had skewed towards sexual and intimate while Harry’s friendly protectiveness was inching towards possessive and Peter really just–

–oh God, he really just didn’t want any part of it.

No thank you.

“Oh my god.” Attention diverted from the Alphas by his present, Peter burst into laughter when he saw– “Gwen, is this a romance novel? ‘Claimed by the Mountain Alpha’?! Why would you buy me this?”

“Oh please.” Gwen looked pleased as hell that her gift had made the Omega smile. “I have it on good authority you have an entire shelf full of smutty romances, Pete! And I know all your favorites are falling apart because you read the sexy parts over and over while you–!”

“GWEN!” Peter turned bright red and the Alpha almost cackled with laughter. “For the love of God, stop talking!”

“I just thought you’d like something to read while you drink your champagne tonight.” Gwen amended, sounding only slightly less wicked. “You can get bubbly drunk and swoon over the x rated parts and I promise to only tease you a little for it.”
“Hey now, what an Omega does with their smutty novels—” Mary Jane started to defend Peter, and then paused to ask, “Wait. Were you going to drink champagne alone tonight, Peter? That is the saddest thing I’ve heard in my life! Champagne isn’t meant to be drank alone!”

“I don’t think it’s the saddest thing in the world!” Peter protested. “Lots of people drink alone!”

Harry was recovered from his earlier embarrassment and winked as he cut in, ‘Besides, I think it’s probably for the best Peter drink it by himself. I think we all remember what happened last time Pete got champagne drunk in public.”

“Can confirm.” Johnny held up his phone and waggled his brows. “In fact, I still have the pictures! Shall we take a stroll down memory lane?”

“That’s enough from all of you.” Peter said loudly and the group of friends dissolved into laughter. “Honestly though, Gwen. Did you set out to find me the cheesiest historical romance ever, or was it just a happy accident?”

“I don’t want to say I went searching specifically for it.” Gwen’s glee over Peter’s embarrassment was almost comical. “But I did check six stores and ask people’s opinion about the purchase.”

“Kill me.” Peter groaned. “Gwen—”

“Holy crap!” Johnny snatched the book and ogled the cover, eyes overly wide. “Look at the tiddies on that guy! Are we sure he’s not the Omega?”

“Not all Omegas have breasts, moron.” Harry took the book next, furrowing his brow at the scantily clad Omega clutched in a brutish Alpha’s arms. “Besides, that’s an old school Alpha right there, look at those fangs. No one has fangs anymore, they started yanking those on Alphas in the seventies. Gwen how old is this book?”

“Apparently older than the seventies.” Gwen ran her tongue over her decidedly fangless teeth. “It’s nice they don’t just rip our fangs out anymore huh? A few hours at the cosmetic dentist and all us Alphas are perfectly socially acceptable.”

Both Johnny and Harry grunted in agreement, and Gwen turned back to Peter. “Anyway sweetheart, I thought you’d like the book mostly for the vintage feel. It will fit right in with all of Uncle Ben’s records and Auntie May’s cross stitched pillows you keep around.”

“I do like old fashioned things—” Peter began, but he was interrupted by MJ, who flipped a few pages of the novel and shouted, “WOW! Pete the sex in this is amazing!”

The three Alphas at the table immediately began clamoring for the book and Peter could have just died when Harry read a line out loud about the Omega being taken roughly against the door and Johnny moaned through a description of the Alpha’s turgid—

“Allrighty then.” Peter snatched the novel and shoved it in his bag, blushing hard enough that the scent of embarrassment filtered out even through his suppressants, effectively shutting up the Alphas and making MJ automatically purr at him. “Please don’t read my smutty things out loud, and definitely don’t shout lines at the top of your lungs, mkay? Thanks.”

“Aw Pete, we’re just teasing.” Johnny drummed his fingers on the table, clicking his tongue soothingly until Peter’s scent mellowed again. “Sorry about that.”

“We didn’t mean anything by it, Pete. But come on, be honest.” Harry waved down the waitress and motioned for another round of drinks. “An Omega like you doesn’t really want an Alpha
like *that*, right?"

“What do you mean an Omega like me?” Peter sipped at his wine and scowled at his friends. “What does that mean?”

“You refused to kiss me until I had my fangs filed down.” Gwen pointed out. “And we were thirteen. They were barely fangs, Pete!”

“You wear suppressants even on dates.” Johnny said next and Harry added, “You only call one of us for your heat at the very last minute when you can’t handle it anymore, then kick us out right after getting knotted.”

“I called you *Omega* last week and you about bit my head off.” Gwen stated. “One time when we snuggled, you purred real sweet so I growled and called you pretty, and you kicked me off the couch.”

“Okay okay okay!” Peter held up his hands in surrender. “Alright fine. Yes, Gwen I’m very happy that Alpha’s don’t have fangs anymore because honestly, *yikes*. And seriously how is the growling thing hot? Growling is practically a threat!. I wear suppressants on dates so the Alpha has to pay attention to me and not my scent, but lots of Omegas do that, it’s not just me. You Alphas wear scent blockers too, how is that any different?”

“And kicking you out after I get knotted? I mean–” Peter didn’t even have the grace to look ashamed. “What else do I need an Alpha for? What’s the point of you guys sticking around? I don’t want stinky Alpha cuddles after my heat, I want a shower and a pound of pasta.”

Predictably, the three Alphas erupted into arguments about how post heat cuddles were *necessary* and that their knot wasn’t the only thing they were good for, and amid the commotion Mary Jane leaned over and whispered, “Okay, but you don’t really hate Alpha scent and growls, do you?”

“It’s not my favorite.” Peter whispered back. “What’s sexy about an Alpha getting possessive and growling? They’re like a dog acting greedy with a bone, except instead of a bone they have knots!”

“Oh my god.” Mary Jane muffled a giggle. “You’re absolutely right about that, but I still think it could be romantic! An Alpha being driven so wild by my scent they are reduced to growls? Imagine having your true mate, your soul mate absolutely speechless, reduced to nothing but their basest instincts when they see you. Or *wow*, to actually be scent bonded? For an Alpha to know you are meant to be theirs just because of your scent?”

“And fangs?” She lowered her voice some more. “I know Alphas don’t have fangs anymore, but *come on*, Tiger. You’d totally melt if an Alpha pushed you against a door and ran their teeth over your neck. Imagine it with sharp and dangerous fangs. Just *think* about it.”

“I *think* you’re just a horny Omega who needs a good knotting.” Peter decided and MJ squealed at him.

“I’m being serious! You don’t think it’s romantic? Not at all?!?”

“I think that our grandparents literally had to march on Washington to give Omegas the right to vote.” Peter said flatly. “Your parents campaigned to have their Omega-Omega bond seen as *legal* just so they could adopt you. It took years and years of serious legislation before Omegas had access to reliable birth control and suppressants so we could lead lives outside the house and it
was May’s generation that demanded Alphas use scent blockers so the rest of us aren’t subjected to their aggression and hormones.”

“Well sure but–”

“Remember forced marriages because Alphas would scent match and imprint, and the Omegas had to mate so the Alpha wouldn’t snap feral and hurt someone?” Peter pressed. “Omegas and even Betas in the hospital for emergency or plastic surgery because an Alpha raged out and tore them up with their fangs? You’d rather have this sort of dynamic–” Peter pointed to the book, to the fangs and the Omega’s clear submission in contrast to the Alpha’s nearly animalistic dominance. “Then what we have now?”

“Well it doesn’t have to be all or nothing.” MJ groused. “Just because I like Alphas getting growly and maybe fantasize about getting stuck with some fangs doesn’t mean I want some Alpha to scent bond me and then force me to mate. Sheesh Pete, lighten up a little.”

“History has proved, it’s pretty much all or nothing.” The Omega lifted on shoulder in a half hearted shrug. “It’s either fangs and no chemical regulators and a society where we Omegas are literally at the mercy of an Alpha’s hormones, or a world where everyone takes their medicine, Alphas get rid of the weapons in their mouths and Omegas can lead normal lives.”

“Pete.” Mary Jane rolled her eyes. “You talk like you have no use for Alphas at all. Look me in the eye and tell me you’ve never once read one of these stupid romance novel and wanted a mate of your own. Social things and work and all that aside, you really don’t want a mate? You’re twenty four and never even had a serious relationship. Don’t you wonder what you’re missing?

Something awful flitted through Peter’s dark eyes then, painful and vulnerable enough to make Mary Jane catch her breath in surprise. “Oh honey, are you okay?”

She reached for him, but Peter leaned away and schooled his features, managing a nearly bland, “I dunno, MJ. I think I prefer this life. Mates and scent matches are about as necessary as fairy tales, you know? I’m not missing out on anything.”

“Pete–” Mary Jane whispered, but just then the Alphas decided to stop arguing and rejoin the conversation and Johnny stuck his nose in to ask, “What’s this about mates? Pete, are you finally thinking about settling down?”

“Nope.” Peter slashed his hand through the air and shook his head. “Don’t get your hopes up. I was telling MJ that mates and scent matches are unnecessary, but what is entirely necessary is my next project, so I need to get home and get started. Mr. Stark didn’t give me all this money so I could blow it drinking with my friends.”

“What’s your next project, Pete?” Harry reached for the bill before the Omega could, and passed his card off to the waitress. “I thought the Hammer Tech story was your entire workload.”

“I’ve been working on a side project for a while now.” Peter blew the Alpha a kiss as a thank you for buying his drinks. “I was going to do one of those genealogy charts as a present for May and was tracking our family through secondary biologies, but then I came across an article that said almost all male Omegas have a mutant in their family tree. So I started researching mutants and it sort of spiraled from there into a –”

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[AUTHORS NOTE: This fic will include themes of racism towards mutants and will reference things such as WW2 concentration camps and past treatment of different religious/ethnic/indigenous groups at the hands of the government. It is talked about in a “It was
terrible what they did back then” sort of way, and as the fic continues, I will try and TW anything notable with in the chapters so you can avoid/skip as needed}---

Peter stopped when Johnny and Harry shared very uncomfortable looks, and Gwen’s eyes widened in alarm. “…what?”

“Pete.” Gwen cleared her throat, visibly thinking through her words before speaking. “Uh… the mutant thing isn’t really… I mean, people don’t talk about that, you know? No one talks about it. Maybe steer away from that when you do your family tree.”

“What?”

“There used to be a lot of hostility towards mutants.” Johnny said slowly. “And even though they aren’t around anymore, people still get upset in arms about it. Hundreds of people died in the mutant uprisings through the last century. My grandpa died in one of those riots, Pete.”

“I know he did, Johnny.” Peter tilted his head and trilled comfortingly at the Alpha. “And I’ve come across some pretty horrifying accounts of what happened on both sides of those fights. I’ve read about mutants in the camps during World War II, I’ve read about different battles across the country, the riots in the seventies– I’ve read it all.”

“Well, a lot of people think the mutant population is better off gone.” Harry spoke up then. “And no one wants to talk about it. It’s one thing to take on big companies who are ruining the earth, but the mutant control they enacted in the forties and fifties… there’s still people around that would take serious offense to you digging around in that. It’s better off left alone.”

“I’m not trying to step on anyone’s toes.” Peter waved off their concerns. “I’m trying to uncover anything, I’m looking for some answers about my own family tree and that’s it. Male Omegas being the last of what we could consider mutants is pretty interesting, but I’m not looking for anything inflammatory, just my own history. I’ll be fine.”

“Promise me you’ll be careful.” MJ worried at her bottom lip. “I know what it means to look for who you are, Pete. Being adopted means I don’t know anything about my family and I understand wanting to look, but a connection to mutants…that’s not great, Tiger. You don’t want that, or at least you don’t want to make a big deal about it.”

“I’ll be fine.” Peter repeated, slinging his bag over his shoulder and blowing kisses to his friends. “Thank you for the drinks and the little party, Gwen, thank you for your present. I’ll talk to you guys in the morning?”

There was no reason to worry his friends with more details about this particular project. They didn’t need to know Peter’s research had skewed far past ‘ancestry’ and deep into concerning accounts of brutality and forced assimilation. They’d hate if they knew Peter had found scattered stories about experimentation and what scientists had done in a horrifying attempt to advance science, about schools that were more like prisons and prisons that were more like concentration camps right here in their own country.

Peter had found hints of a settlement near the Canadian border thought to be a mutant village that had rallied and revolted, attacking a military installation, and killing every soldier, every woman and child. But worse were the hints Peter found about the same settlement, hints that said it had been less of a revolt and more of a massacre, less of an uprising and more of a slaughter, that the women and children had been taken from the village and held captive and the attack was an attempt at a rescue.
It was horrifying, stomach turning, the sort of thing Peter couldn’t just leave alone—

—and then among the scraps and barely there information about the village had been a picture of a man who looked so much like him it was almost terrifying, and Peter’s growing interest in the project had taken an abrupt turn towards obsessive.

There were blood stained secrets in the wilds near the border, secrets that involved someone related to Peter, and he fully intended to find out every single one.

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His doorbell rang and interrupted his packing, and the Omega wrinkled his nose in annoyance. He’d told the Alphas he was busy, Aunt May never came around without calling first, it had better not be the maintenance guy finally showing up to fix the leaky faucet at eight at night. “Hold on a minute!” Peter finally called when the bell dinged again. “Give me just a second to get— Oh. Mary Jane.”

Peter checked down the hall to see if anyone else had come along with the redhead. “Hey. What are you doing here?”

“I would have called, but my phone is dead. Can I use your charger?” MJ pushed right past Peter and into the apartment, holding up a bag of Peter’s favorite take out as she went. “I kept thinking about you drinking that champagne alone and that drove me crazy so I stopped and got food and came to share the bubbly.”

“You’re very sweet.” Peter stepped close to the other Omega and brushed his nose across her cheek, smiling when she trilled softly and returned the gesture. “I’m not doing much, so dinner and champagne sounds great. Thank you.”

“Are you already working on your new project?” MJ’s coat landed over a chair as she went right for the champagne. “Or have you started that book Gwen got you? I swear Pete, would it kill you to do some relaxing outside your apartment? All you ever do is work and—”

The pretty redhead paused when she caught sight of the half packed backpack, her gaze sharpening in curiosity. “—Pete? Where are you going? You didn’t say anything about leaving when he had lunch today.”

“Yeah.” Peter scratched at the back of his neck uncomfortably. “Yeah, um about that. I’m heading for upstate tomorrow, gonna do a little hiking and poke around up by one of the lakes. Some rest and relaxation, you know? I won’t be gone more than a few days.”

“Uh-huh.” Mary Jane narrowed her eyes. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

“Well I mean—” Peter tried for casual, trying to make his friend laugh and hopefully distract her. “Remember the last time one of us tried to leave town for a mini vacation?”

“Mm-hmm, Gwen was going to road trip to visit her Nana and we all ended up crammed in her Subaru and driving to Disney World.” Mary Jane picked up the legal pad full of Peter’s notes and read through the first few lines. “I vividly remember having to sit on Johnny’s lap the entire time–Pete, this is all notes about mutants. Why do you have all these, you said it wasn’t that big of a
Damn it. “Yep.” Peter shoved his hands in his pockets and rocked back on his heels. “That’s–that’s what I said.”

“Then what is all this?” Mary Jane flipped through a few more pages. “Newspaper clippings and quotes and what’s this, a piece from an old book? What happened to researching your family tree?”

“I… was.” Peter hedged, taking the legal pad from her hands. “I was researching. But then it turned into something else.”

“Something else what.” MJ prompted. “Why are you so interested in mutants all the sudden? Where’s the mystery in it, Pete? They used to exist and now they don’t, and every book you pick up is going to tell you the same thing–mutants disappeared in the seventies and no one knows what happened.”

“Someone has to know what happened, MJ.”

“Well.” The Omega huffed. “Sure someone has to know, but this is like chasing aliens. Everyone has accepted that mutants don’t exist anymore, and the people who haven’t accepted it get treated like they’re crazy until they get overly nosy and irritating and get visits from men in black suits. Is that what you want? To have everyone think you’re nuts?”

“Doesn’t the visit from men in black suits prove there’s something they’re trying to hide?” Peter pointed out with a small smile. “And yeah, I read all the books MJ. I tracked down newspaper articles, I’ve done my research on the claims the tabloids print about super powered humans and dangerous mutants. I know it’s crazy and I know–” he blew out a deep breath. “–I know working on this could cost me every bit of credibility my last article gave me. I know that.”

“Then why are you risking it?” Mary Jane gestured to his bag, to the stack of information. “Don’t you remember Doctor Connors from a few years ago? He got hooked on research about mutants and genetic experimentation and ended up in a padded cell, screaming about turning into a lizard and regrowing limbs. All his research has been trashed, the books he’s written discredited, and everyone thinks his mental state was so compromised that his previous findings can’t be trusted. That could happen to you, Pete.”

“It know it could, but I have to find out anyway.” Peter shrugged helplessly and Mary Jane threw her hands up in frustration. “I gotta find answers about this. If there’s a mutant in my family tree somewhere, I have to know who they are.”

“This is about what happened at lunch.” MJ suddenly realized. “When we were talking about you missing out on something because you don’t have any interest in relationships. You got this real awful expression on your face. What’s wrong, and what does it have to do with mutants?”

Peter looked at his friend for a long long moment, and then finally asked, “Do you know what it’s like to wake up every morning and grieve for something you don’t know you’re missing? It’s something essential from your core, from your very center of being, and you can’t even breathe for lack of it, but you don’t know what it is.”

Mary Jane only blinked at him, and Peter sighed, dropping onto the couch and putting his face in his hands. “I feel like that every day, MJ. It started after I lost my parents and it got worse when I had to move schools and a worse again when I moved out of May and Ben’s to get my own place. I have a great life, you know? I have great friends and a wonderful career– I mean hell, I won an
award today. Because of my work, those slums will be bulldozed and Hammer Tech has to pay to build quality housing for their workers. I did that, and I’m very proud of it.”

Peter tapped at his chest. “But I’m still empty. Hollow. Something is missing from me and lately it’s been getting worse. I’m hardly sleeping, I can’t concentrate, I’ve lost like fifteen pounds cos I can’t make myself eat. I think I’m depressed but why would I be depressed?” and then with a self deprecating laugh. “I’d say I’m in love and needing my Alpha, but I’ve never been in love in my life.”

“Oh, Tiger.” MJ clicked her tongue sympathetically and joined Peter on the couch, budging close and wrapping her arms around his waist. “I’m so sorry.”

“This is why I became a reporter.” Peter suddenly sounded tired, exhausted really, more weary than Mary Jane had ever heard. “I’m looking for something in my life and being a reporter means I get to go places and meet people and research and maybe one day I’ll figure out what’s gonna fill this void inside me. I love you so much, MJ, but it’s not friendship I need. And before you say anything about me needing a bond, I am telling you—”

Peter actually shuddered as he said the words. “I am telling you, the thought of mating with any of our Alphas makes me want to run away. Gwen is perfect and Harry is gorgeous and Johnny is hilarious, they are all amazing Alphas, amazing people and would be amazing mates, but I can’t be with them. They aren’t enough, they’re almost…they’re almost boring. I’m bored with them.”

“You’re bored.” Mary Jane echoed, clearly not understanding but trying her best to be supportive. “What does that mean?”

“You know why I read those terrible romance novels?” Peter offered her a wobbly smile. “Because those characters are completely fulfilled by whatever they find, whether it’s a life they didn’t know they wanted or a romance with someone unexpected or an adventure they didn’t think they were ready for. They are content and I don’t think I’ve ever been content. It’s like there’s a piece of me out there that I can’t get a hold of and until I find it, I can’t rest. I can’t rest, MJ. I’m just running in place, breaking my own heart over something I don’t understand.”

“And you think the thing you’re missing has something to do with this settlement up North?” She clarified. “Why do you think that?”

Peter chewed at the inside of his cheek for a few seconds, then reached into his pack for a folded photograph and passed it over. “Because of this.”

The other Omega studied the grainy picture for a minute before her mouth fell open in an ‘o’. “Pete, when is this photo from? This guy could almost be you, is this your great grandfather?”

“I don’t know.” Peter admitted. “I’ve traced my family history back as far as I can trying to find him but there’s a point about a hundred and fifty years ago where the family split and the tree gets real messy in some spots and very blank in others. But when I was looking into the Haven settlement by the border, I found this picture in the very bottom of an old box of newspaper clippings and—”

“— you think whoever this person is, he’s in your family tree somewhere.” Mary Jane guessed. “And if he was in the village upstate, then he was most likely a mutant and that’s why you’re chasing this story so hard.”

“It’s a part of my past.” Peter ran careful fingers over the time yellowed photograph. “And maybe understanding more about the time period and more about who this person is could help me
understand myself.”

He placed the picture back and shook his head ruefully. “I know I sound crazy. And I’m definitely grasping at straws. This is probably nothing more than a coincidence but it also could be really important and as crazy as it sounds?” Peter waited for Mary Jane to meet his eyes. “MJ, this is as close to feeling whole as I’ve ever been. The search for answers is keeping me up at night but it feels good, it feels like I’m finally on the right path. I don’t even have words for how relieved I am every time I find something else. It’s just– it’s just–”

“Sometimes when our souls are involved, it’s more than words can say.” Mary Jane offered simply. “That’s what Ma says when she talks about how she and Pop fell in love. It was their souls recognizing each other, and there isn’t any words for how incredible it is. If this project is pulling at your soul, then no wonder you can’t let it go.”

“Yeah.” Peter managed a smile. “It’s my soul. My soul is relieved every time I get a little bit closer to figuring this out, so I can’t stop looking. I won’t.”

“And I don’t think you should.” Mary Jane handed Peter a few more notes from the table. “If this is what you’re called to do, then do it. I’ll support you, Tiger.”

“I love you.” Peter breathed out shakily and leaned into his friend’s arms. “Thank you. I’m sorry, I know this was supposed to be food and champagne and then I got all intense and–”

“Stop.” MJ hushed him, petting through Peter’s thick hair and purring softly until he went limp against her. “The food and champagne will keep. Let’s just hold each other for a while.”

Despite Peter’s insistence that life was better with suppressants and blockers, that Omegas were better off not having their hormones and scents control their emotions, there was something to be said for the way two Omegas could connect and bond and soothe each other.

Mary Jane always scented like sweet peaches and spicy ginger and Peter tucked his nose into the crook of her neck and breathed in deep as the Omega’s scent flooded rich with comfort and affection and MJ only trilled in approval when Peter stretched out on the couch and brought her down onto his chest so their suppressant muted scents could mingle for a while, calming them both.

“You won’t do anything reckless up at the camp site, will you?” Mary Jane asked sometime later and Peter shifted beneath her until he could tangle his fingers in her long hair, tugging at the strands idly. “Pete? Promise me you won’t do anything crazy.”

“I won’t do anything crazy.” Peter promised.

“Take some bear spray.”

“MJ, I’m not taking–”

“Take some bear spray, Pete.”

“Fine.” Peter kissed the top of her head. “I’ll take some bear spray.”

“Thank you.”

Only after Mary Jane had closed her eyes and snuggled close again did Peter glance over at his phone when it lit up for the third time in just a few minutes.
He had joined a chat group and message board several weeks ago, one dedicated to asking questions about mutants and Peter had asked a lot of questions. He had an entire list of things he had to know, and he sat up for hours every night reading answers and threads and following links and taking notes.

And then finally, sort of suddenly really, someone named Nathan Summers had contacted Peter privately, promising answers to some of the harder questions.

Peter had told him about the village up North and Nathan had known immediately what he was talking about. Nathan had suggested they meet up and walk the site together, Peter had only hesitated for a second before agreeing.

*He had to know.*

Peter’s phone lit up with another message from Nathan right then, probably double checking what time they were going to meet at the hotel tomorrow, and Peter swallowed back a flash of trepidation as he reached with one hand to type a message back.

This was probably a terrible idea, but he wasn’t going to turn back now.

*He had to know.*

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It took nearly five and a half hours to make it to the hotel Peter had booked, and he only stopped long enough to check in and drop off his computer before getting back in the car and continuing North.

The supposed camp site was two hours off the highway, down a dirt road and nearly running into Lake Haven in some areas, skirting the edge of the mountain very closely at others. Peter craned his neck to take in as much as he could see without driving off the increasingly sketchy road, looking for signs or landmarks or anything that resembled the less than rudimentary maps he’d found.

Winter warped the landscape here every single year, avalanches wiping away trees and displacing huge pieces of mountain, the rains flooding in the spring and summer washing away roads and swelling rivers until they jumped their banks and created new pathways. A dam built twenty-something years ago had created a lake where there hadn’t been one before and dried out a previously hidden valley and Peter knew he could be on a wild goose chase. The odds of finding anything resembling ruin or evidence of a village were slim anyway, but after a hundred and fifty years everything he was looking for could be hidden under water or swept under a mudslide or a rockslide or shit, New York even had *tornadoes*, it could have been a tornado–

“Oh thank God.” Peter breathed a sigh of relief when he finally made it around a final corner and into what was left of the parking lot of an old campground. The State had tried to make this area close to the border more accessible to the public, but no one came this far North without wanting to see Ontario or continuing West to the falls or just skipping the border to get into Canada, so the dozen or so installed campgrounds had fallen to ruin.

Thankfully this one still had a mostly paved parking lot and what looked like permanent outhouses, and since Peter knew no one would randomly stumble onto his car here, he felt perfectly safe leaving it locked as he hefted his backpack and took off hiking into the woods.
He was supposed to meet Nathan tonight at the hotel, so Peter had most of the afternoon to explore around the river and into the forest. The village was rumoured to be on the other side of the lake and he certainly wouldn’t make it that far today, but he could at least find a way through the forest so tomorrow hiking with Nathan would be easier.

“Tell me your secrets.” Peter murmured as he reached to touch a nearly faded plaque marking the site as one of historical significance. “I want to know everything.”

Curiosity and the cat, right?

Peter lost himself for hours wandering around the massive trees, ducking under low hanging branches and climbing up and over boulders, stopping to take pictures as he went.

It seemed impossible that anyone could have survived here without machinery to clear a path, without lights to chase the shadows from the looming forest. How did they get water? How did they get supplies? Had the mutants considered themselves American and went to the Fort for supplies or did they cross the border and head further North? Was it a terrible life, a difficult life like the stories of settlers out West? Did they even speak English or was there a mutant language that had ceased to exist like so many other indigenous dialects?

Peter had so many questions, hundreds and hundreds of questions and he wanted to know everything and yet he found himself slowing, lingering, just looking as the urgency of it all faded away into awe and appreciation for the land around him.

It was beautiful up here, wild and open and Peter stopped just to tip his head back and breathe. He’d never noticed how polluted the city was until right now, hadn’t realized how loud traffic could be until he couldn’t hear anything but the birds and the hum of insects and the wind swooping through the trees. The sunlight filtered through branches in patches, lighting some areas golden and covering others in shade and if Peter tilted his head and listened, if he breathed deep and stretched his senses he could almost feel the lake close by.

It was beautiful and peaceful and Peter thought maybe a bit of his soul settled as he leaned back against the sun warmed surface of a big rock and closed his eyes.

Why did this feel so good?

Peter wished he’d thought to bring a tent just so he wouldn’t have to leave, but this time of year night came quickly, bringing the cold right along with it and with the sun already dipping in the sky, Peter had no choice but to leave the unexpected sanctuary of the woods and head towards his car. The road had been barely passable in the daylight and he couldn’t imagine how difficult it would be in the dark, and Nathan would be waiting at the hotel restaurant here in a few hours, so he really had to go.

Still, it almost hurt to leave and Peter touched the plaque again as he passed, lingering over the letters for a long moment and–

“You’re Parker?” a sudden voice from the gathering shadows, low, gravelly and frightening. “Peter, right? I didn’t expect you to be an Omega.”

“Holy shit–” Peter whirled around, clutching at the can of bear spray MJ had demanded he bring along. “Who’s there? Who are you?”

And then almost as an afterthought, “How do you know I’m an Omega? I’m wearing scent blockers and it’s half dark outside.”
“I can smell it on you.” A shadow darker than the others separated and Peter caught a flash of Alpha red eyes from beneath a hood. “Those scent blockers you use only work on tamer Alphas. One like me can sniff out your biology without even trying.”

“Ooookay. Well fair’s fair with that so if you don’t mind–” Peter swallowed a little and leaned in towards the stranger, flaring his nostrils and trying to gather as much of the Alpha’s scent as he could.

But the Alpha reeked of blood and burning, of metallic and copper and smoke and when Peter sucked in a sharp breath ready to scream, the Alpha interrupted, “It’s not blood, Parker. It’s metal. Just metal and smoke is what you’re scenting. Don’t panic.”

“You’re– you’re Nathan Summers?” Peter bit at his lip and shifted nervously on his feet, hoping his suppressants were still working enough to choke the fear drenching his scent.

“Mouthy little shit.” Cable might have chuckled, but it came out almost a growl. “Omegas always have too much attitude. I know you’re scared, I can smell it on you. You’re still gonna try and be a smart ass?”

“Well I–”

“You’re gonna stop looking into the meta humans.” Cable interrupted. “Your little project doesn’t exist anymore, alright? I had to get you face to face to make sure you weren’t a real threat, and now I’m telling you to stop looking into the meta humans.”

“You’re–” Peter cleared his throat, his damned curiosity and the ache in his heart telling him to keep asking. “Meta humans. Is that what you called the mutants? Why meta? Are you saying the mutants have super powers? Or powers in general? I’ve only heard about physical mutations and there are a few recorded cases of feats of strength but–”

“You’re not listening, kid.” Cable took a deep drag on the cigar and blew the smoke out over Peter’s head. “Stop asking questions, stop posting online, stop your research. Nothing involving meta humans ends well and you do not want the type of trouble this will bring. Back off, little Omega. Run along home.”

“Go back to the meta human thing.” Peter ignored the flare of annoyance over being called little Omega and squinted in the dark when he caught a glimpse of something gleaming along Cable’s shoulder. “Just tell me yes or no. Powers? What about the settlement here, was it actually an uprising that brought the Army after them? It had to be an uprising if you’re talking about people with super powers, can you tell me if–?”

“You’re trying my patience.” Cable grunted and turned further from Peter’s view. “This is your last warning kid. Stop digging around or I can’t be responsible for what comes knocking on your door. We’ve stayed hidden a long time just trying to live our lives, I’m not going to let some nosy Omega screw it up.”
“No no wait!” There were a hundred things Peter should have done right then— and all of them involved running away— but instead Peter lunged forward and grabbed onto Cable’s left arm as the man started to walk away “Tell me! Tell me what’s going on! I’m tired of never getting a straight answer with these things and I have to know, you don’t understand I have to know—”

Peter had only a split second to realize he wasn’t feeling flesh but machinery under his fingers, and then a split second more to register an ear splitting noise like grinding gears before Cable flung him into the trees.

Peter screamed as he went flying through the air, nearly bit his tongue in half when he smacked into a tree trunk, and lay there crumpled and stunned for a full minute.

_Machinery, the scent of blood, the weird clicking, the way Cable called them meta humans and not mutants and talked about–_

“–We’ve lived a long time just trying to live our lives.”

**Our lives.**

_Cable was a mutant and he’d just thrown Peter twenty feet without even trying._

_Oh my god, I could die tonight._

“I didn’t mean to do that.” Cable was suddenly in front of Peter, over Peter, crouching down and reaching to check that the Omega hadn’t broken anything in the fall. “I know you’re just a kid and don’t mean to cause trouble but—”

He stopped talking when panic turned the air bitter, and the Alpha covered his mouth when he gagged at the stench. “Parker, what—”

“You arm.” Peter’s eyes were very wide, his face very pale in the dimming light and Cable muffled a curse when he realized his hood and cloak had fallen away. “What the hell happened to your arm?”

“It’s a long story.” Cable rotated the mechanism, grimacing over the grind of gears and the tug and pull of metal along his shoulder, up his neck and into his skull. “And one you don’t want to know. You think the rest of the world wants to hear about this? You think people want to know I’m walking around in the shadows?”

“I—I—” Peter’s eyes darted from the mutant’s face to the metal at his arm, up to the eerie glow of one robotic eye and the flashing red of Alpha in the other. “How— oh my god—”

“I don’t even want to be like this.” Cable said then and he sounded bone weary, patting at a disc shaped object on the strap around his chest. “Kid, no one wants this. Whatever you are looking for up here? Let it go. Just– Just let it go.”

“I can’t.” Peter whispered and the Alpha’s expression flickered in what looked like resignation and maybe even understanding. “I gotta know and you– you gotta help me.”

“I’m not going to help you.”

“But you have to!” Peter’s eyes dropped to watch when Cable touched that same disc again. “Why else would you come all the way up here?”

“I came up here to warn you– HEY!” Cable shouted in alarm when the Omega darted forward and
snatched the disc away, kicking Cable right in the face before taking off running into the woods. “Goddammit Parker! Get back here right now! You don’t know what that thing is!”

“Then tell me!” Peter cried as he fled. “Is this a mutant thing? Or a meta human thing? What is it? I want answers!”

“Stop with the endless questions and just give me the damn device!” Cable muttered a curse when the Omega only picked up speed, swerving towards the parking lot. “No! No you fool! Give that back right now, you have no idea what you’re messing with!”

Peter was gone though, sprinting through the trees towards the lights of the campground, the device clutched tight in his hand. He was almost to his car, almost to safety, almost there almost there–

–It was like hitting a brick wall, and Peter screamed as he jolted to a stop, his entire body forced to stillness abruptly enough to make his head hurt and his fists clench, pain washing through his core.

“What?” Peter tried to make his feet move, tried to make his hands move, tried to do anything but he was utterly trapped and as Cable marched up to him with one hand held out and a furious red glint in his one human eye, Peter knew it was the mutant Alpha’s doing. “Wh-what is this? How are you doing this?”

“There are a thousand things in this world you cannot begin to understand.” Cable said shortly. “And believe it or not, I’m not even close to the worst of them. Hand me that device slowly and I’ll let you go. Slow and easy, kid. No one needs to get hurt, alright?”

“No one needs to get hurt?” Peter repeated, the words coming thick through honey, his tongue not quite working right. “You’re chasing me through the woods and threatening me and I’m supposed to think you’re not going to hurt me?”

“You’re messing with things you will never understand, and I’m not going to let you ruin lives because you can’t stop asking questions.” Cable held out his free hand and snapped his fingers. “My patience is gone, so here it is. We’ve got two options– I keep you suspended so you can’t run and you hand me that thing willingly, or I rip you in half to get to it. What’s it going to be?”

Peter didn’t answer though, and after a moment Cable snapped his fingers again. “What’s it going to be?”

“…is this supposed to be ticking?” Peter asked very very quietly, holding up the disc as it began to glow. “Because– because it started ticking a few seconds ago. What’s happening?”

“Oh god dammit–” Cable dropped the hold on Peter and lunged for the Omega, lunged for his device but a second before his fingers made contact, the ticking stopped.

“No no no no—!”

A flash of bright light, the acrid scent of smoke and when Cable stumbled to a stop, both the Omega and the device were gone.

Gone.

“Oh no.” The mutant dragged both his hands through his silvering hair and groaned. “What have I done?”
1872

The early morning frost crunched beneath Wade’s feet as he stalked through the woods, heavy boots breaking branches and kicking stones out of the way, three or four rabbits hanging limp over his broad shoulders, a rifle held securely in hand.

This time of year the bears tended to be fat and lazy so the Alpha wasn’t too concerned about disturbing one of them, but he’d seen mountain lion tracks outside his cabin the other morning and again last night, and the big cats were a different sort of danger altogether. Wade kept his eyes sharp as he scanned the trees and bushes along his path for anything feline, kept his nose to the air so he’d catch anything dead that would attract the predators, and kept his rifle ready just in case.

Sometimes fangs and brute strength just weren’t enough to keep a man alive in this wilderness.

*Wait.* The Alpha stopped in his tracks when the air tinged with a scent that didn’t belong—smoky and burnt and brimming with *panic*, but beneath all that was the thready scent of Omega and that—well that wasn’t right at all.

*What the hell was an Omega doing all the way out here?*

“Oh shit.” Wade dropped his gear abruptly when he saw a form at the base of a tree, an Omega laying limp in the frost like he’d been dropped from the sky and left for dead. “Shit shit shit, how did you get here?”

Wade ran careful hands up the Omega’s legs to feel for broken bones, pressed gingerly to check for busted ribs, glanced at and then away from the unmarked bonding spot and reached for the Omega’s chin to tip his head back and –

“Oh.” The Alpha gulped when he got a clear look at the Omega’s features, thick hair and freckle dusted skin and gorgeous lips, dark eyes fluttering open in confusion and fear and Wade automatically rumbled something soft at the Omega, murmuring “Hey, shhh. It’s okay. I dunno what you’re doing here, but I got you, okay? I’ve got you. Let’s get you off the ground, come here.”

The pretty thing didn’t weigh enough to matter and Wade lifted the Omega without any effort at all, but when the Alpha got a nose full of heady lavender and sweet honeysuckle scent, his knees *buckled* and nearly sent them both pitching back to the forest floor.

“Oh.” Wade wheezed, hazel eyes snapping red and a growl working in his throat as the Omega scent filled his senses and left him reeling, stumbling. “Oh *fuck*–”

“Mmmm.” The Omega was barely conscious but he still turned and tucked his nose tighter to Wade’s chest. “…smell…good…”

“Damn it.” Wade automatically held the Omega tighter, helpless against his biology’s sudden call of *protect*, and more worrisome, the soul echoing claim of *mine*. “Where did you come from Omega?”

There was no answer, the Omega slipping unconscious again and the Alpha swallowed hard, barely able to form the words to ask. “And how long will it be before Cable comes back for you?”
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Welcome Back! First official Spideypool meeting here and tbh I love it. Generic TW because Peter (understandably) has a panic attack but its over and done with pretty quickly. Also, I know this chapter brings up some questions but we’ve got a whole lot of story to get too, I promise you’ll get your answers!

Peter woke slowly, *painfully*, head pounding and tongue sticking to the roof of his mouth, jaw sore from sleeping with his teeth clenched, entire body aching from his–

–from his fall? From his workout? Did he end up asleep on the couch and Mary Jane helped him to the bed?

*No.*

No, there had been the drive upstate and the hotel, the hike around the lake and the startling, terrifying appearance of Nathan Summers who was actually Cable. A metal arm, a bionic eye and Peter had been *thrown* into the trees. A stolen device and a clicking sound, a flash of light and the unsettling sensation of falling *forever* and then–

–and then what?

Peter vaguely recalled the jarring *thud* of dropping onto cold ground, he had a faint memory of strong arms and a low voice in his ear, and just before he had slipped unconscious Peter remembered thinking the Alpha holding him smelled incredible.

No, that wasn’t right. That couldn’t be right, Peter didn’t like too potent Alpha scent. That wasn’t right.

*...was it?*

The Alpha had scented thick like black licorice lingering in Peter’s throat, deep like the red cedars that grew in the park and *wild* like rainy, summer storms. It really was incredible, safe and familiar, both drugging and exhilarating all at once and right now, the Omega was surrounded by it on all sides, wrapped in heavy blankets and tucked into a big bed.

There were a million questions Peter should have asked just then, questions about the Alpha that had found him in the woods, questions about Cable and where he was and whatever that *device* had been, but it was hard to think when Peter could barely open his eyes.

He didn’t want to wake up yet. He didn’t want to think about Cable, didn’t want to worry about his research. He wanted to lay still and rest sore muscles, burrow deeper into the quilts and pass out again. Peter was tired, exhausted, halfway to tears because he hurt so badly, on the verge of panicking if he thought too long about what happened and *oh god* he just wanted to *sleep*–

“Easy, Omega.” came soft words, a deep voice and a soothing rumble. “That noise is breaking my heart, stop whining. There’s no need for all that, I’m not going to hurt you.”
Peter startled when he realized he wasn’t alone, and made a concentrated effort to muffle another whimper, biting at his lip and clenching his fingers in the blankets, counting up to a hundred to give himself a moment to settle down. He’d never panicked a day in his life and he wasn’t about to start now, he just needed to breathe.

“That’s better.” The stranger grunted. “Gonna sit up so I can see you, or should I keep talking to a mound of bed covers?”

Peter took a deep breath and peeked over the edge of the blankets, then gathered the rest of his courage and sat up entirely, offering a sheepish expression and a hesitant wave to the Alpha sitting by the bed. “Sorry. Um– hi.”

“Hi.” The Alpha’s mouth curved into a half smile. “How are you feeling? You’ve been asleep a long time.”

“I’m… tired.” Peter’s eyes darted around the cabin once, twice before coming back to rest on the Alpha. “Where am I?”

“Up the mountain from Haven,” the Alpha replied. “I found you passed out unera tree and brought you here so nothing else would get you.”

“Nothing else?” Peter had a sudden image of bears and mountain lions and oh god were there wolves up here? Was that a thing? “You um– you said Haven? The campsite? I didn’t see any cabins on the maps I studied, how far up the mountain are you?”

“I mean Haven the town,” the Alpha corrected, and Peter lowered his brow in confusion. “And we’re most of a day’s hike up the hill and my cabin was closer than Banner’s place, so I brought you here. It’ll be a few days before I can get you down the mountain and resettled with Doc, so until then–”

“Stop. Wait, what do you mean–” Peter held up a hand, shook his head and then immediately regretted the decision as the entire world tilted alarmingly. “Oh shit– oh my god, ow.”

“How do you know I’m an Omega?” Peter pressed at his temples as a full blown headache started thrumming behind his eyes. “I’m wearing suppressants and blockers and even if I wasn’t, it’s sort of rude to call someone by their designation, nobody does that anymore. And who’s Doc? None of this seems right, I need to look at a map or my phone and see where I–”

Peter stopped mid sentence, the words falling away when he actually got a good look at the Alpha. “Um, I need to see where I–”

The Alpha waited with raised eyebrows for Peter to finish. “See where you are?”

“Um…”

Wow.

Peter let out a breath he didn’t realize he was holding as he stared at the Alpha. He wondered at the litany of faded scars up and down the Alpha’s over muscled arms, and spared nothing more than a brief glance at the lack of hair before his attention moved onto the cut of the Alpha’s jaw, then down to wide shoulders and a sort of shocking breadth of chest. Hazel eyes sparkled briefly red at Peter’s less than subtle perusal, and when the Alpha sat back in the chair and settled huge hands on
spread knees, Peter’s gaze dropped immediately and maybe even helplessly to the man’s thighs.

“Wow.”

“All done looking?” The Alpha was definitely smirking, and Peter spoke without thinking, sassy and snarky as he retorted, “Only until you stand up and turn around so I can see your butt!”

–and the room went instantly, mortifyingly silent.

“Uh.” The Alpha blinked a few times, obviously thrown by the unexpected response. “What was that again?”

Peter didn’t answer, only inched the blankets up over his face and quietly wished he could die. Here he was in a strange place with a strange Alpha, no idea how he’d come to be laying in a bed or what the hell had happened with that damn device, and not only was he blatantly checking the Alpha out but he couldn’t even keep his mouth shut long enough to not come across like a damn fool.

Wonderful.

“I guess that bump on the head didn’t do too much damage, huh?” The Alpha sounded like he was trying not to laugh and Peter cringed in embarrassment. “Oh no no, don’t be embarrassed, it’s alright. Come out from the covers and talk to me again. Since you don’t want to be called Omega, you got a name?”

“Um. Peter?” Peter cursed his awkwardness and cleared his throat to try again. “Peter Parker.”

“Peter Parker.” the Alpha’s voice went strangely rough as he answered, “My name’s Wade.”

“Wade.” Peter tested the name on his tongue, feeling like he had already known that, and wondering why it made him want to smile. “Okay then.”

“Okay then.” Wade repeated. “Peter Parker, sit up and talk to me, come on. Why do you smell like Cable?”

“Cable.” Peter popped right up from the quilts, embarrassment forgotten as his mind came back on line. “Do you know him? Did you see where he went? I think I set off a flash bang grenade in the woods and I don’t know if him being half machine means he was more affected or less affected but flash bangs aren’t fun. Oh! Did you get my back pack too? I was holding it when I passed out. Do you think Cable is still around, cos I really really need to finish talking to him.”

“Your pack is drying by the fire.” Wade inclined his head towards the fireplace, amused by Peter’s abrupt turn around. The pretty brunette had gone from confused to suddenly sassy before diving right into a million questions and Wade sort of loved it. Little spitfire is what the Omega was. Fucking adorable.

“I’ve got no way of knowing where or when Cable is at any time.” he continued after the Omega had breathed a sigh of relief over the pack. “But I do know he goes outta his way to be invisible to humans, so tell me how you ran into him and why he sent you here. What’s your business with him? What could you have possibly done to earn the misfortune of that time sliding bastard’s attention?”

“Um, no real business with Cable.” Peter was already thinking about what he was going to write in his notes, cursing himself for not thinking to have a digital recorder on hand right then. He had to
get everything down before it started to fade and the headache wasn’t helping matters. “I had some questions for him and he supposedly had answers but—”

The rest of Wade’s answer finally registered and Peter frowned. “Hold on, what do you mean you don’t know where or when Cable is? And what do you mean he sent me here, where is here?”

“You don’t know.” Something worried flickered through Wade’s expression and Peter’s heart sank. “So it was an accident, he didn’t do this to you on purpose?”

“He didn’t do what to me on purpose?” Peter pleated at the quilt, bunching the material up in his palms. “What did he do to me?”

“Damn it.” Wade ran a hand over his bare scalp and tried to figure out the easiest way to break the news to the Omega. “What year are you from, Pete?”

“What year am I from?”

“Yeah, what year are you from.” the Alpha motioned around the one room cabin and shrugged. “Cos I feel like 1872 is a long way from home for you.”

“1872.” Peter just blinked at Wade. “You expect me to believe this is 1872. I ran into a mutant cyborg in the woods and he sent me back in time almost a hundred and fifty years. That’s— that’s where you’re going with this? This is a joke, right? Harry and Johnny put you up to this because they don’t want me looking into the mutants anymore. Gwen’s filming from somewhere, Mary Jane is probably fussing because she doesn’t like practical jokes but she can never actually resist them.”

“Um—” Wade frowned when the Omega started rambling. “Pete?”

“Come on out guys.” Peter called to the room, forcing a laugh that sounded more panicked than anything. “What’d you do, slip a sedative in my water and then hire some super hot Alpha to pretend to be from the past? Johnny, this is ridiculous even for you!”

“Pete.”

“Gwen!” Peter’s voice pitched high and desperate. “This isn’t funny anymore! Come out here right now, jokes over! Who was Cable, was he one of Harry’s friends from the gym? Come on guys, this isn’t funny! I’m not laughing! I’m not laughing, come out here right now!”

“I mean the— the antique stove is a nice touch.” Peter audibly gulped, eyes darting around the room frantically. “And I don’t see a single outlet, that’s pretty intense. This is uh– this has got to be one of those reconstructed Civil War era cabins, right? They do that whole battle re-enactment thing and you can rent the cabins for picnics or whatever, that’s all this is.”

“Hey hey hey.” Wade held up both hands when the Omega’s scent flooded with fear. “Come on honey, you need to calm down for me.”

“Calm down?” Peter pushed the covers away and stood to his feet, swaying unsteadily. “Right. I should definitely calm down. I’m only in a strange cabin with an Alpha I don’t know, which is dangerous enough honestly, but my friends aren’t jumping out to yell ‘got ya!’ which is freaking me out a little bit. And I mean, you said you found me in the woods and I— I complimented your butt? Or tried to, which makes no sense at all and I am very used to my life making lots of sense and—”

“Whoa.” Wade leapt forward to catch Peter when he nearly fell. “Pete. Slow down and just
“Time sliding bastard.” Peter was close to hyperventilating now. “You called Cable a time sliding bastard which means that you— you know who he is and what he does and if all this is actually true and not some elaborate prank. That means Cable really is a mutant who sent me back in time and you would know that because you know who Cable is which would make you a mutant which means—”

Peter’s eyes snapped shut and he covered his mouth with both hands. “I’m going to be sick.”

“Oh yikes,” Wade let go of Peter as the Omega lurched for the door.

“I’m going to be sick right now, oh my god, oh my god—” Peter stumbled clear of the cabin and tripped over an uneven patch of ground, barely managing to right himself against a tree. “Oh my god— there’s no way— time travel isn’t— nope nope nope—” he stumbled again and dropped to his knees, clutching at the grass as his stomach heaved. “Oh fuck—”

“Settle, settle.” Wade came up behind Peter just in time to hold him steady as the Omega lost his stomach onto the forest floor. “Easy does it, little Omega. It’s alright.”

“It’s most certainly not the fuck alright!” Peter shouted, or tried to shout, but it was mostly lost behind another gut churning retch. “What do you mean it’s 1872! That’s impossible! It’s impossible. I’m a reporter, a researcher, I would know if this sort of thing was real and it’s definitely not so—” he leaned over and was sick all over again. “Oh my god, help me—”

“Here, c’mere.” Wade placed a gentle hand on the small of Peter’s back and offered the Omega sip from the canteen he’d snatched from the house. “Take a drink, just a sip. It’s probably travel sickness, Cable’s always wiped for a few hours when he goes too far either way down the timeline.”

“Too far down the timeline.” Peter gagged, coughed, his entire body rebelling against what the Alpha was saying. “You’re being serious. I’m supposed to believe that.”

“You can believe whatever you want, but I’m tellin’ you anytime Cable spends too much time traveling or too long in one place he doesn’t belong, he comes back and he’s sick like this.” Wade’s heart clenched when Peter made a disbelieving, stressed noise. “It’ll pass, little one. Give it a minute. Take a drink.”

Peter wanted to knock the canteen away, wanted to scream and panic, wanted to sit up and pull himself together and demand to know the truth because he was ninety nine percent certain that this was just some elaborate prank.

But the one percent of him that wasn’t certain is was a prank wanted nothing more than to fall back into the weight of the Alpha’s palm and let the licorice and cedar scent haze the brittle edges of this terrifying truth, and somehow, for some reason, the one percent one out.

When Wade offered the canteen again, Peter obediently took a tiny sip, and then another when the Alpha rumbled in encouragement. Then he sat back away from the mess and leaned into Wade’s hand, sighing shakily when the Alpha immediately moved closer so his arm was around Peter’s waist too.

Another sip, Peter swishing and spitting to clean his mouth out, then he dropped his head down between upraised knees and forced himself to take one slow breath after another. In and out. In and out. In and hold for a few seconds, then out nice and slow. In and out, in and out, in and out.
And only once he got his breath back and felt like he could speak without breaking down, Peter asked, “How do you know I’m an Omega?”

“I feel like that’s not the most important question you could ask.” Wade commented, checking the Omega’s scent and relaxing when the torrent of fear lessened to nothing more than mild worry. “But if it matters, I could smell you halfway across the forest. Nothing scenting as sweet as you belongs up here on the mountain, you know? Knew you were an Omega immediately.”

“Sure.” Peter nodded numbly. Cable had said something about his blockers only working on tamer Alphas, so sure, it made sense that an Alpha like Wade could filter right through them too or hey, maybe time travel just erased all traces of medication from his system, because that was apparently a normal thing–

“Settle, settle.” Wade said in alarm when Peter’s scent tinged sour again. “C’mon, thought we got past all that, take another drink and calm down.”

“Sorry.” Peter’s voice muffled where he was still hiding his face. “I’m usually more put together than this. Usually don’t wake up in strange places and make sort of sexually aggressive come ons to unknown Alphas before having full blown panic attacks and throwing up. Definitely not my usual Saturday morning, not at all.”

Wade laughed quietly and rubbed slow circles at Peter’s side, thoroughly smitten with exactly how surprising this Omega was. “That’s alright, not every day I find an Omega in the woods that accuses me of only pretending I’m real.”

“M’sorry about that.” Peter muttered. “Like I said, usually more put together than this.”

“It’s fine.” Wade kept up the easy touch until the Omega’s breathing steadied again. “I uh– I’ve never met anyone from a different time, but Cable comes and goes so much I guess he was bound to pick up a passenger at some point. When are you from?”

“Two-thousand nineteen.” Peter passed the canteen back to Wade. “We’re about a hundred and fifty years apart and you– you aren’t even acting surprised. You aren’t freaking out?”

“I’ve been around a while, seen a few things.” Wade said off handedly. “A hundred and fifty years isn’t all that long in the span of things.” The Omega sent him a dubious look and Wade grinned. “This is Haven, Pete. We’ve got people with abilities that make time travel look like–”

“You’ve got fangs.” Peter interrupted, but there wasn’t an ounce of fear in his voice or his scent. No, he colored warm with awe and curiosity and beneath that, a spark of heat that made the Alpha’s mouth go dry. “That’s– I’ve never–” he hesitated. “I’ve never seen an Alpha with fangs before.”

“Huh.” Wade ran the tip of his tongue over the dangerously curved points and Peter’s eyes dropped to watch. “They don’t have fangs in your time?”

“…no.” Peter was staring again, and the Alpha had to squash the urge to growl at him. “No they’re– they’re–wow. Wow. I didn’t realize–” Peter’s breath caught when a ripple of arousal filled the air between them. “Mary Jane would just love you and I gotta say, I’m starting to understand the appeal.”

Wade did growl then, low and coaxing and the little Omega actually swayed towards him, lips parted and eyes wide and–

“Nope. Nope. You need a minute to calm down.” Wade was about two seconds from doing
something absolutely *stupid* if the Omega kept looking at him like that, so he stood up abruptly, so abruptly that Peter about toppled over when the support at his waist was gone. “There’s an outhouse at the bottom of this hill if you need it, a bucket of cold water so you can wash up. I’m going to reheat some food cos you’re probably starving and it’s about supper time anyway.”

“Um.” Peter scrambled to his feet, feeling like an idiot for the way he’d reacted to Wade’s fangs. *Get it together, Parker.* “Yes. Thank you. I would love– wait, did you say an outhouse? I have to use an outhouse?”

“Either that, or you can pick a tree.” Wade swept his arm around the clearing and hid a smile when the Omega’s lovely mouth fell open in shock. “Your choice, Pete. It’s a big forest.”

“Never thought I’d think an outhouse sounded worse than a tree.” Peter muttered in disbelief. “Okay. Thank you. I’ll just– I’ll just be a minute.”

“Take your time.” it took every bit of Wade’s self control to not reach out and yank the Omega close again. He could *drown* in that honeysuckle and lavender scent, and with Peter still wavering on the edge of afraid, it was all the Alpha could do to keep at least a little distance between them.

This feeling, this instant attraction was both familiar and scary, something Wade hadn’t felt since Vanessa and something he never thought he’d feel again. It wasn’t fair, it wasn’t *fair,* but there was nothing he could do.

Peter didn’t belong here, not in this time and not in Wade’s arms so the Alpha grit his teeth and very gently, very *reluctantly,* took another step away.

“Take your time.” he said again, and backed up even more. “I’ll be in the cabin making some food. You had a pretty good fall and you’re probably starving, and I don’t really know how long you were out in the cold. Warm food and back into bed for the night, alright? You gonna be okay out here?”

“I’m okay.” Peter looked decidedly less and *less* okay the further Wade got from him, but he tipped his head up and set his jaw with a firm nod. “I’m okay. I just need a minute.”

Peter waited until the cabin door closed behind the Alpha before turning and picking his way down the steep hillside to the surprisingly *not* terrible outhouse below. He threw up one more time in the little shack, trying and failing to quiet that last bit of panic still simmering under his skin.

Time sliding cyborgs and a mutant village called Haven. An Alpha with fangs and a scent that Peter thought he knew with every cell in his body. 1872. Fucking *outhouses.*

It was too much to take in, too much to believe, a scene right out of all those outdated sci-fi movies Johnny loved to watch. Mind boggling and frightening, and nothing any of his friends would ever believe. Peter could scarcely believe it himself but he was right *here* and there was no denying how real everything was.

The water hanging outside the outhouse was bracingly cold when Peter splashed his face and he gasped from the shock. The trees were almost monstrously tall, the air fragrant with wild flowers and healthy green and Peter had never felt so small in his life. Birds in the branches and mosquitoes buzzing around his face and Peter reached back to feel the bump at his head, pressing until it hurt just to prove that he was definitely awake.

He wasn’t dreaming. This was *real* and all the answers to Peter’s stacks and stacks of questions were right here. Everything he wanted to know about the mutants, about Haven, the rumours. He
could track down the mutant that looked like him or at least talk to people who could point him in the right direction. Peter could finally know everything and maybe just *maybe* this unbelievable moment in time would settle that part of him that was forever searching.

"I’m okay." Peter said out loud, and then louder because the first time had been shaky, “I’m okay. This is– this is insane, but I’m okay. I’m not hurt and I’m not lost in the woods and the Alpha–” a flush of heat on Peter’s cheeks and a shiver he wasn’t willing to look too far in to. “–and I’m safe with Wade. I’m okay.”

*I’m okay, I’m okay, I’m okay.*

Wade looked up from the antique stove– nope, in this day and age it was modern, wasn’t it?– and offered Peter a hesitant smile when the Omega made a re-appearance. “You feel better?”

“I guess.” Peter sat at the hand made, well worn table and rubbed his fingers idly along a particularly deep gouge. “Sorry about all that. And sorry I kept shouting things about how my friends were playing a joke on me. I um– I didn’t mean to imply you were lying or anything.”

“Sure you did.” Wade said easily, and the Omega looked up in confusion. “It’s easier to think I’m lying than to think you really time traveled, right? Understandable.”

“You’re really really calm about this.” Peter propped his chin up in his hand. “I’d be more worried if an Omega dropped out of no where into my yard.”

“Eh, it’s like I said before.” Wade shrugged. “I’ve met people with abilities that make time travel look tame. This might not be your usual Saturday morning, but it’s not even my weirdest by a long shot.”

Peter laughed softly and tugged his fingers through his hair. “I don’t know if that makes me feel better or not.”

“Food will make you feel better.” Wade plunked a plate down in front of Peter and handed him a fork too. “Eat as much as you want, then I’m gonna put you back in bed.”

“Thank you.” Peter nibbled at the crust of a thick slice of bed, poking at the beans with his fork. “Am I keeping you from your dinner? I’m not… not like cutting into your rations or anything?”

“Do I look like I’m starving, Pete?” Wade deadpanned, folding his arms and squaring his shoulders and adorably the Omega blushed bright red before shoveling a bite into his mouth. “You pecking at a plate of beans and bacon isn’t going to starve me out for the winter, I think I’ll be fine.”

“You can have my bacon.” Peter pushed the slab of pork back towards the Alpha. “I’m a vegetarian, I don’t eat meat.”

“…you don’t eat meat.” The Alpha repeated, as if he’d never heard anything so ridiculous in his life. “Are you serious?”

“For the most part.” Peter slopped a piece of bread through the beans. “I eat fish every once in a while and chicken if I’m extra hungry, but nothing else.”

“Huh.” Wade scratched at his chin. “Welp. Good luck with that here.” he snagged the bacon off Peter’s plate and crunched through it loudly. “Mountain men can’t survive on carrots alone.”

“I eat other things than–!” Peter started to protest, but he stopped when he saw the twinkle in Wade’s eyes. “Oh. You’re teasing me.”
“No, I was definitely serious about the not surviving on carrots part.” Wade stole the other piece of bacon. “No wonder you’re scrawny. Living on carrots, ridiculous.” Peter laughed again and Wade loved it. “And um, for what it’s worth, I’m sorry about this Pete.”

The words were ash in Wade’s mouth, but he said them anyway. “I’m sure there’s a million places Cable could have dropped you, and up here on my mountain so far away from what you’re used to—” he shrugged. “I’m sorry. This is awful.”

“. . .it’s not. . .awful.” Peter said slowly, and a split second of hope flared in the Alpha’s chest. “In a weird way, this is exactly where I would want to be if I could have chosen where to end up.”

“Oh yeah?” Wade backed up until he ran into the stove, the sudden urge to grab Peter up tight almost overwhelming. “Why do you say that?”

“You asked me how I ran into Cable.” With a little food in his system, Peter felt more stable, the words coming easier. “I’m a reporter, you know? I write articles for a newspaper and I was chasing some information about mutants or um—meta humans? Do you prefer being called meta humans?”

“I prefer being called Wade.” The Alpha snorted and Peter scrunched his nose at the snark.

“Alright then, Wade. Anyway. I came across some information about Haven but it was all conflicting accounts and pages torn from books and maps that didn’t really lead to any where.” Peter drank most of a glass of water and wiped his mouth. “Mutants are some big secret in my time so I had to do all my own research and that’s how I met Cable. He said his name was Nathan Summers and he had information about Haven so we met up and he—”

“—warned you to stop asking questions about the village.” Wade guessed. “Cable is real protective over the community.”

“Right.” Peter scraped the last few bites from the plate. “He told me to stop looking, we argued and I grabbed that time device thing, and then I woke up here. Exactly where I need to be.”

“To find your answers.” the Alpha finished. “You’ll be able to learn what you want about Haven and everyone who lives here. Why does it matter so much, Pete?”

“There’s no such thing as mutants in my lifetime.” Peter said slowly. “They— you— you are all gone. There isn’t anything but rumours and pieces of stories that no one can confirm. There’s hardly any male Omegas either, and now they think male Omegas are the last of what would be considered mutants and I just—”

He swallowed and tried not to sound quite so crazy. “—I have to know. Have you ever had to know something so badly you think it might eat you up inside?”

“You think you’re a mutant? Why do you think—”

“And I know you.” Peter rushed on before he lost his nerve, biting at his bottom lip and looking away from the Alpha shyly. “I mean, I don’t know you, but I know you. I feel like I knew your name already and I recognize your scent. I know you.”

The Omega blew out a deep breath and continued, softer, “And that either means something amazing or it means I’ve finally gone nuts and lost the plot. But either way, I should be panicking, right? Beyond what I did, I mean. I should be out of my mind with worry and I’m not.”

“Yeah, you worked through it all pretty quick. Woke up and panicked, rallied and now you’re fine.” Wade’s heart was pounding, his fists clenched at his side. “You think that’s because you
known me and know my—my scent?”

“It’s almost a relief.” Peter was almost whispering now, staring down at the empty plate. “It’s almost a relief to be here. I’m still scared but I gotta trust my instincts and I know I’m supposed to be here.”

And then with an uncertain glance towards the Alpha, “I know that sounds crazy. I know it does. But is it— I mean, is that okay?

It probably wasn’t Wade’s best idea to pull Peter into a hug just then, not when Peter so vulnerable and Wade was barely clinging to his self control. But it was instinct and it was a sort of knowing that resonated beautifully in Wade’s soul so he tugged Peter up from the bench anyway, gathered the Omega in close and held his breath, hoping for something he couldn’t quite put words to.

Oh.

Oh oh oh.

Peter crumpled into Wade’s arms, tucked his nose over the Alpha’s pulse and gasped through an open mouth breath, clutching at Wade’s side and trembling.

Wade smelled good, he smelled so good and everything else was absolutely insane but this Alpha was steady, stable and calming and Peter mewled quietly when Wade’s arms locked around him and the Alpha rumbled into his ear.

Omega.

Mine.

“It’s not as crazy as you think.” Wade finally managed after several minutes, careful not to crush the Omega to his chest, careful not to get too possessive and frighten Peter off. “I recognize your scent too. I know you too.”

“I— I can’t handle thinking about what that might mean.” Peter admitted and Wade nodded into his hair. “Not right now, anyway.”

“I know.” Wade ran his hands up and down Peter’s back, ignoring the urge to growl in pleasure as the Omega snuggled in. “We don’t have to think about anything like that right now. I’m sure you want to find answers and I know a few people you can talk to, but I can’t take you to town for a while yet. I’ve got to get an elk or at least a few deer before the winter sets in, and they’re getting hard to find up here. We’ll go as soon as we can though, alright?”

“What—” The thought of leaving Wade, even just to get to Haven made uncertainty pool in Peter’s stomach. “You’ll go with me, right?”

“Of course.” Wade’s hold tightened briefly. “Cable and I aren’t exactly pals, but he’s got a few friends in Haven who might know what he’s doing and whether you’re here on purpose or if it was ran accident. We could probably get a message to him through Doc Banner but I’m not real sure. We’ll figure it out.”

“And Pete um—” Wade cleared his throat. “You’re safe with me, alright? You don’t have to be afraid of me. I know I’m a strange Alpha, and I know the scent thing is overwhelming but you don’t— I’m not going to hurt you. Ever. You don’t have to worry.”
“I… I know.” Peter drew in a deep breath, filtering through Wade’s licorice and cedar scent to find the steadiness beneath. “I know I’m safe with you.”

************

Peter was asleep almost the minute his head hit the bed, curled up with a pillow clutched to his chest. He looked tiny on the big mattress, thoroughly out of place in his patterned jeans and branded sweatshirt, and even while sleeping the Omega looked stressed, and it hurt Wade’s heart.

But what hurt the Alpha even more was the way Peter looked exactly perfect tucked into Wade’s space.

There was no denying the way the Omega had melted into Wade’s hug, the way their scents mingled sweet and familiar and it was almost unfair how easily their bodies had fit for those few moments.

It had been a lifetime since Vanessa, ages since the word mate had clamored through Wade’s mind and echoed through the Alpha’s chest, almost an eternity since Wade had felt his soul shift and heart beat sync with another person and as he watched Peter sleep, dread curled black through his center.

Peter said he couldn’t think about why he knew Wade’s scent right now, but the reality was they shouldn’t. Neither of them should put any thought into recognizing each other’s scent and settling so still when they were touching. Wade couldn’t focus on the light in Peter’s eyes and the syrupy sweet interest every time the Omega looked at him. They shouldn’t wonder how Peter wasn’t scared because right here with Wade was exactly where he was supposed to be, or how they could already laugh and tease each other so easily.

No. No, they shouldn’t do any of that.

Peter belonged to another place and another time and Cable would be back for the Omega any day, any minute, and then Wade would have to say goodbye so it was better not to risk exploring this—this—

—Peter sighed in his sleep, burrowed deeper into the blankets and turned his nose into the pillow Wade slept on every night, purring quietly for a moment before slipping back to slumber.

Omega.

Mine.

No. Wade turned his back on the gorgeous Omega and went outside to see about evening chores.

He’d already said goodbye to one mate, and didn’t know if he’d survive saying goodbye to another.

Better not risk it.

Better not risk it at all.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

We meet Logan (Movie-verse Wolverine!) in this chapter and our boys do the Awkward Dance of Not Being Able to Bone Yet. Plus a little Clint/Logan softness at the end because I love them.

Quick note: for the sake of this fic, *Victor/Sabretooth* is also movieverse, and is just as awful as he was in the Xmen Origins: Wolverine movie.

Chopping wood was therapeutic.

The repetitive motion, the rhythm of lift and swing, lift and swing, the strain of muscles that gave way to a satisfying sort of burn, and the gratifying *crack* of a perfectly split log.

It was a productive chore, a much needed chore, a necessity that could be done every single day for a year and still be on the to-do list the very next day. Dead trees had to be cleared so nothing could fall and crush the cabin, the woodshed filled and kindling box stocked so the fire wouldn’t go out on the cold nights.

Chopping wood was *therapeutic*, productive and necessary, and right now it was the only thing keeping Wade from wasting the morning by sitting inside the cabin and watching Peter sleep.

Wade hadn’t slept at all last night. He’d sat up by the fire and listened to the Omega’s sleepy sighs, clenched his fists when Peter had dreamed and that perfectly pert nose had scrunched in distress. Peter woke up at one point, stretching and yawning before sending Wade a sweet if not dazed smile and promptly dropping back to sleep.

Wade had scrubbed his hands over his face, counted backwards from about a billion and when that wasn’t enough to convince him not to just climb right in bed with the Omega and cuddle him close, Wade had bolted out the front door to start the morning a chores a full three hours early.

*Keep it together, Wilson.*

“You smell stupid this morning, Wilson.” A sudden scent of bittersweet and almost *feral*, and Wade paused mid way through a swing. “Stupider than usual, anyway.”

“Logan.” With a reluctant half smile, Wade adjusted his stance so he could see the dangerous Omega. “What brings you around?”

“Not gonna comment on your scent, huh?” Logan was the sort of Omega that made Alphas reconsider exactly how *Alpha* they were feeling, his deep voice perpetually grumpy, the usual sweet Omega scent tinted wild enough to make even Betas uneasy. Even now as he teased Wade, Logan looked and sounded all of two seconds from *rage* and it was only years and years of shared history and hard earned trust that kept Wade from growling as Logan sauntered closer. “Glad to see we can agree on one thing at least. You smell stupid.”

“We’d agree on lots of things if you weren’t such a prick.” Wade was careful not to turn his back on Logan, but he continued splitting logs. “What’r’you doing up here? We’re not exactly
neighbors, so why are you wandering around my part of th’mountain?”

“I was at the falls looking for Victor.” Logan whistled sharply towards the woods, and Wade startled as a canine nearly as high as his waist trotted out of the trees and flopped in a graceless heap by Logan’s feet, chin on his paws, ears perked up in interest. “Picked this pooch up along the way.”

“Pooch.” Wade eyed the beast, noting the size of it’s paws and color of it’s coat. “You mean wolf. Why were you looking for Victor at the falls with a wolf?”

“Border town up the way has chalked up six bodies in the past month.” Logan began gathering pieces as Wade tossed them aside, stacking them in his arms and carrying the pile to the woodshed. “Two different ranchers, one’a their wives and a whole posse of law enforcement types.”

Wade clenched his jaw. “Sounds like the type of trouble your brother likes to cause.”

“Probably got caught stealing and killed the ranchers, then the lawmen that came after him.” Logan’s tone didn’t change, but his scent wrinkled sadness for a second or two. “I went up there to check, try and bring him back, but he was gone by the time I made it.”

“How long’s it been since you seen Victor?” Wade hefted another log up onto his splitting bench. “Palmito, right? End of the war? Seven years is a long time, Logan. You know damn well if Victor doesn’t want to be found, he’ll just disappear into the woods.”

“Well I’m gonna find him anyway.” Logan scratched the wolf pup behind it’s ear and went back to collecting wood. “He needs to pay for what he did. Not just in that town, but for his war crimes too.”

“War makes animals of us all.” Wade slanted a sideways glance at the Omega. “And when you got states fighting against each other, families on opposite sides– that tears people up. You and Victor know better than most how easy it is to slip feral when the air reeks like blood. Victor was a little outta control but–”

“Just cos we’re animals don’t mean we gotta be wild.” Logan interrupted. “M’good at what I do, and what I do ain’t all that nice but Victor lost it. Killed just for the sake of spilling’ blood, tore up families and the sorta people that had no business being hurt. Innocent people. He’s gotta be brought to justice for that.”

“And you’re gonna bring him to justice?” Wade wrestled another log up onto the bench. “You think he’s gonna let you bring him in?”

“If I can find him, I’ll have to kill him.” The Omega said evenly. “Victor isn’t gonna let some Sheriff hold him in a cell, and he’s not allowed in Haven so that isn’t an option either. If I want this to stop, I’ll have to kill him.”

“Yeah?” Wade adjusted his grip on the ax and raised his eyebrows. “What does your Alpha have to say about that?”

“My Alpha.” Finally a real smile from the Omega, Logan’s always brittle scent warming at the mention of his mate. “Clint just wants a chance to drop Victor’s pieces off a cliff.”

“Still mad about Victor coming after him when he heard you two mated?”

“Still missing feathers from it.” Logan confirmed, then leaned in and blatantly sniffed at Wade, nostrils flaring and eyes narrowing. “I wasn’t kidding about you smelling stupid, Wade. What do
you scent like? What have you gotten in to?"

“Easy with the nose.” Wade pushed Logan away with a huff. “I don’t smell like any–”

“It’s an Omega.” Logan realized, ignoring Wade’s push to get right back into the Alpha’s space and take a deeper inhale. “An Omega and– and Cable. You scent like an Omega and Cable. What is that? You been messing with that time jumping bastard?”

“I haven’t been messing with Cable.” Wade shot a quick look towards the cabin door. “But I uh, I found someone in the woods real early the other morning. Looked like he’d been dropped outta the sky and left for dead so I put him in the cabin to sleep it off.”

“You put an Omega in the cabin to sleep it off.” Logan repeated. “An Omega that tangled with Cable and ended up alone in the woods. What in the hell are you thinking? For all you know, Cable could be trying to kill them for some future time traveling reason. Hell, that could be Cable’s mate and he’s gonna come back and kill you for interfering.”

“He could come back and try to kill me.” Wade deadpanned. “And the Omega isn’t Cable’s mate or anything like that, I checked. He’s just as confused about all this as I am. No idea why he ended up here.”

“Cable isn’t the type to mess with Omegas and he’s definitely not the type to teleport them random places, trust me, I’ve asked him to try it with me.” Logan lit one of his ever present cigars and puffed a rings of smoke towards Wade. “Where’s the Omega from?”

“More like when is he from.” Wade was hard pressed not to laugh when the Omega’s bushy eye brows flew towards his forehead. “Yeah. Cable found him some hundred and fifty years in the future, dropped his ass back here for some reason.”

“On accident?”

“Pretty sure he didn’t mean to leave the kid alone in the woods at dawn.” Wade shrugged, trying to play off the wiggle of unease skittering down his spine.

He didn’t want anyone else knowing about Peter, not yet anyway. Logan was a good guy, stable in his bond with his Alpha Clint, but he was still going to ask questions, and questions meant other people would get involved and Wade wasn’t ready to share the Omega with anyone.

Not that Peter was his Omega to hide away, but the thought of other people knowing still made something uncomfortable twist in Wade’s stomach.

“So you got an Omega locked away in there who’s a hundred and fifty years away from where he belongs, and you have no idea why Cable left him.” Logan squinted at the Alpha. “You talked to Doc Banner about it yet, or had him check the Omega out?”

“Nope.” Wade’s next chop was more aggressive than it needed to be, the log splintering beneath the blow. “Not yet. Pete’s still sleeping and I gotta get some meat put away for the winter before I can get to town. Conversation with Doc Banner will have to wait.”

“I can take him.” Logan pointed out. “I’m on my way down the mountain right now. I can get through town and drop the kid off with Banner before heading home. Go wake him up and tell him to–”

Wade snarled, low and startlingly vicious and Logan stopped mid sentence, a knowing light in his eyes. “Oh…I see.”
“You don’t see anything.” Another overly aggressive swing and Logan dodged a few flying shards. “Peter’s not going with you. I’m not waking him up until he’s got enough rest, and he’s not going with you. He’ll go to town with me when I’m good and ready.”

“Hm.” Logan bent to pick up the shattered pieces, tossing anything salvageable into the kindling box. “It’s not a real scent match, you know that right?”

Wade white-knuckled the ax and willed his voice steady. “I dunno what you’re talking about.”

“Sure you don’t.” Logan’s blase statement made Wade almost irrationally angry and when it bled hot into his scent, the big Omega held up both hands peacefully. “You know damn well an Omega so far outta their reality will scent desperate and needy and that’s why you’re acting so possessive. Happens every time someone new comes to Haven, every Alpha in town starts getting crazy for a while. You are not a scent match with Peter, it’s just cos of the situation. You know that.”

“I know what I know.” Wade bit at the inside of his cheek until it tore and he tasted blood, hoping the pain would keep him centered, keep him from flying off the handle and roaring at the Omega for daring to suggest he and Pete weren’t scent matched.

Logan was being rational about all of this in a way Wade was physically incapable of right now, and he should be grateful to his friend for pointing it out.

He should be grateful instead of letting his vision tinge red at the mere suggestion that his Omega the Omega Peter wasn’t meant to be his.

But Peter was meant to be his. Just met or not, accident or not, Cable’s influence or not, their scents matched and Peter had admitted to knowing him. Peter was meant to be his.

Mine.

Omega.

“Wade.” Logan said quietly, and then sharper when the Alpha tensed and started to growl. “Wade! Snap out of it! Clear your head and listen! You can’t go all Alpha on the kid when he’s—”

Logan’s voice trailed off, his head cocking in interest and Wade knew without turning around that Peter had woken up and come outside. “—when he’s— holy shit, Wade. Is that him? Is that Peter?”

“Yes.” Wade closed his eyes and breathed in deep, a shudder running through him as he caught the sweetest edge of lavender and honeysuckle in the morning air. “That’s him.”

“Wow.” Logan moved around Wade to go towards the Omega, but Wade caught his arm and squeezed hard with a deadly warning of, “Don’t you dare. Not before I’ve seen him.”

“…Fair enough.” Logan wasn’t an Omega that backed down from anything, but he backed down now, folding his arms and averting his eyes until Wade stopped growling. “But I want to talk to him, Omega to Omega. Understand?”

“Give us a minute.” Wade said gruffly and Logan nodded in agreement.

Fuckin’ interesting is what it was, the way the Omega relaxed immediately as Wade approached, the way Wade’s entire frame softened when Peter turned his direction.

A quiet, “Good morning.” from the Omega echoed in a near rumble from Wade. Peter’s hands
stuffed into his pockets even though his entire body angled towards Wad while the Alpha was holding himself still even though he was practically straining to lean close and scent the Omega. Peter’s head was paused in an awkward posture of not quite submission while Wade’s shoulders were slumped in an attempt of comfort versus dominance, both wanting to be close, neither letting themselves be near.

A truly scent matched pair was almost always touching if they were in the same space, and it was almost physically painful to watch Peter and Wade try not to touch when it clear they needed to be together. They stood too close to be casual, too far away to be intimate and it was painful.

And when Logan closed his eyes and stretched his senses, tapped into the part of himself that borderline animal and breathed, he could almost taste the way honeysuckle and black licorice wove together, lavender and cedar wound into a single heady scent.

“Not a side effect of the circumstance, then.” Logan muttered in disbelief. “Would you look at that.”

Closer to the cabin, Peter peeked over Wade’s shoulder to sneak a look at the Omega by the woodpile. “Who is that? Is he really an Omega? I’ve never seen an Omega so big.”

“That’s Logan.” Wade started to reach for Peter and then let his hand fall away. “Old friend of mine, and yes he’s really an Omega. Every bit as big as any Alpha you’re gonna run in to and just as dangerous too. Be careful. I trust him, but you need to be careful.”

“Dangerous?” Peter bit at his lip, playing with the edge of his shirt nervously. “Why is he dangerous?”

“My mutation keeps me about half way to feral, so I’m more dangerous than most Alphas, more dangerous than most wild Alphas too.” Logan cut in and when Peter’s eyes widened in surprise, the other Omega made a motion over his own ears. “Yeah, I can hear you.”

“He’s alright.” Wade inclined his head towards Logan and motioned for Peter to follow. “This is Peter. Peter, Logan. He his mate got a place along the high ridge on the other side of the valley.”

“Nice to meet you.” After another night of solid sleep, Peter’s dark eyes were clear and bright, sparking with curiosity as he looked Logan over, and then warming with immediate affection when he saw the big dog. “I guess you know I’m not from around here?”

“Wade told me.” Logan didn’t look away from the other Omega, cataloging every hint of expression on Peter’s face. “Had a run in with Cable, huh?”

“You could say that.” Peter’s gaze landed on Logan’s forearms, at the twin sets of faded scars running from his knuckles to his elbows, then moved up and up to the mutants face, nose wrinkling as he caught the bitterness in Logan’s scent and the undercurrent of something off. “You’re a mutant too. Like Wade? Like Cable?”

“No one’s a mutant like Cable.” Logan scoffed, but there was no heat in the words. “But yeah, sort of like Wade. Little less human.”

“Little less human.” Peter echoed. “What does that—”

His jaw nearly unhinged when the scars at Logan’s forearms rippled and the skin at the Omega’s knuckles split and three claws?–stakes?–bones slid from between Logan’s fingers and out almost ten inches into the air, horrifying and other worldly and just— just—
It was mutant.

Wade growled when Logan’s claws made an appearance but didn’t make any movement forward, and Logan watched Peter very closely, reading the Omega’s scent for any hint of fear or terror and smiling a little when Peter only made an impressed sort of noise.

“That’s amazing.” It wasn’t immediately obvious if Peter realized that he’d reached for Wade, nor was it obvious if Wade realized he had automatically moved forward and taken the Omega’s hand but Logan saw it all. “Absolutely incredible. How do you do that? Can you tell me? Does it hurt? Do you ever bleed? How long have you been able to do that? Are the scars from the first time it happened?”

“Most people scream when they see these, not ask a bunch of questions.” Logan said bluntly, and Peter replied, “Most people probably scream when they wake up in a different century too, but you know what they say about curiosity and the cat.”

Logan wrinkled his brow at Wade, who made a similar ‘I dunno’ expression before tuning back in to Peter, whose lips were moving through a hundred different muttered questions as he inched closer to examine the claws.

“Did you ask Wade this many questions?”

“I threw up.” Peter finally got the courage to touch one of the claws, and he recoiled from the too textured feel of bone. “I mean yeah, I asked a bunch of questions, and I yelled at him a little bit, then I threw up when he told me I’d time traveled. Over it now, though. Everything’s fine. Could you tell me if–”

“Give me and the kid a minute.” Logan told Wade, not surprised at all when the Alpha bared his fangs and growled again. “Put those away, you know I’m not going to hurt him.”

“I’m fine.” Peter absentmindedly pressed at Wade’s hand and then pushed him away. “I’m fine. I have about a thousand more questions though. I need to know everything about these. Logan, can you–”

“Are you safe here?” Logan lowered his voice to a near inaudible whisper, and Peter shut up abruptly. “Wade’s a good guy and he’s a good Alpha but you’re always gonna be safer with an Omega. Do you want to come to Haven with me? We can be there by sundown.”

“Um.” Peter cleared his throat and shook his head. “How– how do you know Wade?”

“We fought together in the war.” Logan turned his hand over so Peter could press lightly at his palm. “Answer me. Are you safe here?”

“Which war did you fight in?” Too immersed in his curiosity to worry about a blatant breach of personal space with a very dangerous mutant, Peter traced the nearly faded scars up Logan’s forearm. “Was I wrong? These aren’t from your claws?”

“Yes, they’re from when I was young and stupid.” Logan said impatiently. “And we fought in the all the wars. Now tell me–”

“I’m safe here.” Logan wanting to take him away made Peter feel itchy all over, itchy and anxious and uncomfortable, so he dropped Logan’s hand and folded his arms over his chest. “I’m safe with Wade.”
“You’d be safer with an Omega.” Logan retracted his claws and Peter jumped at the ick noise they made sliding back into place. “You aren’t from this time and whatever you are feeling with Wade is more than likely a result of you being needy, you know?” Logan tapped his own chest. “Omegas just about cry out for Alphas when we are uncertain of things and right now you’re real uncertain. Misplaced, out of your own time, probably a little desperate. Are you sure you want to stay here?”

“I want to stay.” Peter took a step away from the other Omega, a step closer to Wade. “I’m safe.”

“You’re not really a scent match.” Logan was lying, he’d never seen two people more obviously a scent match in his life, but he kept a close eye on the Omega’s reaction anyway. “It’s just time travel effect and you’re in need of some stability.”

“Right.” Peter took another step away from Logan, towards Wade. “That makes perfect sense. Most of the textbooks in my time believe scent matches were a biological assurance that pairs would mate and continue the species, not actually true love or soulmates like it tends to be romanticized.”

“Uh-huh.” Logan raised his eyebrows. “You still wanna stay?”

“Yes.” Another step back, and this time Wade stepped forward to meet Peter halfway, his arm automatically winding around Peter’s waist to keep him still. “I’m staying.”

“Alright then.” Apparently satisfied, Logan’s gaze flickered warm, and his next words were too quiet for Peter to hear.

“Congratulations, Wade.”

The Alpha turned his nose into Peter’s hair for a split second, then offered his old friend a smile. “I’ll be town in a few weeks. Say hello to your mate for me.”

“Stay safe.” Logan said in return, and then with a nod towards Peter. “Welcome to Haven, Peter.”

“Thank you.” Peter lifted his hand in a half wave, and they stood in silence until Logan and his dog had disappeared down the hill and into the trees.

It was only then Peter realized Wade was still holding him, and beyond that, Peter finally realized he was holding Wade, pressing at the Alpha’s hand with his own to be sure Wade didn’t move until Logan was gone.

“Sorry.” he said immediately, dropping Wade’s hand and pulling away. “I didn’t realize I was doing that. Didn’t realize I did it earlier either. Sorry.”

“No harm done, Omega.” Wade answered, and then with a grimace, “Sorry. Peter. No harm done, Peter.”

“It’s fine.” Peter waved off the slip, partly because he knew Wade hadn’t meant anything by it, partly because it really was fine. He sort of liked being called Omega when it was Wade saying it. “I can’t believe I slept so late. I didn’t even hear you leave this morning.”

“You were pretty out of it.” Wade forced himself away from Peter and back to the wood pile, lifting the ax and splitting the next heavy log, decidedly not letting himself stare at the way Peter’s slim fitted pants hugged his legs or how he hadn’t known how slim the Omega was until Peter had shed the bulky sweater for this clinging long sleeve. “Find the water I left you to clean up with?”

“I did.” Peter smoothed his still wet hair back with a self conscious smile. “Thank you. I think I’d...
kill for a shower but it was nice to at least wipe down. I didn’t need the clothes though, I had extras in my pack.”

There was no reason to tell the Alpha Peter had held the clothes up to his nose and inhaled until he was light headed and swimming in Wade’s scent. It had been a moment of weakness was all. He was vulnerable and like Logan had said, probably desperate for some stability and of course he was reaching out to the nearest Alpha. Nothing to worry about at all. Definitely didn’t have some higher– some higher meaning.

“Logan offered to take you to Haven.” Wade said then. “Why didn’t you go with him? He’s safe. A little wild, but safe.”

“I’m safe with you.” Peter pointed out. “Why would I leave you to go with a stranger? I’m safe with you.”

“You are safe with me.” The Alpha’s smile was evident in his voice. “But Haven has real showers.”

“Tempting.” Peter circled around the splitting bench until he could see Wade again. “But um–if you don’t mind, I’d much rather stay here with you.”

The ax stilled, Wade’s voice very soft as he answered, “I’d much rather you stay here with me too, Pete. Least till Cable comes back for you.”

“It’s settled then.” Peter looked down at the scattered pieces of wood. “Should I help?”

“If you’re gonna stay, you’re gonna work.” Wade set up another piece and went back to chopping. “Stack the pieces there in the shed, gather the little bits for kindling. Do you know how to build a fire?”

“I know how to turn on a gas fireplace.” Peter stacked as many split logs as he could fit into his arms and staggered over towards the shed. “And I’ve been known to roast a marshmallow or two on a previously started fire, but no. No, I’ve never built one of my own. Why would I do that? I have central heating and I can honestly say, I’ve never once gone into a store and seen firewood for sale in the city.”

“Of course not.” Wade didn’t know what central heating was, but Peter’s sarcasm was about thick enough to cut with a knife so he responded in kind, “You gotta be useful for something other than just being pretty, Pete. You catch any of those fish you sometimes eat?”

“I catch them on sale at the grocery store.” Peter shot back and Wade cracked a grin, flashing his fangs at the mouthy Omega. “And I’ll have you know I’ve made it very far in life just being pretty. Dunno why it should stop working now.”

“Cos bein’ pretty isn’t going to keep you from freezing when the winter storms come along.” Wade pointed out. “And a well built fire will.”

“Oh! Ow! Son of a–!”

“Pretty enough to drop wood on your own feet?” The Alpha snarked. “Oooh yes, excellent survival plan. One for the adventure books.”

“Point taken.” Peter scowled and carried the rest of his load into the wood shed. “Will you teach
me to make a fire? And you know, not to freeze?”

“I’ll teach you.” Wade trilled comfortingly when when Peter cursed over a sudden splinter. “You’ll be fine.”

“Thanks.” Peter tossed away the splinter, wiped away the dot of blood and went right back to work on the pile. “I might not be panicking anymore about all of this, but I’m still a long way from home. Any help you wanna give me is great.”

“I won’t let anything happen to you.” The words came more serious than Wade had intended. “I’ve got you, Pete. I’ll take care of you. If you want to stay with me, I’m gonna take care of you.”

“I um—” Peter swallowed hard when the Alpha’s eyes shifted red. “I know you will. Sounds crazy but I’m not real worried about anything right now. You’ll teach me to build a fire, I’m going to take notes on everything I learn so when Cable comes back I can remember it all and uh—” he spread his hands and shrugged. “I’m okay. I’m staying.”

“You’re staying.” Wade ran his tongue over his fangs and started chopping again. “Glad to hear it.”

The wind shifted just then and Peter got a noseful of protective Alpha scent, possessive and heated and he all but ran for the wood shed, dumping the logs and planting his hands on his knees, bending over nearly double to try and catch his breath.

Alpha.

A few moments later, Wade called, “Pete?” and Peter straightened back up, wiping his mouth and forcing out a calming breath, willing his own scent to settle.

“Yeah, yeah I’m coming. Just a sec.”

“Alright?” Wade asked once Peter joined him again, and the Omega nodded.

“I’m fine.”

I’m fine.

**************

“How much land do you have?” Peter asked as he followed the Alpha across the clearing towards a barn he hadn’t noticed the day before. “How did you come to own it? How long have you lived here?”

“I have as much land as I want.” Wade undid the door of the barn and clicked his tongue to the animals inside. “And I own it because I came to Haven, decided I wanted to live outside of town, and picked a spot no one else was living on.”

“So it’s a verbal contract only?” Peter ducked through the doorway as well, exclaiming in quiet surprise when he found two horses and a goat in the stalls inside. “And I own it because I came to Haven, decided I wanted to live outside of town, and picked a spot no one else was living on.”

“No contract needed.” Wade tossed a handful of grains at the goat, then looped a rope around it’s neck and patted it towards the open door so it could wander through the yard and graze. “I live here, Logan and his mate live across the way on the high ridges— no one owns the land, we just see
where others have settled and pick a different spot for ourselves. That way when I hunt, I’m not too close to anyone else, but if I need help, the village is less than a day’s travel away.”

“Huh.” Peter jumped backwards when a huge head swung his way, one of the horses huffing and nosing at his hair. “Oh man, he’s big.”

“She.” Wade corrected, patting the mare on the nose and shoving her back until he could get close enough to unlatch the doors. “This beauty here is Bea, big boy on the other side is Arthur.”

“Bea.” Peter stood out of the way as the red roan lumbered past, reaching up a tentative hand to brush at her side. “She’s lovely.”

“Pretty girl.” The Alpha rumbled, and Bea’s ears twitched towards him just before the gelding trotted out behind her, gray spotted with black and gorgeous, heavy hooves pounding at the ground.

“I took Arthur to war with me.” Wade ran his fingers along a white scar at Arthur’s side. “He’s getting to be an old horse so it’s Bea I take hunting, Arthur only has to pull the wagon with her when I go to town for supplies.”

“I can’t ride a horse.” Peter posted up at the side of the barn, arms crossed as he watched the horses parade out in the sunshine. “Always wanted to try, but never had the chance. Not a whole lotta horses in the city.”

“I’ll teach you to ride if you want.” Wade clambered up to the loft of the barn and sifted through the hay, pitching several piles down into the stalls. “Teach you to milk the goat and gather eggs and—”

“I think we’re getting a little ahead of ourselves.” Peter said dryly. “I wanna ride the pretty ponies, not get up close and personal with goaty nether regions.”

Wade leaned on his pitchfork, shoulders shaking as he laughed and down at the stalls, Peter grinned up at the Alpha.

“Well like I said, if you’re gonna stay, you’re gonna work.” Wade jumped from the loft and landed with a thump, dusting off his hands before coming up on the Omega and standing just behind him, flattening one palm on the door frame and using his height to peer over Peter’s head to keep an eye on the animals. “And if you’re going to not eat meat, it’s going to be your job to gather milk and eggs and all the— all the grass you munch on. I’m a hunter, not a gatherer Pete. I don’t forage for weeds.”

“It’s not weeds, it’s—” the word salad died on Peter’s tongue when he whirled around ready to get sassy and found the Alpha all but looming over him, Wade braced against the frame and almost trapping Peter between his body and the wall of the barn.

No, trapped wasn’t the right word. Peter wasn’t sure what the right word was but oh it was something because right now all he could do was feel was the heat pouring off Wade’s body, smell the heavy notes of licorice in the Alpha’s scent blending spiced the longer Peter stared, hazel eyes flickering red when Peter wet his lips.

“…Pete?” Wade asked hoarsely, and the Omega gasped in a too shallow breath. “Sure does things to an Alpha when you look at him like that.”

“S-sorry.” Peter finally tore his eyes away, ducking his head and backpedaling to give himself some breathing room. “It’s um— it’s salad. Not weeds. Salad.”
“Yeah well, you can gather the salad then.” It took Wade a moment longer than he wanted to admit to pull himself out of the daze. “The animals are fine for right now. You want to see the rest of the property?”

“I think I might—” Peter cleared his throat. “I might just um—” a vague motion that meant absolutely nothing. “I should probably—” he jerked his thumbs to the empty space behind him. “Shit. I need a minute.”

“I know.” Wade didn’t mean to growl the words, but the way Peter’s eyes glazed over made the mistake worth it.

“I know.” he tried again. “I’ve got some more work to do in here, then I’ve got about eight trees to get chopped up and a woodshed to fill so you uh– you can wander but don’t go too far.”

“I won’t go far.” Peter mumbled, glancing at and then away from Wade’s thighs as the Alpha crouched down to pat at the goat. “If I get hungry—”

“There’s all sorts of weeds.” Wade finished. “Big weeds, little weeds, weeds with flowers. Snack all you want.”

“I hate you.” Peter couldn’t help his grin. The Alpha was equal parts breath taking and ridiculous and despite everything, Peter had never felt more at home in his life. “I’ll find some goddamn weeds.”

Wade’s laughter followed Peter back across the clearing and halfway down the hill as Peter headed for the outhouse, but by the time the Omega made it back up to the cabin, the steady rhythmic thunk of ax on log meant Wade was right back to working at the wood pile.

Peter shivered through a sigh of relief over the sudden space.

Being around Wade was suffocating in a way that made Peter think he’d be happy to never breathe again, but it was overwhelming too. Overwhelming and new even if he knew in his soul that they were right.

The romance novels talked about mate’s finding each other, scent matching and being bonded by sun down. There were stories passed down from great great grandparents about love at first sight and mates that passed away within minutes of each other because their souls refused to be apart. Every year there were at least two new cheesy movies that promised synced heart beats and Omega’s lost in euphoria from nothing more than their Alpha’s scent and it was overwhelming.

Overwhelming and right and not anything Peter could think about right now.

Instead he busied himself wandering around Wade’s property, clicking at the horses and coaxing them close to he could pet them, grabbing his notebook from his pack and winding through the trees, going as far as he dared so long as the cabin was still in view over his shoulder.

Around lunchtime, the Alpha whistled sharply and when Peter came back around, there were cooked eggs and sliced bread waiting on a plate by the door. Peter didn’t trust himself to not act like a fool if he went to Wade to say thank you, but it did warm a secret place in his heart to know the Alpha was going out of his way to make food Peter would eat.

It was just eggs and bread but it felt like more and whoo boy that wasn’t anything Peter could think about right now either.

When the sun started to dip on the horizon, Peter took his notebook full of scribblings and
definitely terrible attempts at drawing plants he didn’t recognize and headed back to the cabin, stopping only to wash his hands before going inside and offering Wade a smile.

“There you are.” Wade’s tone was light but his scent was heavy with worry that lightened only when Peter put the notebook down and came to sit at the table. “How were your weeds?”

“Green and crunchy.” Peter reached for a nearby mug, took a long drink, and then instantly wanted to die as his stomach rebelled against the very strong taste of very strong liquor. “Oh my god! Oh my god what is that?! What is that?!?”

“Moonshine.” Wade switched the cup out with a glass of milk and grinned as the Omega chugged it. “Can’t imagine the milk tastes real good after that.”

“No, I’m pretty sure it curdled on the way down my throat.” Peter wheezed. “Oh my god. How can you drink moonshine? It’s practically gasoline!”

“Well that’ll teach you to take a man’s drink.” Wade reprimanded him mildly. “Besides, it’s about the only thing that gets someone like me drunk. Sure will put a little Omega like you on your ass though, so stick to milk and water, Pete.”

Peter’s only response was a loud cough and then a glare when Wade took a sip of the moonshine and didn’t even blink.

“Guess it’s my fault for assuming it was water.” Peter finally grumbled, and took another swallow of milk. “Did you um— another short cough, and this time Wade’s eyes dimmed in sympathy. “— did you get all the wood done?”

“Got enough done.” Wade rolled his shoulders to ease a still lingering twinge. He’d chopped wood for a good five and a half hours today as Peter had gone exploring. Anything to keep his mind off how Peter had looked there in the barn, anything to keep him from following Peter through the woods just to stay close, anything to keep distracted from the instinctive need to keep the Omega set tight in his arms. “What about you? Take enough notes to last you?”

“I could write about all this for days.” Irritation over the moonshine abruptly ended in favor of talking about his day, and Peter launched into a rambling chatter about how there were plants on Wade’s land that he was sure didn’t exist anymore in his time, how the trees were so huge it almost made him believe in things like Big Foot because a Sasquatch could definitely hide in this mess, and oh! Did Wade know how old Logan was? He could kill for internet access right now because he had to know if there were reports of men like Logan running around and maybe it was the same person and—

“Christ, you’re beautiful.”

Peter’s mouth clapped shut, his eyes wide when the Alpha breathed the words. “…wh—what?”

“You’re beautiful.” Wade said again, before his brain came back on line and told him he was being stupid. “I keep waiting for you to panic and cry or something, but instead you’re sitting here drinking moonshine and asking me a bunch of questions and your eyes are all bright and you’re smiling and it’s—” there was his brain, screaming at the Alpha to shut the hell up. “— it’s beautiful. You’re beautiful, Pete.”

“Oh.” Peter gulped and whispered very very softly, “You’re beautiful too.”

“No, I’m not.” Wade ran a hand over his bare scalp, tugged the sleeves down further to cover the scars on his hands and then just as quickly tried to adjust his shirt collar to cover the ones at his
neck. “But thanks all the same.”

“You are.” Peter meant every single word, and the Alpha rumbled quiet and grateful when he saw the truth in Peter’s eyes. “I um– I don’t think I’ve ever met an Alpha that makes me–” horny. “– I mean, you are–” holy shit I’m bad at this. “Um–”

“Pete.” Wade bared his fangs in a knowing smile and the Omega shivered. “Are you hungry?”

“…starving.” Peter hid his flaming face by looking down at the table. “Thank you.”

They ate in relative silence, both Alpha and Omega all too aware of every movement and change of posture and every single breath the other took.

Overwhelming.

Right.

“I feel bad for taking your bed.” Peter said later after dinner, exhaustion written across his face and the slump of his shoulders. “I guess when I was comatose it was alright, but I can put some blankets on the floor or sleep in the big chair by the fire so you can have the bed back.”

“You’ll sleep right there.” Wade didn’t look up from stoking the fire. “You’re still over tired from whatever Cable did to you, you’re about asleep on your feet. Go on.”

“No really, it’s fine.” Peter insisted. “Wade, I don’t want you to–”

“Sleep in the bed, Pete.”

“Wade–”

“You’ll sleep in my bed, Omega!” Wade growled, hazel eyes bleeding dark red and Peter stumbled back a step first in fear and then–

--then he realized the Alpha didn’t scent angry or upset, he scented pleading and protective, scented warm and coaxing and possessive and Peter nodded slowly, backing up until his knees hit the bed and he could sit.

“Thank you.” Wade went back to the fire, purposefully looking away so Peter would have the chance to undress and slip beneath the covers. “Sweet dreams, Pete.”

“…sweet dreams.” Peter curled up beneath the blankets that smelled like his Alpha the Alpha Wade, and breathed out in an exhale that seemed to come right from the bottom of his feet.

He was fine, this was fine.

“I have to secure Bea and Arthur for the night, then I’ll be back.” Wade passed by the bed, clenching his fists so he wouldn’t be tempted to run his fingers through Peter’s hair, or brush them down the Omega’s cheek. “You’ll be right here.”

“I’ll be right here.” Peter snuggled deeper into the bed, and the Alpha left with a smile on his face, the scent of content Omega in his nose.

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{Authors Note: This Clint/Logan pairing is entirely self serving on my part. I wrote a blurb for
High on the ridge above Haven was a cabin built some fifty years previous, stones pulled from the mountain and used to build walls, heavy logs split and smoothed for the roof, rooms added on as needs changed until it sprawled across the ridge, blending into the wilderness behind it and nearly invisible from all angles until a traveler was nearly upon it.

Inside the cabin, Logan was just coming from a long overdue bath, water streaming down the Omega’s body as he drip dried in front of a roaring fire, a cup of his favorite whiskey held in both hands.

But when warm feathers wrapped around his torso and nearly covered him to his toes, Logan put the cup down and turned round to burrow into his mate’s arms.

“I do like when I come home and find my Omega naked in front of the fire.” Clint rumbled, sharp fangs landed at the silvered bond mark on Logan’s neck. “Why didn’t you call for me sooner?”

“Because you would have wanted to share my bath and your wings get gross and waterlogged.” Logan said flatly, and his Alpha only laughed softly and held him even tighter, dark feathers fluffing up until Logan was fully surrounded. “I missed you Alpha.”

“I missed you too.” Clint was a full four inches shorter than his Omega, but it didn’t stop him from gathering Logan up close and it certainly didn’t stop Logan from acting rarely submissive and tucking his head into Clint’s shoulder. “You didn’t find Victor?”

“He moved on before I caught him.” Surrounded by the safety of Clint’s huge wings, Logan pushed and prodded until Clint fell onto the sofa cushions. The Alpha immediately made room for the Omega against his chest, grinning when Logan tumbled naked into him. “Picked up another dog and stopped by to see Wade though.”

“Is it a dog or another wolf, love?” Clint wanted to know, and when Logan didn’t answer, his grin stretched wider. “So, a wolf then. Well what’s new with that scarred asshole Wade?” Clint ran his hands gently up and down his Omega’s back. “Done anything stupid lately?”

“He’s found himself an Omega.” Logan melted deeper into his mate’s embrace. “Pretty thing tangled with Cable, ended up dumped on Wade’s land and the two of them are scent matched.”

“Probably trauma bonded.” Clint said absentmindedly and Logan countered, “I saw them, Clint. They are a true scent match.”

“Huh. Didn’t know that could happen more than once in a lifetime.”

“Maybe when you’re indestructible like Wade and me and Victor, a lifetime is an amount of years, not judged by when you die. Theoretically we could have all sorts of mates, right?” Logan shrugged, and when his Alpha went very still beneath him, added, “Don’t you worry though. I’d find you in any lifetime. Don’t matter how many of them I get. S’always gonna be you, Clint.”

Clint relaxed again, humming in contentment when their scents mingled, heart beats slowing and syncing together as they reconnected.

“So if the Omega was mixed up with Cable–”
“Yeah, he’s from *real* far in the future.”

“Whew.” The Alpha blew out a deep breath. “Isn’t there something about how being in the wrong timeline screws with you? That’s why Doc Banner is always a little off, right? Cos he doesn’t really belong here?”

“Something like that.” Logan ran idle fingers through Clint’s feathers, straightening out the ones closest to his mate’s shoulders. “Don’t think it matters though, Cable would be better off leaving them alone. Wade will rage out and tear Cable in half if he shows back up to take Peter away.”

“But it could *kill* that Omega to stay here with Wade.”

“I know. But it’d kill both of them to be apart. They’re scent matched, true mates. Timelines and right or wrong has got nothing to do with it. They’re meant to be together.”

“Hm.” Clint turned his head and left a very soft kiss on Logan’s temple. “I know the feeling. Guess we’ll just have to see what happens.”
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

This chapter turned out different than I planned, but if there’s one thing I learned, it’s to let stories do whatever they want because Free Range Plots are much more fun to read than plotted, planned and outlined ones.

Note: while this story isn’t actually D/s, I have given ‘subspace’ a MTW/ABO twist and I sort of love it. Hope everyone else does too!

Also, I love snarky Hank Pym so much omg his character in the Ant Man movies was amazing.

Hank Pym had an entire list of people he never wanted to see knocking at his front door.

Tony Stark topped the list, Tony Stark’s uncomfortably intimidating assistant Pepper Potts was a close second. Norman Osborn wasn’t even allowed within a hundred yards of the property— or was it that Hank wasn’t allowed within a hundred yards of Norman Osborn? Restraining orders between old men fighting over physics were so complicated— and even though Scott Lang was well on his way to becoming part of the family, Hank didn’t particularly want to see him at three in the morning either.

The very last person Hank was expecting to see on the other side of his door was the mutant cyborg Cable, and though he would happily die before admitting he screamed when that metallic yellow eye zeroed in on him—

“Shit!” Hank tried to slam the door right in Cable’s face, shrieked a little when metal fingers grasped around the edges and pried it back open, and then shrieked a little louder when the heavy door came right off its hinges as Cable barreled inside.

“Whoa whoa whoa!” Hank swept a shock of silver hair away from his eyes and puffed out his chest, folding his arms and rocking up onto his toes and doing everything possible to appear bigger than his several inches shorter than the Alpha. “You can’t just run in here like you own the place! Who the hell do you think you are!?”

“You know who I am.” Cable didn’t bother hiding his smirk over Hank’s floor length striped robe and color coordinated slippers. “Nice jammies.”

“I’m insisting I don’t know who you are, so when I’m taken to court for whatever mayhem you’re about to unleash on Manhattan, I can truthfully say I had no prior notice of your bullshit.” the Beta retorted. “Get out. Your kind isn’t welcome here.”

“My kind.” Cable dumped his utility bag out onto the nearest surface and rifled through the assorted items. “Pretty bold words coming from someone who’s future son in law has a standing appointment at the local prison.”

“Scott’s a good kid, he’s just a dumbass.” Hank defended. “And by your kind I meant you, specifically. You, Cable, are not welcome here. The last time you ended up in my neighborhood
you tried to steal my tech and destroy my gardenias. You need to leave. Take that bionic arm and creepy eye and your fanny pack and get out."

“It’s a utility bag.” Cable held a computer chip up towards the genius. “And I’m not going to apologize for your gardenias. They weren’t prize winning no matter what the old lady across the street told you. Are you going to help me or what?”

“It’s absolutely a fanny pack and no, I won’t be helping you.” the Beta inched forward a step, eyes narrowed behind his glasses. “What is that? Why is it glowing gold?”

“I thought you weren’t going to help me.” Cable taunted, holding the chip away when Hank reached for it. “Or did you change your mind?”

“I’m not going to help you.” With a quickness that belied his nearly eighty years, Hank grabbed at a small remote and pressed the button. There was a whir and a pulse, and Cable’s left arm dropped limp and useless, the chip falling from his fingers.

“Gotcha.” Hank darted forward and grabbed it, ducking back out of the way as the robotic pieces of Cable’s body came back on line. “You like that? Pocket sized EMP. I know that shiny shit up your neck is more techno organic than mechanical, but an EMP will stun anything for a few seconds.”

“Congratulations.” Cable said flatly. “You stunned me for a few seconds and got your hands on the computer chip. What now?”

“Now you can leave.” Hank flipped on a lamp and studied the piece under brighter light. “But before you go, tell me what this is?”

“It is part of the computer that controls my time travel device.” the Alpha admitted, and Hank’s eyes widened in excitement. “It’s all I have left, actually. A back up to my main piece. My device was…taken… and now I need to build a new one.”

“The mighty time traveling Cable stuck in the year twenty nineteen?” Hank whistled in mock sympathy. “Got your fancy time traveling gadget stolen, huh? Who took it from you?”

“That doesn’t matter.” Irritation blanketed Cable’s scent, but Hank Pym was a Beta and gave exactly zero fucks what an Alpha scented like. “You need to help me build another one.”

“Oh-ho, I think I do not.” Hank ran a curious finger over the glowing chip. “Why does it light up like this? Is it like the glow of my Pym particles?”

“Pym particles.” Cable rolled his eyes. “You’re a few years ahead of this timeline’s science and think you can just name sub atomic particles after yourself. You know what we call them in my timeline?” Hank’s eyes narrowed and Cable finished bluntly, “Trash. Pym particles are trash because we’ve moved beyond them. Now are you going to help or not?”

“Right.” Hank turned the chip over a few times. “Remind me why I’d help you now that you’ve thoroughly insulted my life’s work?”

“Because you’re desperate to know how time travel works.” The Alpha unfolded a piece of paper and handed it to the scientist. “And because you’re so damn curious you’re gonna throw me out tonight, then fuss and fidget for a few days, and then call me and act huffy about helping. How about we skip all of that and you just help me now?”

The muscle in the Beta’s jaw jumped as Hank ground his teeth together and glowered, but finally
he snatched the list from Cable and read through it, muttering under his breath the entire time.

And finally, “I have most of this on hand. A couple items will take me a week to get my hands on but some of these?” he shook his head. “Cable, I don’t know what’s just laying around on grocery store shelves in your timeline, but these sort of things are locked up tight in all the places the government swears they aren’t stockpiling weapons of mass destruction and doomsday devices. I can’t just waltz in the front door, have a cashier ring me up, and then waltz back out with this in a paper bag.”

“You tell me where to find it, I’ll get in and grab it.” Cable maintained. “You get me the rest. Then I’ll need your lab for the finer work.”

“No no no, you aren’t listening to me.” Hank stabbed his finger at the list. “Even if I called in a few favors and managed to get my hands on it, those phone calls would end with me being tossed down a dark hole and probably charged with war crimes and consorting with terrorists. No. No, I’m not doing it.”

“How do you lose a time travel device anyway!” Agitated now, the Beta crumpled the list up and tossed it back at Cable. “Don’t you have a spare?”

“I have the one.” Cable said in frustration. “I have charges for it and enough pieces to make minor repairs, but it’s gone and now I have to build a rudimentary piece from scratch to get back to my timeline and retrieve a newer one to return to the past!”

“Why the past!” Hank threw up his hands. “Why does it matter? Why did you pound on my door at three in the morning to ask me something imposs–”

“It’s a kid.” Cable cut in, and Hank’s mouth shut with an audible click. “He’s just a kid, twenty something years old, scrappy little Omega is all. He ended up activating the device without meaning to and now he and the dial are gone. I need a new one so I can go and get him back.”

“So you know where he is.”

“I know exactly where he is.” Cable nodded. “I had the dial pre set to a specific year, just gotta jump back and drag him back before it’s too late.”

“…what’s too late?” Hank swallowed and took the list again, scanning through it a second time. “When will it be too late?”

“Don’t worry about that.” the Alpha waved the question off. “How soon can you have this all for me?”

“It will take a few months.” Hank felt around for a pen and started making calculations. “Most of the pieces are easy to get, assembling them into such a delicate device is completely different. The more difficult items will take several weeks to get in, I’ll have to treat the wires, build a circuit board, all that sort of thing. And the more impossible things could take months if I can get them at all.”

“You have ninety days.” Cable said flatly and Hank gaped at him.

“Were you listening to what I said? It could a month and a half just to track down some of these, and the rest I’ll have to call in favors for, sell my soul and probably sign over Hope’s first born child! I can’t do it in--”
“You have ninety days.” the mutant said again. “I have to get that kid and get him back within ninety days.”

“What happens in ninety days?” Hank held up a hand stubbornly when Cable tried to argue. “No, you need to tell me. What happens in ninety days if I can’t get all this material?”

Cable swallowed, guilt laying heavy over his shoulders. “When a human is placed into a timeline other than their own, their body stops working. Blood cells stop regenerating, wounds won’t heal, a cold could actually kill them because their immune system can’t rally. Anything other than their basic functions grinds to a halt. Sometimes mental stability is affected, other times it eats away at them visibly— hair falling out, loss of hearing, severe eczema, all of that.”

“What?”

“This is a virus.” Cable tapped at the metal leached into his neck. “I’m not a cyborg, I’m not a robot. I’m sick. I don’t belong in the future timeline, I was sent there as a child and was infected with this virus. Every time I use my device it takes over my body a little bit more until one day there won’t be anything of me left. But I’m mutant, so it’s a slower progression. On a human, it won’t be slow at all.”

“Ninety days.” Hank stared stunned, the color draining from his face. “Red blood cells only last about a hundred and fifteen days before our body breaks them down, is that why it’s ninety days? Anything past that and his body starts to shut down entirely?”

“If he gets a bad cut, he’ll die because his body isn’t making anything new to replace what’s lost.” Cable stated. “If he gets a cold, it will turn into fatal pneumonia within a matter of days. A fever could end him by sun down, an allergic reaction could kill him within minutes. This is life or death, Hank. Are you going to help me or not?”

“Ninety days.” the Beta looked back down at the list. “I can get this in ninety days. Maybe even sooner.”

“Maybe make it sooner.” Cable grunted. “You let me know how I can help. And Hank?”

Hank looked up and Cable offered him a half smile. “Thank you.”

The mutant was out of the house and gone a moment later, leaving Hank holding the paper and the computer chip as the cold night air wound in through the broken door.

“Prick.” he muttered to no one in particular. “I’m not doing this for you, I’m doing it for the kid.” and then quieter, “And because I am dying to know how time travel works.”

“Ninety days. I can do this.”

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Peter hummed to himself as he gathered eggs, shooing the chickens away from their nests and tucking the eggs in the pocket of his hoodie. He’d never put even a split second of thought into where his breakfast came from but apparently chickens only lay one egg a day which meant his favorite brunch meal of three egg omelets was the combined effort of three different chickens and that— that just didn’t seem right.

Looking down at the five meager eggs, Peter made a silent vow to never eat more than two at a
time anymore, especially since Wade more than likely ate all five and was giving up part of his breakfast for Peter.

“You look awfully stressed out for having tussled with chickens.” Wade flashed his fangs in a teasing grin when Peter made it back inside. “Figured after three days the birds would stop giving you grief. Which one did you poke in the butt?”

“I didn’t poke anyone in the butt.” Peter huffed, and the Alpha’s smile stretched wider. “It’s just um—”

“Just what?” Wade could fit all five eggs in his big palm without even stretching, a fact that didn’t go unnoticed by Peter, even though he didn’t let himself linger too long on the fact that Wade had big feet too. *We all know what that means.* “What’s on your mind, Pete?”

“Um, it’s stupid.” Peter grabbed at his notebook and jotted down a few lines. “I just never put any thought into where my food came from or how much effort goes into making it.”

“…it takes two minutes to collect eggs, Pete.”

“No.” Peter shook his head. “No I mean. Chickens only lay one egg a day.” Wade blinked at him and Peter gestured vaguely. “My normal breakfast is the work of three chickens, a cow or goat, and someone who has to plant and harvest vegetables!”

“Yeah.” Wade cracked the eggs into a pan. “And?”

“And.” Peter emphasized. “I just go to the grocery store and buy a dozen eggs, a quart of milk and grab a tomato on my way up to the register. I never put any thought into how much effort goes into food. It’s about enough to turn someone vegan.”

“And vegan means…”

“I won’t eat any product that comes from an animal.” Peter stared down at his cup of milk. “Even though I feel like that barely works in my time where I can buy basically anything at the store, I’ll definitely starve to death here if I have to live on pine cones or something.”

“Yeah it’d be a real shame if you starved to death.” The Alpha stirred at their breakfast for a minute and then dropped a slab of meat into a frying pan. “I got five chickens because I usually eat five eggs and then I butcher them in the hard parts of winter so they don’t freeze and so I have fresh meat. I keep a goat for the milk and two horses to help haul the wagon. It’s not like I’m over hunting deer for the sport of it or keeping so many chickens I just end up attracting coyotes and mountain lions. If I don’t eat—”

“No.” Peter held up his hand to quiet Wade. “No, I’m not saying you’re wrong for needing to hunt or anything. I’m just saying that the—wow the sheer amount of eggs and meat and milk that people in my timeline go through and now that I know a chicken only lays one egg a day it’s just… It’s sort of awful.”

“Well it’s a good thing you’re here now.” Wade turned the meat over and raised his eyebrows at Peter. “Right? Because it’s not awful.”

“It’s decidedly not awful.” Peter agreed, a faint blush climbing his cheeks when the Alpha rumbled at him softly. “And thank you for breakfast. I promise I can actually cook though, so maybe tomorrow morning you let me try?”

*Tomorrow morning.* The words came so easily, the assumption and acceptance that Peter would be
there another day something that made both Alpha and Omega smile.

Four days had come and gone since Logan’s visit, and every day Peter woke up a little more rested, a little more peaceful.

He followed Wade along with chores and helped where he could, spent long hours exploring the surrounding forest while Wade worked on the cabin or chopped wood, and at evening they ate dinner together, talking quietly about the day and sharing increasingly warm smiles. Peter would write down all the new things he learned, Wade would patiently try to answer a litany of questions and Peter would exclaim in delight every time he figured out an answer before Wade could tell him.

Every night Wade motioned Peter towards the bed and Peter would put up a fuss about how Wade should be sleeping in the bed. The Alpha would growl a little and demand, Peter would huff and turn his nose up but inevitably, he would snuggle down into heavy blankets and Wade would watch protectively until the Omega slipped away into dreams.

It was the easiest thing in the world to move around each other, to move with each other, to laugh and talk and find conversation and for the first time in years Peter asked questions without urgency, wanted to know without feeling like he might explode if he didn’t, he was learning without painfully, desperately searching.

Wade’s scent wrapped safe around him at night, the cabin air saturated with contentment, and even though neither Peter nor Wade had re-introduced the topic of their scents matching or how they knew each other, there wasn’t really words for what they felt anyway.

The knowing was more than words, it was more than what Peter had read about in romance novels, more than what science could explain away, the sort of comfort and security that settled soul deep despite knowing Cable could return any minute and take him away.

They weren’t ready to think about that though, not about Cable and not about saying goodbye when they were still just barely skating along the surface of the bond sparking between their souls.

No, Peter was more than willing to put Cable out of his mind for right now and focus on learning everything he could about Wade’s world… and perhaps focusing on pulling as many fanged smiles from the Alpha as he could.

And it was this focus that led directly to Peter deciding he wanted to help Wade out more by taking on another chore, which in turn led directly to the Omega staring down a goat and immediately wondering if he’d made a mistake.

Offering to clean the cabin would have been a better idea.

“Alright Goat.” Peter eyed the beast warily, bucket clutched in one hand, a chunk of dandelions held in the other. “You got milk, I need the milk, are you gonna be cool about this or what?”

The goat bleated and stamped it’s little hoof.

“What was that?” Peter asked suspiciously. “Was that a yes? Are you saying yes? Gonna give it up for some dandelions?”

Wade was busy working tangles from Bea’s mane so he didn’t witness the head butting but he definitely heard the Omega squawk in outrage, heard the goat bellow in triumph, and when Peter came out of the barn spitting both hay and curses, Wade turned back to the roan so his laughter wasn’t quite so obvious.
“I can hear you.” Peter snapped and Wade tried even harder to muffle it. “That Billy goat knocked me right over! Does it do that to you?”

“First of all,” Wade smoothed his fingers through Bea’s mane and patted the mare on the neck to shoo her on. “That’s a nanny goat, not a billy goat. Billy goats are boys, nanny goats give milk. What did you think you were tugging on down there to get white stuff to shoot out?”


“Fair enough.” Wade’s scent colored amused and the Omega turned bright red. “C’mon, get your bucket and I’ll show you. Come on.”

Peter grumbled under his breath as he followed Wade back into the barn, but he still dragged the stool over and paid close attention as Wade led the goat back over and tethered her to a short post, putting a pile of food in front of the animal to keep her distracted.

“See this? Milking post. Keeps her from running.” Wade smoothed his hands down the goat’s back and patted her rump. “Make sure she knows where you are, talk to her a little. She might be an animal but that doesn’t mean she likes being yanked on any more than a person would, you know? Easy and steady, firm but not painful. Look.”

Peter watched in fascination as milk hit the bucket in steady streams, Wade making the motions with no visible effort at all. “It doesn’t hurt her?”

“It’s more of a relief.” Wade trilled at the goat when she balked away from Peter. “She had kids this past spring so she’s pretty full of milk still. When we go to town, I’ll get her bred up with one of the town billies so her production stays up. There will be a few months in the spring where we don’t have milk cos she’s nursing but otherwise she puts out all year.”

“Is she acting weird around me because I’m new?” Peter picked up the nearly trampled dandelions and offered them to the goat again. “Or am I doing something wrong?”

“You smell off.” Wade eased off the goat and got up from the stool, motioning for Peter to take his place. “Humans don’t like the scent of mutants because we scent wild. Animals like our scent just fine. S’why the wolf pups follow Logan. They recognize the wild in him.”

“You don’t smell weird to me.” Peter settled onto the stool and petted at the animal awkwardly. “I think you smell good.”

“Yeah well,” Wade cleared his throat, swallowing back a burble of happiness. “That’s because if you told me I stunk, I’d kick you out and make you fend for yourself.”

“You’re right, that’s exactly what it is.” Peter wrinkled his nose teasingly, then put cautious hands on the goat. “Is this right? It doesn’t feel right. In fact it feels a little… ick.”

“You’re basically right.” Wade crouched behind the Omega, big arms circling Peter’s lean frame so he could cover Peter’s hands with his own and better direct each motion. “Feel that? A little pressure and it will give, and then right here where you meet some resistance, back off. No no don’t let go.” He recaptured Peters hands. “You let go and she thinks you’re done. Always hands on.”

“How do I know when she’s empty?” Peter’s brow furrowed in concentration. “Do I keep going until she’s all the way dry or stop before then?”
“You’ll feel when she’s about done, but you do wanna get her empty.” Wade let Peter take over the milking again, but didn’t move from behind the Omega. “Leave too much and her body thinks she doesn’t need to produce and then we end up with no milk at all. And having a full udder for too long can give her an infection.”

“Okay.” Peter nodded, eyes trained on the bucket and the stream of milk. “We do this twice a day?”

“Twice a day, and once you get comfortable it shouldn’t take you more than five or six minutes.” Wade confirmed. “Think you can handle it?”

“I think it wouldn’t be the worst thing in the world if you watched me a few times to make sure I’m not hurting her.” Peter clicked at the goat when she shifted uncertainly. “Would you mind?”

Wade would certainly not mind sitting here twice a day with Peter cradled between his thighs, the Omega’s thick hair in his nose and back fit to his chest. Peter hadn’t seemed to notice yet that Wade was practically hugging him, that all he’d have to do was turn his head and their lips would meet, or scoot back a few inches to plaster their bodies together.

He was so close and here in the barn the Omega’s honeysuckle scent mixed with sun warmed hay, lavender underscoring the earthier tones of animal and it would have been so easy for Wade to shift forward and bury his nose in Peter’s hair, to inhale deep and get scent drunk right then and there. Tempting.

“Course I don’t mind helping.” Wade tried for teasing but it fell flat as his entire body tightened with a surge of longing. “Last thing I need is you pissing off the goat and her giving me spoiled milk, right?”

“Ugh. Right.” Peter laughed quietly. “You’d kick me out for sure then, wouldn’t you?”

“Without even hesitating.” Wade said immediately and Peter laughed again. There really was something sort of relaxing about this particular chore. Sunlight was streaming bright through the open barn doors and settling warm over their shoulders. The goat was calm and the steady crunch of it eating was oddly comforting. Peter could hear Bea and Arthur stamping around in the yard and their soft nickers and neighs as they talked to each other, and beyond that was the sound of birds in the trees and the whistle of autumn wind through branches.

Wade was set right behind him, the Alpha solid and steady, soothing and dependable, dark licorice scent like caramel flowing thick through Peter’s veins, the cedar bringing to mind long summer days and lazy naps in the sunshine.

Not that he needed a nap, no Peter had slept better in Wade’s bed the last several nights than he had in months. The mattress was barely comfortable but somehow Peter sank right into it and passed out almost immediately. Dreams that had been almost nightmares before were now nothing more than vague impressions of calm and home and even though waking up to a cold cabin wasn’t easy, it was wonderful to sit up and stretch and watch Wade’s eyes light red and possessive for just a split second before the Alpha got himself under control again.

Never once had Peter thought to want an Alpha outside his heat, but oh he wanted Wade and the sudden shift made his fingers tremble, his heart pound.

“Easy. Let up now.” The Alpha’s deep voice was low and smooth in Peter’s ear, breaking into his thoughts and pulling him back to the moment. “She’s all done, Pete. Don’t want to stress her out.”
“Hm?” Peter blinked a few times, lethargic and lazy and not wanting to break the hazy spell that had fallen over them. “Oh. Oh sorry. Is she okay?”

The goat bleated at Peter in annoyance and side stepped away, so Wade reached with one hand to undo her tether and send her out into the yard, then murmured, “It’s alright. You didn’t hurt her.” and pressed at Peter’s side gently, before spreading his fingers out over the Omega’s stomach so Peter wouldn’t move away quite yet. “Are you okay? Seems like I lost you there for a minute.”

“Yes, I just sort of—” Peter’s mouth felt dry, his tongue thick and head fuzzy and he closed his eyes to the pull of slumber. “—just sort of floated away. I dunno what happened.”

“Floated away…” Wade hesitated. “…in a bad way?”

“Mmmm, no.” he hummed a little and turned in Wade’s arms, tucking his nose into the Alpha’s neck and parting his lips to take a slow breath in. “No, I got tired all the sudden and I feel… spacey. Sorry.”

“Christ.” Wade slipped his hand over Peter’s stomach and around to the side, holding the Omega tight to his chest and shuddering when Peter only sighed and settled firmer into his shoulder. “No, don’t apologize. This is— this is fine. I’ve got you. Just… just keep floatin’ Pete. I’ve got you.”

Peter’s smile was soft and secret, fingers clutched into Wade’s shirt and frame limp and trusting and the Alpha whispered, “Stay right here.”

It had been so long since Vanessa had passed that Wade had forgotten about this, forgotten about the way two bodies could yearn and linger and the way one partner could fall into a lazy sort of euphoria just because there was nothing better than being held safe in the others arms.

Vanessa had been an Alpha, so these sort of moments had been few and far between but Wade remembered slow nights watching the fire as she drew mindless patterns on his chest and how he’d slipped deeper and deeper under until he could have sworn the stars were shining bright right there in their cabin. He remembered Vanessa wearing nothing more than his shirt, fangs glinting as she laughed, all her edges softened and blurred as he brushed her hair or whispered sweet things into her skin as she tumbled into brilliant nothingness where the only thing that mattered was the pressure of his fingers and the rumble of his voice.

And now Peter was tipping over the edge with nothing more than sunshine and Wade holding him close. He was gorgeous, breath taking even, and it was all Wade could do not to gather the Omega up and carry him to the cabin and lay claim to him properly.

But it wasn’t the right time, it may never be the right time, not when their realities were so far separated and not when Cable was bound to return and take Peter away.

It wasn’t the right time and the thought made Wade’s blood rush hot, his fangs aching as the instinct to claim now before it was too late flashed through his core. His scent roiled sharp, fingers gripping too tight, and the change had Peter shifting against him, the Omega’s perfectly pert nose wrinkling in distress.

“No no no, no distress.” Wade tried to calm his scent, to loosen his hold. “Easy Omega, little Omega, it’s alright. Settle down.”

“Mmm.” Peter hummed and stillled again, and Wade ignored the burn in his thighs from crouching so long, the ache in his back from being bent into such a weird position, and mentally willed the Omega to stay.
Please stay.

Please don’t leave me.

They sat together for a while, and would have sat together long enough for Wade’s legs to go entirely numb if the goat hadn’t interrupted the quiet moment with an aggressively annoyed noise from outside. Wade’s heart twisted when Peter’s eyes opened wide in surprise, and then shuttered in shyness, his cheeks stained red as he peeked up from beneath his lashes.

“We probably have more chores to do?” he whispered, and Wade whispered back, “I can do them, why don’t you go rest?”

“I’m not tired anymore.” Peter denied, but the stretch and wriggle and sleepy sigh he gave said something different. Need punched Wade straight through the stomach as the Omega’s shirt rode up to expose perfect skin, Peter’s satisfied moan as he came back to himself enough to have the Alpha biting his tongue until it bled. “Okay, maybe just a short nap.”

“That’s fine.” Wade managed. “You need help back to the cabin?”

“I’m pretty sure I can walk.” Peter teased him, but standing on wobbly legs was more difficult than he imagined, and he pitched forward a little, catching himself on Wade’s shoulders. “Wow. Sorry. Seriously, I don’t know what’s going on.”

“It’s fine.” Wade ran gentle hands up Peter’s long legs to settle at his waist, holding the Omega steady. “It’s– shit, Pete. This is fine. How are you feeling? Still floaty?”

“Feel like I’m coming back around now.” From this angle Peter was staring right down at the Alpha, rubbing his thumbs over Wade’s collarbone and the scars at the base of his neck. His eyes were lit with curiosity but not disgust, maybe even affection and Wade held his breath and waited for the inevitable questions—

“Does this hurt?” Peter asked softly and that– that wasn’t what Wade had been expecting at all.

“What?”

“Does it hurt when I touch you?” Peter clarified. “If I touch you here?” his fingers slid under the shirt collar just a bare inch, and Wade felt the touch like a brand at his soul. God, how long had it been since anyone had touched him like this? “Do the scars hurt?”

“No.” Wade shook his head, his scent filtering thankful when Peter flattened his palms to touch more skin. “Not anymore. They only hurt when I get a new one, but once they fade, I don’t notice anymore. Looks worse than it feels.”

“When you get a new one.” Peter swept his fingers up along Wade’s neck, trilling sweetly when the Alpha tipped his head into his palm. “How often do you get a new one?”

“…one part of my mutation is that I heal.” Wade explained slowly. “I heal from everything. But the scars never go away. Every cut, every broken bone, every scrape stays on my skin forever. The older I get the worse it becomes.”

“How old are you?” Gentle so gentle over Wade’s bare scalp, a soft hush when Wade shuddered. “How long have you been collecting scars? Logan said he fought in all the wars with you, what does that mean? How old are you?”

Wade hesitated, wet his lips and steeled himself for shock and rejection before finally admitting,
“Logan and I met during the war of 1812. I’d recently lost my mate Vanessa and when war broke out I went and lost myself in the fighting. Men like Logan and I– you find each other when you’re the only ones walking off a battlefield full of dead men.”

“1812.” Peter repeated, and unbelievably, his beautiful mouth tipped up in a smile. “That’s amazing. So you– you’re a hundred years old? Older?”

“I’m not sure of my exact birthday.” Wade swallowed, pressed at Peter’s waist coaxingly. “You’re not going to ask about Vanessa?”

“I’m so sorry you had to lose her.” Peter inched closer, lips parting over a shaky sigh when Wade’s hold tightened. “She was your first mate? Have you– have you had one since?”

*Just you.* “…no.” Wade shook his head. “I never thought I’d get another chance at a scent match and a soul bond.”

“Oh.” Another sigh, this one even more unsteady. “A hundred years you’ve been collecting scars, you’ve bonded and lost her, and now you and I– um, you and I–” the Omega bit at his lip shyly.

“You’re beautiful, Wade. Incredible. I wish I knew all your stories.”

“Stick around.” Wade waggled his eyebrows to break the tension, and obligingly, Peter laughed. “I’ll teach you a thing or two.”

“Plan on it.” Peter finally leaned away, clearing his throat and blinking the last of the daze from his eyes. “Chores?”

“I thought you were going to take a nap.” Wade stood gingerly, stretching his sore muscles until the hurt bled away. “Go lay down, Omega. I’ll wake you in time for dinner.”

“Are you sure?”

“I’m sure.” Wade jerked his head towards the cabin, then turned away so he wouldn’t be tempted to follow Peter to bed. “Go on. See you tonight.”

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It wasn’t easy for Peter to wake up in a cold cabin, or stumble from the bed to splash ice water on his face to help with chores, but it was easy to look up with a smile for the Alpha when Wade offered him a cup of too strong coffee to help him face the day.

It wasn’t easy to learn how to milk the goat, or to dry his clothes when Peter inevitably knocked the milk bucket over, or to keep the goat tethered tight enough to not move too far but not so tight that the ornery thing yelled at him the entire time.

But *oh* it was easy to blush when Wade looked up and caught Peter shirtless as he tried to wring out the wet, the Alpha’s eyes lighting red and scent charging *eager* for a few breathless seconds.

And it *really* wasn’t easy to force himself to eat red meat, but this life required more energy than Peter was used to. He couldn’t survive on beans, eggs and bread forever, so he sat down for dinner each night and ate tiny bites so his stomach wouldn’t hurt.

It wasn’t easy, but it was so very easy to trill sweetly when Wade tried so hard to pile mushrooms and wild carrots on the plate along with nuts and berries he found around the property.
“I thought you said I had to find my own salad.” Peter teased one night as Wade produced an entire bowl of gathered greens. “Are you a gatherer now, Wade?”

“It took you so long to milk the goat, I figured I should help you out with the salad thing.” Wade deadpanned, and Peter laughed at him, clear and cheerful and the Alpha only rumbled in response, closing his eyes to inhale sweet happy Omega scent.

Nothing about this life was easy, but it was so easy to live this life with Wade, Peter found himself forgetting this all had an expiration date.

_He could stay here forever._
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Things take a turn towards lightly smexy with our boys (HOLLA), Peter comes to terms with the whole 'soulmate' thing and our boys have an honest conversation about what their scent match means. Honestly, the way these two talk to each other just slays me. Like I wrote the damn thing, and it still makes me swoon a little bit.

Generic TW for vague mentions of hunting,butchering an elk. I feel like no one actually cares about that, but when I was vegan/vegetarian hunting in general was sort of hard to read about so just throwing it out there for anyone else!

Peter woke before the sunrise to see Wade buttoning into his heavy coat, half a sandwich crammed into the Alpha’s mouth and a fire already roaring behind the grate.

“Wade?” Peter rubbed at his eyes and blinked a few times. “Where are you going? The moon is still out.”

“Heya Pete.” Wade shot the Omega a quick smile before cramming another bite of sandwich into his mouth. “I gotta get into the woods and try for a couple deer to get us through the winter. Maybe an elk. Gotta fill the root cellar.”

“Root cellar.” God it was hard to think when there will still stars outside the window. “We have a root cellar? That’s a real thing?”

“Where do you think the food is stored?” Wade raised his eyebrows and gestured around the cabin. “Don’t pull beans outta thin air, Pete. We’ve got one in here and I’ve got a smaller one out by the barn where I’ll hang the meat before we can do anything with it.”

“Right. Right, no that makes sense.” Peter’s hair was hilariously rumpled, standing up in tufts all around his head. “Okay, we have a root cellar. What goes in the root cellar? What do we–” a jaw cracking yawn. “—what– I mean um– food–?”

“I think you’re too tired to put words together, why don’t you close your eyes again?” Wade suggested, and the sleepy sweet smile the Omega gave about made his knees weak. God damn Pete was gorgeous. “You can uh–” Wade coughed to clear his throat. “– you can sleep late today. I’ll give the animals their feed now and be back in time to do the milking once it’s warm out again. The fire is already set so you can just rest.”

“Nah, I’m awake.” Peter sat up and stretched, sighing out loud and wrapping one of the blankets around his shoulders. “Um, I can do chores. Or I can at least help when you get back home.”

Home. If a smile had been enough to make Wade’s knees weak, hearing Peter call the cabin home was enough to put him on the floor. Ever since their moment in the barn when Peter had gone so soft and floaty, the Omega had been talking in terms of us and our, thinking out loud about how the cabin would be in the spring as if he were planning to be still be around, lingering over smiles and letting his eyes melt warm every time he looked up and caught Wade staring.
Wade didn’t know if Peter even realized what he was doing, but the Alpha loved every single second anyway.

“Or maybe I could do laundry.” Wade came back to the conversation just in time to see Peter sniff at his shirt and then wrinkle that adorable nose. “Man, do these need washed. I’ve never slept in the same jammies for ten days before. I am rank.”

“You scent amazing, Omega.” Wade tightened his laces and stood up again, purposefully looking away from the flush he knew would be painted across Peter’s cheeks. “But if you want to wash up, use the rain water in the bucket outside. Otherwise we gotta haul it from the spring up the mountain a ways like I do for the animals.”

“Rain water is fine.” Feeling inexplicably shy over Wade’s compliment— and thinking perhaps he should just go ahead and fall asleep again so he wouldn’t say anything embarrassing in response— Peter stared down at the quilts, pleating the material between his fingers. “Um, soap?”

“Here beneath the wash basin.” Wade opened the doors of the small cupboard to show several wrapped packages of soap. “And if you want to heat the water up, I keep the big cauldron in the root cellar.”

He waited for Peter to look up in confusion, then stamped his foot loudly so Peter could hear the echo of hollow beneath the floor. “Trap door is right here. There’s a line hung outside between the cabin and the barn—”

“– I read once that homesteaders would run a rope between the house and the barn so they could walk along it in blizzards and not get lost when they did chores.” Peter interrupted. “Is that why you have one?”

The reference to another one of Peter’s books made Wade smile. He couldn’t imagine a life with enough down time to read as much as Peter did, but it was fuckin’ cute when the Omega spouted off random knowledge he’d picked up in a book one time.

Just fuckin’ cute.

“That’s exactly why I have it.” Wade finally said. “But you can use it to dry clothes since it’s not exactly blizzard weather yet.”

“Oh right.” the Omega smiled sheepishly. “Not blizzard weather yet. So. Hunting, though. You’ll be safe?”

“Um.” Wade slung his rifle over his shoulder and hooked a pouch of bullets to his belt. “Yes?”

“Wade.”

“I’ve never had to think about being safe, Pete. I just hunt.” An extra knife strapped to Wade’s thigh, the other half of the sandwich tucked into his pack alongside rolled bags to carry the meat home. “And remember how I always heal? I could shoot myself in the foot and be just fine by the time I make it back.”

“Oh that’s awful.” Peter made a face over Wade’s attempt at humor. “And I know you heal and that’s great but– but I don’t know what I’ll do if you don’t come back, alright? So please come back?”

It was a practical point, one worth mentioning. Peter had only been around a week and a half and had just the barest idea how to take care of the animals and the cabin. Peter hadn’t been to Haven
yet and didn’t know how to get there, and beyond that he would have no idea who to ask for help if he made it down the mountain. Something awful happening to Wade would spell certain doom for the Omega, and Peter was right to worry.

“Please come back.” he said again, softer this time as he picked at a loose thread on the blanket. “Okay?”

There was a thump as Wade’s pack hit the floor, then nearly running footsteps and Peter startled when the Alpha was suddenly right in front of him, Wade pressing their foreheads together and fitting his palm to the base of Peter’s neck in a protective hold.

“Oh.” Peter swallowed. “Wade–”

“I’ll come back, Omega.” Wade rumbled and Peter shut his eyes, breathing out slowly and settling further into the touch. “Don’t worry. Stay here and stay warm, and I’ll be back real soon.”

“Oh–okay.” Peter brought his hand up to rest on the Alpha’s forearm, digging his fingers into the flex of muscle and quivering when Wade thumbed firmly over his bonding spot. “Thank you.”

“Back real soon.” Wade repeated, and Peter– Peter might have imagined the barest brush of lips at his forehead, but Wade was out the door and gone before he could ask.

Alpha.

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The cabin was comfortably warm this morning and Peter was very tempted to just cozy back into bed and maybe read his book for a while but a whiff of his pajamas had the Omega changing his mind, scrambling from the covers and stripping out of his clothes as fast as he could.

It was nice that Wade didn’t mind how Peter smelled, but Alphas liked how Omegas smelled no matter what, so the compliment didn’t mean quite as much as it would if Peter had bathed in the last two weeks.

After all, one time he’d done a mud run with MJ and Harry had gone half wild over the scent of sweaty Omegas, so Wade liking that Peter probably smelled like cabin and blankets and horses didn’t mean a damn thing.

“Into the wash you go.” Peter piled the rest of his dirty clothes by the fire, then padded naked across the cabin to get into Wade’s dresser and borrow a clean shirt. Then it was over to the root cellar Peter had never once noticed to retrieve a pot that was damn near a cauldron and lug it back up the stairs.

It felt quirky and sort of daring to be doing chores clad only in the Alpha’s shirt, but it was a clothing choice Peter sorely regretted the moment he stepped outside.

“Oh son of a–!” A brisk morning wind swept up beneath the hem of the shirt and made the Omega scream high and girly as his most sensitive parts were treated to a wash of frigid air. Peter had never clenched his butt up so tight or so quickly in his entire life, and as he covered his front protectively and dove back inside, he was forever grateful to have had this particular snafu while no one– not even the goat– was there to judge him.

“All right. New plan.”

Wade’s pants were huge on him, but Peter wasn’t about to risk going outside with his bits
uncovered again, so he rolled the trouser legs up to his knees and used his belt to tighten the waist as far as it would go, and tried again.

Peter definitely wasn’t strong enough to lug a full cauldron over to the fire and up onto the hook inside, so it took fourteen different trips out into the early morning chill with a pitcher before the over sized pot was full and heating above the flames.

Then Peter kicked out of Wade’s pants and refolded them because honestly not only did he look ridiculous, but it was practically impossible to move in them and the shirt covered him down to mid thigh anyway.

No one was here to look at him anyway, right?

While waiting for the water, Peter took a few minutes to dump his backpack and clean it out. His phone screen was dark and Peter’s lips twisted into a frown when he realized even if he could charge the stupid thing, it wasn’t as if cell phone service existed in this time period. The brand new phone was nothing more than an over priced paperweight and that— that was depressing.

The digital recorder had extra batteries at least, so Peter wouldn’t be fully without technology and if he ran out of paper, he could record all his thoughts and save them that way too.

The recorder went down to the bottom of the pack next to his worthless phone and unnecessary wallet, and the Omega moved on.

Granola bar wrappers from the hike were thrown away, but Peter kept the empty water bottle just in case, and his toothbrush and comb went next to Wade’s toothbrush and jar of tooth powder on the wash basin. A quick look into the small mirror on the wall and Peter brushed the bedhead away until his hair lay at least somewhat tame, and made a mental note to see about actually washing the mess later today.

Gwen teased him mercilessly about never wanting to use hotel toiletries. Peter always insisted on bringing his own shampoo and conditioner, a pack of face cleansing wipes and a travel sized bottle of his favorite soap and while his friends insisted hotel toiletries were built into the price of the room and therefore free to take, now Peter was infinitely relieved to have packed all his regular items.

He felt icky after being up close and personal with animals, after sweating in front of the fire before bed and then climbing under heavy blankets and after ten days of only brushing his teeth and wiping down with a rag and cold water, an actual shower or bath sounded amazing.

Later, maybe. After the clothes and at least some of the blankets were washed then he would heat up some more water— ugh, his arms rebelled at the thought of carrying more water— and take a proper bath.

Then Wade would really think he scented good and maybe the Alpha would—

“Easy Parker.” Peter filled the wash basin and dunked a couple pair of boxers in while he unwrapped a chunk of soap. “No need to follow that line of thought.”

That line of thought being of course, the one that inevitably started when Wade flashed those damnable fangs, moseyed down a path of jittery, tongue biting interest every time the Alpha brushed too close, and ended either in that easy, floaty realm where all Peter wanted to do was close his eyes and let Wade’s scent carry him away…
…or ended in a flash of too sharp heat, Peter’s stomach clenching as he gasped for air, core tightening and thighs squeezed together when Wade’s eyes slid from beautiful hazel to dangerous red.

No. No need to follow that line of thought, Peter wouldn’t get anything done if he started thinking too much about that.

Nope nope nope. Washing clothes it was.

It took depressingly long for Peter to wash his few outfits. First he scrubbed at them in the basin so he could pitch the dirty water and refill with ease every few garments. Then they all went into the near boiling pot over the fire to get rid of any sort of germs, after which Peter had to carry the sodden pile out onto the line outside to dry in the slowly warming air.

He started with underwear and socks and moved on to a few shirts, then onto the sweatpants he’d been wearing on the drive up, the ratty pair of brightly colored leggings he’d stolen from MJ as a joke and hadn’t realized he’d stuffed in the bottom of his pack, and finally both pairs of jeans and it took forever.

Peter would never take a washing machine for granted again.

Still, there was something to be said for the sheer satisfaction of having all clean clothes again and as Peter pitched the water in the basin and made a quick refill of the hanging pot, he made the decision to just go ahead and wash all the blankets in the cabin.

Sleeping in clean sweats and clean sheets would be absolute heaven and well worth the time and effort of hand washing.

“I can do this.” Peter looked down at his red fingers and palms, the skin rubbed raw from rough soap and already an hour and a half in and out of the water. “Clean blankets will be worth it. Come on, Pete. You can do this.”

He could do this, but it was messy sort of surprisingly difficult work to muscle heavy blankets in and out of the water and out to the line. But Peter didn’t give up, scrubbing at the sheets and working thick lathers into the blankets until they were ready to go into the refilled cauldron. Then the pillow cases, then the blankets folded in a corner by the big over stuffed chair and as Peter held them up he realized that he’d never thought about where Wade slept every night.

He took over the bed and was always passed out with in a few minutes, and even though there was a well worn couch pushed up against the far wall, it was barely big enough for Peter to stretch out on, certainly not big enough for an Alpha of Wade’s size.

“Do you sleep on the floor?” Peter asked the empty room, and judging by the number of blankets stacked by the chair, the answer seemed obvious. “Holy shit, you sleep on the floor every night so I can have the bed?”

Those blankets went into the wash immediately, and Peter gave the hot water a squirt from his bottle of body wash to freshen up the scent of the blankets too.

The Alpha deserved a little something extra for always being so sweet.

Busy with his self mandated chore, Peter didn’t notice the hours slipping away and once the very last blanket was drying on the line and all the others were refolded and set back on the bed, he tucked into the chair with his notebook and started scribbling down everything he’d done.
Peter had a list of questions—what was the soap made of? Was there an easier way to do laundry? How often did Wade do this? Was there a laundromat in Haven or was that not a thing yet?—but the fire was so warm, Peter’s eyes droopy after waking up so early and he was honestly sort of embarrassingly tired after doing the laundry, so halfway through his list of questions, the pen slipped from Peter’s hand and rolled to the floor as the Omega fell asleep.

He didn’t hear Wade whistle to let him know he’d returned, or hear the goat bleating in aggravation as the Alpha finally made it in to milk her. Peter didn’t hear Wade calling for him from the yard, and didn’t hear the cabin door open and close as the Alpha came looking for him—

— and Peter didn’t hear the way Wade’s breath hitched as he came around the chair and found Peter curled up and sleeping soundly wearing nothing but the Alpha’s long shirt.

He was sleeping, so he didn’t see Wade’s eyes blur darkly possessive red or hear the growl of approval the Alpha didn’t bother muffling when he saw the length of Peter’s bare legs and the way the shirt only covered him to mid thigh.

The entire cabin smelled clean, the blankets scenting of strong soap and beneath that, faintly of sandalwood and Wade’s stomach did something swoopy and wishful as he took in the domesticity of the moment.

He’d been out hunting all morning while his Omega had been home puttering around in his shirt and doing the laundry?

It was domestic and beautiful and Wade took a chance, bent down to nose over Peter’s soft cheek and inhale sleepy Omega scent like he’d wanted to do every single morning since Peter had arrived.

Peter hummed in his sleep, then peeked an eye open and offered a quiet, surprised little smile and Wade grinned right back, baring his fangs and rumbling in satisfaction. “Good morning, Omega.”

“Good morning.” Still loopy from his nap, Peter turned his head a little to press their cheeks together and Wade’s rumble grew even louder. “Did you get us a deer?”

Us.

“Not this morning, but I’ll go back out later in the afternoon.” Wade crouched in front of the seat so they were at eye level, giving in to the urge to slip his fingers into Peter’s hair and tug gently at the strands. “How are you?”

“Washing clothes is hard.” Peter stated and the Alpha chuckled softly. “Remember how I said I might go vegan so I’m not taking things from animals? I might go nudist just so I don’t have to wash clothes anymore.”

“I feel like I wouldn’t object to that.” Wade closed a calloused palm around Peter’s slim ankle, thoroughly enjoying the full body shiver from the Omega, and the way Peter’s honeysuckle and lavender scent tinged hazy with anticipation. “But I only stopped long enough to milk the goat so she’d stop yelling at me. I still need to take care of Bea and work around the cabin a bit before taking off hunting again and—”

“... and me parading around naked might be a little distracting?” Peter finished with a nearly devious scrunch of his nose. “Hm?”

“A little distracting.” The Alpha allowed. “But you sure could sit outside in the sunshine and show off these legs all day long. Come on out with me.”
“You want me to come outside and show off my legs while you work?” Peter raised an eyebrow faux suspiciously, fighting to keep a smile away. It was so easy to flirt with Wade, so easy to get the Alpha’s eyes sparking as they teased. “And here I thought you said I couldn’t survive by just being pretty anymore.”

“You keep wandering around in my shirt like this, and being pretty will get you just about anything you want.” Wade’s voice dropped, the words rough and just that quickly the moment slid from teasing to tense, their easy banter suddenly edging the line of much more, Wade’s hand at Peter’s ankle less casual and more claiming as he drew purposeful circles over the delicate bones. “You look good like this Pete. Look good in my clothes.”

“…yeah?” Peter could hardly breathe through the tension in the air as the Alpha’s licorice and cedar scent rolled with arousal. “You like how I look?”

“Mmmm.” Wade’s sigh was more of a growl, vibrating through his chest and clear into Peter’s body and Peter had the sudden hysterical thought that this was exactly the sort of scenario Omega’s got themselves into between the pages of his cheesy romance novels.

It was always a platonic situation turned blatantly sexual, an innocent moment flush with unneeded innuendo, the Alpha almost aggressively turned on and the Omega reacting with a rush of arousal Peter had always chalked up to fanciful writing and authors with no idea how sex and attraction actually worked.

But here he was anyway, pressing his knees together as if it would stop slick from trickling down his thighs, biting at the inside of his cheek until it tore so he wouldn’t whine. He was torn between staring at the Alpha’s tongue running greedily over hooked fangs– and staring at Wade’s trousers pulling tight over his thighs and doing nothing to disguise the swell of the Alpha’s cock beneath the fabric.

Oh oh oh.

Wade inhaled, rolled his shoulders and flexed his fingers where they lay on Peter’s body and then– even though the hazel eyes had long past charged red and hungry– then Wade stood up and moved away.

“N-no–” Peter clapped a hand over his mouth so he wouldn’t ask Wade to come back, fixed his eyes on a spot on the floor so he wouldn’t watch as Wade grimaced and adjusted himself.

“Take your time–” Wade had to clear his throat at least twice to smooth the snarl from the words. “Take your time getting dressed, come outside whenever you’re ready, okay?”

“Okay.” Peter covered his face with both hands and sank deeper into the chair, both ready and willing to fall through a hole in the floor and just disappear if it would save him from the embarrassment of–

“Beauty.” Wade leaned over the chair and whispered into Peter’s ear, his hand steady and warm at Peter’s back. “Gorgeous Omega. Don’t ever stop wearing my clothes.”

Peter peeked up through his fingers and Wade dropped a gentle kiss on his forehead. “Come outside whenever you’re ready.”

“I’ll– I’ll be right there.” An unsteady breath and then too quiet for Wade to hear, “…Alpha.”

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Wade laughed for a full five minutes when Peter came outside wearing the brightly striped bottoms and even though the Omega huffed over the noise, he was secretly glad his plan had worked.

The moment in the cabin had been real enough to be frightening, and Peter honestly didn’t know if he could walk outside and handle a repeat scene. Thankfully, Mary Jane’s leggings sported both migraine inducing stripes and retina burning colors and there was simply no way for Wade to think they were even the least bit sexy.

Wade was still laughing when Peter walked over to help brush Arthur, and the Alpha laughed even harder when the gelding reared back in alarm and swung his big butt around to face Peter.

“Stop that.” Peter swatted Arthur’s tail away. “They aren’t that ugly.”

“Oh baby boy,” Wade leaned into Bea’s side and gave him a once over. “Those are definitely that ugly. Is that what people were in your time? Stripes and terrible colors?”

“I’d wear just about anything, so long as they are this comfortable.” Peter said primly. “Besides, I just washed all my jeans. These are already worn out so it’s not a big deal if they get stained. I’ll just throw them away.”

“When we get to town, I’ll get you some real clothes.” Wade finally ceased his chuckling and went back to grooming the mare. “Heavier work clothes so your other ones don’t wear out.”

“…you’re going to buy me clothes?” Peter should absolutely want to object to that. Alphas who paid for their Omega’s clothes usually felt as if they deserved a say in what the Omega wore and that was unacceptable. “Really?”

“I’d let you buy them, but you don’t have any money.” Wade pointed out, and for about the hundredth time since arriving in Wade’s life, Peter felt foolish for assuming the Alpha was anything like the stereotypes he knew back home. “Or if you do have money, it isn’t from my time, right?”

“Right.” Peter thought about the wallet full of cards in the bottom of his pack. “Uh, yeah. I guess that’s true. But I don’t want you to spend all your money on me.”

“It won’t take all my money to buy you some clothes, Pete.” Wade assured him. “But even if we do spend it all, I’ll put the rest on credit and when I run trap lines this winter I’ll pay it off. Not a big deal.”

“What if you don’t sell enough…” Peter hesitated. “…fur? Is that what trap lines mean? What if you don’t get enough fur to pay off the bill?”

“Then I try extra hard next year.” Wade sent him a strange look. “Why the questions, Pete? It’s not like we won’t be able to get our supplies. Mr. Lee would never deny anyone what they needed, what sort of person would refuse to give someone else food or clothing just cos they couldn’t afford it at the moment?”

“Boy howdy, would you hate my timeline.” Peter said dryly. “People go without food, shelter and medicine because they can’t afford it.”

“That ain’t right.”

“As someone whose literally had to scrounge for pennies to buy groceries in the past?” the Omega nodded. “It definitely isn’t right.”
They finished the majority of the chores in comfortable silence. Too bright leggings or not, the moment from before still simmered between them as the late morning spilled into afternoon and more than once Wade caught himself stopping to just *stare* when his shirt slipped off of Peter’s shoulder, or the Omega bent to get something and those damnable bottoms hugged his legs.

By the time Wade was ready to try hunting again, the need to get Peter back in his arms was proving impossible to ignore, sizzling in the Alpha’s veins and running under his skin until he felt nearly electric.

*Omega.*

*Mine.*

But Peter was still acting gun shy about earlier, ducking his head if he caught Wade looking, an acidic edge of *uncertainty* undermining lavender if they brushed too close. Not rejection, just uncertainty, and Wade didn’t let himself be discouraged by it.

After all, there had been nothing but acceptance and want in the Omega’s scent when they’d been together, a surge of lust in Peter’s dark eyes that had about bowled Wade right over, and as he’d left to go outside the Omega had whispered ‘*Alpha*’ in a soft, secret tone that left Wade breathless.

No, he wasn’t discouraged at all. Peter *knew* him and he knew Peter and they were meant to be—differing timelines or not.

*He could wait.*

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{{Author’s Note: For anyone that cares, elk have been considered technically extinct in upstate New York since 1877 so they would be very difficult to Wade to find. White tail deer are plentiful, but tiny. Example: an average bull elk can yield 200 pounds of meat, the average white tail, only about 50}}

The two weeks Wade had spent taking care of Peter had pushed him right past prime hunting season and into leaner hunting times and every day the Alpha couldn’t get a bead on a decent sized animal or even a couple smaller animals, the more worried Wade became.

Early morning and late afternoon hunts changed to all day hunting as a few days passed and Wade hadn’t seen hide nor hair of anything decent, and the need to bring home extra this year to also provide for Pete had the Alpha out in the woods from before sunup to past sundown.

Peter spent the time alone mostly trying to do chores so Wade wouldn’t have as much to do when he finally made it home. It still took Peter close to fifteen minutes to coax the goat close and tether her up to be milked, and even though he was recently discovering a new found fear of rickety ladders and high lofts, he still climbed up every day to shovel down fresh hay into the stalls.

Dealing with Arthur was easy at least, and Peter lingered over grooming the gelding and familiarizing himself with the different gear and how to take care of bridles and saddles.

In the late afternoons before evening chores, Peter sat in the cabin and tried to organize all the notes he’d taken so far or sat and flipped through the book from Gwen until he got bored and tossed it away.
The romance suddenly felt much less interesting than it had only a few weeks prior. Peter skimmed through most of the conversations and rolled his eyes at the stilted interactions, skipped the sex scenes entirely because reading dirty things about fanged, mountain men Alphas while he had a real fanged mountain man Alpha sleeping only a few feet away from him every night…

… well it just seemed weird.

Peter gave up on the book after a few days and busied himself with sweeping the cabin floors, boiling water to sanitize some of the older looking dishes, making up his bed every morning and taking the time to fold the blankets Wade slept on. Johnny would laugh until he threw up if he knew Peter was willingly keeping house for an Alpha, but Peter didn’t feel so much like he was ‘keeping house’ for Wade as he felt like he was keeping their cabin clean.

Wade came in from hunting to a clean space, at least an attempt at dinner even if it wasn’t much more than slightly burned meat and beans— the Alpha kept a very sparse pantry— and being able to help Wade in at least a tiny way settled a quiet part of Peter’s soul that was driven to take care of the Alpha.

It was a simple sort of life and as Peter spent more and more time outside in the late autumn sunshine and let freckles dot across his nose, he couldn’t find a single thing to complain about.

…Except how hard it was to wash clothes, that is.

He would forever complain about that.

***************

The good weather and low stress days couldn’t last forever of course, and the afternoon Wade finally managed to bag an elk, clouds began building black and ominous on the horizon, spilling over the high peaks and pouring down the mountain side.

By the time Wade finished field dressing the animal and packed the heavy pieces onto Bea’s back so he could take them home, a fine mist of rain had turned into a near deluge and he had to walk alongside the mare on the slippery trail so she wouldn’t lose her footing and send both of them down the mountain slope.

Lightning split the sky as they came into the clearing, the bolt highlighting the barn and the cabin and Wade’s heart squeezed in affection when he saw Peter huddled in the open doorway of the cabin, peering out into the storm and clearly waiting for him to return.

“I’m here!” he called, and whistled for good measure. “Get inside! I’ll be right in!”

“Let me help!” Peter buttoned up one of Wade’s extra jackets and darted out into the rain, thoroughly soaking his sneakers as he skidded across the muddy clearing. “I can help with Bea, you do something else.”

Peter clicked and trilled and coaxed the big mare into her stall, carefully undid the bit and bridle and nearly fell under the weight of her saddle, then wiped her dry with a soft rag all with in several minutes. Taking care of the horses was so much fun he didn’t even mind the work, and since both Bea and Arthur were gentle as could be, he wasn’t even nervous around the big hooves and blunt teeth.

“There you are, pretty girl. do you need to eat?” Bea nickered at him and Peter patted at her nose with a smile. “You’re a good girl, aren’t you? Aren’t you?”
Wade overheard the myriad of comments and only shook his head in amusement as he got to work hanging the bigger pieces of meat down in the outside cellar, piling the smaller pieces on rudimentary shelves in the always chilly underground storage. Usually he would salt most of it and pack it tight, but he was worn out from long days hunting and with the storm coming in he didn’t have the time to try and cut the meat down into smaller, more manageable portions.

It would have to hang here until the storm blew out which was alright anyway. The longer the meat hung, the more tender it would be, and while Wade wasn’t picky about what he ate, Peter would enjoy more edible pieces for the little bit of meat he managed to eat every day.

“Was it a buck?” Peter wanted to know when Wade came up from the cellar. “The deer I mean. A buck?”

Wade sealed the cellar door behind him and moved his heavy splitting bench on top to dissuade any animal visitors who might have caught the scent of fresh game. “I got us a bull, Pete. Bucks are deer, bulls are elk. Cow elk are usually pregnant this time of year and it’s gotten so hard to find the herds anyway, I didn’t want to risk shooting anything that could be expecting. Gotta keep the population up somehow.”

“But the bull—”

“It’s after rut, so if this guy was gonna contribute to the survival of the species, he already got it out of his system.” Wade winked when Peter made an icked out noise. “Come on. No reason to be standing out here, back to the cabin.”

They ran for the relative dryness of the cabin together, Wade holding his coat up and over their heads as they went and pushing Peter through the door first so he could bar it behind them.

The soaked jacket was tossed over the peg closest to the fire to dry, then Wade crowded close to the flames too, chasing away the chill of several hours in the rain.

“Did I do okay with the fire?” Peter asked almost immediately, eyes darting purposefully towards the full box of kindling and the stack of logs piled close by. “Chopping kindling is about a thousand times more difficult than I thought it would be.”

“Did you cut yourself on the hatchet?” Wade tugged out of his long sleeve and spread it over the mantle, then stripped out of his undershirt as well and started working on his belt. “I keep it real sharp.”

“Real… sharp.” Peter’s gaze changed direction rather abruptly as he zeroed in on the play of Wade’s abdomen as the Alpha bent to yank at the ties of his boots, then straightened to put them on the mantle next to his clothes on the heated rock. “…yep.”

“Pete?”

“Yep.” Peter snapped back to attention, ignoring the smirk on Wade’s face. “I mean nope. No, I didn’t cut myself. No.”

“Well you did a good job.” The kindling pieces were jagged and uneven, some nothing more than splinters and others still practically logs but Peter had tried and it was both heart warming and adorable, so Wade flashed his fangs in a reassuring smile and repeated, “You did a good job, Omega. Thank you.”

“I didn’t want you to have to do as much work when you got home.” Peter muttered, toeing at the floor self consciously. He knew his kindling pile was absolutely terrible, but he did feel proud that
Wade had one less chore to do after hunting the last several days. “And I dunno how much wood it takes to last through the night, but I carried it in until my arms hurt so…” he shrugged. “Hopefully that’s enough.”

“I can always run and get more from the shed. Pete, how’d you start the fire?” The Alpha glanced around the room. “Did you find the matches? I took my flint with me.”

“….it didn’t occur to me to look for matches.” Peter admitted, pulling a lighter out of his pocket. “I had a lighter in my back pack, so I used that.”

“Oh I see.” Wade’s eyes widened a little when Peter clicked the lighter and a flame burst into existence. “Oh. So you just used your future time magic to start the fire, huh?”

“Is that what we’re calling that?” Peter’s chest swelled with pride when the Alpha made an impressed noise. “Future time magic? Don’t you guys have lighters?”

“There’s a couple idiots out there who convert their old pistols to strike and light like that.” Wade motioned for Peter’s lighter and turned it over in his hands. “I prefer starting fires in ways that won’t blow up in my face.”

“That’s fair.” Peter acknowledged, and Wade flashed another one of those fangy smiles his direction. “Um, are you hungry? I realize I’m a terrible cook but—”

“I ate out on the trail.” Wade clicked the lighter on and off a few times. “I was always taught to say a prayer over any animal that gives it’s life so we can survive another winter, so I thanked our animal and then built a little fire to cook up some of the meat. I’m fine.”

“Oh okay.” A little relieved that he wouldn’t have to ruin dinner tonight, Peter backpedaled until he could fall into the chair, and tucked his knees up to his chest. Wade was still shirtless, damp trousers clinging to powerful thighs and Peter just let himself look for a long time, cataloging the myriad of scars cutting across heavy muscles and admiring the breadth of the Alpha’s shoulders.

Wade was completely opposite of everything Peter had ever found even passably attractive in an Alpha before. Harry was good looking but his carefully gelled curls and smooth skin suddenly seemed so plain compared to the patchwork of stories told by Wade’s scars. And Johnny was hilarious and fit, but his shoulders weren’t near as broad as Wade’s, his arms not half as thick. And Gwen— well it didn’t seem right to compare a female Alpha to a male Alpha, but there had been a time when Peter thought Gwen had the prettiest smile he had ever seen— and now that he’d seen hooked fangs glinting in firelight as Wade laughed, well even Gwen paled in comparison.

But Peter also knew it wasn’t just the physical appeal that drew him to Wade. If he’d come across an over large Alpha with wicked fangs and a tendency to growl at home, Peter would have turned on his heel and walked the other but now?

Oh now he wanted to just sit back and listen to the pitch of Wade’s voice and feel the carefully restrained strength in those arms and lay against a too solid chest and feel their hearts beating together.

It was more than physical appeal, it was more than circumstances, and more than some sort of side effect of the time travel. It was more than—

—Peter didn’t realize his eyes had closed until suddenly they were wide open, his breath stuttering as Wade’s scent weighted dense with interest.

“W-Wade?” he croaked, clutching at the blankets when he saw the Alpha’s eyes shadowing red.
“What’s wrong?”

“What’s wrong.” Wade rumbled. “Nothing’s wrong, you smell good, Omega. What are you thinking about?”

“Oh. Oh my god.” Peter’s face burned in embarrassment. “I um– sometimes I forget you can scent me, I forget you can read my scent so well. Back home we wear suppressants so no one’s emotions can affect anyone else. Scent blockers and all that.”

Wade’s brow furrowed, but he didn’t look away, nostrils flaring as he tried to catch even more of the lavender and honeysuckle scent. “You said that before. Sounds awful, having one of your senses taken away like that. How do you know if you’re mates if you can’t scent each other?”

“Scent matches aren’t really a real thing anymore.” Peter explained haltingly. “We uh– you know, just spend time together and fall in love, get married and bond. Or just spend time together and maybe we don’t fall in love but we still share heats. No– no scent matching needed. Or if we get married, our scents end up matching because we’re in love, we don’t fall in love because our scents match.”

“Seems like a backwards way to do it.” Wade passed by on his way to his dresser and Peter kept his eyes firmly on the fireplace while the Alpha changed into a pair of sleep pants. “Wouldn’t it be easier to match scent with someone first? Everything else works out after that. Scent match means your souls match, why wouldn’t people want it?”

“I guess people want the chance to pick their own soul mates.” For the first time in his life and despite his past objections to everything related to bonding, Peter suddenly thought the idea sounded absolutely stupid.

Who wouldn’t want a soul mate?

“Besides.” He made a vague gesture, not even half convinced of his own argument. “What if they never find the person they are scent matched to? What if they live in California and their soul mate lives all the way across the world and they’ll never meet? Falling in love on your own means you can choose whether or not to be alone, not be left alone because the universe assigned you a mate you have no chance of ever knowing.”

“I don’t think it’s like that.” Wade poured two drinks and came back to the fire, pressing one into Peter’s hand. “Soul mates find each other no matter what. Distance has got nothing to do with it.”

“Right.” Peter swallowed. “Distance—” and time. “—has nothing to do with it.”

Wade sat down at the foot of Peter’s chair, tipping his head back onto the arm rest and staring into the flames as he sipped at his moonshine and changed the subject. “Get you some wine or something when we’re in Haven, huh? Then you won’t have to drink water and milk like a damn toddler all the time.”

“A toddler.” Peter cracked a smile. “Yeah, that’d be nice.” Then he tightened his fingers around the cup of water and asked, “Um, Wade?”

The Alpha raised his eyebrows, the upside down expression almost comical. “What’s up, Pete?”

“Um—”

Words weren’t going to work since it was all but impossible to form sentences when Wade was looking at him, and even if Peter could put together a sentence, he didn’t know where to find the
words to possibly explain his acceptance of the pull at his soul and the way he craved—no, yearned—no, needed to be with the Alpha.

There weren’t any words and it was so frustrating—

“Wade—I um—”

“Pete.” Peter jumped a little when Wade turned around to face him, the Alpha up on his knees and looming into Peter’s space. “Hey hey, come here, c’mere.”

Peter set his cup aside and leaned into the calloused hand at his cheek, lay his head back when Wade’s fingers slid around to tug through his hair before settling at the curve of his neck. Foreheads touching, noses bumping and Peter whined softly so softly in response to the Alpha’s rumble, didn’t hesitate to sway closer when Wade coaxed him forward and when he could fit his nose to Wade’s collarbone and open mouth inhale the Alpha’s scent, Peter couldn’t stop his relieved purr.

“I know what you’re trying to say.” Wade muttered, other arm winding around Peter’s waist and holding him steady. “Don’t need words, baby boy. Not when it’s like this, you know?”

“I’m… I’m starting to figure that out.” Peter whispered back, fingers trembling where they lay over the Alpha’s heart. “This is amazing, I never thought—I mean I heard stories but I didn’t know it was like—like this.”

“It’s what it’s supposed to feel like, Omega.” Wade moved tighter between Peter’s open knees. “Can only get better from here, you know?”

“I– I—”

I’m not ready for more.

The thought slammed into Peter’s mind and made him recoil, and the Alpha’s grip tightened when he tried to jerk away.

“Easy, easy.” Wade hushed him, sweeping his thumb over Peter’s jawline. “What happened, what’s the matter?”

“Oh god.” Peter shook his head, or tried to at least, the words coming unsteady and too fast as every inch of him locked up in a panic. “I’m not ready for more than this. And—And I know you. I know you and that’s amazing but I know being scent matched means we’re supposed to mate and everything and holy shit I don’t think I’ve ever wanted an Alpha the way I want you but I’m not ready—”

“Hush.” Wade held him even tighter. “Pete, Pete stop for a minute and just listen. Just listen.”

“Listen?” Peter didn’t understand, but he went along obediently when Wade coaxed him in, took a shaky breath and forced himself to focus only on what he could feel from the Alpha.

Anxiety and uncertainty. Excitement and surprise. Mate and mine. Heartbreak and hurt and hesitation.

“Oh.” Peter swallowed. “You um– you too?”

“Me too, sweetheart.” Wade’s scent didn’t change from steady and comforting, lightly possessive and over whelmingly protective. The lust and heat that had flared so quickly the last time they’d
found themselves in this position was banked now beneath a syrupy slow wash of affection, simmering but not important and once Peter relaxed enough to read everything the Alpha was saying, he was stunned by just how much he suddenly knew.

Wade wasn’t ready for more either.

“Wade?” he asked carefully. “You too?”

“Losing my first mate was real difficult.” Wade said slowly. “And I never thought I’d get another chance at this, Pete. Figured scent matches and mates come along once a lifetime, you know? But then you dropped outta no where and changed everything. This is real scary for me, Omega. Feels like I’ve had you forever when really I don’t have you at all. I could lose you any minute and I keep thinking I should ignore our bond and save myself the heartbreak but every time I try to do that, you go and do something ridiculous and I fall for you a little more.”

Wow.

“I’m not saying I’m not tempted to throw you over my shoulder and claim you cave man style.” Wade continued and Peter bit back a laugh. “But I gotta be honest, I dunno if my heart is ready to take that step. Body sure is, but if I get Wade Junior—” another half snorted laugh. “— to settle down long enough for actual thoughts, I don’t think I’m ready.”

It was an unexpected confession from the Alpha, unexpected and so heartbreakingly honest that Peter started purring again, trilling gently in an attempt to erase the vulnerable in Wade’s eyes.

“That’s why I pulled away from you the other day.” Wade admitted. “Seeing you cozy in my clothes about killed me, but I’m not ready for that yet. I need you just like this and maybe– maybe a little more but you know, maybe not. I dunno, Pete. Don’t really know anything beyond knowing right here—” he tilted Peter’s jaw up and stared down into those dark eyes. “Right here is where I want to be. And maybe we have time for more and maybe we don’t but I– I can’t rush this Pete. I’m not ready.”

“You uh– you say we don’t need words, but that was a whole lotta words.” Peter coaxed the words past the ball of emotion closing up his throat. “You’re way better at this than I am.”

“I’ve been hunting a lot lately.” Wade returned dryly. “Lots of time for self reflection and to work through what I want to say so I don’t sound stupid when I finally open my mouth.”

“Okay. Well for the record.” Peter mouthed a featherlight kiss to Wade’s pulse and hummed quietly when the Alpha grasped at his side. “Right here is where I want to be too. One day I’ll be ready for more but I dunno when that will be.”

“Yeah.” Wade’s lips swept soft over Peter’s cheek and up into his hair. “Yeah, I know what you mean.”

“And by the way?” Peter tipped his chin up until their mouths nearly met, no more than a breath away from the edge of Wade’s fangs. “I definitely fall for you a little more every time you’re ridiculous, too. Which is a lot. All the time.”

“Perfect.” Wade’s laugh shook through his shoulders as he gathered Peter into a hug. “You’re perfect, Omega.”

Peter’s body flashed with heat when Wade’s hand dropped to his hips and then down along the curve of his rear for only a split second before settling at his thigh, but the Alpha soothed him with a sweet croon of, “This is enough, Pete. This right here.”
“Cos we don’t need words.” the Omega murmured, and Wade shifted closer, nodded against him. “That’s right, beauty. We don’t need words.”

And after another gorgeous moment together, another moment of breathing each other in, another moment with the Alpha’s heavy frame wedged between the Omega’s slim thighs so they could hold tight, Peter asked very very quietly, “Will you call me that again?”

“Call you what?” Wade nuzzled at the delicate curl of Peter’s earlobe, pressed his lips to the tender spot at the hinge of the Omega’s jaw. “What did I call you?”

“Baby boy?” Peter tinged pink and the Alpha almost melted. “You called me that earlier today and again just now and I– I like it. Will you call me that again?”

“Baby boy.” The tip of Wade’s fangs peeked out when he smiled and Peter had the sudden, totally irrational thought to lean forward and lick the sharp points. “I’ll call you that whenever you like, Pete. Anytime at all.”

“Okay.” Peter’s blush got a little darker. “Thank you.”

This time the Alpha growled, “Baby boy.” and Peter’s head snapped back, his mouth falling open in a pant as his thighs involuntarily clenched, holding the Alpha captive between his knees.

Oh god.

Oh god, yes please.
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Okay well, this chapter did whatever the hell it wanted with no care for my carefully plotted outline or intentions. And then it got long, super duper long, so I cut it in half and boy howdy, this chapter is still 12 words, so that’s fun. I got carried away with Haven and have no regrets.

This cameo of Stan Lee might be my favorite ever, we get a brief glimpse of Bruce Banner and Eddie/Venom (please mind the author note before that section) and some hardcore Spideypool sweetness.

Buckle up and don’t forget to comment because there’s about a billion details and several hints for things to come!

“Behind you, sweetheart.” Wade brushed light fingers at the small of Peter’s back as he passed, rolling his eyes when he saw Peter feeding Arthur yet another piece of apple from the tree at the edge of the property. “And stop feeding the horse, Pete. He’s gonna get full and lazy and not be worth a damn. We need him to work today.”

“He’s too old to work.” Peter stepped back into the barely there touch and the Alpha paused immediately, spreading his fingers and flattening his palm to support Peter’s slight weight. “Pretty thing just needs to rest and eat apple slices for retirement.”

“I’m not going to let you spoil my war horse.” Wade said flatly. “Stop giving him snacks.”

“I absolutely will not.” Peter patted at Arthur’s nose and trilled something sweet to the gelding. “Are we ready to go?”

“We’d be ready faster if you were helping load the wagon.” Wade pointed out and the Omega’s eyes went comically, innocently wide. “Don’t look so surprised, Pete. Remember complaining yesterday that everything takes work here? Turns out heading to town takes work too. Hop to it.”

“I thought you said if I kept wearing your clothes, I could definitely do whatever I want.” Peter countered, turning around so he was fully facing the Alpha. “And I definitely want to keep spoiling Arthur because he deserves it.”

“I did say if you kept wearing your clothes, you could do what you wanted.” Wade sent a pointed look towards Peter’s outfit. “But you’re wearing your shirt and your pants so unless you stole my underwear…?”

The Omega went bright red and Wade outright laughed at him. “That’s what I thought. Quit feeding Arthur and get to loading the wagon!”

“Yeah, alright.” Peter reluctantly left Arthur, snuck Bea the last bit of apple in his pocket and went to carry a few of the boxes out of the wood shed. “What’s in these anyway?”

“Tools that need repaired at the blacksmith.” Wade shouldered a heavy bag and held another
beneath his arm. “A few pelts from earlier this fall. Gonna trade out some of the elk I got for more chickens.”

“Why chickens?”

“Because you don’t really like elk.” The Alpha was busy tying the packages down and missed the way Peter’s expression softened. “I figured we’d pick up a few more chickens and butcher them through the winter so you got something you don’t mind eating. Plus we can use the feathers to restuff the pillows so your bed is more comfortable and–”

Wade paused when he turned around and found Peter right behind him. “Pete?”

“You’re a good Alpha.” Peter stepped close until their feet tangled, leaned in so he could lay his palm over Wade’s heart and rub his forehead into the Alpha’s chest. “Thank you for taking such good care of me.”

“Omega.” Wade didn’t hesitate to wrap both arms around Peter, to tangle his fingers into Peter’s hair and hold him close. “Mmmm, baby boy.”

Peter purred in pleasure over the endearment then stood up on his toes so he could notch his nose over Wade’s throat, looped his arms around the Alpha’s neck and hugged him tight. “Is this okay?”

“Of course it’s okay.” Wade didn’t mean to growl, but the words were rough anyway. “Don’t let go yet, Pete.”

“Shit.” Peter’s laugh was a little breathless but he definitely didn’t let go. “You’re amazing.”

Wade didn’t answer, though it was on the tip of his tongue to tell the Omega in at least a hundred different ways exactly how amazing he was. He could have told Peter about how the last few weeks had settled his soul when he hadn’t realized he needed settled. He could tell Peter that waking up every morning and seeing the Omega tucked into his bed, or getting one of those heart stopping sleepy smiles was the best part of his entire day.

…He could tell Peter the thought of Cable coming back and tearing them apart made him rage, made his Alpha surge, made Wade half wild with the need to claim, to mark, to cover the Omega in his scent and to make sure that not even a hundred and fifty years could erase them from each others skin.

Wade could have said any of that or all of that, but instead he grasped at Peter’s waist and sifted through the Omega’s hair until Peter tipped his chin up and smiled expectantly. Then Wade very carefully, very gently nuzzled down Peter’s throat until he reached the spot where the lavender and honeysuckle scent was the strongest, where a silvered bonding mark would go once they were mated.

And there Wade pressed the points of his fangs into delicately clear skin, digging the sharp ends in until his Omega cried out, Peter’s knees falling weak over a trembly mewl as he sagged in Wade’s hold.

“Oh-h-h–” Peter gasped and the Alpha’s cedar scent swelled with hunger. “Wade. Al-Alpha. Oh my god.”

“Omega.” Damn near a snarl, working from deep in the Alpha’s chest and then with a visible physical effort to soften his tone, “Pete.”
They could have stood there forever—Peter pliant and trusting against his Alpha, fully content to feel the prick of too sharp teeth at his neck and the iron hold of too strong arms at his waist. Wade was near delirious tasting his mate on his teeth, feeling Peter’s heart beat on his tongue and quietly loving that the Omega was calm so calm like this.

Only an Omega ready to submit would be this still with an Alpha’s teeth in their neck and Wade knew what his mate was saying even if Peter wasn’t quite ready to put it to words.

They could have stood there forever, but it would take at least five hours to reach Haven pulling the wagon behind and Wade had too much to do in town to linger any longer, so he was the first to ease away.

“I could hold you all day.” Wade rumbled soothingly when the Omega made a distressed noise. “But we gotta get going, Pete. We gotta make Haven before supper time if I’m gonna get my list of supplies filled, alright? There’s always time for this sorta thing later.”

For a split second, Wade thought Peter might actually pout over having to wait till later for more cuddles and the brief flash of petulance on the Omega’s face made him want to howl in triumph.

The last few days had been an extreme test of Wade’s patience and self control, their conversation about not being ready a relief to his still cautious heart while the newly acknowledged physical need simmering between their bodies felt like needles beneath his skin.

Wade would have given his left arm to feel Peter pinned beneath him on the bed, to hear the Omega pant and cry for him, to taste drugging lavender and sweetest honeysuckle down his throat while his face was buried in the soft places between Peter’s thighs.

Now that Wade knew Peter wanted him too, the waiting was nearly intolerable but at the same time, the waiting was so necessary it set the Alpha’s teeth on edge to consider rushing this part.

They needed the time to know each other, to come to terms with the enormity of their bond and what it meant for their future that Peter’s time was most likely limited. Wade wanted the chance to court his mate and woo the Omega, to spoil Peter with gifts and spend hours simply sitting and breathing each other in. He wanted to learn every inch of Peter’s body, wanted to know what each smile meant, each change in tone and the rise and fall of every breath.

Wade wanted to know and he wanted to feel and even as he murmured something reassuring to Peter about ‘time’ and ‘later’ and ‘another chance’, the Alpha nearly strangled under the hopelessness of knowing they didn’t have much time at all.

**Rush rush rush.**

**Wait wait wait.**

And yes, Peter might have been pouting over an end to their long hug but he wiped it away with a quick smile when he felt Wade’s scent flash melancholy, the Alpha clearly struggling with the waiting as much as Peter did.

**Rush rush rush.**

**Wait wait wait.**

“It takes half a day to get to Haven, right?” Peter did them both a favor and changed the subject, meandering away from Wade and back towards the horses so he could distract himself by checking their bridles and patting the soft noses. “Even with both horses?”
“Pulling the wagon means we gotta take the road, so yep. Half a day even with both horses.” Wade appreciated the space, appreciated that his mate already knew him well enough to give him time. “It’ll take most of the day tomorrow to get home again with a full load. Long few days but it’ll be fine.”

“Where will we stay in Haven?” Peter coaxed Bea’s mouth open to check her bit. “Is there a hotel? Or a room we can rent?”

“There’s a hotel in town.” Wade watched in amusement as Peter checked Arthur’s bit too. For an Omega who’d not so much as seen a horse up close before, Peter sure had gotten comfortable quick with Bea and Arthur. “We’ll stay there unless you want to camp in the woods for the night. Pitch a tent and cook our beans over a campfire and that sorta thing.”

“Right.” The Omega rolled his eyes. “Because I look like the type to go camping. I was never even in the Boy Scouts, Wade. Not exactly outdoorsy.”

“Well, I dunno what a Boy Scout is, but I bet you’d be adorable sleeping on the ground.” Wade went around the other side of the wagon and climbed up. “Let’s get a move on, the day’s a’wasting.”

“The day’s a’wastin’?” Peter left the horses and climbed the steps to sit next to Wade on the bench. “The sun’s only been up for an hour, how is that wasting?”

“Cos we should’a been gone an hour ago.” Wade reprimanded. “But you got all clingy and needed a hug so–ow!” he jumped when Peter pinched at his side. “Okay! We’re going! Geez!”

“Ridiculous.” Peter muttered, and Wade’s smile was enormously pleased. “Why are you smiling so big right now?”

“You told me you fall for me a little more every time I’m ridiculous.” Wade clicked at the horses and Bea and Arthur took off immediately. “So by all means, keep thinking I’m ridiculous.”

“Ridiculous!” Peter said louder, but now his smile was every bit as big as Wade’s overly pleased expression. “Let’s just go.”

The cabin and clearing were left behind in a matter of minutes as the horses took the wagon down the hill towards Haven. The team knew the way by memory and Wade only needed to guide them over particular rough patches with quiet words and the occasional tug on the reins.

The road was full of switch backs to compensate for the steepness, almost dangerously narrow in some places, wide and open in others. Wade pointed out places where he’d cut and hauled logs to reinforce weaker spots, where he’d built rock walls to keep the side of the mountain from washing away in heavy spring rains.

The Alpha knew where a black bear made her den each winter in the hills and where the wild turkey gathered in the spring to lay their eggs, showed the Omega deer sign on scraped up tree trunks and slowed the wagon to point out a mountain lion track still evident in roadside mud.

“Mountain lions.” Peter repeated. “Is that– are they a real danger out here?”

“Everything’s a real danger out here.” Wade told him. “But you’ve gotta be careful of the big cats, Pete. If you’re out in the woods with me or even just by yourself you’ve gotta stay sharp. They’ll drop outta trees and onto your back if they’re desperate enough and with the elk and deer disappearing up here…” he shook his head. “I saw some lion tracks around the property a few weeks ago but haven’t seen anything since. Just gotta be careful.”
At the river crossing, Wade jumped down to walk between Arthur and Bea, helping the team over the slippery rocks and onto the other side. He didn’t let go of Arthur’s bridle until the wagon was back on dry land, then patted the old gelding on the nose and crooned sweetly at Bea before climbing back up next to Peter.

“Why did you do that?” Peter leaned over the side to look at the wagon wheels, noting where they were wet. “The river wasn’t too deep, was it?”

“Not deep at all.” Wade agreed. “In the spring it’s a lot more dangerous with all the snow run off but now it’s about as safe as it gets.”

“So why did you help the horses?”

“Because if I didn’t help, I’d worry they would slip.” the reins went slack in Wade’s hands as he relaxed again. “The only way not to worry is to be right out there with them in the water too. That way if Bea slips, I can keep her from knocking into Arthur, and if Arthur panics and tries to bolt, I can make sure he doesn’t take Bea with him. Only way for all of us to make it across the river every time, is for me to get in there with ‘em. Nobody panics if we’re all there together, and I don’t have to worry about the horses or the wagon if we’re all walking the same path, right?”

The same path. The words felt strangely prophetic when said between an Alpha and Omega that were never supposed to even meet, and Peter smiled to himself at the thought of he and Wade walking the same path.

“You’re smiling.” Wade sent him a sideways glance. “You thinkin’ I’m ridiculous again?”

“Always.” Peter said promptly and Wade chuckled at him. “But I was thinking too, um—” he rubbed at his neck where Wade’s fangs had pricked his skin earlier. “Well actually, I was thinking that I never knew I’d like that.”

“Like what, Pete?”

“The fangs.” Peter clarified. “Your fangs, I mean. You said that thing about walking the same path with the horses and it made me think how you and me are sorta… sorta walking the same path right now.” A bump of possessiveness in the Alpha’s scent and encouraged, Peter rushed on, “And that made me think about how different everything is right now in my life, how different it is than how I ever expected and that made me think of your fangs cos those are certainly different. In fact I had a whole conversation with Mary Jane before I met Cable that revolved around exactly how little I liked fangs and it’s… it’s different now.”

“Changed your mind, did ya?” Wade lightened the moment with some teasing, baring the hooked points and running his tongue over the sharp ends. “You gonna be a horny little Omega every time I get fangy with you?”

“I’m not going to be a horny little–” Peter started to protest, then stopped when he realized he was wet between his thighs, knees gone shaky and breath a touch choppy at the thought of Wade getting fangy with him. “You know what, comment withdrawn. Are we trying to get to town on time or what? Chop chop.”

Wade dropped his head back and nearly cackled at the Omega’s blush and while Peter wasn’t a prissy Omega, he was damn tempted to stick his nose in the air and huff at the Alpha for laughing at him.

Instead he reached for Wade’s hand and wove their fingers together, quieted an instinctively sassy
retort, and scooted into his Alpha to lean his cheek on Wade’s shoulder. He wanted to be close and he knew Wade wanted to be close and there was no reason why they shouldn’t be, not if they were walking the same path, right?

This was enough.

“Omega?”

“Do you need both hands to drive?” Peter wanted to know, and Wade shook his head. “Good. I’ll just be right here if that’s alright with you.”

Wade pressed a gentle, grateful kiss to Peter’s hair and murmured, “Sure as hell alright with me, baby boy.”

***************

Peter’s hand never left Wade’s grip as they came into Haven, the Omega tucked knee to knee and thigh to thigh with his Alpha, shoulder to shoulder and fingers clasped tight.

“Enough?” Wade asked and Peter turned his nose to the Alpha’s cheek and purred until Wade laughed quietly. “Yeah, this is enough.”

“This is–” Peter’s agreement was cut short when Bea and Arthur turned the last corner and Haven was suddenly spread out in front of him, the town tucked into the secluded valley and covered in the changing colors of autumn leaves. “Oh. Oh my gosh.”

“Pretty, right?” Wade needed both hands to steer the horses down the wide road, around pedestrians and past other wagons, but he left Peter’s hand up on his leg, pressing lightly so the Omega knew to leave it. “Haven is beautiful this time of year.”

“It’s so crowded.” Peter kneaded absentminded circles on Wade’s thigh as he stared around him curiously, questions bubbling up and out as fast as he thought of them. “Why are there so many people? Are those hunters? Look at that wagon full of vegetables! I should have brought my notebook. Look at all the– oh my god that guy is wearing a fur hat? That’s a real live fur hat. I’d ask what century this is but I mean… I know what century it is. Still though, a fur hat? Really? Is he Davy Crockett?”

“How do you know about Davy Crockett?” Wade slowed the team to a walk to avoid a near collision with another wagon. “He’s been dead for ages now, or so everyone says. No one’s seen him since he fought down in Texas and rumour has it the Mexican army executed him.”


“Served a couple months together during the war in ‘13.” The Alpha shrugged. “He was a good man, even if he put down his rifle and turned to politics. He tried to get bills passed to help mutants and keep the army from relocating all them folks out West… Always fought for the little guy, you know?”

“Was he…” all the stories Peter had ever heard about Davy Crockett flashed through his mind, the cheesy song full of folk tales and wild exaggerations of the larger than life frontiersman. “…a mutant? Was he like you, because if he was maybe all those stories about him are true!”

“The only true stories about Crockett are about him being a mouthy fuckin’ Omega, damn stabby with that knife of his, and the quickest to turn an argument into an all out war.” Wade disagreed.
“Couldn’t tell you if he was mutant or not, but that buckskin outfit and coonskin hat sure were stupid. I think he wore it just to make people uncomfortable. Even back when he was alive they told tall tales about him and he’d laugh while gettin’ drunk around the campfire.”

“He’s a hero in my timeline.” Peter deflated a little in disappointment. “The Alamo where he died is practically a shrine and there’s songs about him and everything.”

“M’not saying he wasn’t a good guy. Ease up, Bea. Settle, Arthur.” Wade brought the horses to a stop outside a stable. “M’sayin’ he wasn’t ever happy unless he was making trouble whether it was as a politician or in a battle. For fuck’s sake, he went down to Texas spoiling for a fight with the Mexicans for no good reason at all. That sound like a hero to you?”

“I think it’s not a stretch to say most American heroes are people who picked fights for no reason and then rewrote the stories to make sure they came out as the good guy.” Peter said dryly. “History is written by the victors, right? Just means there’s a thousand stories out there that have never been told cos the authors were on the wrong side of the fight.”

Wade jumped from the wagon and held out a hand to help Peter down as well. “Just make sure when you turn all those notes you write into a book, you mention how very handsome I am, yeah? I don’t care who wins or loses so long as future generations know I was a good lookin’ Alpha.”

“Future generations.” Once his feet were on the ground again, Peter rolled his eyes. “Yeah, when I publish my book about all the mysteries of Haven, I’ll be sure to include an entire chapter of nothing but praise for your physique.”

“See, you got the right idea.” Wade pressed at Peter’s waist for a second, his fingers lingering at the little bit of skin between the hem of Peter’s t shirt and his jeans. “I’ve got to get the horses and wagons set away for the night and some of these boxes dropped off at the blacksmith. Why don’t you get into the store and start picking things out for the cabin and I’ll come find you.”

“You want me to pick things out for the cabin?” It was an odd thing to be affected by, but Peter’s heart still skipped a beat when Wade sent him a ‘no duh’ sort of expression. “I mean… do you have a list for me to go by? Or are you going to trust me just to buy…whatever.”

“Buy whatever you want.” Wade motioned towards the store just across the street. “It’s your home too, Pete. Your cabin. Figure out what we need and put it up front, I’ll fill in whatever’s on my list. Sound good?”

“Um…yep.” Peter chewed at the inside of his cheek. “Yeah, I’ve shopped for groceries before. I mean, I can do it. But–”

“Pete?” the Alpha raised his eyebrows. “What’s going on?”

“It’s so stupid, oh my god.” Peter dragged both hands through his hair and shook his head. “It’s just um– holy crap. Wade, I’ve never um, I’ve never–”

“Omega.” Wade stepped into his space, replaced Peter’s hands with his own and tugged through the dark strands until Peter tilted his head back and sighed. “What’s the matter? It’s just supplies.”

“I know it is.” Peter held on to Wade’s wrists and closed his eyes. “But I’ve never done this.”

“You just said–”

“Not for an Alpha.” Peter finished and Wade hummed in realization. “I’ve never done this for an Alpha. Or with an Alpha. The whole scent matching thing is… I mean, we’re handling that in our
own way. But I dunno. Seems bigger to be picking out things when there’s an Alpha involved. I know it’s stupid. Maybe it’s not such a big deal in this timeline but in mine this is like moving in together steps. Bonding steps. Somehow it seems bigger than me wanting to um—”

Peter coughed awkwardly. “—you know. Watch you chop wood naked.”

“Alright.” Wade tried hard not to laugh because he knew Peter was very serious about how big it all felt. It did feel big in a bonding-moving-in-together sort of way, but Wade was still stuck on Peter apparently wanting to see him chop wood naked and when the Omega exclaimed, “Oh my god, just laugh already!” Wade grabbed him up close into a hug and muffled his laughter in Peter’s hair.

“I was trying to make a joke so I wouldn’t feel so dumb about all this.” Peter confessed, leaning into a kiss at his temple. “I think I worried less about the time traveling thing than I am worrying right now about choosing blankets.”

“Tell you what.” Relishing in the freedom to be close, Wade ran his hands up and down Peter’s back, then palmed low over the Omega’s hips until Peter’s breath hitched. “Go inside and just start picking things out for you. When I get done with the horses, I’ll come in and we’ll pick everything else out together. And as far as blankets go?”

He waited until Peter looked up and finished, “So long as it smells like you, I don’t care what it looks like, alright? Pick the worst one you can find. Pick the ugliest one. I don’t care. I’m gonna wrap you up in it tonight and then sleep with it every night after and when it stops smelling like you, I’m gonna wrap you up in it again.”

“You are ridiculous.” Peter informed him, soft and teasing and wonderfully, openly affectionate. “And you know what that means.”

“Yeah.” Wade squeezed at Peter and then let him go. “I sure do. Go buy some ugly blankets and whatever else you want. Oh, and whatever you do, do not let Mr. Lee pressure you into buying unnecessary things, he’s the worst about that.”

“Right.” A quick nod. “Who’s Mr. Lee again?”

“Shop keep.” Wade went around the back of the wagon to unload the tools. “Tiny guy, about fifty years past ancient, giant glasses. You can’t miss him.”

“Is he—” Peter glanced around the relatively empty sidewalk and lowered his voice. “Mutant?”

“You know, I dunno.” Wade shrugged. “He might be but I couldn’t tell you for sure. He doesn’t scent like one of us but that doesn’t really mean anything. Never heard anyone mention it either, but it’s not the sorta thing you ask about, you know?”

“Sure.” Peter nodded again “Sure, not asking about personal things like… powers. Sorry. Can you at least tell me how old fifty years past ancient is?”

“I dunno.” the Alpha repeated. “Mr. Lee’s just super old. Just super super old. Looks like a raisin without his glasses on and will send you home with really unnecessary things.”

“Got it.” Peter tamped down the curiosity threatening to bubble over into about a hundred different questions. “I’ll just uh— yeah, I’ll just do that. No unnecessary things. And you’ll be back soon?”

“Real soon.” Wade promised. “See you in a bit.”
“Kay.” Peter squashed the urge to blow his Alpha a kiss– he definitely wasn’t going to do that in public– and hurried across the road to get into the shop. He dodged an oncoming wagon and sent a quick smile to a Beta woman who stared curiously at his outfit, and with one last glance back at Wade, ducked into the store.

Mr. Lee’s store was brightly lit and surprisingly stuffed, filled wall to wall and nearly up to the ceiling with every item Peter could have possibly imagined ever needing. It reminded him of thrift shops back home, the kind full of random crap from a thousand different places tucked into corners and oddly long hallways with flickering lights and no clocks on the wall because time apparently stopped once you were through the doors.

That’s what Mr. Lee’s store made Peter think of, and as he turned around in a full circle to try and take it in, he couldn't help but laugh a little at the oddness of it all.

There was a full size stove on the back wall and a wheelbarrow parked next to it. Shelves full of various canned goods, stacks of books, bolts of flannel and denim and other fabric alongside a few mannequins with ready made shirts and trousers, and one in a fancy dress and parasol. Jackets and heavy coats hooked onto a precariously overloaded coat hanger, a low table with an assortment of children’s toys and on the next closest rack, a handful of farm implements mixed in what was surely an unsafe manner with several rifles and boxes of ammunition.

There was a display full of highly scented lotions and body sprays, a selection of soft satin and lace pieces and up on a shelf out of reach, a beautiful violin polished to a high shine. Jars of colorful candy lining the counter, thick blankets stacked on a chair, what might have been a couch buried beneath a staggering amount of hideous throw pillows and a dresser full of the sort of knick knacks Peter only thought existed in weird movies about old people.

Pots and pans piled haphazardly into what was quite literally a kitchen sink, boxes full of hammers and nails, various tools and hooks full of axes. What looked like a fresh pie– what the hell?– sitting on a tiny table next to a stool, silverware gleaming beneath a stained glass lamp, sewing thread and needles in tidy bundles and yarn in a basket with an alarmingly fat kitty sleeping snuggly on top.

Beneath the cash register was a set of knives ranging from ‘most likely used for steak’ clear to ‘most definitely for killing a bear’ and a door in the back was marked ‘Enter At Your Own Risk’. Peter had no idea why a grocery store would have an area that was too risky for customers to enter but he wasn’t about to ask.

The furthest corner of the store was packed full of what could only be called junk– a haphazard assembly of mis-buttoned shirts, patchwork quilts, cracked glasses and warped pans, a dress mannequin with ladies ruffled underpants and men’s sleep shirts looped over it’s neck. There was a rifle with a curved barrel, a spittoon that had seen better days– if that was even possible. Gross – and a once ornate mirror cracked from the center out.

Junk. Just junk to round out the most random store Peter had ever set foot in.

“I love it.” he said with a quiet chuckle. “I want to know everything about everything in this store. What on earth–”

“What’cha lookin’ at, son?” A man popped up out of nowhere and Peter nearly screamed in surprise. “Now now, none of that. I’m not that scary, am I?”

Peter blinked a few times, taking in the strangers frazzled white hair and hilarious askew glasses, the broad suspenders and patched too short trousers, and finally the ear to ear smile stretching across the man’s friendly face. “Ummm. You must be Mr. Lee?”
“Well-ll-ll.” the old man shrugged, baring dulled fangs in a smile just short of devious. “That’s the name on the door anyway. And you’re in luck because I know exactly what you came in here looking for today.”

“Oh yeah?” Peter thought he could actually shout with laughter. “And what would that be?”

“Quilts!” Mr. Lee leaned in and sniffed at Peter loudly. “Yep. An Omega. Could smell you walking in the door. Not that it’s a bad thing, you smell great. I’m just saying, I know exactly what you need and what you need is quilts!”

He plucked one from the junk pile, a hideous brown and yellow with red stitched hearts. “I got this one off the undertaker for a great deal and I’m willing to pass those savings on to you! What do you say, this is the perfect thing to keep you and your Alpha warm at night. Oh! And another thing–!”

Before Peter could begin to answer, the ancient Alpha whipped around and darted off towards another part of the store, then was right back a few seconds later, proudly brandishing one of those awful ceramic trinkets.

“See this?” Mr. Lee pushed his glasses up his nose and peered at Peter. “This right here is exactly what you need to make your new place feel like home. A knick knack is the perfect amount of your personality finding a spot on your Alpha’s mantle and will make the settling in process easier.”

“Settling in–”

“And then for those cold nights when cuddling is mandatory and darn it all, you just don’t have enough blankets.” Another god awful quilt snatched from the junk pile. “This one is guaranteed to keep you warm but also looks thin enough to make your mate think you’re chilly. Only good things of course. An Alpha thinking you’re cold means lots of holding and usually sans garments.”

“Sans garments??”

“Of course if you’re a good enough cook, you won’t need trinkets and blankets to keep the Alpha’s attention.” Peter blinked and his arms were suddenly full of the never asked for blankets of suspicious origins and a knick knack that under no circumstance was coming home with him, and a second later the shop keep stacked a few pans on top as well. “There, see? What else could an Omega need to start a new life with their mate?”

“Uh none of this.” Peter set the pile aside carefully. “Literally none of this. But thank you anyway. And also, how did you know about me and my–my mate? How do you know? Oh and hey, when you say you got the blankets for a steal from the undertaker, does that mean you took them off dead people?”

“They weren’t using them anymore.” Mr. Lee waved off the question and busied himself gathering up other unneeded items around the place. “Now I’ve been around a long– a long time– and I know the look of an Omega in love and I’m tellin’ you around these parts, if there’s an Omega in love an Alpha ready to take him home isn’t far behind. Who’s the lucky soon to be mate?”

“Actually wait, don’t tell me.” Mr. Lee leaned in again and took a deep breath, then snorted and shook his head. “Wade, huh? How’d a pretty thing like you end up with an Alpha like Wade Wilson? The man only comes down the hill twice a year and never looks at anyone, not even the Omega’s over at the cat house. You’d’ve hadta drop from the sky right into his lap for Wade to take notice. How’d you do it?”
“We found each other.” Peter wished and wished he’d thought to bring his digital camera along when he’d packed for the trip upstate. The battery might still be charged and he’d at least have a chance at getting a picture of this hilarious Alpha. “We um– yep. Found each other.”

“Mm-hmm, that’s the way it usually goes.” Mr. Lee nodded as if he’d already known what Peter would say. “That’s how it usually goes. Walking along minding your own business and bam!” he clapped his hands and Peter jumped. “The universe decides it’s time to be in love and hits you with a mate. So then. If you don’t need pots and pans then you must need this!”

A length of lace spread out on a table Peter was pretty sure hadn’t been set up a minute before, and Mr. Lee ran careful hands over the delicate fabric. “This is absolutely perfect for those bonding heat activities, but I highly recommend wearing it afterwards when your mate can see straight enough to admire those gams in this pretty cloth–”

“My gams??”

“– and maybe even this!” A bolt of checkered flannel set over the lace. “Nothing gets a mountain man going like seeing his mate in flannel and lace!”

“Oh my god.” Peter scrubbed a hand over his face and tried not to think of whether or not Wade would like him in flannel and lace. “I don’t uh– nope. Don’t need that.”

“Oh ho, I beg to differ!” Mr. Lee held up a finger. “It’s important to keep the romance alive, kiddo! You might be pretty and smell like them fancy whore houses down in the city–”

“WHAT?!”

“–but I’m telling you–”

“Hey.” Wade came up behind them and Peter whirled around with a grateful expression, while Mr. Lee greeted the Alpha with a toothy, faux innocent smile. “How’s it going in here?”

“This is the craziest place I’ve ever been.” Peter whispered, and Mr. Lee interjected loudly, “I was just treating your mate to the finest goods my store has to offer!”

“How many knick knacks has he tried to sell you?” Wade wanted to know. “Has he tried to get you to buy a throw pillow yet?”

“I haven’t!” Mr. Lee protested. “But! If you step this way I’ll show you my collection! I promise I have exactly the right pillow to go on your bed and if you need a couch I’ve got one somewhere under all this stuff and–”

“Mr. Lee.” Despite his earlier warnings about the shop keeps antics, Wade’s smile for the old man was fond, and his tone respectful. “This will be the first winter my Omega spends with me, so we need extra supplies beyond my usual order. Everything I normally get and whatever else Peter would like, alright?”

“Sure thing, Wade.” Mr. Lee might have been old, but his eyes were still razor sharp as they checked the other Alpha over curiously, lingering at the scars on Wade’s knuckles and then up at one by his ear. “Rough season, son?”

“Not any more than usual.” Wade shook his head minutely to dissuade any further questions, but took the time to assure, “You know how it is up there. Can’t get through a summer without a cut or two.”
“Ah.” Mr. Lee nodded, a ripple of understanding between the two Alpha’s that Peter didn’t quite catch. “Good to hear. You’re taking care of yourself, then?”

“It’s been a long since the war, Mr. Lee.” Wade slipped his arm around Peter’s waist and pulled the Omega closer to his heart. “Even longer since things were bad, you understand?”

“Don’t do no harm to check in all the same.” Apparently satisfied with the cryptic conversation, Mr. Lee turned back to Peter. “Start picking things out, kiddo. I’ll fill in the spaces with what your Alpha usually orders and we’ll ring it all up.”

“Pete.” Wade held on to him for another minute. “What’s with the flannel and lace?”

“Don’t ask.” Peter settled more of his weight into Wade’s frame. “I’m pretty sure he tried to sell me a blanket he stole from a dead person. I think he also might have insulted me at some point, something about how not even Omega’s that smell like fancy whore houses can keep the romance alive?”

“Yep, that sounds about right.” Wade sighed. “Mr. Lee has lived long enough to say whatever the hell he wants and not give a damn how crazy it sounds, so that’s exactly what he does. Let’s get to shopping though, yeah? Ugly blankets?”

“And random knick knacks.” Peter finished. “I didn’t like it at first, but that one with the weirdly staring baby and slightly rabid looking dog is starting to grow on me.”

“I will leave your perfect ass right here in Haven if you think you’re gonna bring that thing home with us.” Wade said flatly. “Move on, Omega.”

“But–!”

“Move on, Omega!”

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Peter had spent enough time with Wade to get used to reading the Alpha’s scent, being able to pick up on Wade’s moods and the truth behind his words when they talked. Unless the moment turned heated or overly emotional, Peter had even learned to temper his own reactions to the Alpha and stay on an even keel despite the lack of suppressants and blockers.

It helped of course, that being scent matched with Wade kept him calmer anyway. Mates evened each other out, the Alpha’s presence keeping the Omega from being too anxious and the Omega settling the Alpha’s often destructive impulses. Mates were perfectly matched in all ways and every day Peter spent in Wade’s company only further confirmed what his heart already knew.

Mates. Scent matched and soul bonded even without the physical act to seal it.

Mates and Wade’s scent was without a doubt one of Peter’s favorite things in the entire world.

But being in the company of a single Alpha and learning to control his reactions was entirely different than walking into a room full of Alphas, Betas and several Omegas and the moment Wade prodded Peter through the door of the only restaurant in Haven, Peter realized he was not prepared at all.

His head snapped back as if he’d hit a wall, his breath suddenly coming in wheezes as he tried to
work through everything assaulting his senses. The Alphas scented of aggression, the Omegas saccharine sweet, and even though Betas were usually bland compared to the other genders, too many in one room rang like noise against Peter’s head.

“Oh fuck.” Peter wrenched around and shoved his face into Wade’s chest, screwing his eyes shut and breathing open mouthed in an attempt to ease the onslaught. “Wade– Alpha help me. Fuck fuck fuck.”

“What’s the matter, sweetheart?” Wade inhaled as deep as he could to try and figure out which scent had set Peter off, but found nothing out of the ordinary. He recognized everyone in the dining room and yes, several of them were not to be messed with, but there wasn’t a person present who should be triggering Peter’s fear instinct and turning his sweet scent bitter. “Pete, come on–” the Alpha nearly gagged on the alarm clouding up around his mate. “What’s wrong?”

“I can smell all of them.” Peter muttered, curling tighter into Wade’s chest. “It’s too much, I can smell all of them. Can we go back outside please?”

“Suppressants and blockers.” Wade realized. “You’ve never had to deal with all of this unfiltered.”

“Please take me outside.” Peter was nearly in tears, a migraine rapidly building behind his eyes. “I’m sorry but this is awful, I can’t– I can’t–”

“Come on.” Wade backed out of the door in an instant, holding Peter close and crooning soft things until they were back out in the sunshine and away from the crowded eatery. “How’s that? Better?”

“M’sorry.” the words were muffled in Wade’s shirt, the Omega unwilling to even lift his head yet. “I didn’t expect that.”

“Didn’t expect it either.” Wade admitted “Sorry I wasn’t looking out for you, Pete. Let’s walk around until the sun goes down, then we’ll try for more food when it’s not so crowded, okay? Maybe that will be easier on you.”

“Okay.” Peter winced when the sunlight only aggravated his headache, but anything was better than feeling like he couldn’t even move in the restaurant. “Okay, thank you.”

“Shhh.” Wade tugged the Omega in and kissed his head. “Shhh baby boy, it’s alright. Come on, let’s just walk.”

Haven really was beautiful, and as Wade walked Peter along through the shops and then off onto the side roads to show him some of the prettier homes, Peter found himself relaxing again, his natural curiosity pushing away the pain from earlier as he asked question after question.

There were people everywhere, and Wade pointed out the groups of hunters from the hills, the miners down from the high mountain streams with their gold and the farmers in from the far side of the valley with wagons overloaded with produce.

“Is everyone…” Peter tried not to stare when a little girl with bright pink skin danced past them, green sparkling at her finger tips and flowers blooming behind her as she went. “I mean I know Haven is supposed to be a town for–” a man passed with eerie white eyes that scented of both Alpha and Omega mixed along with something terrifying, and Peter froze. “–Wade.”

“That’s Armando.” Wade nodded a hello towards the mutant and pushed Peter right along. “Remember when I said Haven has got people with abilities that make time travel look small?”

“Yes?”
“Armando is one of those people.” Wade took Peter’s hand and pressed his palm comfortingly. “He’s every bit as old as me and Logan, maybe even older. No way to tell because his mutation means he adapts and changes to whatever situation he is in, and that apparently includes death.”

“Are you saying he’s immortal?”

“I’m saying one time he slipped on some rocks and hit his head real hard, the river swept him away and over the falls.” the Alpha nodded to another acquaintance as they passed. “We found him face down in the water, unconscious, but breathing through a set of gills in his neck that definitely hadn’t been there before. He adapts, which makes him all but indestructible. Never seen him start a fight, sure as hell seen him finish them.”

“Good to know.” Peter snuck a quick look back at the man, and jumped when he saw Armando staring right at him. “Is he um– is he an Alpha or Omega? He scents like both.”

“He’s whichever he needs to be whenever he needs it. Both, neither, and sometimes he’s somethin’ else altogether.” Wade directed Peter towards a clearing and towards a leather shop on the other side. “He’s staring at you right now cos he can’t tell what makes you different from everyone else. Don’t look back, keep on walking. He’s safe, but that doesn’t mean you need to run up and ask a million questions, alright?”

“I won’t bother him.” Peter promised. “I just wish I would have brought my notebook so I could write everything down. It’s almost full, I’ve gotta start writing in the margins just do I don’t–

The Omega froze mid step and cursed quietly. “Oh no, I think I just walked through the middle of someone’s photograph. Look at those people set up over there. Did I just ruin it? Can we buy them another one or something? I don’t know how expensive that sort of things are in this time.”

“It’s fine, Pete.” Wade reached for Peter’s other hand and dragged him out of the way. “If they were worried about the backdrop, they wouldn’t be taking a picture in the street. They’ll take more than one picture anyway, and if you ended up in the background, they’ll cut you out and throw it in a box or something.”

“…throw it in a box.” Peter echoed, his face washing pale with sudden realization, pieces clicking together one after another in his mind to form an absolutely boggling picture. “Jesus Christ. I just created the picture I found in my time.”

“You recreated what now?”

“I’m a reporter.” Peter reminded Wade, and the Alpha nodded, motioned for him to continue. “When I was doing my research into the community, I found an old torn up picture of someone who looked exactly like me in a box from the university archives. I assumed it was a photo of a great great great grandparent or something but um–”

“But you just walked through their picture.” Wade caught up with Peter’s line of thought. “So it’s you that you found in that photograph.”

“A hundred and fifty years from now.” Peter confirmed, mind spinning as he tried to put it all together. “That uh– holy shit, that makes my head hurt. So if I wouldn’t have walked through their picture just now, would future me never find the picture at the university? And that means I’d never meet Cable, right? Cos I wouldn’t care as much about the story, it was the picture that made me start obsessing over Haven. That picture led me to Cable and Cable led me to–”
His tone softened, eyes warming and Wade’s heart skipped a beat when Peter’s scent melted through with adoration. “Cable led me to you.”

The Omega closed the few steps of distance between himself and Wade, tangled their feet and plastered chest to chest with the Alpha, wet his lips and pressed his mouth to Wade’s ear.

“Never been so happy to ruin someone else’s photo in my life.” he murmured. “Alpha.”

By the time the sun set the restaurant was nearly empty, tables being cleared and the kitchen restocked to make room for all the customers that would wander in again in a few hours, the rowdier crowd that would sit up half the night drinking alongside their food and singing with whoever was up to play the piano.

Wade kept his arm around Peter’s waist when they passed through the doors this time, solid and steady at the Omega’s side but Peter didn’t even hesitate to keep step along with the Alpha.

He was feeling much better now, eyes wide and chin up, senses straining to understand everything he could feel in the room, and as Wade led him over to a table, Peter was struck by just how much he had missed in his old life.

“This doesn’t happen back home.” he whispered when the Alpha pushed out a chair for him. “I can feel so much. That Omega over there is nervous for some reason, I can scent the Alpha by the stage is hurt but I can’t see it so she must be hiding? I can even scent the Beta and I didn’t know they even had a real scent. This is incredible.”

He took a deep breath in and wrinkled his nose. “Wade, how do you tune it out? Isn’t it a lot to know so much about so many people all the time? How do you keep it all straight.”

“I don’t tune it out.” Wade denied. “It’s like walking down the street and noticing someone’s wearing a red shirt or seeing a weirdly short Alpha or that little girl with pink skin. I just notice and move on so long as it doesn’t set me on edge.”

“It’s so much information though.” Peter insisted. “I’ve sat with my friends for hours and couldn’t tell you half of what they were thinking, but I can sense all the exhaustion from that lady over there. Exhaustion and she’s…” he took a deep breath. “…sad? And oh—” a curious expression. “—and there’s something like Omega heat around her, but she’s not an Omega so she’s just been with one?”

He hesitated, and continued in a quieter voice, “Isn’t that…intimate to know? I wouldn’t want anyone knowing you’d just been with me in my heat, that’s not their business. I didn’t know it was so obvious in our scents.”

Peter made a valid point, but Wade heard ‘heat’ and instantly distracted, hazel eyes shifting dark red, licorice and cedar scent spiking hot. “I’d want everyone to know I’d been with you in your heat, Pete.” he rumbled. “Everyone. I’d want your scent covering me, let everyone in the room know I was mated and knew how to satisfy my Omega.”

“Shit.” Peter crossed his legs beneath the table, clamped his knees together and folded his arms over his stomach when it swooped eagerly. “Wade—”

An Alpha a couple tables over looked up, eyes narrowing and flickering when
Omega *arousal* soaked the air like syrup. Wade let his rumble grow into a growl and then spill over into a *snarl* until the Alpha apologized quietly and went back to their food.

The show of protectiveness should have frightened the Omega, but instead Peter *gasped*, and Wade’s smirk slid devious and knowing.

“Oh fuck, that’s not fair.” Peter whimpered, biting into his knuckles so he wouldn’t whine out loud. “Not fair you can do that to me so fast.”

“You’re wrong if you think you can’t do that and more to me with just a smile, Omega.” Wade countered, blinking the red from his eyes and clearing the snarl from his words. “I know we said *enough*, but I’m tellin’ you, you could bring me to my knees without even trying.”

*Oh.*

There was a challenge in the Alpha’s statement, a challenge and perhaps an invitation, permission for Peter to push the boundaries of their *enough* and assurance that Wade would be right there with him.

*Oh oh oh.*

Before Peter could respond either way—whether it was to back down and laugh it off, or to wet his lips and try for *more*—their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the Omega Logan and his mate.

“Logan.” Wade reached across the table for Peter’s hand, a soft press assuring the Omega that they were *fine*, then turned to wave at his friend. “How are you?”

“Not as tense as you two are.” Logan’s sense of smell was overly developed even for a mutant, and his nose wrinkled when he could nearly taste the *tension* between the pair. “Ease up, you’re in public for fucks sake.”

Peter cursed under his breath and looked away in embarrassment, but Logan only nudged at Peter’s shoulder. “I’m teasing, Omega. Not your fault if your Alpha gets you riled up with no where to work it off. Wade, cut the kid some slack.”

“Easy does it, love.” Another Alpha joined their table, and Peter’s embarrassment fled in place of sheer *awe* when Logan’s mate opened a pair of *massive* wings in greeting. “Wade, how are you?” and with a nod towards Peter. “Introduce me to your mate.”

“Clint.” Wade’s eyes sharpened red at the other Alpha until the stunning wings folded back behind Clint’s shoulders again. “This is Peter. Omega, this is Clint. Logan’s Alpha.”

“H–Hi.” Peter croaked. “This is–wow. Um–”

Logan sent a knowing look towards his mate, and Clint chuckled, fluttering his feathers towards the speechless Omega. “Go on. Ask it.”

“Holy shit, can I feel your feathers?” Peter blurted. “Is that rude? Wade said I shouldn’t ask a bunch of questions but *seriously*, can I feel your feathers? Do you actually fly? Do you swoop Logan into your arms and carry him up the mountain? How old are you? Do you molt? Ew, was that weird? Do you have a–” he shut up abruptly, biting at his tongue until it nearly bled.

“Don’t stop now.” Wade had started laughing at the question of *swooping* Logan up and had yet to get it under control. “C’mon Pete, ask him what you really want to know.”
“You weren’t kidding about the questions.” Clint muttered and Logan leaned into his Alpha’s shoulder, grinning around the cigar clenched in his teeth.

“Just wait, I bet this last one is gonna be good.”

“Do you have a nest?” Peter whispered. “Do you use your feathers to decorate your nest?”

Logan almost collapsed laughing when Clint’s jaw dropped, and Peter hid his face behind his hands, mortified that his curiosity had gotten the better of him.

“Sorry. Sorry. I shouldn’t have asked that. I just um–”

“He’s just gotta know.” Wade finished, and crooned sweetly at his Omega. “It’s alright, Pete. We’ve all wondered the same thing. Tell us, Clint. When you molt, do you line your nest with feathers?”

“And is it sexy when Logan grooms you?” Peter burst out, and then hid his face again in horror. “Okay seriously, I’m sorry. I’m not going to ask anymore questions.”

“For the record, my mate playing with my feathers is very arousing.” Clint agreed, a low growl for his Omega bringing a secret sort of smile to Logan’s face. “But when my feathers come loose I do not keep them, nor do I have a nest where we sleep. No, I can’t take off into the sky and fly from the ground, but if I leap from the bluffs by our home yes I can soar and yes, I can carry my mate with me when I do. Anything else you want to know?”

“Um…” Peter peeked up at Wade and flushed even darker when he saw his Alpha clearly enjoying the awkward moment. “…no? But if I think of anything more, I’ll write it down and maybe ask you later?”

“That’s just fine.” Clint scented like wind and like rain, the Alpha’s deep brown feathers shimmering under the lights as he opened them wide again to sweep up over Logan’s shoulders. “Come on Lo, let’s get some food. Welcome to Haven, Peter. And Wade?” he waited until Wade looked his way. “Get your mate settled with dinner and then you and I should talk about a few things.”

“Yes.” Wade waited until the pair had moved away, then picked up Peter’s hand and kissed his knuckles. “I’m gonna go up and order some food. Stay here, alright?”

“Sure.” Peter worried at his bottom lip. “Uh, Wade?”

“Yeah, sweetheart.”

“You didn’t correct Clint when he referred to me as your mate.” A barely audible whisper. “Why not?”

“Should I have corrected him?” Wade asked instead and Peter’s head jerked up in surprise. “Do you want me to go correct him?”

“No.” Still in that barely there tone. “No he was um– he was right.” A little braver now, Peter’s eyes sparkling and lips parting in anticipation. “He was right. Don’t go correct him. Leave it alone.”

“Alright then.” Wade didn’t quite trust himself to touch Peter without making a scene right there in the restaurant, so he stayed firmly on his side of the table as he said, “Remember when we talked about how all it takes from you is a smile?”
Peter swallowed then nodded and the Alpha whispered, “*Smile, Pete.*”

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“What in the actual fuck are you doing?” Clint flared his wings in open aggression when Wade finally joined him on the other side of the restaurant. “That Omega still reeks of Cable and you’re out here announcing him as your *mate*? You lookin’ to get your shit kicked?”

“Put the feathers away, Bird Brain.” Wade dropped into a chair opposite the other Alpha and rotated so he could keep an eye on Peter across the way. “You don’t scare me.”

And then with a surge of annoyance, “And don’t say Pete *reeks* of Cable, if anything, he scents like me. Been sleeping in my bed every night for weeks now, he definitely doesn’t smell like that time sliding bastard.”

“Alright, he doesn’t reek of Cable.” Clint admitted. “But he still scents like *burned* and I know what that means. What are you doin’ mating up with an Omega with an expiration date? You trying to break your own heart, or what?”

“Not like I have a choice in the matter.” Wade lowered his voice and finally, Clint lowered his wings. “He’s my *mate*, Clint. Scent matched him the moment I saw him and he knows it too. Maybe if Cable would’a come back sooner to take him away then I would’ve gotten over it but it’s too late now.”

The winged Alpha made a sympathetic noise and Wade shook his head. “It’s too late. I’m in over my head but it’s too late to back out. Don’t even want to back out. He’s *mine*. Peter is *mine*.”

“I get it.” Clint gathered his wings up behind his shoulders and sat as well, motioning for the bartender to send a couple drinks their way. “Have you talked to Doc Banner yet? He usually knows where or when Cable is and how soon he’s expected it back.”

“Haven’t seen him.” Wade grunted. “Been so busy takin’ care of Pete this is the first time I’ve gotten into town all season.”

“Well he should be here soon.” Clint inclined his head towards a figure making their way towards the furthest corner of the place. “There’s his roommate now.”

Wade only snorted and took a sip of his drink. “Roommate. Is *that* what we’re calling Eddie now?”

Across the room alone at his table, Peter took a break from his potatoes to watch in interest as an Omega–Alpha?– no, perhaps the newcomer was a Beta because their scent was… well it was *off*– but he watched in interest as the stranger walked by.

He had been nervous when Wade left him alone to go and talk to Clint, but now Peter relished the chance to learn the room in a way his previous life had never allowed. His earlier observations only grew *deeper* as he watched everything between bites of his dinner. He saw more now that he could read body language, could *hear* more now that he knew how to filter scents and recognize the nuances for what they were.

How much had he missed from his friends just because they all wore blockers and suppressants? How many times had Mary Jane lied about how she was feeling and Peter didn’t know because he couldn’t feel the change in her scent? How many times had Gwen and Harry and Flash actually *meant* their flirting and how often had he missed their eyes changing to red because he couldn’t scent the way the air spiked with arousal?
It was incredible, like he’d been blind for years and just now found his sight and Peter was reveling in everything he suddenly knew.

{{Note: This Eddie/Venom has a fairly tragic backstory, but since not everything is explained right away, I want to add a generic TW for depictions of mental instability that aren’t handled very well by the community. As the story unfolds, you will learn what happened to Eddie/Venom and understand Bruce Banner’s role in their recovery but until then, there will be some descriptions that may be a little jarring. Please take into account the mutant/ABO lore and historical setting of this fic when reading how Peter reacts to/describe them. A major theme of this story is Peter learning/changing his opinions about a lot of things he considered truth, and how he deals with Eddie/Venom will change from this initial meeting and fear into something really great as the story progresses.}}

And because his curiosity would always be his doom– and partly because he knew Wade was watching and would keep him safe– Peter stood up from his dinner and crossed over to the furthest table, approaching slowly and cautiously until he was close enough to offer a quiet, “Um, hi. How are you?” to the oddly scented person alone in the corner. “Do you– do you want to come and eat with me? If we’re both eating alone, I mean. I’m new to Haven so–”

“No no, my love.” they whispered to no one in particular, and Peter recoiled when the curious scent of not quite Beta flooded heavy with Alpha, aggressive and shocking. “No no, he belongs to Wade. We shouldn’t.”

Dull blue eyes blinked at Peter for a split second before they twisted opaline and reflective, shiny and mirrored. “We shouldn’t. We can’t. Such a nice Omega.”

“But we want him, he is so pretty.” came a voice so guttural, so deep, so horrifying that Peter actually screamed a little, screamed and fell back onto the floor and found himself scrambling for safety as the Beta/Alpha’s teeth seemed to lengthen and sharpen, crowding their mouth and forcing an unnaturally long tongue out from beneath their stretched lips. “Pretty thing, pretty Omega, we just want to touch–”

“Wade!”

Wade was suddenly right there, hauling Peter up off the floor and baring wicked fangs and blood red eyes at the stranger, a snarl in his throat opening up to a roar until the–the thing’s eyes turned back to flat blue and the teeth disappeared.

The moment the person looked normal again, Wade turned back to Peter with a comforting trill, “Hey hey hey, you’re fine. You’re fine Pete. Everything’s alright.”

“He–that– oh my god–” Peter wanted nothing more than to hide behind Wade’s bulk and let the Alpha take care of whatever the hell that was, wanted to throw up as his stomach twisted in revulsion. “What– what–”

“Easy.” Wade rumbled and kept one arm tight around the Omega’s waist before asking, “Eddie? You back with us again, are we okay here?”

“No no no, we’re fine, he’s fine, we won’t hurt him.” Eddie said listlessly, scenting only like a Beta now, eyes glazed as they listened to the Other in their ear. “Yes, darling. Yes we have to play nice with the pretty Omega. He belongs to Wade and Wade is our friend.”

“Eddie?” A new voice and a new presence that scented as off as Eddie had and Peter tucked further
into Wade. “Hey are you okay? Wade, what happened?”

“Eddie took Pete by surprise so I had to get a little loud.” The Alpha said calmly. “No harm done to either. Peter’s scared but I think that’s fair, all things considered. How’s it goin’ Doc?”

“Eddie, look at me.” Bruce Banner was mild and unassuming in appearance, his voice mellow and entire being one of complete, almost un-natural calm as he knelt in front of Eddie. “Right here, love. Look right here, right in my eyes. How are you?”

“We’re fine, Doc.” Eddie leaned into Bruce’s palm and nodded. “Didn’t mean to scare the Omega. We’re sorry. We’re sorry.”

“I know.” Bruce murmured. “And there’s no harm done, okay? You’re fine, he’s fine, nothing happened. Have you eaten yet?”

“No, not yet.”

“Okay, that’s fine, I’ll get you some dinner.” Bruce ran his fingers into Eddie’s hair, then down along their neck over their pulse to check his heart rate. “Wait right here. Stay put.”

“Mkay, Doc.”

“Wade Wilson.” Bruce stood to his feet and shook Wade’s hand. “It’s been a long time since you’ve come down the hill. Introduce me to your mate.”

“This is Pete.” Wade didn’t let go of Peter, nor did he encourage him forward closer to Bruce or Eddie. “Pete, this is Doctor Bruce Banner, and you already met Eddie.”

“Doctor.” Peter clamped his mouth shut so he wouldn’t ask anything about that– that thing inside Eddie. “Nice to meet you.”

“Welcome to Haven.” Bruce glanced between Peter and Wade a few times, then leaned in and sniffed at Peter. “Cable, huh? How long have you been on the mountain and when are you going home?”

“Oh, I–” Peter looked up at Wade uncertainly. “Well, um–”

“I need to talk to you about a few things, Doc.” Wade cut in smoothly. “Tomorrow morning?”

“I think we definitely should.” Bruce looked a little closer at Peter, down at his jeans and shoes and then back up to his face. “How are you adjusting to not having any suppressants? They were just starting to introduce those and I uh– I never used any but it must be difficult for you to adjust, hm? Do you find Haven overwhelming? Mutants smell different than humans anyway, and since I’m sure you’ve never been around more than one before, it can’t be easy.”

“Wait, what?” Peter blinked a few times. “How do you know about suppressants? What do you mean you never used– what is going on? Are you not–”

“He’s got lots of questions.” Wade chuckled when Bruce’s eyebrows rose. “Let’s talk tomorrow morning, alright? Before we head up the mountain again. I’m staying at the hotel.”

“I’ll come and find you.” Bruce promised and with one last, curious look at Peter, “Nice to meet you, Peter.”

“I have…” Peter blew out a deep breath. “Wade, I’ve got like a thousand questions right now. I
don’t even know where to begin. What the hell is Eddie? What is that inside him and why isn’t he locked up? I know Haven is supposed to be safe for all types but fuck, how is he allowed out when he’s got— got that?

“You need to stay away from Eddie.” Wade led Peter away from the table, checked to be sure his mate had finished dinner, and then headed towards the door. “He’s um— he’s harmless, alright? Eddie is a good person, a real good person but that thing inside them is not. And none of us really know which is in control, so just stay away. Better safe than sorry, yeah?”

“Well what is it?” Peter turned his nose into the Alpha’s shoulder as they passed a few of the other townspeople. “What is that thing? Is it his mutation?”

“Hell Pete, we don’t really know.” Wade admitted. “But every since Eddie got the other thing, no one comes and bothers them anymore, that’s for sure.”

“Why do you call Eddie them?”

“Because whatever they’ve got is wrapped through their core and mind and one can’t exist without the other.” The hotel was just a few blocks away and Wade held Peter’s hand tight as they went. “I used to consider Eddie a friend but after that thing came along and everything went to shit, they aren’t the same.”

“After what went to shit?”

“Everything.” the Alpha’s scent dipped towards sadness. “Everything went to shit and Eddie hasn’t been the same since.”

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The hotel room was tiny, or maybe it was average sized but small compared to their cabin, or maybe it only felt tiny because the bed took up most of the space and Peter hadn’t thought until exactly that minute about their sleeping arrangements in town.

Wade still slept by the fire in the cabin, laid out on a thick pad of blankets with a pillow from the bed and even though Peter had offered numerous times to trade, the Alpha always insisted it was just fine.

But it seemed ridiculous for Wade to sleep on the hotel room floor when the bed was so big and taking up so much room and looming in front of them and unable to be ignored…

“I’ll ask the front desk for some extra blankets.” Wade solved Peter’s conundrum with only a few words as he set down a pile of clothing. “I had Mr. Lee pull a few things in something close to your size. Heavier duty pants a button up shirt— nothing fancy. We can go in the morning and buy more or put in an order to come from the city, alright?”

“Thank you.” He bought me clothes. Peter made up his mind right then and there about their sleeping arrangements.“Wade, I was thinking about tonight—”

“And I got you something.” The Alpha suddenly looked shy and the unexpected vulnerability caught Peter entirely off guard. “It’s nothing much, but it reminded me of you and I uh—” Wade cleared his throat. “I hoped you would use it.”

He handed Peter a small, square package wrapped in satiny paper and tied with a ribbon. “It’s been
a long time since I tried to court anyone and I’ve always been awful at it, but I think this might be alright.”

“You’re trying to court me?” Peter turned the little present over and over in his palms. “Wade.”

“Seems like the right thing to do for my mate.” Wade squared his shoulders and folded his arms, tipping his chin up so he didn’t come off half as nervous as he really was. It didn’t change his scent of course, the rich cedar rippling with unease and anxiety and maybe even a hint of fear.

“It’s soap.” The pretty wrapping paper fell away and Peter stared down at the molded bar, purple and blue lavender petals pressed into white. “You bought me lavender soap? Why?”

“…cos that’s what you scent like.” Wade’s heart was in his throat watching the Omega peruse his gift. Soap was an intimate gift, meant to be lathered, spread over water slick skin and settled as perfume into secret, lovely places. It was so easily used alone or hopefully used between mates as they shared baths.

It was intimate and personal and not the sort of thing a more modern Omega like Peter would probably care for. Alphas in his day probably gave their mates more lavish gifts, or maybe courting wasn’t a real thing anymore but it was what Wade had to offer and he could only hope— “

Peter brought the soap to his nose and inhaled, closing his eyes as the drowsy sweet smell filled his senses. “This is what I scent like?”

“Better.” Wade corrected “You scent better, Pete. Lavender and honeysuckle and it’s gorgeous. I—I thought you’d like it. Guess I’m doin’ it backwards though, tryna court you after we live together and everyone knows you’re mine.”

Peter sucked in a harsh breath and Wade hesitated. “Been a real long time since I used that word, but it— it’s alright, right? It’s—”

“Don’t get extra blankets tonight.”

“…what?”

“Don’t get extra blankets tonight.” Peter re folded the soap into the paper with trembling fingers, but his voice was steady, scent flush and eager. “I know we said we wouldn’t rush but you promised whatever we decided was enough would be enough and I—” a slow inhale. “—I don’t think I can sleep away from you tonight. Don’t get extra blankets.”

“I don’t think I can sleep away from you tonight either.” Wade’s stomach tightened with anticipation. “No extra blankets.”
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

This is basically 8000 words of fluff and like, 250 words of plot. Lots of romance and smooching and a tiny bit of plot.

Oh and also, there’s a small reference to “special brownies”? I can’t imagine anyone cares about that, but it’s there anyway!

Enjoy!

The water in the hotel showers was either scalding hot or unbearably frigid and there didn’t seem to be an in between. Peter was so relieved to be getting a proper shower after weeks of only wiping down, that he settled on scalding and jumped in anyway.

“Sonofabitch!” the Omega yelped and darted right back out of the spray, huddling close to the flimsy dividing curtain and covering his more sensitive spots from the lava like drops. “Okay. Super hot water was a bad choice.”

“Pete?” Wade’s voice sounded even deeper in the large room, rolling off the tile floors and echoing through the steam. “Everything alright?”

“Uh yep.” Peter hadn’t given any thought to the rather locker room style shower set up in the hotel basement when he first came down, but now that Wade was sharing the space, suddenly the entire area seemed uncomfortably open.

The dividing walls between showers were flimsy at best, high enough to avoid potential awkward eye contact with the person showering just next door, but ending rather abruptly at knee height. The door was nothing more than a curtain and Peter inched away from the material and back towards the water as Wade’s footsteps came down the corridor towards his stall.

“Pete? You okay?”

“Um…”

I’m naked in a giant locker room with an Alpha.

Oh no.

Nope, being naked in the showers wasn’t actually the problem.

The problem was that Peter was supposed to soap up naked in the same room that Wade was soaping up naked. He was supposed to wash himself while knowing Wade was washing himself and manage not to think too hard about… naked things… because his scent would give it away and then the Alpha would get all fangy and probably growl and then— oh Lord and then all their conversations about waiting and things being enough would go right out the window.

“Um, everything’s fine.” Peter’s voice went high pitched, thready and nervous. “And hey, I don’t want to be weird about this but would it be okay if you took your shower on the– the other side of
“Damn it.

“t’s a big room? Maybe you–” get naked. “–shower over there? I just– I need you to be maybe give me little bit of spa–ACE! WADE!” Peter shrieked when the Alpha reached into the shower and yanked him right out into the open.

“Oh my god what are you–” he stopped abruptly when he realized Wade had his head turned away completely, eyes shut tight. “Wade? What are you doing?”

“Grab your soap and clothes and come on.” Wade didn’t so much as look in Peter’s direction as he towed him down the corridor and around to a side area the Omega hadn’t noticed before. “Don’t slip right here, the floor gets rough.”

“What’s this?” Peter sidestepped the aforementioned rough area, and peered curiously around the Alpha. There was a single shower built into the corner, blocked from anyone else’s view by a high wall and a door that could be barred. “Why is this here?”

“Hotel has one specifically for Omegas travelling alone or anyone who is particularly vulnerable.” the Alpha pulled several towels from a nearby cabinet and handed one behind for Peter to wrap around his waist. “Haven brings in all types, you know? Sometimes a shower room that locks is better for everyone.”

“Oh.”

“Figured this way you can take your time and get good and clean, wash that hair a hundred times if you want.” Wade turned the water on in the private shower and lay the towels down on a low bench. “The door locks so you don’t have to worry about anyone barging in, or the showers getting too crowded with Alphas and making you uncomfortable. Now hurry up and get in there so I can get to my own shower.”

It was entirely charming the way Wade was making such a point to not even risk a glance even though Peter’s towel more than covered him. The Alpha was probably giving himself a headache keeping his eyes scrunched so tight and Peter– god, Peter could have loved him for it.

So instead of running into the shower stall and locking the door, and instead of taking the opportunity for the space he’d been so worried about just a moment previous, Peter tightened the towel around his waist and stepped in to hug his– his mate tight from behind. “Thank you for this.”

“It’s no problem, Pete.” Wade linked their fingers and tipped his head back until it rested against Peter’s hair. “Gotta tell ya though, sure can’t wait to smell that new soap on you. Been thinkin’ bout it all day.”

“I’m tempted to use all of it.” Peter’s lips moved over Wade’s rough skin as he spoke, his breath puffing warm on the Alpha’s neck. “But I want to keep some so I can wash up at home, too.”

“Use it.” Wade lifted their hands and mouthered a kiss to Peter’s knuckles, turned them over and kissed Peter’s palm as well. “I’ll buy you more sweetheart, hell I’ll buy you every piece Mr. Lee’s got in stock. M’just glad you like it. I know it’s not a real big gift but–”

Wade went quiet when Peter came around to face him, and when Peter saw the Alpha’s eyes still
shut, he laughed and stood up on his toes to lay a very soft, very sweet kiss on Wade’s cheek. “Thank you.”

Wade started to answer, but Peter cut in with an amused, “You can open your eyes, you know. The towel covers everything important.”

“We said enough, Pete.” Wade opened his eyes but kept his head leaned back so he was staring at the ceiling. “And if I see you half naked, even if it’s the unimportant half, enough is gonna be— it’s gonna be a distant memory. Seeing you in a towel is gonna break me. They’ll have to come pick my pieces up from the floor, you wanna explain to the owner why you left a grown man in pieces in the showers?”

“No, I guess that would be a pretty awkward conversation.” Peter’s grin was obvious in his words. “I better get in there before your neck starts hurting, huh? The ceiling can’t be that interesting, definitely not worth being sore tomorrow anyway.”

“I’d appreciate the hell outta that. Yep.”

“Okay.” the Omega left another nearly chaste kiss on Wade’s cheek. “See you soon, Alpha.”

“God dammit.” Wade’s big hands grasped suddenly at Peter’s bare waist, calloused fingers digging bruises into his skin and the Omega gasped when Wade bent to leave first hungry kisses and then sharp nips at his throat. “Pete. Please always call me Alpha. I know you’ve said it before but every time it about kills me. Sure feels like I’ve waited a whole lifetime to hear that from you, don’t ever stop.”

“Alpha.” Peter let his head fall back and purred, low and nearly wanton when he felt his mate’s tongue over his pulse. “Mmmm, I know the feeling. Didn’t even know I was waiting to hear you call me Omega, but it’s incredible.”

“I can’t wait to hold you tonight.” True to his word, Wade kept his eyes shut tight but he didn’t pull away yet. He couldn’t quite convince himself to let go of Peter, not when the Omega was panting into his ear and cuddling close. “Pete, Omega. I can’t wait.”

“I can’t wait either.” Cheeks red and heart pounding, Peter inched away before he did something reckless like kiss the hell outta his Alpha. “I’ll see you soon.”

“See you soon.” Wade didn’t open his eyes until the shower door had closed and locked, and then they opened hazy, needy red.

“Mate.”

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Peter stayed in the showers long after Wade had come by and rapped at the door to let him know he was heading upstairs again. The water was still almost too hot, but Peter lingered under the spray for as long as he could stand it, unwilling to give up the luxury of a private shower before he absolutely had to.

The lavender soap foamed up beautifully in his hands and Peter spent an inordinate amount of time smoothing the fragrant bubbles over every inch of skin, between his toes and clear up his legs, up under his arms and behind his ears and then back down again. The very last bit of shampoo sudsed up into his hair and while it soaked, Peter rummaged through his toiletry bag for finger nail clippers and the one disposable razor he’d packed.
Omegas didn’t have much body hair in general, but Peter still smoothed out his chin and side burns and tidied the sparse curls between his thighs. They’d said enough and agreed neither he nor Wade was ready for sex but it still felt nice to be ready, especially since this was most likely the last chance for a proper shower for a while.

Peter was contemplating another run down with the lavender soap– and wondering just how expensive it had been, if Wade really would buy him more– when another couple came down into the showers talking and laughing together, so he turned off the water and began drying off just in case the pair wanted to share the private stall.

Peter smiled when he heard the gentle teasing and obviously loving remarks, a squeal from the Omega when their Alpha turned on the water too quickly, and the Alpha’s surprised yelp when their partner retaliated with what sounded like the snap of a towel.

The laughter quieted into hums and then a soft moan, and Peter’s eyes widened when he realized the couple was getting rather amorous right there in the public showers.

Oh no. No no no, he couldn’t stand in here and listen to that and then go upstairs and keep a straight face around Wade. Absolutely impossible.

Peter was contemplating how to turn the water off and sneak away without the mated pair realizing someone had been eavesdropping, when the Omega purred towards their mate, “I’m yours, my Alpha. I’m yours and you’re mine.”

“That’s right, you’re mine.” the Alpha nearly snarled the words and Peter jumped in surprise. “You’re mine Omega, you’re mine and I’m yours.”

Then came more noises, the sort of noises Peter couldn’t quite deal with, so he ran a towel haphazardly through his hair, hurried into his sleep clothes and gathered up his things before all but bolting from the private stall and through the main room, heading for the stairs with eyes turned firmly forward lest he see anything unfortunate.

“Hey sweetheart.” Wade looked up with a ready smile when Peter finally made it to the room and locked the door behind him. “Thought you drowned in there.”

“Just about.” Peter grinned at the Alpha and went to put his toiletries away. “I had to get like six months worth of showering in. Everybody says you only get down here twice a year, so will it be summer before I get to wash my hair again?”

“We could just shave you bald.” Wade ran a hand over his own bare scalp. “No muss, no fuss, no worries about needing to come to town for showers.”

“You’re gorgeous without hair.” Peter dragged his fingers through the thick mess until it was standing up in spikes all across his head. “However, all my good looks are tied up in these heavenly locks, so if I shave it, you won’t want to sleep next to me anymore.”

“I highly doubt that.” the Alpha thumped his head back against the bed frame and watched with no small amount of adoration as Peter brushed his teeth at the basin and worked a comb through his hair to ease the tangles. “About all your good looks being in your hair or about me wanting to sleep next to you.”

Peter scrunched his nose at Wade through the mirror and went back to getting ready for the night. “Can I ask you something?”

“Yep.” Wade popped the ‘p’ of the word, not bothering to look away from the line of Peter’s legs
in the slim fit sleep pants. “What do you want to know, Pete?”

“When I was in the shower—” the Alpha’s scent jolted with interest and Peter was quick to add, “Easy does it, Alpha. This won’t be about be washing or anything else remotely related to that sort of thing.”

“You’re crushing my dreams, Omega.” A faux petulant pout, but Wade still sat up straighter in the bed so he could listen. “What’s on your mind?”

“When I was in the shower.” Peter started again. “A couple came in and I heard the Omega say ‘I’m yours and you’re mine’ and the Alpha got all growly and said ‘you’re mine’ all vicious before saying ‘and I’m yours.’”

“…okay?”

“So why did they say that?” he wanted to know. “Is that a thing in this timeline? Because we don’t say things like that in my timeline. Not ever. An Omega being super verbally submissive in public and an Alpha getting loud and possessive— I mean, that makes everyone uncomfortable. We just say I love you when it gets serious enough for the Omega to play at submissive and even then, I don’t know any Alpha that snarls at their mate unless it’s in heat.”

“You don’t like hearing an Alpha get snarly, Pete?”

“I dunno.” Peter furrowed his brow. “I don’t mind when you growl at me, but you’ve never spoken to me the way that Alpha spoke to the Omega. And I don’t think um—”

Wade raised his eyebrows and waited, and Peter finished in a quiet tone, “When we get to that point, I would want to say I love you. Would you not say that?”

When we get to that point.

It was a question in his mate’s voice, but Peter wasn’t actually asking. There was only clear intent and the expectation that one day they would be in love, they would be sharing those words together. Peter was saying out loud what Wade already knew in his soul and the reflection of his own intentions made Wade want to pound at his chest and roar.

Yes his mate knew they would love each other, no questions, no uncertainty, no wondering.

Peter clenched his fists at his side when Wade’s cedar and licorice scent roiled swollen with hunger and possessiveness before softening and sweetening to contentment, and when Wade held out his hand and curled his fingers coaxingly, Peter went right to the bed, right to his Alpha.

“C’mere.” Wade rumbled. “C’mere, baby boy right up here with me.”

Peter let himself be pulled up to the bed and then into the Alpha’s lap and settled with knees on either side of Wade’s waist, arms looped loosely around his neck and their foreheads pushed together. The Omega exhaled noisily when Wade rucked up the back of his shirt and flattened a warm palm just over the dimples at the curve of his rear, and bowed his back into the welcome touch with a sigh.

“C’mere, c’mere, c’mere.” The Alpha spread his other hand high on Peter’s leg and swept his thumb into the hip crease, rubbed idle circles at the Omega’s back and slid his fingers beneath the waistband of the thin sleep pants to feel more of his mate. “This okay? Enough?”

“It’s wonderful.” Peter sank lower onto Wade’s lap, helpless against the intoxicating feel of his
mate surrounding him, grounding him with just a few touches. “Fuckin’ wonderful.”

“Language.” Wade chuckled into the Omega’s ear, his lips rough on the sensitive skin. “The mouth on you, baby boy.”

“Now it just seems like you’re trying to set me up for a dirty joke.” Peter retorted, and this time the bed shook with the force of their laughter together. “Can’t put me on your lap and then talk about my mouth.”

“Yeah, I dunno what I was thinking.” Wade grinned and Peter grinned right back. “Too easy, hm? Of course you’d get sassy about it.”

“It’s what I do best.” Peter admitted. “Now tell me what that phrase means.”

“Alright.” Wade shifted forward and scraped his fangs lightly, so lightly, over Peter’s cheek and the Omega went very still on top of him. “That phrase, Pete. It’s not what people say instead of I love you. It’s bigger than I love you.”

“What do you mean?” Peter turned his face into more, shivering over another pass of the dangerous points. “How is it bigger than ‘I love you’?”

“It’s… it’s submission from the Omega, Pete.” The Alpha’s voice went a little hoarse. “Full on submission in words and usually in an action as well. First submission and then admitting to wanting the Alpha as their own. And then from the Alpha, it’s possessive and protection—” his hands tightened on Peter’s frame. “—claiming the Omega as theirs, and then an admission that they belong to the Omega as well. *I’m yours and you’re mine.* It’s more than words.”

“More than words.” Peter echoed and Wade nodded.

“It’s a promise between mates, giving all of yourself to the other and then taking everything they are as your own. When you have all of someone and they have all of you, it means you have every bit of each other and together, it’s something new.”

Peter’s lips parted in a quiet ‘oh’ and Wade tucked his forehead into the Omega’s shoulder, waiting for the inevitable question.

“…does the Omega always say it first?”

“Always.”

“Why?”

“Because.” The Alpha’s throat worked as he swallowed. “Because that way the Omega is offering their submission is a gift. It’s a gift Pete. They choose to submit and then they choose an Alpha to share it with. Biology and scent matching and all that aside, being trusted enough that an Omega is willing to be their most vulnerable with you is *humbling*. And then to have that same Omega claim you as their own? Incredible. What else is the Alpha to do besides accept the gift and swear their loyalty. ‘I’m yours and you’re mine. You’re mine and I’m yours. That’s what it means. Pure submission and complete trust.”

“You and your first mate.” Peter whispered. “Did you say it with her?”

“No.” A quick, negative shake of the Alpha’s head. “No, Vanessa and I never did. She was an Alpha and things were different between us. Not.. not less. Just different.”
“This is all new for you?” Peter was still whispering. “Being with an Omega.”

“It’s all new for me.” Wade confirmed. “And every single minute of being with you is incredible. I don’t even have words for it, Pete.”

“It’s more than I love you.” A ribbon of awe curled through the Omega’s honeysuckle scent. “More than words– I had no idea. No idea something so old fashioned could be so wonderful, thank you for explaining it to me. It’s absolutely beautiful.”

“You’re beautiful, sweetheart.” Wade touched their noses together. “You’re beautiful.”

It was all to easy to fall into the bed together, Wade snuggling Peter down off his lap and into the blankets, rolling the Omega over and spooning up tight to his back. Sleep clothes made for thin barriers and Peter made a shocked sort of sound when he could feel the Alpha’s heat pressed against him from shoulders to toes, Wade heavy and thick against his rear, comforting and solid everywhere else.

“Smell good, Omega.” Wade tucked his nose to the spot just behind Peter’s ear and breathed in the drowsy lavender perfume. His mind immediately went to all the other places the scent would be lingering, the secret hidden areas only a mate would know to discover and explore. “Did you use all the soap?”

“Almost.” Peter relaxed into the pillows and reached behind to rest his hand on Wade’s leg, kneading small patterns into the solid muscle. “Will you buy me more?”

“I’ll buy you all of it.” the Alpha dropped a kiss at Peter’s cheek then one down at the curve where neck met shoulder, curved fangs pricking without breaking skin, just a hint and gone so Peter would shiver and melt further into him. “Sleep, baby boy. I’ve got you.”

Too long a day combined with the heady, sleepy fragrance of lavender had Peter dropping off to sleep almost immediately, safe and warm tucked in at his mate’s chest. Wade stayed awake for a while longer though, loathe to fall asleep too quickly and miss out on the wonder that was their first night sleeping together.

The moonlight came through the windows and lit silver on Peter’s freckles, turned pink lips dusky red and cast shadows over the Omega’s long lashes. Wade could have stared at his mate forever, memorizing the rise and fall of each breath and the minute expressions flickering across Peter’s face as dreams took him further into slumber.

He didn’t weigh hardly anything at all against Wade’s bulk, the Omega’s features nearly delicate in contrast to Wade’s more defined frame. Peter’s fingers were fine boned and slim, meant for reading and writing not chopping wood or dealing with animals and when Wade reached to press at the fingertips, he frowned when he felt calluses forming where there had been none before.

“You deserve a softer life, my mate.” he whispered to the quiet room, and predictably adorably, Peter’s nose wrinkled as if he’d heard and disagreed even in sleep. “I hate every reminder that you aren’t supposed to be here with me.”

Their time was limited, short, regardless of Peter’s teasing about not being able to take a shower till next summer, despite the way they talked about planting more vegetables in the spring, no matter that Wade had purchased a few small things for his Omega to set aside as presents for the holidays.

The reality was Cable could return tomorrow, next week or next month, hell he could already have
returned to Haven and was stomping around looking for Peter right that moment.

Their time was limited and it broke Wade’s heart, so he kept his eyes open for as long as he could and watched Peter long into the night, mouthing silent adoration into his Omega’s skin and tucking close to breathe in the scent that completed his own.

*Don’t leave me yet, my mate.*

**********

Morning came before Wade was ready, and he didn’t realize he had fallen asleep until he was jolting awake in time to feel Peter stretch and arch against him, that pert perfect rear snuggling to his hips before Peter relaxed again and fell back onto the bed with a sleepy huff.

The Alpha checked and then checked again to be sure Peter was still asleep, then eased regretfully from the bed and from the room to hurry down the hall to the bathrooms. There was a ‘bathroom’ in the hotel room too, but it wasn’t much more than a bucket behind a privacy screen and hell even the cabin outhouse had better privacy than that. There were better ways for Peter to wake up after their first night together than to the sound of Wade *relieving* himself.

The facilities down the hall it was.

Wade made quick work of his needs, splashed some water up on his face and swished through his mouth and hurried out of the bathroom and down the hall to get back to his mate–

–then turned the corner and ran smack into his Omega.

“*Ooph.*” Peter bounced off Wade’s chest and would have hit the floor had the Alpha not reached out and snatched him real quick. “Oh hey look at you.”

The lopsided grin the Omega sent Wade’s way was so hilariously tired, Wade nearly dropped him again when he started to laugh.

“Not real nice to laugh at me when m’too tired to be sassy.” Peter complained over a jaw cracking yawn. “Fuckin’ rude.”

“Sorry Pete, but you’re sorta–”

Whatever Wade was going to say, whatever teasing or maybe even sarcastic quip he was going to toss back fell by the wayside when Peter swayed close and lay an enthusiastic, if not sleepy, kiss on his lips. “MmmgoodmorningAlpha.” he muttered. “Gotta bathroom then back to bed.”

Wade was too stunned to do much more than *stand* there, and he was still standing there when Peter made a reappearance a few moments later. “Hey uh sweetheart–”

“Alpha.Mmmlergh.Coffee.” Another kiss just as unexpected as the first, and Peter disappeared into their hotel room without another word, leaving his Alpha shell shocked in the hallway.


It was a miracle he made it down to the kitchen without falling right down the stairs, and more than one Alpha clapped Wade on the back and muttered something understanding about, “Nothing like a night with your mate to make an Alpha half stupid, huh?” and Wade could only nod in agreement.
Not that he and Peter had spent the sort of night together the other Alpha’s assumed, and not that Peter’s kiss had been anything other than most likely accidental and entirely innocent but Wade was still goofy and a little bit stupid as he gathered up coffee cups.

His mate was going to be the death of him, even if it was death by stairs because Wade couldn’t get the feel of Peter’s lips off his own long enough to concentrate.

By the time the Alpha made it back upstairs with their coffee, Peter had rolled onto Wade’s side of the bed, not asleep again but still languid and lazy as he bundled into the warm spot Wade had left behind, hugging one of the pillows tight and sighing loudly.

“Comfy?” Wade asked, and had to bite back a grin when Peter popped up from the blankets with wide eyes and hilariously rumpled hair. “It’s alright, Omega. Lay back down. I didn’t mean to startle you.”

“No, I’m awake.” Peter was not awake, but he made grabby hands for the coffee anyway and clutched the cup close. “Sorry, do you want your spot back?”

“I dunno.” The Alpha’s scent twisted affectionate as he took a sip of his own coffee. “You sure look sweet trying to stay warm on my side of the bed.”

“Well-l-l-l.” Peter drew his knees up to his chest and peeked at Wade over the rim of his cup. “If you came here and sat with me again, I wouldn’t have to try to stay warm, would I?”

“You want me to come sit with you, Omega?” It shouldn’t have felt like such a loaded question, not after they’d spent the night together but Peter had kissed the Alpha this morning without even hesitating and suddenly the question meant everything.

Peter had submitted to Wade without thought when they’d spent a moment together before heading to Haven, going still and trusting with the Alpha’s fangs at his throat. He’d allowed Wade to introduce him as ‘mate’ to anyone who asked, and then purposefully called Wade Alpha even after knowing what weight the word carried. They’d talked of submission and promises and bonds that were more than words, and then Peter had slept so happily next to him all night long.

They had said enough, had said neither was ready to take that final leap but Wade knew there were a thousand steps between discovering soul mates and completing their bond, a thousand tiny ways to know and learn that had nothing to do with sex or mating, a thousand chances to choose each other that came along so naturally with Pete, the Alpha didn’t even have to think about it.

But he wanted to be sure Peter was thinking about it, wanted to make sure his future mate saw the significance of every step and the direction they were heading so he asked again “You want to me come sit with you, Omega?”

And Peter looked up with the sort of smile Wade wanted to see every morning for the rest of his life and in a reply far too simple for what it did to the Alpha’s heart– “Of course.”

Of course.

Wade climbed back onto the bed and opened his arms for Peter, his entire being washing in happiness when the Omega cuddled close immediately. Peter tucked his toes beneath Wade’s legs and breathed in deep when his Alpha’s scent swelled with pleasure and satisfaction, the cedar and licorice heady enough to make him dizzy.

“What do we have to do today, Alpha?” Peter thought he might have slurred the words but he was too at ease to care. A night spent in his Alpha’s arms had left him loose limbed and yielding this
morning, his entire self floating in the aura of completeness filling the room. He only somewhat remembered leaving the bed to use the restroom, had only a fleeting thought that he’d ran into Wade in the hallway before tumbling back into sheets and pillows that scented of his Alpha, of them.

He felt almost drugged, honestly. Like the time Harry had convinced him to eat one of those special brownies and Peter had thought he’d never get off the couch. Not when the cushions were so comfortable and the blankets were so warm and whatever was on the television was more hilarious than it had ever been before.

That’s how he felt this morning, lax and comfortable and the only thing possibly better then lying next to Wade in bed would be lying skin to skin with his Alpha, limbs tangled and hearts pounding and oh Peter thought he’d very willingly stay wrapped in blankets and near suffocate in the quilts so long they smelled like black licorice.

Funny thing that, Peter had never even liked black licorice before meeting Wade and now…

“Pete? Where’d you go?”

“Peek a boo.” Peter mumbled and Wade chuckled down at him.

“Seriously sweetheart, where’d you go? You’re practically asleep on me again, smiling for no reason at all.” Wade tipped the Omega’s chin up and searched his eyes. “I was saying we need to pick up supplies and then visit Doc Banner and you sorta laughed at me. Everything alright?’”

“Mmm, sorry.” Peter made a valiant effort to sit up straighter even though his fingers clenched almost instinctively in Wade’s shirt to make sure the Alpha didn’t move away at all. “I’m all loopy this morning. Sorta floaty. Keep talking though, I’ll wake up eventually.”

“Nah, keep floatin’ baby.” Wade budged Peter in close again and nosed through his hair with a quiet sigh. “You’re gorgeous like this.”

“You’re gorgeous, Alpha.” came a barely mumbled answer, and Wade held his mate a little closer and kept right on talking, outlining the plan for the rest of the day and marking out a hopeful timeline for when they’d make it back to the camp. He rambled about how pissed off the goat would be that they left her overnight, talked about a few last minute repairs the cabin needed before the winter came down hard onto the mountain, and mentioned buying a new wash and wringing machine so laundry would be easier.

“Did I kiss you this morning?” The Omega interrupted almost twenty minutes later and Wade hesitated before nodding slowly.

“Yeah Pete. You sure did.”

“Oh.” Silence for a moment and then a whisper soft, “Can I kiss you again?”

“Yes.”

Peter huffed a laugh at Wade’s immediate response and struggled to sit up, throwing his leg over Wade’s lap until they were face to face again, forehead to forehead. “You said um– yesterday you said we were doing things backwards since you introduced me as mate before you tried courting me with gifts and that reminded me of something else we were doing backwards.”

“What’s that, sweetheart?” Wade cupped Peter’s face between both his palms, sweeping his thumbs over the high cheekbones and tangling his other fingers in Peter’s hair. “What else are we
“Kissing is supposed to come way before moving in together.” Peter said seriously– or it might have been seriously if he hadn’t practically hummed the words, a loopy smile on his face as lavender and honeysuckle wound like syrup into Wade’s senses. “We’re supposed to kiss before we sleep together and definitely before we say things like ‘meant to be together’. We did it backwards and I think we should fix that.”

Wade could barely breathe as Peter settled firmer onto his lap, hope and elation lightening his hazel eyes. “Omega.”

“I um– I wanted to kiss you last night.” the Omega admitted in a hushed tone. “But then you said that thing about falling to pieces if you had to see me in a towel and I thought a kiss might actually kill you so I figured I’d wait.”

“So you could kill me with a kiss in bed?” Wade dropped one hand down to Peter’s hip to hold him steady, thoroughly enjoying the flush in his mate’s cheeks. Peter was beautiful like this. “Is that what you’re trying to do, Omega?”

“I guess we’ll have to find out.” Peter’s laugh was low and husky, falling into an unsteady sigh when their lips met in a single tentative kiss. Then came another less tentative than the first and when the Alpha urged him forward Peter came back for a third and a fourth and a half dozen more.

The moment was almost innocent, very nearly chaste as they shared soft kisses and gentle touches. Peter explored the lines of scars up his Alpha’s neck and down just beneath the collar of Wade’s shirt. He shivered over the press of blunt fingers at his waist and further along his hip, rocked forward into Wade’s lap and nearly bit his tongue off when the Alpha growled at him and yanked him up tight and the moment was suddenly decidedly less chaste.

“Oh-h-fuck, Alpha.” A full body shudder from the Omega when the next kiss ended with the drag of too sharp fangs at his bottom lip. “Oh my god.”

“This is enough.” Wade was panting as he pulled away, trying to blink the red from his eyes as he went. “Pete this– this is enough.”

“Okay.” Peter tried and failed to keep the disappointment from burning through his scent. “Okay, sorry. Sorry let me just–”

“Stop.” Wade clamped his palm down on Peter’s leg when the Omega tried to leave his lap. “No no listen, sweetheart. Listen.”

“…I’m listening.”

“This is enough.” the Alpha repeated. “I mean whatever we decide, is enough. Last week enough was just acknowledging the match and maybe scenting each other. Last night enough was holding you when you slept. This morning, kissing you is enough. Whatever you want, Pete. Whatever we decide together. It’s always enough.”

Peter blinked at him uncertainly and Wade swallowed hard. “Baby boy, there’s a thousand steps between knowing we are meant to be together and actually being mated. And I don’t care if we hit every single one of those steps along the way or if we skip eight of them to get to something better. I don’t care. However fast or slow we’re moving is– it’s enough. It’s enough for me.”

“A thousand steps.” Peter flattened his hand over Wade’s heart, closing his eyes for a few seconds
as he counted the steady beats. “And whichever one we’re at is enough for you.”

“It’s enough, Pete. I’m happy no matter where we are on that journey.”

“You’re telling me this so I know just kissing is okay.” Peter guessed. “Cos we moved real quick through a lot yesterday.”

“Yes.”

“I’m not ready for more than kissing,” the Omega admitted and Wade reached up to cover Peter’s hand in a comforting squeeze. “But I feel like I’ll crawl outta my skin if I can’t be with you right now. I need you close, need you holding me. And I dunno if it’s cos we slept together last night or what, but I want to kiss you. Right now. A lot.”

“Oh no.” Wade managed a teasing smile. “My mate wants to—mmmph!” he startled when Peter lunged forward and crushed their mouths together, the Omega not even pausing before shoving his hands beneath Wade’s shirt and audibly groaning over the twitch of muscle and feel of heated skin.

“Say it again.” Peter wasn’t so much floating now as he was burning, rocketed back to his senses by the all too casual way Wade had called him ‘mate’. “Say it again, Alpha. Again.”

“Mate.” Wade rumbled and Peter tossed his head back and moaned. “Mate.”

“Yes.”

Their next kiss went on and on and on until both Alpha and Omega were desperate for air and both unwilling to pull away. Peter fit perfectly on Wade’s lap, his long legs hugging the Alpha tight on either side so he could keep his mate right where he needed him. What started out innocent quickly moved towards needy and Peter didn’t bother trying to keep quiet, not when every one of one his sighs was echoed by the Alpha, every little moan returned as a snarl until Peter was drowning in the rush of arousal from his Alpha.

“Alpha!” Peter keened over the cut of fangs at his lip and Wade’s growl shook through his core. “Oh my god please—” A rough groan from the Alpha as Wade cleaned the spot of blood from Peter’s mouth and then thrust his tongue deep into willing warmth and Peter couldn’t do much more than open up to his Alpha and whimper for more.

“I’ve got you.” Wade raked his fingers down Peter’s back, palmed over that all too tempting rear and then spread his hand wide to hold as much of his Omega as he could, steady at Peter’s hip so they could rock and grind into each other. “Right here baby boy, come on.”

The Omega’s entire body lit up with sparks when he could feel how bad Wade wanted him, when the thick Alpha cock throbbed at his core. He spread his knees and ground down onto his mate, shoved his tongue deep into Wade’s mouth and licked over his Alpha’s fangs, ripped his nails down Wade’s chest and tossed his head back nearly shouted at a jolt of pleasure so sharp it was almost painful when Wade shifted just right and their bodies slotted together.

The air was brittle, twisting heated and destructive and Peter’s vision went hazy, his heart pounding out of control as he was suddenly hot, he was too, too hot. He was shattering apart beneath his Alpha but it was almost frightening, his near desperate arousal choked off by a ripple of too much and too sudden and no no no they’d said enough but this wasn’t enough, this was—

“Oh!” Peter gasped out loud when Wade jerked up in the bed and flipped them over in one quick motion. He oop hed when he hit the bed but it turned into a moan when the Alpha pushed his knees
open and crowded close between his legs, Wade settled hard and heavy against Peter’s center.

“Stay with me.” Wade’s deep voice cut through the fog like a light, snapping Peter back into too sharp focus. “Pete. Omega. My mate, settle.”

The Alpha grabbed both Peter’s wrists in one big hand and shoved his hands up towards the edge of the bed, pulling the Omega up into a stretch that forced him to breathe and Peter’s eyes flew open wide.

“Settle.” Came the repeat command and Peter took in another shaky breath, only enough to whimper, “Please. Please…”

“I’ve got you.” Wade pinned Peter to the bed with his body and the moment they fit back together Peter went immediately, almost alarmingly still. “Settle.”

“This is enough, right there.” Peter’s eyes fell closed, his grip at Wade’s hands loosening and knees splaying lax. “Oh my god, don’t– don’t move. Wade, Alpha, don’t move. This is enough, this is– this–”

“I’m here.” Wade budged closer, tighter and Peter murmured something slurred and sweet. “Ah fuck, baby boy, I’m here. I’ve got you. This is–” he swallowed when the Omega tugged him down and nuzzled at his neck, willed away the flash of still lingering arousal because now was not the time. “I’m here. You’re right. This is enough.”

It was enough.

Wade knew what this was, what had been buzzing beneath Peter’s skin the last few days since they’d put words to their bond and had only gotten worse after spending the night together. He should have seen it when Peter had such a hard time pulling himself from the hazy afterglow of being held for so long, and he should have seen it when the afterglow sparked too hot too quickly.

But now Wade recognized it, remembered it from when his and Vanessa’s bond was new and even now, even though it was a second time around and Wade thought he knew what to expect, the truth of it all still took the Alpha’s breath away.

This was their bodies yearning, it was their souls starving, it was the bond that had sparked so unexpectedly begging to be completed.

This was the Omega asking to be held and covered and adored, the Alpha anxious to see his mate spread out and submitting. It was Peter needing to be needed and Wade desperate to be called Alpha, both of them silently begging to be called yours because even though neither of them were ready to take that last step, their biologies and hearts and minds clamored to be together.

But now with Wade covering Peter from shoulder to toe, foreheads together and mouths still passing in soft touches, hands running slow circles and fingers exploring lazy paths over clothes, now Peter could settle, now they could each breathe and all they wanted to breathe was each other and it was enough.

“…Alpha.” Soft and achingly sweet, and winding through Wade’s soul like balm soothing a hurt he’d thought healed a lifetime ago. “No words. Just– this is enough. Is that okay?”

“Yeah, Pete.” Wade lingered over another kiss, grateful when his mate’s scent lifted sweet again, pure and settled instead of anxious and jittery. Peter was calm again, their need tempered by just being close. “No words. That’s okay. We don’t need words, not when it’s like this.”
“Yeah.” Peter nodded and turned his head so Wade could mouth at his bonding spot, the painful empty inside him calming and easing away in a wash of contentment. “Don’t need words.”

And after another moment in a self conscious whisper, “I’m sorry I started all this kissing and got us all wound up just to— to you know. Pump the brakes. We were having a good morning and I went and ruined it. I’m sorry.”

“I’m not.” Wade let his fangs drag over Peter’s neck and inhaled deep of potent honeysuckle and the sweetest, most drugging lavender he had ever scented in his life. “You didn’t ruin anything, and I’m not sorry. I could never be sorry about any of this.”

“…does this mean we can kiss again?” Tentatively, almost embarrassed. “If I promise not to get carried away?”

“Pete.” Wade chuckled and nuzzled at his sweet mate. “Omega. You’re not the only one carried away.”

“No?”

“Of course not.” he bumped their noses together and crooned quietly until Peter finally smiled. “We’ll figure it out, sweetheart. Don’t worry about it. You could get me wound up and snarly every day and then need to stop and it’s fine. We’re fine. We’ll figure it out.”

“Can you feel me, Alpha?” Peter dug his fingers into Wade’s bonding spot and shivered when the Alpha rumbled low and content at him. “Seems like you’re right here in my heart, can you feel me like I feel you?”

“Yeah, baby boy.” Wade wrapped both arms around Peter and hugged his mate up close. “Yeah, I feel you.”

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“Have you heard from Cable?” Wade stood at the window of Doc Banner’s office and watched until Peter ducked into Mr. Lee’s shop, then let the curtain fall and turned back to the doctor. “When was the last time he was around?”

“I haven’t seen Cable in a few months.” Bruce washed his hands, waved his patient out the door and then pinned Wade with a look. “But you know he’s gonna come looking for that Omega, so I’m expecting him any day now.”

“Yeah.” Wade’s eyes flashed red in annoyance. “Yeah, I’m aware.”

“Do you know what you’re doing, Wade?” Bruce took his glasses off and rubbed at his eyes. “Bonding with an Omega that isn’t from your timeline isn’t— this can’t end well, you have to realize that.”

“We aren’t bonded yet.”

“Bullshit.” Bruce snorted and Wade cracked a smile at the doctor. “Just cos there’s no bite on either of your necks doesn’t mean you aren’t bonded. Being mated just means you finally get to see each other naked, bonded is way more than that and you damn well know it.”

“…yeah.” the Alpha’s smile grew a little more. “Yeah, I know it.”
“You’re being a fucking idiot.” Bruce informed him. “But you know that already. So tell me how happy he makes you.”

“Shit, Bruce.” Wade’s smile stretched to a grin that was damn near ridiculous. “Peter’s incredible.”

“Tell me about him.” Bruce went to brew a cup of tea and motioned for Wade to take a seat at the table as well. “When is he from?”

“About a hundred and fifty years from now.” Wade nodded when Bruce whistled. “Not too far from your timeline, I guess. He complains about not having phones or central heat but he works hard around the cabin. Did all our laundry one day by hand and his fingers are still sorta raw from the soap. Tries to chop wood, takes care of the animals…”

“He’s fit right in.” Bruce finished. “I’m sure you know that the transition has been easier because he’s so calm around you, right? An Omega that wasn’t your scent match would be much more emotional, panicky, and probably too overwhelmed by everything to even get out of bed most days.”

“I think Pete would be this amazing whether we are mates or not.” Wade countered and Bruce snorted, “Spoken like a man with a mate. What else?”

“He uh–” Wade cleared his throat. “He gets spacey for me real easy, you know? Floats for me, goes all soft and sweet. All I gotta do is hold him for a while and he’s pretty much gone. We spent the night together last night and it took him a good hour this morning to come out of it. It’s gorgeous.”

“I remember how that can be.” Bruce said quietly. “I was an Alpha once, a long time ago. There isn’t anything prettier than your mate going down all soft like that. I remember.”

“We’re waiting to mate.” The Alpha admitted next and Bruce nodded in apparent understanding. “When Pete is from they don’t scent match or anything, so it wasn’t normal for him to match and then bond right away. We’ve been working at it. Only been a few weeks–”

“But it feels like years, right?” Bruce offered. “Cos it makes perfect sense in this world to scent match and be mated by sundown. Can’t imagine how hard it is for you to wait, especially knowing you don’t have much time together.”

“It’s easy to wait when Pete needs to wait.” Wade shook his head. “And I– I mean it’s been a long time since Vanessa but sometimes I think I need to wait more than my Omega does. And yeah, we don’t have much time together and I know that’s why it feels more urgent. Eating me up inside knowing I’ll have to say goodbye to him someday before I’m ready.”

“We’re not ever ready to say goodbye to our mates.” Bruce poured tea for himself and the Alpha. “And I don’t want to be the one to tell you, but take it from someone who knows the consequences of being out of their natural timeline– the sooner Cable comes back, the better. I can’t say for sure how Peter will be affected since he’s fully human and I’m obviously not, but be careful with him anyway. Don’t let him get hurt, don’t let him get sick or over tired– he won’t recover like you or I would. Just be careful. I know you hate the thought of losing him, but you’d hate it more if you lost him to an accident or something.”

“I’m not going to let anything happen to my mate.” Wade said stubbornly, and then softer, “Do you miss it? Do you miss your world?”
“No.” Bruce met the Alpha’s gaze easily, nothing but honesty in his dark eyes. “No I sure don’t.”

“Hi.” Peter looked up with a smile when Wade climbed up into the wagon next to him. “How was your visit with Doctor—”

Wade cupped his mate’s jaw and leaned in to press a tender kiss to Peter’s mouth, lingering over the moment until Peter sighed and melted into him, swaying forward to kiss the Alpha right back and opening obediently when Wade’s tongue swept the seam of his lips.

“Mmm, Alpha.” Peter crooned and Wade rumbled in response, gathering Peter up into his lap and cuddling him close. “What’s this for?”

“My mate.” Wade budged his nose to the soft spot behind Peter’s ear, left a sharp nip on the Omega’s lobe. “I’m ready to take you home.”

“Well that’s good cos I’m ready to go home.” A month ago Peter would have balked away from an Alpha publicly claiming with his words, he would have pushed Harry or Johnny away if they got clingy and probably would have outright growled at Gwen if she messed with his hair half this much.

But Wade was his Alpha and Peter arched his back and purred under the endearment of ‘mate’, curled closer so Wade would keep scenting at him and tipped his head back into the fingers at his hair so Wade wouldn’t let go quite yet.

His Alpha.

Wade left one last kiss on Peter’s forehead before picking up the reins and calling to Bea and Arthur to head out, and the Omega snuggled close as they left Haven behind and climbed the mountain towards the cabin.

“Are you happy with me, Pete?” Wade asked at the river crossing, and as Peter jumped down to take hold of Bea’s bridle and help Wade walk the team through, he didn’t even hesitate to reply—

“Of course I’m happy with you, Alpha.”

And on the other side of the river after Peter had exclaimed over how wonderful both the horses were for making it through the water, the Omega added, “This is where I’m meant to be, right?”

“…Right.”

“Then of course I’m happy.” Peter patted at Arthur’s nose one more time and sent his mate a smile. “Let’s go home.”
Wade laughed for at least ten minutes over Peter’s expression when the Omega wondered aloud where they were going to store all the new supplies, and Wade simply opened the door to the lean to and motioned to all the space inside.

“You don’t have to laugh at me.” Peter said frostily, and the obnoxious Alpha only laughed harder. “How was I supposed to know you had a storage room?”

“Pete, you’ve spent weeks in the cabin now.” Wade stacked two fifty pound bags of rice against the far wall of the lean to, and followed with several bags of beans as well. “I can excuse you not knowing about the root cellar but how did you not know this was a door over here? You never once saw me go into the cellar for coffee, where did you think I kept it all?”

“I don’t care where my coffee comes from so long as it’s hot in the morning.” Peter sniffed and his sassiness set Wade off all over again. “In my defense! In my defense! I didn’t know old timey cabins came with extra rooms!”

“Old timey cabins?” Flour and sugar, coffee and cornmeal, salt and dried fruit all went into the lean to, and Wade dusted off his hands one he was finished, leveling his Omega with a look. “What are you trying to say, Pete?”

“That all the good historical romances have one bed, in a one room cabin and never once in between the sex does it talk about lean tos or root cellars!” Peter retorted, and Wade shot right back–

“Hey, if you learn all your history through sexy books, that’s your fault.” And then with a more than curious expression, “How much time do you spend reading sexy books, Pete?”

“Nope.” Peter wagged his finger at the Alpha. “Nope, you don’t get to ask that after you cackled at me for not knowing you have an extra big pantry. No way. I’m going to go get the blankets out of the wagon. You’ll need them for when you sleep on the floor again tonight.”

“Hey.” Wade snagged Peter around the waist and dragged the Omega back up to his body, covering Peter’s half hearted protest with a long kiss. “I’m not sleeping without you tonight. If I gotta sleep on the floor, stack those blankets high cos you’ll need to be comfortable too.”

“You’re not sleeping without me?” Peter echoed, lingering close enough for their lips to brush as he spoke. “Well I don’t want to sleep on the floor, so how’s that going to work?”

“You’ll have to get over being a brat and let me sleep in the bed.” Wade decided and damn it Peter didn’t want to giggle but his Alpha was absolutely ridiculous.

“Now why would I let you sleep in bed with me when you’re calling me a brat?”

“M’serious Pete.” Wade was suddenly done laughing, his palm warm at the back of Peter’s neck as he ran circles over his mate’s bonding spot. “I’m done sleeping without you, alright? Enough for me is getting to hold you every night and kiss you good morning. I need to know you’re safe in my arms, need to see that smile right when the sun comes up. That’s enough for me, is it enough for you?”

All of Peter’s breath left his body in a whoosh, the Omega stunned by the show of vulnerability from Wade. Of course they were honest with each other, and their stay at the hotel had led to some
amazing revelations, but all that seemed to pale in light of the conviction in Wade’s eyes, the way there wasn’t a hint of playful anywhere in his Alpha’s expression.

“It’s… it’s enough for me.” he squeaked, then wet his lips and tried again, “It’s enough for me, Wade. You’re enough for me. I can’t wait to fall asleep next to you tonight and tomorrow and all the other nights too.”

“Good.” Wade’s eyes ringed in red for a few seconds before he flashed his fangs in a teasing smile. “Now why don’t you go get a few more things from the wagon so we can stock this super secret pantry with enough supplies to get us through the winter.”

“Yes, Alpha.” Peter said obediently, and then scrunched his nose. “See? I’m not always a brat.”

“Always be a brat, Pete.” Wade leaned in and nuzzled at the base of Peter’s throat, rumbling in pleasure when the Omega automatically tipped his head back, offering up more. “Don’t ever change. Everything about you is absolutely perfect, my Omega.”

“Alpha my Alpha.” the words were soft, shy, nearly inaudible though a glow of adoration in Peter’s scent. “You’re perfect too.”

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“I think I’ll name the new chickens after my friends.” Peter decided one day as he gathered eggs. “This one has got hair just like Johnny, this one is as red as MJ and this one–ow!” he scowled at one particularly mean chicken. “–is obviously a Gwen. This new one is pretentious as hell so I’m going to call him Harry.”

“Oh yeah?” Wade patted the goat on the rump and shooed her out of the way. “Wanna hear my names for them?”

“You’ve named them?” Peter turned to his Alpha in surprise. “You haven’t even named the goat! I didn’t think you’d name the chickies!”

“Sure I did.” Wade nuzzled a kiss onto Peter’s temple as he passed. “That one is Soup, that one is Dumpling, that one is Fried and this beauty right here is named Baked.”

“Soup, Dumpling, Fried and Baked?” A less than impressed glare from the Omega. “Seriously?”

“I bought these chickens so you’d have something to eat all winter, Pete.” Wade started up the ladder to the loft. “Not so you’d have pets. Name the ones we keep for eggs, don’t name the ones we’re going to eat for dinner.”

“Fine.” Peter shooed Gwen–er–Fried out of the way and set his basket of eggs up on a shelf so he could help with the horses. “Harry would be pissed off if he knew I named a pretentious chicken after him anyway.”

“You don’t talk about your friends.” Wade dropped clean hay down into Arthur’s stall. “Not ever. Which one is Harry?”

“…you want to hear about my friends?” Peter kicked at the hay to spread it around the horse’s feet. “Really?”

“Sure.” the Alpha shrugged a little. “You’ve met my friends, only seems fair I should know about
“I’ve met a few super scary mutants and a crazy shop keep.” Peter patted at Arthur’s side to push the gelding out of the way so he could get to the back corner of the stall. “I feel like that’s not the same thing as me boring you with stories of—” **people I’ll never see again.** “—my friends.”

“Well tell me anyway.” Wade moved onto Bea’s stall, clicking his tongue at the pretty mare until she nickered up at him. “Why is Harry pretentious?”

“You really want to know?” Peter asked uncertainly and his Alpha prompted, “I wanna know everything about you, Pete. We’re not gonna do much more today than chores and sit inside since the weathers so crappy. Now’s as good a time as any to talk, right?”

“Okay then.” Peter snuck Arthur a piece of carrot then ambled over to Bea. “Well, it’s not Harry’s fault he’s pretentious, his father is completely unbearable. Rich people in general are jerks, but Norman Osborn is the worst I’ve ever met. Harry’s a sweet guy but when you’re raised that way, there’s no escaping it, you know?”

“I can’t say I’ve known many rich people.” the Alpha hedged. “But keep talking.”

“I’ve known Harry since I was six. He showed up to the first day of school in a suit and tie.” Peter grinned over the memory. “We had Sloppy Joe’s for lunch and Harry bitched about not having real silverware to eat his sandwich with.”

“Who eats a sandwich with silverware?”

“Harry Osborn does.” A long suffering sigh. “Honestly, he still eats hamburgers with a knife and fork. I’ve never seen him pick up anything and just take a bite.”

“He sounds terrible.”

“Nah.” Peter’s scent turned wistful. “Nah, he’s wonderful. I miss him.”

Good natured stories about Harry being pretentious turned into recollections of how Mary Jane had come into their lives, how she’d moved next to Peter’s Auntie May and they’d spent the summers exploring the canal behind the houses and sharing books over the back yard fence. They’d presented as Omegas the same year, cried through their first heat together because it just didn’t seem **right** for teenagers who’d never so much as kissed anyone to be going through a full blown heat, and spent way too much time skipping school to go shopping.

Gwen had come along in junior high year of high school and Peter laughed through most of the stories about the mouthy blond, how Gwen had reacted with actual cheers when she’d presented as Alpha, how Peter had refused to kiss her until she’d gotten her little fangs removed and how MJ was absolutely horny for Gwen but never said anything.

“Absolutely horny.” Wade stated, setting a pile of logs down by the fire. “Are you serious with that?”

“Absolutely horny.” Peter grabbed the hatchet and set to work chopping kindling. “MJ likes to think she’s a demure little Omega but we all know different. Harry and Johnny aren’t interesting at all, but if Gwen ever did anything but flirt, Mary Jane would be ready to bond in a moment.”

As they made dinner together, Peter chatted about Johnny and how the Alpha was convinced he was the best at everything ever. He was full of stories of showboating during athletic events, entering contests just for the sake of winning, terrible pick up lines and hilarious failed attempts at
flirting and the ongoing unspoken competition between he and Harry to get the best looking Omega around.

There were memories of all night study sessions and celebratory partying the day after exams, of crowding five in a cab just to save a little money, the one summer after freshman year of college when they’d all lived with Auntie May cos the dorms were closed for break and no one could afford an apartment yet. Countless movie marathons, the never ending misadventures of Gwen and her inability to keep track of her phone, the times they’d pranked Harry’s butler and that one day Johnny dyed his hair green to win a bet and then had to shave his head.

And that night in bed, Wade propped up on his elbow and looked down at his Omega, tracing idle patterns on Peter’s stomach as he asked, “You miss them, don’t you?”

“They’re my best friends.” Peter answered softly. “I’ve known MJ and Harry for almost twenty years now, Gwen and Johnny for over ten. Of course I miss them.”

Wade waited a moment, and when his Omega didn’t finish, he prompted, “But?”

“…but…” Peter pursed his lips and blew out a deep breath. “I don’t think I miss them so much as I worry about them right now.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’ve been gone six weeks.” the Omega turned into Wade’s arms and snuggled into his chest. “Six weeks, Alpha. They must be out of their mind with worry not knowing where I went or what happened or if– you know, if my body is going to show up at some point? Six weeks is a long time to wonder where someone went. Gwen’s Dad is the police chief and I’m sure she’s had him put out bulletins for me and Harry most likely used all his influence to try and figure out what happened. They’ll find my car in the woods and probably something I dropped and they’ll all think—”

He shook his head. “I don’t know what they’ll think, but I know they are worried.”

Wade tucked a strand of hair behind Peter’s ear, tugged lightly on the longish ends that were just beginning to curl and crooned comfortingly when the Omega’s lavender scent dipped low with sadness.

“They don’t know how happy I am.” Peter inched closer and pushed his forehead over Wade’s heart, fluttering his lashes gently over the scarred skin and sighing. “They don’t know I’ve found you, that I’m safe and secure with my Alpha and that even though I’m so far away from everything I was used to, this is the most content I’ve ever been. It makes me sad that I’m having the best time of my life, and they are probably planning a funeral—”

Wade cuddled his mate tight and wound their legs together. “I don’t know if this matters, Pete. But from what I gather from Bruce and a few short conversations with Cable, when you’re jumping through time things are… things are different. Cable told me once that time isn’t a line, it’s a place and that time can move different outside the places or– or you know, something like that.”

“…alright.” Peter frowned. “I’ve heard that idea before when people theorize about time travel, that it’s not like walking backwards in a straight line it’s about moving from one spot to another. So what?”

“So I’m saying maybe–” the Alpha paused, trying to find his words. “–maybe you’ve been here for six weeks but no time has passed there. Or maybe only a little time. I’ve heard Cable make comments about being gone for months when we just saw him a few days ago. Or one time he was
gone for almost a year but when he came back he seemed surprised that so much time had passed."

“You’re saying that it’s been a month and a half for me and you, but maybe I haven’t even been gone long enough in my time for them to worry?”

“I’m saying it could be possible.” Wade closed his eyes when he felt the lightest brush of a kiss on his heart. “And I know we don’t like to talk about Cable coming back but we know it’s inevitable, right? Don’t you think Cable would return you right to the moment you left?”

“I could wake up in the woods close to my car and go check into my hotel like nothing had happened.” Peter finished. “You think?”

“The guy’s an asshole but he’s not cruel. If Cable can make your return back there easy, he will. He’ll make it easy on everyone.”

“Everyone except you.” Peter murmured. “Cos you’d be here without me.”

“Well I’m here with you right now.” Wade rolled Peter in the bed until the Omega was straddled on top of his waist, Peter’s nose tucked into his neck. “And that’s all that matters, right?”

“Right. That’s all that matters.”

For now.

“Thanks for letting me talk about them.” Peter whispered sometime later. “All day, I mean. It can’t be fun to listen to me rattle on about people you don’t know. I must have listed about a hundred things you don’t understand– smart phones and Netflix and stuff about college… sorry.”

“Shhh, Omega.” Wade was half asleep by now, his voice little more than a rumble. “You can talk all you want ‘bout whatever you want so long as you’re smiling over it. I like to see you smile.”

Peter pressed as close as he could get to his mate, humming quietly when Wade hugged him tight. “I like to see you smile too, Alpha.”

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Late fall turned to winter with a rush of sudden, chilling wind that poured over the mountaintops and whipped around the corners of the cabin, howled around the chimney and rattling windows before bending the trees on it’s way to whirl through the rooftops of Haven.

The sunlight had been steadily disappearing for weeks now, but one day it seemed as if the sun didn’t rise till mid morning and then had gone again well before supper and the increasing darkness was nearly depressing.

Or rather, it would have been depressing had Peter and Wade not been so perfectly content to simply exist with each other in the sanctity of their own space.

Their mornings were slow, both Alpha and Omega loathe to leave the warmth of new blankets and each other’s arms to face the biting cold that had settled around their land. Coffee was sipped in front of the fire with Peter snuggled into Wade’s lap, kisses shared as they washed up for the day and buttoned heavy jackets to go out for chores.
Wade worked on minor repairs throughout the afternoon, reinforcing the roof and doors on the warmer days, tightening up pieces inside when the wind was too cold to work in. There were new blankets on the bed, so Wade and Peter doubled up the old ones to hang over the windows and further insulate the house. Cracks between the log walls were filled, the stove and oven and chimney deep cleaned to avoid any future smoky issues and the root cellar packed near to bursting with all the meat from outside so they wouldn’t run out of food during a storm.

The evenings found them huddled around the fire for dinner and sharing a chair as Peter wrote in one of the new journals Wade had bought for him at Mr Lee’s– an unexpected present left on Peter’s pillow that had rendered the Omega speechless for several minutes and had ended in a kiss wet with tears– or reading out loud from one of the few books Wade kept on his shelf.

And every night Peter crawled into bed and into his Alpha’s arms, content to sleep away the cold and wind with his mate’s heartbeat steady beneath his ear while Wade fought against sleep so he could stay awake and watch his Omega dream.

A good life, even with the difficulties winter brought to their routine.

It was hard to chop kindling when hands and fingers were nearly numb, harder still to climb out of bed and into a near freezing cabin because they both slept so soundly these days not even Wade woke up to stoke the fire past midnight. It was simply too cold to open the barn doors first thing in the morning, so chores were pushed back an hour or two so the animals had an extra hour or two before letting the frigid temperatures into where they slept.

Bea and Arthur seemed to appreciate the gesture, but the goat took her irritation about waiting to be milked out on Peter via way of absurdly loud bleating, hoof stamping and heaving of her little body weight around to try and knock the Omega over. She was obstinate and obnoxious and some days Peter wondered if goats made good eating, but still he persisted with his chores, mixed a salve to keep the goats udder from chafing in the dry air, talked and crooned and even outright purred to her so she wouldn’t jump quite so much when he tried to tether her to the milking post. Much to Wade’s poorly-hidden amusement, the goat wanted absolutely nothing to with Peter or his efforts and much to Peter’s very obvious chagrin, every single day was a pain in the ass.

“I don’t know why she doesn’t like me!” he finally huffed one cold morning, thumping the only half full bucket of milk down on the kitchen table and blowing on his freezing fingers. “I have tried everything short of hog tying her down! I am so nice to that beast and she still tried to bite me!”

“Well how would you feel if someone tied you up every morning, yanked on your nethers until you were dry and then patted you on the butt and called you a good boy?” Wade scooped eggs out of the pan and dropped them onto a plate, handing it over to the Omega. “And to add insult to injury, you gotta do all that after having the doors flung open and your bits frozen by the winter wind? C’mon Pete. You’d try to bite someone too.”

“All those terrible mental images aside.” Peter sent his Alpha a fully disapproving glare and Wade only waggled his eyebrows in return. “She doesn’t do that crap with you, so why does she do it with me?”

“I’m an Alpha, baby boy.” Wade made his voice exaggeratedly deep. “Even the wildest of animals know not to incur my wrath, far be it for a simple barnyard creature to risk upsetting me.”

“Oh for fuck’s sake–” Wade got a spoonful of eggs to the face for his sarcasm. “That’s enough out of you. We’re switching chores. You milk the goat and gather the eggs, I’ll spend the morning
grooming Bea and Arthur. I’d much rather cuddle up to those beauties than mess with that goat trying to head butt me every time I so much as glance her way.”

“You should growl at her.” Wade wiped the eggs off his face and refilled his coffee cup. “Get a little snarly and she’ll stop testing you.”

“Omegas don’t growl.” Peter pointed out, and Wade countered, “Baby boy, I’d give my left foot to hear you growl some time. Bite me and growl a little and I’d be a mess.”

“You already are a mess.” Peter reached across the table and brushed a missed piece from Wade’s lips, his gaze darting over to the Alpha’s throat and the barely there silvered scar from a long ago bonding. “I’ve never had an Alpha ask me to bite them.”

“Most Alphas probably won’t ask to be bitten.” Wade returned. “Or at least they won’t admit to it. That’s a pretty Omega thing to do– ask to be bitten.”

“I don’t know about that.” Peter wrinkled his nose. “I’ve shared plenty of heats with Alphas and never asked to be bitten.”

“You’ve never asked an Alpha to bite you?” Wade squashed the urge to snarl possessively. Damn right his mate had never been bitten. “Ever?”

“N-No.” Peter gulped when his Alpha’s hazel eyes blurred red for a few blinks. “No, I’ve never asked. Never even wanted to be bitten. Not ever. That seems um– it always seemed–” Wade parted his lips and ran his tongue over the hooked points of his fangs and the Omega first went very pale, and then very red, Peter’s own mouth falling open in a mirror of Wade’s motion. “I–I–I mean– it used to seem–”

Peter didn’t even realize he was rubbing over his bonding spot until the Alpha’s eyes dropped to watch. “Um. Holy shit. Wade–”

“Pete.” Wade growled and Peter’s answering whine was purely instinctual, high pitched and coaxing and the Alpha lurched forward to grab him up tight, pushing aside the breakfast to bury his face into his mate’s throat. An open mouthed inhale over Peter’s pulse had Wade growling all over again, clutching at his mate’s side and rumbling low when Peter’s blunt teeth closed over his ear lobe experimentally.

“You um– you like to be bit, Alpha?”

A flash of heat rolling through Wade’s center as he remembered the burn of Vanessa’s fangs in his neck, the sting of brutally pointed ends at his thigh close enough to more sensitive areas to add a spike of adrenaline to their moments together.

The thought of Peter biting him lit an entirely different spike in the Alpha’s core as he imagined seeing his mate carried away to the point of growling at him, kisses turned messy and sharp, playful bites turned nearly painful and altogether electrifying, fingers scraping and teeth breaking skin and the taste of hormone flush blood on their tongues–

“Alpha.” Peter’s cry was more of a gasp for air, his eyes wide and mouth open in a breathless pants as he dug his fingers into Wade’s shoulders. “What are you doing?”

Wade came back to the moment with a jolt, pulled himself from a heated fantasy he hadn’t realized was spilling into the room and shocking his mate to stillness with the amount of everything he’d put between them. He could nearly taste his own scent in the air, cedar and licorice bruised with
lust and it was a sharp contrast to the too sweet scent of honeysuckle swelling rich beneath lavender as Peter reacted almost helplessly to the Alpha’s arousal.

“Sorry. Sorry.” He wasn’t sorry at all, but Wade said it anyway, murmured the word over and over as he forced some distance between himself and his mate, unlocking his muscles one by one until he could pry his hands from Peter’s side and get his fangs covered again. “Sorry my Omega, I didn’t mean to get carried away. Sorry sorry. You alright?”

“I’m fine.” Peter was still gasping, practically choking as he tried to get a breath in, pants uncomfortably tight over his straining cock, uncomfortably wet between his thighs. “Alpha what–what–”

Wade ran the heel of his hand own the fasten of his own trousers and bit back a desperate groan when Peter did the same thing, the Omega’s knees falling open and head lolling back as Peter worked to get settled again.

“What–what–” Another attempt at a deep breath. “Holy shit Alpha, what were you thinking about?”

“About you biting me.” The Alpha ground out. “I didn’t realize I was thinking out loud though. Been a long time since I’ve had anyone around to react to that sorta thing. And you–fuck, Pete–you react so good to me. Gorgeous.”

“Is that what this is?” Peter moaned quietly, shifting on his seat and relaxing only a modicum when the tension started to ease as Wade got himself further under control. “Good? Gorgeous?”

“So gorgeous.” The flush at Peter’s neck and cheeks was outright enchanting, and Wade didn’t want to look away. “Damn it, Omega. My mate–” Peter whimpered and Wade felt it clear to his soul. “– you are perfect. Jesus Christ.”

“Alpha.” The tension eased a little more, enough that Peter could send his Alpha a shaky smile. “Should I be flattered or worried that you have a biting kink?”

“Both.” Wade decided and the Omega’s breathless giggle trailed off into a quiet moan. “Flattered cos you don’t even have fangs and I got all hot and bothered. Worried cos you’re absolutely right in thinking our kisses are gonna get weird from here one out.”

“Oh my god.” Wade’s joke lightened the air enough to Peter to sit up again, and his purr for his mate was both soothing and grateful they’d managed to salvage the moment. “Ridiculous.”

“Yeah well.” Wade spread his hands vaguely, and tried to smile at his Omega. “Alright now?”

“Getting there.” Peter slid out of his jacket and dropped it over his lap, tugged his fingers through his hair and took a few steadying breaths. “Tell me this though. How uh–ahem–how did we go from me growling at the goat to you suffocating me with all your Alpha hormones and your biting kink?”

“Well you know.” The Alpha paced back several steps, a steady rumble from his chest to make sure Pete knew the distance was a good thing for right now, his tone as dry as he could manage as he answered, “I lived up here a long time alone, Pete. You talk about stubborn goats, I get a little growly, it happens."

“Ah. I see.” Peter’s dark eyes sparkled in sheer delight. “Do goats make you randy, Alpha?”

“I dunno who Randy is.” Wade said flatly. “Does he have a thing for goats too?”
Peter’s screech of laughter echoed out from the cabin and even over the sound of the wind as Wade headed to the barn to deal with the stubborn goat and finish the morning milking.

He needed a minute away from his mate, and he knew Peter needed a minute to get settled again, so the chores were a perfect distraction until things calmed down again.

*Enough.*

The Alpha was forever grateful for a mate who could drive him out of his mind with nothing more than a smile, and then bring him right back to sanity with a soft touch and quiet word, and not even the winter cold could dampen Wade’s grin or the swirl of affection in his chest.

*Omega.*

*Mine.*

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The first snow of the season came one evening as they were closing up the barn for the night, and Wade looked up in surprise when Peter made an excited noise and rushed out to the middle of the clearing.

“Pete? What are you doing?”

“It’s snowing!” Peter’s nose was red from the cold, cheeks rosy and hair askew from his hat, but his smile was *huge* as he tipped his head back and opened his mouth wide to try and catch a snowflake on his tongue. “I love the snow!”

“You won’t love it much when there’s six feet of it outside the door.” Wade slid the bar on the barn and grinned at his mate spinning around in the yard. “Get your butt inside before you catch cold, Omega.”

“I’m not going to get pneumonia because I caught a few snowflakes.” Peter waved off the Alpha’s concern and concentrated on letting the tiny flakes land on his palm. “And yeah, I’m sure I’ll hate it in a few weeks, but that’s why I have a big strong Alpha to shovel it away from the door for me, right?”

“Are you staying with me for my snow shoveling skills, Pete?” Wade hooked an arm around Peter’s waist and dragged him up close. “I’m shocked and appalled.”

“You’re neither of those things.” Peter retorted. “You knew why I was keeping you around, Alpha. Kisses and your snow shoveling skills. That’s it.”

“That’s it, huh?” The Alpha sighed theatrically at his sassy mate. “I think you should have to sleep with Bea and Arthur for that. I’ll kiss you goodnight and shovel the snow away in the morning to bring you breakfast. That should hold up my end of the deal, huh?”

“Alpha!” Peter burst out laughing when Wade started shoving him towards the barn. “I thought you said you didn’t want to sleep away from me anymore! What happened to always sharing a bed!”

“That was before I knew you only wanted me for my kisses and snow shovel.” Wade grabbed at Peter when the Omega tried to run and threw him right over his shoulder, chuckling over
Peter’s *ack*! of surprise. “Where do you think you’re going?”

“To bed!” Peter pounded at Wade’s back with his fists. “And not in the barn! Put you down you brute!”

“Brat.” Wade swatted at Peter’s rear and the Omega shrieked. “Tell me you want me for more than my snow shoveling skills.”

“I refuse!”

“I’m gonna put you in with the goat.” Wade decided and Peter was laughing too hard to properly scream when the Alpha yanked at the barn doors again. “She likes you just fine. You guys will be the best of friends come morning.”

“Okay okay okay!” Peter clung tight to Wade’s waist as the goat bleated in alarm at their sudden reappearance. “Okay I want you for a whole bunch of reasons, the least of which is so you can shovel snow for me when it gets deep. There’s just so many more reasons why I want you. I’ll start working on a list.”

“Well that works out then.” It took no effort at all for Wade to sweep Peter off his shoulder and cradle the Omega bridal style in his arms as he made an abrupt about face and headed back towards the cabin. “Cos I’ve got a whole bunch of reasons I want you too, Pete.”

“Good.” Peter wriggled up and pursed his lips for a kiss Wade was all too happy to receive. “You’ll still shovel snow for me though, right?”

“Brat.” Wade mumbled, but he still leaned in and bumped their noses together, smiling over the snowflakes sparkling on his mate’s eye lashes. “I’d do anything for you.”

“Alpha my Alpha.” Peter whispered and *god* Wade loved that so much. “I’d do anything for you too.”

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Down in Haven, Bruce Banner warmed his hands around his tea cup and took lazy sips of the steaming liquid as he watched the snow come down outside the window.

He loved winter in Haven. The town was beautiful and *still*, the bustle of hunting season gone away and not set to start up again until the trappers came down the hill in the spring with all their furs. Mutants didn’t get sick quite like humans did, so the common cold wasn’t really a worry. His waiting room wouldn’t be full of nervous mothers and sneezing children, in fact last winter his only calls had been for a few elderly patients and an unfortunate broken leg for one of the kids not blessed with the healing ability found in so many others.

Winter in Haven was *calm*, and Bruce was the sort of man to always prefer when the world was *calm*.

“The Omega is like you.” Eddie spoke from behind him and Bruce nodded absentmindedly. “Not from here, he doesn’t belong.”

“No, he doesn’t.” There had been a time when Eddie’s sudden appearance had made Bruce startle, but after almost ten years of knowing Eddie and two of living together, nothing they did bothered the doctor anymore. Not the occasional emergence of the *Other* lurking inside Eddie, not the
nightmares or the fury that could rage so unexpectedly.

“No, Wade’s mate doesn’t belong here.” He said again. “Is that why you startled him at the restaurant a few weeks ago?”

“Wade said there was no harm done.” Eddie never sprawled anymore, they never flopped or stretched out or did anything careless. Every motion was carefully measured, every bit of space they took up carefully allotted lest they do something unacceptable. So no, they didn’t flop into the easy chair, they sat slowly and methodically with arms folded and knees together, shoulders hunched as if trying to hide.

It hurt Bruce’s heart to see Eddie still acting hurt but he knew it was more instinct now than actual fear, so he forewent his usual reminder about relaxing and simply nodded again.

“There was no harm done, Eddie. But is that why you showed him your other side? Because you realized he didn’t belong?”

“We only wanted to see.” A deeper ripple to Eddie’s voice as the Other pushed forward. “We thought he was different like me, but he’s different like you.”

“Peter isn’t a mutant.” Bruce corrected. “But he isn’t from this time, no.”

“Is he from your time?”

“No, he’s from a time further forward than my own.” Bruce poured Eddie a cup of hot chocolate and pushed it towards them. “Why do you ask?”

“He’s dying.” Eddie’s tongue went too long, his teeth too sharp as he inhaled the cocoa scent. “The Omega, Wade’s mate. He’s dying.”

“I think he was just tired or–”

“He’s dying.” Eddie interrupted. “We could smell it, feel him fading. He is dying like you are dying, but you are fading slowly and he is fading faster. He doesn’t have much time left.”

“Cable will be back soon.” Bruce swallowed the last of his tea and poured a fresh cup. “Everything will be alright.”

“Cable should hurry.” Eddie mumbled. “Cable should hurry.”
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Here is a dose of Fluff, Relationship Development, Unbearable Softness, Literally Ridiculous Heart Eyes.3 seconds of Romantic Foreshadowing, AND THEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE

Enjoy! And don’t forget to comment! (or scream, whatever!)

After that first snowfall, winter settled over Haven and the surrounding hills in a heavy blanket of white, piling high in drifts against outer walls and doors, layering deep between trees and building up at the edges of iced ponds, turning fields into arctic expanses marred only by the steps of the animals willing to brave the cold.

The snow brought a hush along with it, and all of Haven was still and quiet. Bird song was muffled and the babble of the river sluggish and nearly silenced. The children bundled up to play and even their shrieks of excitement were muted, absorbed by the fluffy pieces that fell slowly, steadily, for days on end.

At the cabin in the mountains, all was quiet as well. Bea and Arthur tromped through the snow and huffed at the powder, the goat high stepped around the flakes as if highly annoyed but didn’t so much as bleat at the mess, and after chores were done and the animals were warm inside their stalls, Peter and Wade sat by the fire and waited out the blizzard together.

Peter spent most of the days organizing his writings, filling in the margins of his notebook and expanding on some of his earlier ideas. The articles he’d saved about Haven were paper clipped at the back cover along with the questions he’d never gotten to ask Cable, and the Omega smiled a little as he folded it all into smaller squares and tucked them deep at the bottom of his backpack.

“What’s the smile for, sweetheart?” Wade was passing by with a load of firewood, but he stopped long enough to kiss his Omega, showing off just a hint of that jaw dropping strength by holding all the logs in one arm so he could sweep his free hand through Peter’s hair and down over his cheek. “Find something good in that mysterious notebook of yours?”

“Is my notebook mysterious, Alpha?” Peter scrunched his nose at his mate and Wade bent to kiss him again. “You mean to say you’ve never once peeked in it while I was sleeping and read all my notes?”

“If by ‘notes’ you mean chicken scratch?” Wade set the wood down by the fire and wiped his palms down his trousers. “No Pete, I’ve never tried to read your chicken scratch. That’s your stuff, none of my business.”

“My writing is not–” Peter looked down at the scribbles, squinted and tilted his head to try and read it. “Alright yeah, my writing is pretty bad. But really? Not even once? I write all the time, aren’t you a little bit curious about it? I mean, you’ve never even asked me what’s in my backpack.”

“Yeah, well you never asked me what was in my root cellar.” The Alpha scooped Peter up off the
chair and took his place on the cushions, settling his mate onto his lap. “Fair’s fair right? I don’t ask about your things, you don’t ask about mine.”

“I have a literal notebook full of all the questions I’ve asked about your things.” Peter gave the notebook an emphatic tap. “Your argument is invalid. Also, I never asked about the root cellar because I didn’t know it existed and once I did know it existed, I found out absolutely nothing interesting. No questions needed.”

“Seems rude.” Wade slouched down in the chair and the Omega immediately moved to follow him, Peter rearranging his limbs and shifting his weight back into the Alpha’s chest. “Extra food storage is very interesting.”

“It’s definitely not.”

“Fine.” Wade notched his nose into the hollow of Peter’s throat, moved the collar of Peter’s shirt aside so he could dot a kiss on the beautifully clear skin. “Food storage isn’t interesting. What’s in your backpack that I should be so curious about?”

“Well there’s medicine.” Peter pointed out. “Ibuprofen helps with headaches and breaks fevers and I dunno if your healing factor takes care of that sort of thing, but I’ve got med in case it doesn’t. I have my extra clothes–”

“I’ve seen your extra clothes, Pete. Not interesting.”

“–ugh, fine. I’ve got my digital recorder and my phone that doesn’t work anymore but is still mildly interesting, I’ve got a pile of pens, assorted toiletries, probably some dubiously fresh gum and–”

Peter’s mouth snapped shut, color rising in his cheeks. “–Annnnd that’s about it.”

He wasn’t necessarily lying, that was about everything in his backpack… ‘about’ being the operative word there.

The Omega had one other thing in his backpack, something he’d bought in town and hurried to hide, then managed to forget about completely in the rush to get the cabin set up for winter.

It had been a last minute purchase, one Peter hadn’t intended to make in the slightest but as he’d wandered through Mr. Lee’s shop that last morning in town, a bolt of lace in the old shop keep’s window had caught his eye and Peter had… lingered.

Mr. Lee must be at least partially omniscient because had Peter stopped to look at the lace and no more than a split second later the aging Alpha hurried over to take his arm, talking a hundred miles a minute about how pretty Omega’s needed soft things to wear and how the best way to catch an Alpha’s attention was to wear something only semi sheer. He’d insisted half the excitement of undressing a mate was in the peek of skin and the feel of something satin beneath grasping fingers and before Peter could even take a full breath, Mr. Lee had handed him a very delicate, very tiny pair of lace shorts and waited with bushy eyebrows raised for Peter to make a decision.

It had been an easy decision, or at least it had seemed easy at the time, but once Peter was holding the paper wrapped package and realizing the next step was to actual wear the shorties for his Alpha…

… well that didn’t seem very easy at all.

Into the bottom of Peter’s backpack the package had gone, stuffed away and forgotten in the rush
of the last few weeks until this exact moment.

“Pete?” Wade jostled the Omega when Peter went quiet. “What happened, where’d you go?”

“Nowhere.” A kiss was a surefire way to distract Wade from any more questions, so Peter wriggled around in his mate’s lap and planted a long kiss on the Alpha’s lips. “Would you like some coffee?"

“Ummm….” Wade was dazed from the kiss and Peter laughed quietly. “Yes. Coffee is a thing I like. Yep.”

“I’ll be right back then.” Lace shorties pushed firmly from mind before his scent gave away his thoughts, Peter hummed on his way to the stove to boil some water. “Alpha my Alpha– oh!”

He startled when Wade came up behind him, heavily muscled arms winding like steel around his waist, the Alpha already rumbling in Peter’s ear as he nuzzled close. “Wade? What is it?”

“I dunno what you were thinking about a minute ago.” A scrape of fangs over Peter’s pulse made his knees weak. “But you should come to bed and tell me all about it.”

“Come to bed.” Peter tried for a laugh, but it ended up more of a wheeze as Wade’s fingers spread out across his stomach and then swept downwards. “It’s the middle of the afternoon, Alpha. What are we going to do in bed in the middle of the day?”

“I just wanna lay with you while you keep scenting so sweet.” Anyone else would have taken the chance to propose intimacy, to hint towards shedding clothes and tangling limbs when Peter asked what there was to do in bed, but it didn’t even occur to Wade to make such a suggestion. Kissing and holding each other was enough for right now and when the Alpha said he wanted to lay with Peter and scent him, he meant it.

“I thought you wanted coffee.” Peter tipped his head to the side so Wade would keep scenting him. “Besides, we have to go out and re-clear a path to the barn, remember?”

“Does this mean you aren’t going to tell me whatever it was that made you spike so sweet a minute ago?” Wade grumbled in faux annoyance. “What’s the point of being trapped inside a cabin with a pretty Omega if he won’t tell me all his sexy thoughts?”

“I was thinking about Mr. Lee.” Peter said flatly and Wade let go of him immediately. “Yeah, that’s what I thought.”

“Yikes, Pete.” the Alpha made a show of shuddering. “Don’t ever tell me your sexy thoughts again.”

Peter snorted a laugh and jerked his thumb towards the shovel leaning by the door. “Get to shoveling, Alpha. I’ll put some coffee in a thermos and bring it out for you.”

“Fine fine fine.” A quick kiss and Wade went to button into his heavy jacket. “I’ll leave you and your thoughts about Mr. Lee alone.”

Peter only grinned and measured out the coffee grounds.

If only his Alpha knew what his sexy thoughts were really about.

***************
“I want to know everything about trapping.”

Wade looked up from his whittling when Peter plopped down on the other chair, notebook in one hand, pen held high in the other.

“What’s that now, Pete?”

“I want to know everything about trapping.” Peter repeated. “You said you are going out in the morning to lay your lines and I want to know everything. How do you when the right time is to lay lines? Why do you call them *lines* and not traps? What are you catching and is it a humane practice? Am I going to have to eat little animals you catch? What about the fur, what sort of work does that take to clean it and prepare it? What about the hides? Are hides and fur the same thing?”

Wade blinked at his mate a few times, then went back to working on his project. “Christ, Omega. How does one person have so many damn questions?”

“I have a list.” Peter turned his notebook around so Wade could see. “And trapping like this isn’t something I think exists in my timeline anymore, or at least not that I’ve heard of, definitely not outside of like… Nome, or something.”

“Where?”

“Never mind.” Peter waved him off. “We all learn in history classes about how the fur trade led to pretty intense conflicts and how the Hudson’s Bay Company had such a stranglehold on this entire region. Do you deal with them at all? Is that still a thing or is this after the HBC had to give up so much of their land to the actual governments?”

“Christ.” Wade repeated. “Um alright. We don’t deal with the HBC. Haven tries to stay off the map in general, so when we bring our furs down to the village, they get taken to the bigger cities and sold over there. We get our money straight away and then the furs are gone so no one has any reason to come looking this way. I don’t bring in a whole lotta income doing it, no one really does. When you’re half wild like Logan is, or your mutation is closer to animals like Clint it’s sorta difficult to sit there and kill things all season.”

“So you don’t lay—” Peter checked his notes. “—lines all winter long? Just a few?”

“Fur trade isn’t as busy as it used to be.” Wade turned the piece of wood over in his hands and started carving at another side. “Even if I wanted to trap all winter, there’s no reason to. No demand. I do a little pest and predator control to keep the nasty ones away from the cabin, but I try to keep it to a minimum.”

“You won’t have to eat the critters, that’s why we have Soup and Dumpling, remember?.” Wade smiled a little. “But rabbit makes good stew, you’d be missing out.”

“I doubt it.” Peter put his notebook down and chewed at his bottom lip for a moment. “I admit I was feeling a little conflicted about it, about you trapping I mean. The history books make it seem like fur traders didn’t care what they did to the land or which species they nearly ran to extinction. That’s not the case at all, is it?”

“It’s the case for a lot of people out there.” The Alpha disagreed. “There are always people who will use the land for whatever the hell they want without thought to how they leave it, but there’s more of us who only take what we need to survive. Suppose we don’t make for fascinating passages in the history books, though.”
“No, I suppose not.” Peter really had been keyed up to be defensive and maybe even angry that his Alpha engaged in those sort of land ruining, species ending practices but of course– of course Wade wasn’t the stereotype Peter had always heard about. His mate was never the stereotype, not ever, and Peter wondered if he’d ever stop being surprised by it.

“Tell me what you’re making, Alpha.” Setting the notebook aside entirely, Peter left his chair and moved to perch on the arm rest of Wade’s chair. “Is that a toy, are you making a train?”

“Trying to make a train.” Wade held up the roughly shaped piece. “Still needs some work, but the good part of being stuck inside all winter is having lots of time to work on it, right?”

“Why are you making a train, though?”

“For the kids.” Wade said simply, as if it explained anything at all. When Peter just looked at him, the Alpha clarified, “I make toys for the kids in Haven. Mr. Lee always gives out toys at Christmas but me and some of the others that live in the mountains– when we come down the hill, we bring toys too.”

“You spend all winter making toys for children.” Peter repeated. “Really?”

“What else am I supposed to do with my time?” Wade shrugged and shaved off a thin curl of wood, fashioning round wheels for the toy train. “By the way, I sorta love that you were ready to get mad about trapping, Pete.”

“Why’s that?” Peter watched in fascination as the wheels began to take shape. “You like being yelled at by your Omega?”

“I like when you call yourself ‘my Omega’.” Wade’s fangs glinted in the firelight as he smiled. “But I love that you care so much about a bunch of different things. In the beginning you talked about going vegan because you didn’t realize where your food came from. Now you fuss every day until I double check that the animals are warm enough in the weather. You were worried about me hunting cos you have a hard time with it, and now you were ready to yell at me about trapping. You sure do ask a bunch of questions, but I’m telling you, I love that you care so much about these things. You’re sweet, my Omega. A good soul.”

“…I wasn’t going to yell at you about trapping.” Peter denied slowly. “And I dunno if I’m a good soul or not but–”

“You’re a good soul, Pete.” Wade interrupted. “And you were definitely going to yell at me for trapping.”

“I’m sorry about that. Sometimes it’s hard for me to reconcile this life with what I knew, or what I thought I knew, from before,” the Omega said quietly. “I um– I did so much research about Haven and this time period and any people I could track down in this part of the state but reality is so different. I keep realizing I know exactly nothing about anything and I want to know–” he made a vague gesture. “Everything. I want to know all of it.”

“So what you’re saying is, I should have bought you two notebooks.”

“I’m saying, I’d very much like to sit here all night and watch you make toys for the kiddos because I think it’s amazing.” Peter waited until Wade paused in his carving, then slid into his mate’s lap and curled close, relaxing into the circle of the Alpha’s arm and very much enjoying the slight flex of muscle at his side as Wade continued working. “I think you’re amazing, Alpha.”

They sat in silence for a long time, Wade working steadily to form a child’s toy from an
unremarkable chunk of wood, Peter content to listen to his Alpha’s heartbeat and watch the flames behind the grate.

Every once in a while Peter would shift up for a quick kiss or run his fingers along the scars on Wade’s arm, turn his nose into Wade’s shoulder and purr when the Alpha’s cedar scent swelled with happiness. Other times Wade would pause in his carving to press lightly at his mate’s side and rub at Peter’s leg or tangle in his thick hair for a few seconds before going back to work, rumbling in response to every sweet noise the Omega made.

He knew the moment Peter slipped under, the exact second Peter inhaled fully conscious and exhaled into that gorgeous in between where everything was hazy and slow. Every last bit of tension drained from Peter’s body, even the unnoticed tension that came from simply holding himself upright. It flowed out of the Omega along with a soul deep sigh, Peter’s head falling back onto Wade’s chest, his grip at the Alpha’s arms loosening and legs uncrossing as he went pliant.

Peter had done this a couple times since their trip to Haven but Wade was always shocked, always humbled and thankful he’d been blessed with a mate so easily overwhelmed just by being together.

Clint had confided in him once that it took years for Logan to go under for him, that despite their near telepathic bond and the way their mutations were closely linked to nature and therefore to each other, the half feral Omega had taken almost a decade to let go and trust his mate enough to float.

Yet Peter slipped away with nothing more than Wade’s heartbeat, slid under at the end of a long good night kiss, hazed out gorgeous and easy when they just sat together and felt each other breathe, and Wade would never get enough of it.

“Where are you, sweetheart?” the Alpha murmured. “You with me?”

“Mmm, Alpha.” Peter nodded slowly. “I’m with you.”

“Yeah?” Wade set his project aside and slid both arms around Peter’s waist, one hand low on his Omega’s hips and the other spread over Peter’s heart and inching towards his neck. “You feel me, baby boy?”

“I feel you, Alpha.” Peter’s breath hitched when Wade’s hand closed with the lightest pressure at his throat.

He’d always wondered what he would do if a partner ever went this Alpha with him, a hand at his throat to direct his head any which way. An Omega baring their neck to an Alpha was a sign of submission, an Omega allowing an Alpha to open them up into submission was a sign of implicit trust, of unwavering confidence in their mate, a show of faith to allow someone so dangerous where they were so vulnerable.

Peter had always wondered what he would do if Harry or Johnny or Gwen tried such a thing when they shared his heats but it wasn’t them thumbing over his pulse or keeping him safe and secure on their lap.

It was Wade, it was his mate and Peter pulled himself free from the drugging lure of his Alpha’s body to whisper again, “I feel you Alpha. Don’t stop.”

Wade growled into the Omega’s ear, satisfaction drenching his scent and mingling with lazy lavender contentment as he held Peter even closer. “Pretty Omega.” he rumbled and Peter went
nearly liquid in his arms. “Pretty perfect thing. You are gorgeous. So beautiful. Mine. All mine, my mate.”

“My mate…”

Peter didn’t weigh enough to even register in Wade’s grip but it still took far more of the Alpha’s strength than he’d ever admit to stand up after close to an hour and carry his mate to the bed, far too much effort to pull the blankets up to Peter’s shoulders and hush the quiet complaints from the Omega at not being held anymore. He kissed away a petulantly scrunched nose, tucked the quilts in tighter so Peter wouldn’t be cold and then went back to the fire and picked up his whittling knife again.

This time Wade wasn’t working on the train or the other toys he’d drawn designs out for. This time the Alpha pulled a beautiful piece of red oak from the pocket of his coat and began working along the inked circular outline, glancing up periodically to make sure his mate was well and truly asleep and not peeking in on his project.

It had been simple to visit the wood crafters in Haven and procure a beautiful bit of wood for this, simple to request it cut down thin enough for Wade to do the work with nothing more than a few tools and some sand paper.

This particular project was entirely unnecessary, of course. He and Peter were mates even without spending a bonding heat together, meant to be together with no official ceremony needed. *Marriage* wasn’t needed between mates, the validity of a bond was never doubted so long as all partners were obviously happy. They didn’t need any sort of symbol beyond an eventual silver mating bite on their necks, but Wade still sat up and worked for another few hours.

Entirely unnecessary, but *oh* he couldn’t wait to see how Peter looked with a ring on his finger.

*Omega.* The Alpha looked up when Peter stirred on the bed, heart clenching in happiness when the pretty Omega rolled over onto his side of the bed and burrowed into his pillow. *I’m so glad you’re mine.*

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Walking the trap lines and collecting the animals inside took Wade almost six hours every morning. He was up before the sun to make coffee and kiss his Omega goodbye and then with a set of snow shoes strapped to his feet and a framed pack rigged with hooks and line to hold animals, the Alpha headed out into the cold.

Six hours of work, which meant Peter woke up alone and had to start his day without his mate’s steadying presence and help. Wade kept the path to the barn shoveled so Peter could pick his way across the clearing to take care of the animals, and once the Omega was done there, he had to carry wood to the cabin and fill the kindling box so the cabin stayed warm. He was getting better at building a fire but some days were harder than others and Peter had to rush to pull the splinters from his fingers and to treat any small cuts before his Alpha came home and saw the damage.

The physical labor wasn’t so terrible—after two months living at the cabin Peter wasn’t even sore after chores, his back didn’t ache after pitching hay and his arms didn’t strain carrying logs. So long as the goat wasn’t terribly obnoxious, he could get through the barn chores within an hour and a half and the worst part was dealing with the miserable cold that seemed to penetrate even a heavy jacket and thick gloves.
The physical labor wasn’t so terrible.

What was terrible was the way Wade’s absence turned Peter into a needy, clingy little Omega and good god did Peter hate that.

Two months wasn’t all that long to know someone, nor was that long enough to be absolutely miserable without their company, or to miss them with a soul deep sort of ache that led to day dreams about intimacy and kisses that ended in skin and sweat and heat.

Two months wasn’t all that long, and yet Peter had to physically restrain himself from leaping at Wade the moment the Alpha reappeared in their clearing, he had to bite his lip and fold his arms to keep from glomming onto Wade as they ate a late lunch and Wade tried to warm up after half a day outside.

It took all of Peter’s self control and then some he didn’t even know he had to keep from outright whining when Wade finally got settled and was ready to gather Peter up and hold him for a while. Every kiss ended far too soon, Peter thought he would burn up if he couldn’t lie skin to skin with his Alpha soon, and the last time Wade growled at the end of a kiss, Peter had been instantly, embarrassingly wet.

Needy, clinging, annoying as hell.

Peter was not that sort of Omega, had never been that sort of Omega and goddammit he was not about to start now.

“Remember to keep the fire going.” Wade chugged the rest of his coffee and rinsed his cup out. “Pete, are you listening? This time of year the fire has to be going all the time. We need a good coal bank—”

“– to maintain an even temperature that can be easily stoked to a real fire in case we need to quickly heat the cabin.” Peter didn’t bother looking up from his book. Pretending to be busy while Wade was getting ready to leave seemed to help with his newly acquired separation anxiety, so the Omega had taken to waking when Wade did and sitting up in bed until the Alpha had gone.

“The kindle box has to stay full, there needs to be a full night’s supply of logs stacked by the door in the off chance we are caught unawares by a snow storm and can’t get to the wood shed.” he finished. “I know, Alpha.”

“Well yeah, and—”

“–and I should spend some time twisting hay so if we can’t get more wood, we at least have something to burn besides the furniture.”

“Pete.”

“And boil some water to put in the indoor barrel so we have plenty of usable water in case there is a hard freeze.” The Omega turned a page and kept right on reading, mentally counting down from one hundred so his voice was steady when he continued, “And to make sure and sift the hay in the loft so it doesn’t get clumpy and weird, and to leave a little milk in the goat so she can start drying up since it’s difficult to get out and milk her when the winter sets in like this.”

“Omega.”

“I know you’re disappointed we didn’t get her bred in Haven, but don’t you think taking care of wee goaties in the middle of winter sounds like a pain in the ass? Maybe we should just get her
knocked up in the spring when we can make it down the mountain.”

“Are you done?” Wade waited with raised eyebrows. “And I’m sorry, did you just say wee goaties?”

“One of the characters in my book is Scottish.” Peter slouched a little further into the bed and shrugged, all but hiding behind his book. “I think I should start calling little things ’wee’, it would make me more interesting.”

Wade narrowed his eyes when he couldn’t see his mate anymore, but let it go so he could ask, “What about if you see cat tracks anywhere around the cabin?”

“If it’s a wee puss–” Peter barely managed the sentence without laughing. “–then I won’t say anything at all. A track bigger than my palm I should let you know because we aren’t too worried about bobcats but a lynx or a lion hanging around usually means serious trouble. I know, Alpha. We’ve been over all of this at least a hundred times.”

“And we’re gonna go over it again at least a hundred times.” The Alpha leaned over the bed till he could smooch a kiss to Peter’s cheek, clicking his tongue coaxingly until his mate turned to give him a proper one. “I just want you to be safe, Pete. That’s all.”

“I know.” Peter went right back to his book, biting at his tongue in an effort to keep his spiraling emotions under control. “I’ll see you after lunch.”

“Are you okay, my mate?” Wade hesitated at the front door. “You’ve been distant this week, sorta closed off. You aren’t still made about me trapping, are you?”

“We already talked about that.”

“I know we talked about it.” the Alpha maintained. “But you’ve been acting weird anyway. Going to bed before me, not hanging out by the fire for very long. Last week you went all fuzzy on me while I was making that train, now I can’t hardly get my arms around you without you pullin’ away after a minute. What’s going on?”

“I’m fine.” Peter was lying through his teeth and it was plainly obvious when his scent bumped in guilt. “I promise.”

“Pete.” Wade pulled his hat off and ran a hand over his bare scalp, rubbing absentmindedly at a scar along where his hair line used to be. “We’re mates. I can read your scent and your body language and all the funny ways your tone changes when you talk. But I can’t read your mind. If somethin’s bugging you, just tell me. Is it the trapping? Are the chores too much for you? Do you need help? What is it?”

Peter pursed his lips and clenched his fingers into the quilts. “Alpha, I promise I’m–”

“Talk to me, Omega. Don’t shut me out.”

“Wade, it’s nothing–”

“–obviously it is–”

“I miss you!” Peter nearly shouted and the Alpha jerked in surprise. “There! I said! I miss you when you’re gone half the day and it’s so stupid because I am not a needy Omega. I am not clingy and I am not overly emotional but I’m so tired of waking up alone in this bed that I’ve started waking up early just so I can see you leave! And when you come back, I have to practically tie
myself down so I don’t jump you!”

“Oh sweetheart—”

“No no no, stop.” Peter pulled the blankets up to his chest and shook his head. “Stop. I know I’m being ridiculous, okay? I know this is probably my entire— my entire—” another shake of his head, and Peter tapped at his chest. “–my entire soul panicking because you and I aren’t bonded yet and we’re supposed to be. You and I talked about this already, we are adults who are well aware we need to have boundaries and I’m fine with that.”

“And I know we’ve only been together two months but that doesn’t mean that my biology isn’t freaking out because my mate is suddenly spending hours and hours away from me and shit, Alpha we don’t like to talk about it, but we both know our time could be very limited and sometimes I freak out about that stuff too!”

The Omega closed his eyes and forced a breath out between pursed lips. “I know this is insane so I am trying very hard to not let my own issues push our enough, alright? That means I need some self imposed space and the chance to get used to you not being around all the time and to control my– my sort of weird amount of horny. If this was my timeline, we’d both go away to work every single day and it would be fine. I’ve just gotten used to you being with me every minute of the last few months and I need to take a step back and gather myself. It’s fine. I’m fine. We are just fine.”

“Are you sure?”

“We are just fine.” Peter repeated, and then softer, “And I’m sorry for keeping it from you, Alpha. I just didn’t want you to worry, or make extra demands on your time because I’m feeling needy. You’re so tired when you come home now and I didn’t want to add to that.”

Wade was quiet for a moment, cataloging the misery flickering across his mate’s face, the sadness in the deep brown eyes, the way the Omega’s lavender and honeysuckle aroma was dulled from his outburst.

“You think I don’t miss you, Pete?” he finally asked and Peter looked up with a small frown. “You think it doesn’t about kill me to leave you here every morning and not see you again until closer to dinner time? I’ve never hating walking my trap line more than I do this last week, and I’ve never been happier to come back home.”

“…oh?”

“You’re worried about pushing our enough cos you’re being needy.” The Alpha put his gloves down and came back to the bed, tugging at Peter’s hand until he could pull his mate to the side of the mattress and up onto his knees so they were eye to eye and nose to nose. “I’m worried about pushing our enough cos you aren’t being needy and I am about fucking desperate for you to need me like I need you.”

“Alpha.” Relief, brightening Peter’s scent until the Omega was practically glowing with happiness. “Really?”

“By the way, you’re not the only one feeling weirdly horny.” Wade deadpanned, and Peter blushed.

“It’s fine, Pete.” The Alpha smoothed his rough hands down Peter’s back, down to the narrow hips and over the rise of his Omega’s rear. “You know I love when you’re ridiculous.”

“Cos you fall for me a little more every time?”
That’s exactly right.

Their kiss was soft and sweet and slow, Wade ignoring the pressing need to get out and onto his trap lines so he could hold his mate close for a long time, Peter reveling in the feel of his Alpha’s knowing touch and the way Wade rumbled through their embrace as the moment grew lazy and long.

“Open for me.” Wade murmured and Peter’s mouth parted immediately, falling open so the Alpha could lick past his lips and slide slick along his tongue. “That’s good, baby boy c’mere, c’mere I’ve missed you.”

“I missed you too.” It felt good to just admit it and Peter laughed breathlessly into their next kiss, dragged his hands over the rock hard muscle in the Alpha’s back and shoulders to get down to the tapered waist and then lower still to get his fingers into the meat of Wade’s ass. “I’m so glad you need me to be needy, Alpha.”

“I will always need you to be needy for me.” A sharp scrape of fangs at Peter’s bottom lip and Wade groaned when Peter came back with a less sharp but just as purposeful bite in return. “Always, my mate. Need me. Please.”

“Mmmm, I need you.” Peter bit down harder this time, digging his blunt teeth into his mate’s lip and purring in delight when the sting made his Alpha clutch him up tight. “My mate. I won’t keep myself away from you anymore. Be prepared for a stupid amount of cuddles when you get home tonight.”

“Consider me prepared.” Wade cut their next kiss shorter, then pulled away altogether to sweep his mouth along Peter’s jaw and down the Omega’s neck to the tender skin over his mate’s bonding spot. “I’ll be home as soon as I can.”

“I’m going to hold you to it.” Peter already looked better after a few moments of physical affection, his eyes sparkling and a sweet flush in his cheeks. “Hurry?”

“I’ll hurry.” Wade peeled himself away from Peter, but held onto the Omega’s hand until Peter had dove back under the covers and was warm again. “See you soon, Omega.”

“Soon, Alpha.” Peter echoed, and Wade headed for the door. “Oh. Wade?”

“Yeah, Pete?”

“I’ve been working on my growl.” Peter cleared his throat, then offered the Alpha a far too adorable, “Grrrr.” that didn’t sound at all fearsome and sounded more like a purr that got carried away. “Um… how’s that?”

“The sweetest thing I’ve ever heard in my life.” Wade fought to keep a smile from his face. “My god, you’re cute Pete.”

“It’s not cute.” Peter narrowed his eyes at his mate and tried again. “Grrrr. I’m taking your advice and getting vicious with the goat. She tried to headbutt me again yesterday and I am tired of it. Grrrrrr.”

“Oh my god.” For the second time that morning, Wade abandoned his plans to get to his lines and threw himself back on the bed, clambering up the mattress until he could pin Peter to the pillows and kiss him Omega speechless. “You are adorable.”

“No!” Peter protested, even as he pulled Wade down for another kiss. “It’s not adorable! It’s
“Yeah, sure.” Wade sucked a bruise onto the hinge of Peter’s jaw, worked his hands beneath the blankets and then beneath the Omega’s shirt to get to skin. “Your pretend growl is fuckin’ vicious. Do it again for me.”

“Damn you!” Peter growled in earnest this time, as deep as he could manage and accompanied with a bite hard enough to split the Alpha’s lip and taste blood. “There, how’s that for a pretend–eeep!”

He shrieked a little when Wade was suddenly snarling, the Alpha gone from lax to solid on top of him, every line in the massive body tense, eyes startlingly red and muscles straining with the effort of holding himself still. Wade’s fangs were bared, the curved edges sharp and drawing blood when he ran his tongue over the points and Peter only managed a whimper before the Alpha leaned in close and dangerous to bite at the base of Peter’s neck.

“…Alpha?”

“My mate.” Nearly subsonic, vibrating between their bodies and shuddering into Peter’s core as the fangs dug deeper into his throat, long fingers curling around the Omega’s neck and holding him still. “Again.”

Peter wrapped both hands around Wade’s wrist, holding on tight but without an ounce of fear even as the Alpha’s breath staggered choppy and uneven. “My mate.” he purred soft and sweet and consoling first, waiting until Wade relaxed a bare fraction. Then Peter shifted up until his mouth could rest at the Alpha’s ear and he growled as best he could, biting down into Wade’s earlobe. “Mine.”

“Omega.” Wade sounded all of three seconds from losing himself, but Peter didn’t move away, didn’t turn his head and didn’t hardly breathe. There was a primal sort of satisfaction in biting and being bit, one Peter hadn’t expected to thrill him clear through his center.

Alpha.

Mine.

“My mate.” he came back for another nip at the Alpha’s neck, left a harder on closer to Wade’s pulse. “Mmmm, I want–”

“Gotta find some snow to shove down my pants.” Wade suddenly wrenched away and practically stumbled for the door, tripping over his feet and rubbing at his eyes. “Gotta– gotta cool down and get my brain back online and–”

“No no no Alpha, wait–.”

“Nope. Seriously. Snow down my pants right now.” Wade flung the door open and by the time Peter scrambled out of bed and over to the door to see, his Alpha was lying face down in the snow and groaning like he was dying.

“Wade. What in the hell are you doing?”

“I figured I’d start with the face. Down the pants seemed more extreme once I got out here and realized how fucking cold it was.” Wade rolled over and blew out a deep breath. “You okay?”

“… I think it wouldn’t be terrible if we were both still inside.” Peter plucked at a seam on his sleep pants, shifting uncomfortably when the cold air wound frigid through the thin material, freezing
“I’m fine.” Wade stood to his feet and dusted the snow from his clothes. “Look, Pete. I know you’re needy right now and I love that, and I’d apologize for getting carried away but I’m not sorry at all. But we can’t take needy and blow right past all of our ‘enough’ cos I got growly over your bite. This is a conversation we gotta have when I’m not outta my mind wanting you and that’s not—”

He shook his head. “That’s not right now. So just tell me this, and then I’ll leave. Is this enough? Can you tell that right now or do you need some time to think about it?”

“It’s not— it’s not enough.” Peter touched the bite marks again, not looking away from his Alpha as he out words what had been swirling through his mind for the past week. “You said there’s a thousand steps between knowing we’re meant to be and actually mating and I’m ready for– for another step. Or eight. Or a hundred.”

“Or a hundred.” Wade repeated, hope rolling through his scent. “You think?”

“Or a hundred.” Peter nodded, folding his arms against the chill. “I keep trying to pace myself based on how long we’ve been together and compare it to the usual speed I’d take a relationship back home, or add it up to a timeline and schedule of how relationships progress. But this isn’t home and this isn’t a usual relationship. You’re my mate, Wade. My mate. And there isn’t a pace we should be keeping or benchmarks we should reach before moving on. The only schedule that matters is how long we wait before officially mating and we aren’t ready for that, right?”

“Right.” It almost hurt to admit they weren’t ready to bond, but it was more important that they were both honest, so Wade agreed, “Right. Not ready for an actual bond. Getting there though, yeah?”

“Getting there.” Peter murmured. “But I’m still ready for more that what we’re doing.”

“A hundred steps more?” Wade pressed. “Cos that’s— what we were going towards right there on the bed? That’s a lot. That’s a big jump from kissing and you sitting on my lap. I’m ready, Pete. I was ready the night we got home from Haven, I was ready last week when you spaced out on me and were so damn sweet when I put you to bed. I’m ready, but if what we have is enough, I’ll wait. I’d wait forever for you Omega. Just tell me what you want.”

They stared at each other for a long minute, searching each other’s eyes for answers that weren’t always easy to say out loud, until finally—

“I want you to you walk your trap lines.” Peter’s eyes fell to where Wade was still straining against his pants, the abrupt snow bath obviously not doing much for the Alpha’s state. “Because it needs to be done and I need to do my chores and then I want you to hurry home to me so we can—”

“—figure out our new enough.” Wade finished, and Peter added, “Without our clothes on. I’m afraid I’ll have to insist on that part. No clothes at all. I might actually die if I don’t get you naked immediately.”

“Omega.” Wade’s laugh was a little pained as he adjusted his trousers, but no less affectionate and wholly longing. “You are ridiculous.”

“Yeah well you’re the one out here with snow in your pants.” Peter blew his Alpha a kiss. “Looks like we’re both ridiculous and both falling for each other.”

“I’ll hurry home, my mate.” Wade promised.
“And I’ll be right here waiting.” Peter returned. “Be safe?”

“Always.”

**************

Wade was distracted as he worked his trap lines, focused only enough to avoid cutting his own fingers off as he removed the animals from the steel jaw pieces.

Understandably, his mind was firmly set back at the cabin, on the Omega who would be busy doing chores and then busy waiting for Wade to come home so they could move onto something new.

The Alpha had nearly been undone this morning, driven to distraction by Peter’s heartfelt admission of neediness and the resulting kiss, smitten with his mate’s little snarl and the teasing bites they’d shared before Peter had—before he’d—

Wade slowed to a stop beneath a tree, hanging his head and panting in an effort to alleviate the sudden tightness in his pants, his cock hardening over the memory of how Peter had growled and drew blood, the way the Omega had *keened* over the taste without even realizing.

Wade had surged forward completely out of control, his fangs out and ready to sink into Peter’s bonding spot before he’d managed to force himself to a stop but his mate—his gorgeous, perfect mate hadn’t flinched, hadn’t pulled away, hadn’t spiked sour with *fear* for even a split second.

Instead Peter had arched closer and growled again, bit at Wade gentler but with no small amount of possessiveness and in every way but verbal that was a *yes*, that was a *yours*, that was a *mine* and a *more* and a *don’t stop*—

—in every way but verbal.

So Wade had thrown himself outside before he did something awful like rush into *more* just because he’d missed Pete and because they were both obviously struggling with needing to further their connection without moving too fast.

Two months, Peter had said. Two months was all they’d been together and that seemed too short for the Omega but for Wade it seemed like years. Most soulmates met and were bonded with in a few days, most soulmates couldn’t handle waiting any longer, not to mention most soulmates didn’t see a reason to wait.

The ever looming limit of their time together had Wade almost crawling out of his skin needing to see his mark on Peter’s neck, but he was willing to wait until his Omega was ready. Until they were *both* ready.

It was one thing to call each other mate and acknowledge their bond.

It was something else for Wade to fuse his soul to another when he thought he’d never stop grieving his first. He didn’t even know when he’d stopped mourning Vanessa but every time he and Peter moved past another *enough*, Wade thought about his first, about the woman that had been his entire world.

Their bodies were certainly ready to bond, their biologies all but *begging* to meld but Wade’s heart wasn’t ready. Not yet.
And even if he was, Peter still needed time to–

–

–

– Wade went perfectly still, his focus coming back razor sharp and painfully aware as he stopped breathing so he could listen.

There was something in the branches above him, something heavy based on the slight creak of branches, something predator judging from the rancid smell of meat clinging to the air around it.

Wade had been too lost in his thoughts to think about his surroundings, too consumed with the idea of Peter stretched out on his bed to worry about his scent swelling rich and potent and mixing with the smell of the animals in his traps, enough to bring in any predator within a few miles.

He had been reckless and stupid and now he was in very real danger and Wade tensed his muscles, readied himself to draw his knife and whirl around to at least have a chance at fending off the animal, but he was already too late.

The Alpha’s frame buckled under a hundred and eighty pounds of muscle and fur, his shout muffled beneath the roar of a hungry cat as it dropped from above, his screams silenced by the snow as claws tore down his back and into his sides and spilled too bright blood onto the ground—

—miles away inside the cabin, Peter was mid brushing his hair when his chest seized up, his heart stuttering behind his ribs and legs giving out in a bolt of pain.

He screamed as the hurt traveled up his spine and into his head, and just before the Omega passed out he had the horrifying thought that his heart was literally breaking in his chest.

Something was wrong with his Alpha.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

This chapter requires tissues and the obligatory TW of (temporary, because it’s Wade and because we have 19 more chapters) Character Death as well as vague descriptions of sort of terrible injuries.

Tissues! (seriously) And if you don’t 100% hate me after reading, I’d love to hear what you think because I sort of love the end sequence!

Wade didn’t think he would make it home to the cabin.

He must have faded in and out of living a half dozen times, blacking out and coming back to himself with a scream, every breath agony, the weight of the lion at his back terrifying.

Somehow, the Alpha got a hold of his hunting knife, somehow he wrenched his arm back far enough to slash through the muscle and sinew in the predators foreleg and make the beast scream in anger. It shifted its weight in a split second of shock and Wade took the knife in his other hand, heaving himself to the side and using the momentum to hack up and into whatever he could reach.

He couldn’t see through the red dripping into his eyes, could barely stand with one thigh shredded nearly to bone, but Wade still struggled to his feet, still pressed a hand to his torn side and staggered off in the direction of the cabin, bloody prints marring the snow with stuttered, sluggish prints.

He didn’t know if the cat was still behind him or if he’d wounded the creature beyond repair. All the Alpha could think about was getting home to his mate, to his Omega, making sure Peter was alright because that was the only thing that ever mattered.

He would heal, he always healed, he would heal and he would be fine but Peter would be alone in the cabin, alone and probably frightened—

“Pete.” Wade meant to yell, he meant to shout but the word came as nothing more than a wheeze, a desperate pant as he stumbled past the trees at the edge of the clearing. “P–Pete– my mate–”

“Wade!”

Peter was too pale, leaning on the door frame as if he could barely stand on his own, and through the stink of blood and his own pain Wade could feel the terror from his mate, could almost feel the way Peter was shaking, sore and confused.

He felt it, felt the attack.

“Wade! Alpha!” the Omega ran to meet Wade, and then there were soft soft hands at his face, a panicked sob when his legs gave out and Peter nearly collapsed under his bulk. “Oh no no no, please. Please my mate, don’t do this. What happened, what happened to you? No no no, please. Wade? Wade!”
The last thing Wade saw was his mate’s eyes flood with tears, spill down over gorgeous freckles and onto beautiful, bite reddened lips.

“…Pete.”

“Wade?” Peter’s voice pitched in terror, clanging sharp against Wade’s ears as he spiraled towards darkness. “No no no, don’t close your eyes! Don’t close your eyes! WADE!”

***************

It took a level of strength Peter didn’t know he possessed to get the Alpha out of the cold and into the cabin. Wade was practically massive, thick limbs and solid muscles and when he was unconscious, all that mass was simply deadweight, heavier than Peter by almost a hundred pounds.

The Omega struggled and strained through every step, hooked his hands under his Alpha’s shoulders and dragged Wade through the door and over to the fireplace where it was warm. Peter couldn’t look at the smear of red left on the cabin floor, so he set Wade’s head down as gently as he could before running for blankets, blinking tears away as he went.

No no no, my Alpha. Not this, please not this.

He needed blankets, right? Blankets and towels and wait—the wash basin needed filled first and oh no, the pot above the fireplace. That needed to be filled first and set to boiling so he could disinfect rags for a compress. Rags had to disinfected, right? But first he should make sure Wade was comfortable, that was more important. A pillow maybe, or no no no wait he should try to stop the bleeding first, he had to stop the bleeding first—

“Focus.” Peter dragged his fingers through his hair and then recoiled in horror when he realized they were stained with Wade’s blood. “Oh my god– oh my god—”

He was sick into the wash basin immediately, and fuck now that needed to be cleaned before he could fill it again and oh Jesus he did not know what to do.”

“Focus.” the word was a whimper. “Focus, Peter. Come on. Okay okay okay.” the Omega forced a steadying breath, then another and another. In through the nose and out through the mouth, in through the nose and out through the mouth until he wasn’t shaking quite as badly. “I can do this. One step at a time.”

I can’t do this.

“I’m here.” Peter whispered to Wade’s still form, over the doubt circling in his mind. “I’m here, I can do this. I can help Alpha. I can—” he closed his eyes and clenched his fists, willing away the last of the pain that had hit so suddenly before, the lingering migraine from when he’d passed out on the cabin floor.

It had obviously been a reaction to Wade being attacked, their souls linked so tightly that they shared pain and even though the migraine was nearly blinding, Peter still managed a tiny smile.

He was hurt because his mate was hurt, and if that wasn’t proof they were meant to be together, nothing was.

“I can do this.” He repeated, ad it was a little stronger this time, the reminder of their bond settling his scattered mind. “I– I can do this.”
“Stay with me, Alpha. Stay with me.” Peter managed to fill the pot at the fireplace despite the still lingering tremor in his hands, and then he grabbed one of the extra sheets from the basket by the bed to tear into strips. Fingers at Wade’s pulse and the Omega choked back a grateful sob when he could still feel a weak heartbeat. “Okay my love, I dunno what I’m doing but I’m gonna try anyway okay? Hold on.”

It was impossible not to cry as Peter poured first water and then a measure of Wade’s moonshine over the wound at the Alpha’s side. He didn’t know much about first aid, but he knew that alcohol cleaned wounds and he hoped Wade’s healing factor would negate any damage to surrounding tissue and muscle.

“I’m sorry.” he whispered when Wade seized up in pain, the Alpha’s body contorting in an effort to twist away from the burn. “I’m so so sorry, I’m just trying to help. Stay still, Alpha my Alpha, stay still.”

Peter cleaned the gouges with the warmer water from the pot until it ran clean into the cracks of the floor and then he gently wrapped the bedsheet around Wade’s abdomen, pushing the fabric beneath the Alpha’s back and pulling it out the other side until Wade was wrapped tight.

The gouge at Wade’s thigh had stopped bleeding already and Peter didn’t know if that was good or bad, but he was grateful for any reprieve, and made quick work of scrubbing away the dried remnants to see where the cut began and ended before cleaning it with alcohol and water again. This time Wade barely twitched and Peter held a compress to the gash while he felt again for a pulse, cursing when it was even weaker than before. “Stay with me, love.” he begged. “Oh please, hold on for me. I can’t do this without you.”

There was a myriad of smaller cuts on Wade’s arms and shoulders and the Omega leaned in and lay a shaky kiss on one that had already healed in the time it had taken Wade to escape the cat and make it to the cabin. He cleaned the others as best he could, ripped pieces from the sheet to wrap Wade’s torn hands and up his forearms, and when all that was finished, Peter set to work pulling Wade’s boots off and cutting what remained of the Alpha’s trousers away.

The clothes couldn’t be saved, they’d require more sewing and material than Peter had on hand and he doubted the blood would ever come out. Even if the clothes came clean, he’d never be able to look at them again without remembering his Alpha bleeding out on the floor and–

Nope, can’t do that.

The clothes would be rolled in the ash from the fireplace and buried in the clearing so no other predators would be attracted to the smell, and once the sheets came off Wade’s injury, those would be buried as well.

He never wanted to see them again.

A pillow under the Alpha’s head, a bundle of blankets beneath the hurt leg, and Peter checked Wade’s pulse one more time before finally stepping away to wipe the blood from his palms and under his fingernails.

His tongue hurt from biting it so hard as he worked, the tremble in his hands had spread clear through to his core and as the Omega tried to clean up the mess near the door, this time he didn’t bother to quiet his sobs.

Tears mingled with the boiling water from the fireside pot and wet the rags with the rest of Wade’s
blood, dripped onto the back of Peter’s hands as he scrubbed, burned in his eyes along with the fumes of moonshine as he poured the high-proof alcohol into the wooden slats to erase the reddened stain. The air was thick with the smell of looming death, Wade’s cedar and licorice scent buried beneath the stomach churning stink of despair and Peter–

– Peter didn’t know what else to do.

He couldn’t leave Wade alone to get help in Haven, and even if Peter could ride Arthur or Bea, he had no way of knowing whether the pass down the mountain was open or not. There wasn’t even a way to get word to Bruce and somehow hope the Doctor could make it up the slopes to their cabin in time to help.

The ibuprofen in his pack could be crushed and mixed with water, poured down the Alpha’s throat to combat any fever but it might already be too late for that sort of thing, or Wade’s healing factor might cancel anything the medicine would do, which would make it a wasted effort.

The wounds on Wade’s shoulder already healing was a good sign and Peter clung to that tendrils of hope with his entire heart, even as makeshift bandaging turned scarlet over the deeper wounds and the Omega knew in his soul Wade wasn’t healing fast enough.

He could keep the fire going all day and all night, there was plenty of wood and plenty of kindling so at least he didn’t have to worry about that. The goat had already been milked for the day, the chickens and horses taken care of only a few minutes before Peter had returned to the cabin and then collapsed when Wade was attacked, so chores were done at least until morning.

Peter could concentrate on cleaning up the cabin, on keeping Wade comfortable, on making sure there was always hot water around to disinfect the next round of bandages. There was one more sheet that could be torn to strips and then the Omega would use the more worn out of their clothing, Wade didn’t actually keep much moonshine on hand, but there was enough for a second round of disinfecting in case an infection set in.

Peter could have sold his soul for a proper first aid kit with gauze and disinfectant and supplies for stitches, but even as he wished for better tools, he knew it was a moot point.

He didn’t know what to do, and the overwhelming helplessness of the entire situation sent Peter back to the wash basin on his knees, gagging and heaving as he was sick all over again.

He didn’t know what to do. Wade was lying there maybe healing, possibly dying and Peter didn’t know what to do. He didn’t know how to sew a wound shut even if he had the needle and thread, and other than keeping pressure on the deepest cuts, he didn’t know where to go beyond the first rudimentary bandages.

Two months Peter had lived in this timeline and other than the initial panic attack, he hadn’t worried a single whit about how he would survive. Any insecurity was hushed by Wade’s expertise, any worry rushed away by the Alpha’s reassurance of age and experience and Peter had grown comfortable, maybe even confident in his new found life.

But now his Alpha was unconscious, barely breathing and steadily bleeding through the bandages. His scars were too pronounced on too pale skin, not even the sunshine through the windows and the firelight able to bring a healthy color to his face. The broad chest Peter loved to snuggle up against was rising and falling only barely, the thick arms limp and powerful legs useless.

Peter didn’t know what to do, and for the first time since that first, fateful day, Wade wasn’t able to help.
I’m sorry, Alpha. I’m sorry I don’t know what else to do.

Peter carried the wash basin outside and washed the sick from it, rubbing snow around the bowl and scrubbing at it with a piece of soap, swishing alcohol around it for good measure. The simple chore and the bracing cold helped to settle his mind and gave him a break from the awfulness of everything in side, but even as he gulped in deep breaths of clean air, Peter didn’t dare linger too long.

Back inside, Wade was still and pale and Peter dragged the chair up close to the Alpha’s frame, then settled cross legged on the floor and lifted his mate’s head up into his lap.

Careful careful fingers down Wade’s cheekbones and along the sharply defined jaw, and Peter lingered over the barely there pulse for a long minute before flattening his palm over Wade’s heart and closing his eyes.

Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.

“Stay with me, Alpha.” he whispered.

Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.

“I can’t do this without you.” Peter tried hard not to cry again. “I mean it. I really can’t do this without you. The goat is too ornery, I can’t handle her alone, she hates me.”

Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.

“And besides.” He leaned far over to bump their noses together gently. “I’ve gotten entirely too spoiled sleeping next to you every night. I’m not going to go back to sleeping alone in that big bed, I refuse.”

Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.

“We already decided I won’t be shoveling snow, so you’ve gotta wake up at least for that.” He tried to smile, though Wade’s eyes weren’t open to see it. “And I know I’m getting better at chopping kindling but I dunno if I can even lift that axe out there, so you know… hurry and wake up so I don’t have to try it alone.”

Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.

“I’ve got to put another log on the fire, stay right here.” Sometime later, Peter eased out from beneath Wade to stoke the fire up. The room was almost stifling, but the Alpha was shivering, cold and clammy and Peter tried hard not to panic when he felt Wade’s forehead. “Oh no. Oh shit, you’re too hot. You need to cool down. I don’t um–” he shook his head. “Okay hold on. Hold on, my mate. I’ll get some snow.”

It didn’t feel right to lay snow soaked rags on Wade’s neck and down his chest, but Peter did it anyway, muffling a distressed whimper when the Alpha started shivering harder. “I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry I don’t know how to do this better.”

Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.

“I’m sorry.” Peter said again once he was back holding his mate, his hand steady over Wade’s heart. “I don’t know what you’d do in this situation, but I feel like you’d be better than me. I have–” tears, and he didn’t bother to wipe them away. “–I have never felt more helpless in my
entire life.”

Morning fell into afternoon, and afternoon slid right into evening, the hours passing without the Omega noticing. Peter only moved from Wade’s side to re-dip cold rags or stoke the fire, only took his hand off his mate’s pulse and heartbeat to try and coax a few sips of water down the Alpha’s throat. Peter’s butt went numb and his legs fell asleep, every vertebrae in his back aching with the effort of being hunched over for so long, but still the Omega sat on the hard floor and held his mate.

*Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.*

He tried to talk to fill the silence, part of him hoping Wade would hear his voice and come back to consciousness, the other part of him afraid if the cabin went quiet, Wade’s heartbeat would go quiet too.

Peter talked about his friends, talked about Auntie May, talked about the article he’d written that had led to him receiving the grant. He whispered stories about modern life and all the things Wade would never believe about the twenty-first century, chuckled through recitations of his favorite part of terrible comedies, pondered aloud the differences between Wade and the Alphas he knew back home, questioned how different his life would be if the seventies and eighties hadn’t been rife with Omega led protests for equality.

*Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.*

Exhaustion hung oppressive over the Omega’s shoulders but Peter fought to keep his eyes open, not willing to miss a single breath, a single blink, any sort of sign that Wade was recovering. The scrapes that had healed earlier had already deepened into new scars and Peter concentrated on tracing the new lines, learning and relearning their contours in an effort to stay awake.

*Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.*

Sleep was an unwanted mercy, and Peter cursed out loud every time he jerked awake and realized he had drifted. He rushed to check Wade’s heart, to feel along the cuts, to check the bandages for fresh blood and sat up straighter, sipped at ice cold water to shock his system alert and talked even louder for as long as he could.

Sleep was an unwanted mercy, inevitable and *needed* and eventually the Omega’s head fell forward and his eyes stayed shut after too long a blink. The stars were out by now, the moon high in the sky and while the well fed fire crackled behind the grate, Peter gave in to slumber after nineteen hours of desperate vigil.

*Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.*

*Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.*

*Thump-thump. Thump-thump. Thump-thump.*

*Thump-thump.*

…

…
Peter stirred as the sun was barely rising over the horizon. The fire was nothing more than coals, the cabin almost uncomfortably warm despite the freezing temperatures outside and the Alpha in his arms was–

“Wade?” Peter rubbed at his eyes then pressed hard over his mate’s heart, searched for a pulse at the Alpha’s throat and down at Wade’s wrist, leaned over and listened for any rattling breath, strained to see the rise and fall of Wade’s chest.

No no no.

“….Alpha…”

No.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Probably tissues again for this one, but not too many, hopefully the tears are tears of joy at the end?? Generic TW because sometimes descriptions of grief/mourning can be difficult to read.

Peter remembered the day they laid Uncle Ben to rest.

He wasn’t old enough to remember his parent’s funeral– or maybe he’d blocked it all out like the grief counselor had suggested to May– but he remembered Ben’s funeral as it had been yesterday.

He remembered the flowers and the way the church smelled, the too bright sunshine that was ill fitting to such a terrible day, the condolences that had meant nothing because no words could make losing Ben any less painful.

Peter remembered staring down at the familiar face in the coffin and wondering where Uncle Ben had gone, cos the body in front of him wasn’t his Uncle, the body wasn’t family, it was just a body without a soul and not the man Peter had loved like a father.

Peter remembered the way Auntie May had gone through the following weeks as if on auto play, her movements robotic, her eyes sad through every day chores.

“Life goes on, Peter.” she had whispered when he crawled in her bed at night to cry. “Life goes on whether my world has stoped turning or not. Sometimes the routine is the only thing that keeps me together, so I’ll get up tomorrow and do the dishes just like I always do, do laundry and grocery shop. Life goes on even after heartbreak, and sometimes the routine is the only thing stopping us from giving up right then and there.”

Peter had taken his Auntie’s advice and got up for school the next day even though he only wanted to lie in the dark forever. He remembered the hushed way every one had moved around him in the halls, the teachers that made a point of coming by to check on him and he remembered the day he told his physics teachers, “I’m not accepting the internship. Physics won’t save the world. Why should I be studying in a lab when people are dying out there every day for no good reason?”

Aunt May had cried when Peter shoved all his science textbooks in the bottom of his closet and turned his attention towards journalism, towards listening to the police scanner and making charts and graphs about the rise of crime in their part of the city. He’d spent the day of graduation interviewing people in one of the worst neighborhoods, trying to understand more about the world Uncle Ben’s killer had come from, and what could be done for change so people weren’t driven to violence for the sake of a few dollars.

A degree in journalism had given the Omega a chance to write papers about the homeless in their city, articles about rising housing costs and stagnant wages and the resulting hopelessness, scathing editorials about the rich taking everything and leaving only crumbs for the workers trying to survive.

Grief over losing Ben had turned into an obsession with righting the wrongs in the city, and the
obsession had led directly to Peter investigating the Hammer Corporation ‘employee housing’ and then exposing the billionaire’s corrupt influence among the poorest parts of town.

Ben’s funeral had been what spurred Peter towards a career trying to change the world, and seeing Aunt May go on day after day though her heart was broken beyond repair had encouraged Peter to wake up every morning and work even though it had so often felt like a losing battle.

Peter remembered all of it— the blinding grief and the stubborn determination, every difficult step forward and the melancholy tainting each memory left behind. He remembered nights crying and days lying about everything being okay, the depression he thought would strangle him, the fear that put him on his knees in despair.

And he remembered Aunt May smiling through her tears and whispering that life had to go on, that the world kept turning, and sometimes a routine was the only thing keeping her together.

Routine.

Bea and Arthur’s stalls needed mucked out, the goat would be screaming to be milked. There were eggs to gather and the kindling box to refill and wood to chop. Coffee to start and breakfast to make, meat to chop up and dump in a pot to make stock for soup.

Routine.

There were a hundred things to do today and Peter should get started on them.

He didn’t even know how long he’d been sitting with the Alpha’s head on his lap, feeling for a nonexistent pulse and a ceased heartbeat. It might have been hours since Peter had woken up to find Wade gone, but he hadn’t been able to move away. The Omega’s mind had gone immediately to Ben’s funeral, immediately to the unsettling thought he’d had all those years ago looking down into his Uncle’s coffin–

–It was just a body in front of him, not the spirit and soul of someone he loved.

Just a body.

His Alpha was gone, but life would go on. His world had stopped turning but there were chores to do. The routine would keep him together, keeping him from falling to pieces and giving up.

“You aren’t you anymore.” he whispered, the words steady and awful. “You look like you, but you aren’t my Alpha. You’re just a shell of him, not his spirit, not his soul. I–I can’t feel you.”

Peter put a hand to his own heart and shook his head. “I can’t feel you anymore.”

He was numb clear through to his toes, stiff from sitting in the same spot for so long, freezing despite the warm coals in the fireplace. His tongue felt thick, his head fuzzy, labored gasps sounding as if it were far away. It took every bit of his waning strength just to breathe, to blink and Peter was grateful for the blurry edges that crowded his vision and became a detachment from everything awful in front of him.

Soon the grief would come in waves, soon the Omega would collapse as his soul twisted in agony over the loss of his mate, soon Peter would be inconsolable and losing himself in anguish but for right now it felt as if someone had wrapped him in gauze and thick blankets and nothing truth could penetrate the barrier.

There were chores to do, and he should do them before the hazy denial turned to heartbreaking
acceptance.

*Life goes on even if my world has stopped turning.*

*Numb.* Peter lay Wade’s head— not Wade, this wasn’t Wade anymore— Peter lay the Alpha’s head gently on the cabin floor and stepped away all together, moving to the now tepid water over the fireplace to rinse his hands over and over and over. A piece of him wondered if he would ever feel clean again, but he was too numb to wonder for too long.

*Fuzzy.* He changed clothes and wrapped them into a tight bundle to be buried later next to Wade’s the Alpha’s bloody pieces. No sense keeping them, not after all of this. They’d only be a reminder and Peter knew at some point, he wouldn’t be able to handle it. He was fuzzy right now and blurred at the edges but some day it would all come rushing in sharp and jagged and he didn’t want the clothes around when that happened.

*Muffled.* Peter made his way through the snow to the barn and pushed the door open, clicking and trilling at Bea and Arthur. The horses barely stirred and he thought perhaps his tongue wasn’t working, maybe his ears weren’t working cos he’d hardly made a sound at all. The entire world was muffled, not even the goat’s pissy bleating reaching his ears at full volume.

*Suffocating.* The scent of hay usually made the Omega smile, but today Peter couldn’t breathe when he stood in the loft. Every inhale was difficult, every exhale nearly painful and it was the only hurt Peter could register, the only one penetrating the fog that settled oppressive over his entire being.

*Heavy.* His movements were sluggish, or maybe it was his mind that was sluggish but the entire world seemed slow. Peter’s feet weighed so much he could barely lift them, his hands so ungainly he had to try three and four times before finally grabbing a pitchfork. His heart pounded in his chest as if trying to escape from the pressure building behind his ribs and when Peter leaned against Arthur’s side after feeding the gelding, he thought maybe he was too heavy to ever stand again.

“I tried.” he whispered thickly, and the words echoed like a stranger had yelled them into an empty room. “I tried, but I didn’t know what to do. I tried.”

Closing the barn doors was harder than opening them, the simple act of turning from the structure and facing the house again making the suffocation rise high in the Omega’s chest and into his throat. Peter had to open his mouth just to draw some air and even that wasn’t enough to stop the spots dancing in front of his eyes and the way his feet suddenly refused to take another step forward.

*I can’t do this.*

*I can’t do this.*

*I can’t do this.*

And then just as quickly as the numb had set it, it all rushed out of him, ripped away and tossed aside so he could feel everything again. The suffocation eased and Peter cried out at the shock of ice cold air. His limbs lightened and the weight on his shoulders fell away, and as everything that was muffled poured in and clamored around his ears and mind, baring his bruised heart and tattered soul to grief, the Omega pitched forward onto his knees, dug his fingers into the snow and–

– “Pete.”
The entire world stilled, and Peter’s heart beat once, twice, painful in it’s abruptness before it steadied into rhythm again.

*It can’t be.*

“Omega.”

No.

Wade was standing in the doorway of the cabin, bloody bandages hanging in tatters off his side and from his thigh, fists clenched with the effort of staying upright, hazel eyes shifting between shades of red as the Alpha tried to come back to himself.

“My mate, are you alright?” Wade’s breath was wheezing as his lungs finished knitting themselves back together, his leg shaking as the muscles reattached but as soon as he was able, he took a step towards his Omega, and then another, his hand outstretched pleadingly. “C’mere sweetheart, let me see you–”

“No.” Peter held up a hand but it wasn’t to reach for his Alpha, it was to stop Wade from coming any closer. “No.”

“What’d’ya mean no, baby boy? Please just let me–”

“No.” Peter knew his legs wouldn’t support him, so he stayed kneeling in the snow and he knew the Alpha in front of him couldn’t possibly be Wade, so he kept a hand up and shook his head. “I don’t know who you are, but you aren’t my Alpha. Don’t come any closer.”

“It’s me, Pete.” Wade could see the terror in his Omega’s eyes, could see the way Peter was biting his lip bloody to keep from crying out. “Sweetheart, I promise it’s me.”

“It’s not you.” Peter sounded calm, but his lavender and honeysuckle sweetness was buried beneath harsh pain and heartbreaking fear, tainted by the stink of denial and a twisted sort of acceptance that told the Omega that Wade was dead which meant this Alpha– this person– could not be his mate.

*It’s not possible.*

“It’s not you, just like it wasn’t Uncle Ben at the funeral, it was just a body, not his soul. It wasn’t him and this– this isn’t you.”

“Pete–”

“Is this denial?” Peter’s dark eyes glazed over a little, and he swayed like he might collapse as he asked, “Is this denial? Am I hallucinating now because I can’t handle what’s waiting inside the cabin? Because this can’t be real.”

Wade didn’t know who Uncle Ben was, but he knew his mate was only a moment from splintering apart so he ignored the burning ache in his side and the way his still healing leg throbbed in protest and broke into a run, heading right for his Omega.

“No no no–” Peter tried to scramble away, both hands up to try and fend off whatever was rushing towards him and his voice pitched in a scream when the Alpha caught him up into a hug. “No! No no no! Don’t touch me! Don’t touch me–!”

“Listen.” The order was rumbled, *growled*, and Peter’s head fell back helplessly as his
very instincts arched towards the familiar tone. “My Omega, listen to what I’m saying, come here, come here.”

Peter was still fighting when Wade hauled him close and pinned him against his neck, he was still fighting when strong fingers wove into his hair and forced him still and he was still fighting, sobbing, knowing none of it could be true when he dragged in an open mouthed breath and tasted darkest licorice, and warm red cedar.

No no no.

No, it can’t—

It can’t—

“…Al–Alpha?”

“Oh my god.” Wade wrapped an arm around Peter’s waist and held his mate hard enough to bruise, huffing loudly as he scented up and down the Omega’s neck and crooning, trilling in encouragement as Peter took another deep breath, and then another and another.

“Alpha.”

“It’s me.” Wade fell backwards into the snow, ignoring the cold and wet against his mostly naked body in favor of bundling Peter up into his lap and holding his mate as tight as he could. “Baby boy, I promise it’s me. It’s me, I came back. I’m so so sorry I left you, but I’m here. I’m here. I’m back, it’s me.”

The Omega’s sweet scent flooded rich with gratitude and then with no warning at all, dropped full with rage and Wade howled in shock when Peter balled up his fist and hit him hard. “Ouch! Omega!”

“You were dead!” Peter yanked out of Wade’s arms and scrambled to his feet, pointing a shaking finger at the Alpha’s chest. “You were dead! I held you and your heart stopped, I felt it! How are you here? Is it you or some zombie version of you? Why didn’t you tell me you’d be alright?”

“Pete–”

“You were dead!” Peter was screaming now, all the numbness washed away in a blur of anger and confusion. “I tried everything to save you and nothing worked! You bled out on the floor and when I checked your pulse it was gone! You died! How could you do that to me!?”

“Sweetheart.” Wade got up too, hands held out palms up and peaceful. “Pete I’m sorry. I’m sorry, I thought you knew I would heal. I’m sorry.”

“I knew you would heal!” Peter was still practically screaming, his voice already turning hoarse. “But healing means not needing stitches for cuts, or never getting sick. Being gone is not the same as healing! Did you know you would make it through? Did you know you would die and come back?”

“….yeah, baby.” Wade took a step away when he saw how angry his mate really was, when he realized just how much Peter had gone through. “I’m so sorry, my mate. But yeah, I– I knew I’d come back if anything happened.”

“When?” the Omega demanded. “When did you learn you could survive even death? How long have you known?”
“Since Vanessa.” Wade worked to keep the words even as he touched a patch of nearly faded scars over his heart. “When I lost her, I tried to— tried to follow her but I came back every time.”

“How many times?” Peter’s voice cracked as he stared at the old scars, then at the still dark scars at Wade’s side. “How many times have you come back?”

“Thirty one.” Wade swallowed hard. “This one makes thirty two. I’m so sorry I didn’t tell you, my mate. I didn’t think it would ever happen and I didn’t want to frighten you by talking about it and I didn’t think—”

“You didn’t think I would sit up all night and feel your heartbeat get weaker?” Just that fast, the anger drained from Peter and left his scent dull, flat. “You didn’t think I’d check your pulse at least once every two minutes? Didn’t think I’d panic because you don’t keep any medical supplies around, and even if you did, I had no idea how to save you?”

“I could feel you.” Peter was whispering now, the words ragged from his scream sore throat. “I could feel you slipping away from me, and then you were gone and I couldn’t feel you at all. You were gone and I couldn’t feel anything. Not you, not— nothing. I was all alone.”

Wade closed his eyes, and the Omega finished, “I could hate you for this.”

“Pete.”

“Fuck, I could hate you for this.” Peter pushed right past Wade and stomped towards the cabin. “I can’t believe you did that to me. I can’t believe you never told my you’d be okay even if you got attacked. I can’t believe you never—”

Wade was on his feet and at Peter’s side when the Omega collapsed, smoothing back Peter’s longish hair from his forehead as he was sick over and over into the snow. There wasn’t anything left in his system to throw up, but Peter still gagged, spat up bile and held onto his stomach as it wrenched and heaved.

“My mate.” Wade scooped up a handful of clean snow for Peter to suck on, ran his fingers in soothing circles on Peter’s back until the Omega had stopped spitting and coughing. “Pete, I’m so sorry. Come here, baby boy. Come here and let me hold you.”

This time Peter didn’t try to resist when Wade pulled him close, this time Peter dug his fingers into the newest scars and sobbed when Wade’s fangs landed at his bonding spot and dug in until all Peter could feel was the twin points of pain proving his Alpha was here, Wade was here and they were going to be alright.

“Pretty Omega.” Wade stood up and brought the Omega with him, cuddling Peter close and crooning into his ear. “Sweet Omega, such a sad Omega, it’s okay. Everything’s alright, I promise. M’so sorry Pete, so sorry.”

He tipped Peter’s head up and scented over the Omega’s neck, growling and rumbling softly until Peter gave him a shaky purr in response. Gentle bites as they crossed the threshold of the cabin, barely more than sharply tipped nibbles as Wade avoided the living space altogether and simply headed for bed. Peter shuddered and held on tighter when Wade lay him out on the blankets, and locked his arm around the Alpha’s neck, whining plaintively when Wade tried to pull away.

“No no no please.” Anger forgotten, blurred edges brought back into sharp relief and desperate to keep his Alpha’s scent close, Peter whimpered and arched his back, trying to stay close. “Don’t let go. Alpha don’t let go. I can’t— I need—”
“Sleep sweetheart.” Wade left a purposeful bite over Peter’s pulse and the Omega mewed in response. “You’re exhausted and I need to clean up so you don’t have to look at any of this when you wake up. Get some rest and—”

“The last time I closed my eyes, you left me.” The Omega said quietly, firmly, and Wade’s heart felt like it shattered right there in his chest. “I’m not sleeping without you.”

“But now you know I’ll always come back.” Wade could barely speak past the lump in his throat, his scent twisting with grief for his mate. “I’m sorry you had to learn that at all, but at least you can sleep and know that I’ll always be here when you—”

“The last time I closed my eyes, you left me.” Peter repeated, just as heartbreaking as the first time around. “I woke up and you were gone so I’m not sleeping without you.”

“Pete—”

“No, Alpha.”

“Okay.” Wade wound his fingers into Peter’s hair and pressed a grateful, sorrowful kiss to the Omega’s lips. “Okay okay okay. Stay sitting right here where it’s warm, sweetheart. I’ll only be a minute.”

Wade poured what was left in the pot out onto the floor, then went into the lean to for some sand. He scrubbed at the lingering stains with the pile of bandages until the wood lost it’s dark red hue, and tossed everything into the ashes to cover the smell. Later tonight he would clean out the fireplace and bury it all in the yard, but for right now, a quick clean up would have to do.

Mindful that his Omega hadn’t once looked away, Wade stripped out of his underwear and tossed those into the ashes as well, knowing the scent of sweat and lion and death would ever come out again. He unwound the rest of the tattered pieces from his abdomen and leg to reveal wholly knit together skin and only faint bruises where he’d been ruined before and with a quick trip outside to fill the basin, Wade washed himself right there in the doorway where Peter could keep an eye on him, lathering up with their soap and rinsing off with the cold water.

He patted dry only enough to slip into a clean pair of sleep pants and a long sleeve shirt, then made quick work of brushing his teeth and when Wade turned towards the bed and saw Peter reaching for him, he didn’t hesitate to climb beneath the covers and gather his mate up tight.

“Tomorrow I need you to tell me everything.” Peter mumbled, plastering himself over Wade’s heart and counting the beats under his breath. “Everything. I want to know what happened and how you came back, how long you were gone. I want to know everything.”

“I know you do, Omega.” Wade grimaced when Peter’s fingers found the still sore scars again. “I’ll tell you everything I know about my healing factor, about my mutation, anything I can answer, alright? I promise.”

“I’m not sorry I screamed at you.” The Omega said next. “If I didn’t need to hold you so badly right now, I’d make you sleep outside. You deserve a swift kick in the balls for putting me through that and I’m going to yell at you more tomorrow. A lot. I’ve never been so scared in my life.”

“You time traveled, Pete.” Wade tried for a smile and was rewarded with the tiniest bump of affection in his mate’s scent. “What do you mean you’ve never been so scared?”

“I was never afraid of time traveling because you were here with me.” Peter admitted. “But when you aren’t here with me I– I don’t know what to do. Don’t leave me again.”
“I won’t leave you again.” Wade swore, and then softer, “Do you really hate me, Pete?”

“Alpha my Alpha.” Exhaustion crept up quickly over the Omega, slurring his words and slowing the rhythm of his fingers as he kneaded at Wade’s side. “I could never…hate…you…You’re my–my mate.”

“I’m your mate.” Wade repeated, and waited until Peter was well and truly asleep before rolling them in the bed and tucking his mate up tight into his body. They had a million things to talk about tomorrow, a million moments where Wade need to reassure Peter that he was here and it was real and that the worst was behind them, but for right now, it was enough just to listen to his mate’s quiet snores and wipe the last remnants of tears from Peter’s cheek.

“I’m so sorry for putting you through all this, sweetheart.” he murmured, and then with a barely audible whisper and the lightest of kisses, “I’ll never leave you again, my mate. You’re mine and I–”

The Alpha sighed and pressed closer, willing his soul to settle now that he could hold his mate again. “I’m yours.”

“I love you, Pete.”
This was supposed to be just naked times and then it got all emotional... I mean clothes come off eventually but it’s definitely not the porn-without-plot I intended it to be. Still good though. Yep. Still good.

Wade was tired.

No, tired wasn’t the right word.

The Alpha was wiped, he was exhausted, he was core deep \textit{weary} and struggling to stay awake long enough to make it through daily chores.

Healing was difficult, and Wade’s very bones ached as they worked to finish solidifying. His muscles were still torn in awful places, his nerve endings on fire, every breath painful. Coming back to \textit{living} always took a few days recovery and since this particular time had been so very \textit{brutal}, Wade walked around in near agony for most of a week.

But he hid the urge to limp, bit back groans after chores, and fought against needing to sleep for days so his body could finish healing. In fact, the Alpha refused to so much as flinch if Peter was anywhere near by. He didn’t want his Omega to see the lingering effects of death, so Wade suffered in silence and tried to keep his scent from warping \textit{hurt}.

The Omega was traumatized enough right now, and Wade didn’t dare do anything to jeopardize the fragile peace hovering in the cabin.

Peter was \textit{brittle} since Wade had woken up, quiet and withdrawn, eyes too bright as he watched Wade’s every movement and voice too hoarse the few times he spoke, fingers trembling every time he reached to checked Wade’s heartbeat or pulse.

Peter was \textit{brittle}, the promised day after yelling amounting to not much more than a near whisper of, “Don’t ever do that to me again.” as the Omega picked at his breakfast. Peter’s list of questions whittled down to just one– ‘Why?’ and none of Wade’s answers seemed remotely adequate, so their conversation dwindled to nearly nothing for several days.

Peter was \textit{brittle}, unwilling to be away from Wade’s side for more than a minute, but keeping a purposeful sort of distance between them at the same time. He couldn’t quite bring himself to cuddle up like they’d done before, but he couldn’t quite bring himself to touch Wade other than to be sure the Alpha was alive, either. When Wade put his coffee aside and reached for Peter the morning after it all, his mate had stepped away and shook his head, then stepped right back to put a hand over Wade’s heart and close his eyes to count the beats.

It was heartbreaking, and Peter was \textit{brittle} and it was Wade’s fault.

The Alpha would never forgive himself for not thinking to assure Peter ahead of time that everything would be okay. He could have stayed in the woods and come back around over night, went home to the cabin and spun a tale about getting lost or tracking an animal and getting
distracted. He could have admitted to being hurt and brushed it off as nothing serious, said the sun had set and he couldn’t find his way home until morning.

Wade could have said anything, he could have done anything besides stagger home and put his Omega through all that horror, but it was too late to take it back now.

Wade had seen the red smears at the doorway where Peter tried to carry him inside, he had buried the torn of up sheets the Omega used to wrap the wounds, he knew the bottle of moonshine was all but empty because Peter used it to disinfect the cuts.

Peter had tried desperately to save Wade, sat up all night fighting a losing battle to keep him alive. The Omega hadn’t known those tear filled fear filled hours were only prolonging the inevitable, he hadn’t known Wade would wake up again and piece himself together over the course of a week, he hadn’t known their life would go right back to normal as if nothing had changed.

But things had changed, and tonight as Wade watched his mate stare blankly at the spot in front of the fireplace, he thought the guilt could eat him from the inside out.

I’m so sorry, my mate.

“Pete.” After another hour, Wade couldn’t take it any longer and he got up from the kitchen table to kneel by Peter’s chair. “Omega, are you alright?”

It took Peter a few seconds to respond, but he finally nodded. “Yeah. I’m fine.”

“Are you?” Wade reached for Peter’s hand and cursed when he felt how cold they were. “Hell, honey you’re freezing. I’ll put you in bed, you look tired and you’re cold and–”

The Alpha stopped speaking before he blurted out how badly he needed to hold his mate. The days of careful distance were starting to wear on him and watching Peter be so obviously miserable made everything worse.

“Let’s just go to bed.” he finished lamely. “Early morning tomorrow, right?”

“No earlier than usual.” The Omega said flatly. “I’m fine right here.”

“Pete–”

“You need the rest.” the Omega kept staring at the floor. “You think I can’t tell you’re still hurting but I can. You’re extra tired, you barely make it through chores, when we get in bed you’re asleep by the time you hit the pillow. You need the rest, so you get in bed. I’m fine right here.”

“…you’re angry with me.” Wade frowned when he realized he couldn’t scent the anger on Peter, frowned harder when he realized he couldn’t hardly scent Peter at all. “What’s going on, Pete? Why can’t I scent you?”

“I dunno.” One of Peter’s shoulders rose and fell in a half shrug. “I’m still um– still fuzzy, I think. Everything came back real sharp right when you first woke up but it’s fuzzy again.”

“Fuzzy.” the Alpha repeated. “What– what do you mean?”

“When you died, everything went fuzzy.” Peter’s voice never changed in pitch and Wade hated it. “Numb and sorta– sorta insulated. I thought it was denial or maybe just my mind locking down so I wouldn’t crack and freak out but it hasn’t gone away yet, not except for those few minutes when I first saw you. In a weird way, it feels like you aren’t even back.”
“Um.” Wade didn’t even know where to begin with that. “Omega, I– I am back though. I’m right here.”

“Are you?” Peter turned Wade’s hand over and pressed his fingers at the Alpha’s wrist, right over his pulse. “Okay, yeah. I guess you are.”

“Pete.” Worry, choking and uncertain rising in Wade’s throat. “Hey sweetheart, we need to talk about this. You keep checking my pulse and now you say you’re still fuzzy and that’s not good. I thought you were just mad at me, but it’s more than that isn’t it?”

“You’re right, we do need to talk about this.” Peter wrapped both his arms around his waist and shut his eyes tight. “But what are we supposed to talk about? How do we have a conversation about what happened? It’s not a normal topic, Wade, this isn’t like figuring out who does which chores. You were gone, Wade. Gone. How are we supposed to talk about it?”

“I was gone.” The Alpha said slowly. “And I get that it’s– it’s hard to get a handle on. But I’m back. I’m here.”

“Right.” Distress, flickering across the Omega’s features. “That’s exactly right. You were gone, and now you’re back. I was barely believing you were gone and then– then you were back. Just like that. And now everything is supposed to be normal, I’m supposed to move on with life because you’re back, right? You’re alive and that’s great.”

“Omega.” Wade reached to touch Peter’s cheek, to press over his bonding spot and try to get some sort of reaction besides blank from his mate. “Pete, I um–”

“You’re walking around like nothing happened.” Finally a spark in the Omega, a spark of near fury that made Wade’s blood run cold. “But I held you, Wade. I held you and you were dead. You were dead! You were gone and you didn’t tell me you’d be alright, so how am I supposed to deal with that? How am I supposed to deal with you being here when three days ago I was scrubbing your blood from this spot on the fucking floor?! How are we supposed to talk about that?!”

“This isn’t real for me yet!” Peter was shouting now. “This has been like a– like a fairy tale, alright? I wake up in an alternate time line, I meet my soulmate, we have this cozy little life in our cozy little cabin where we flirt and kiss and do chores together! You say romantic things and I fall asleep every night wondering how I got so lucky and then you died!”

Peter jumped from the chair and jabbed his finger at the floor. “Right there! Right there you died and I thought everything good about my life was over! And what–what? Now you’re back drinking coffee and making dinner and acting like nothing has happened and you wanna have a conversation?!”

“Pete–”

“You want to fucking talk!” the Omega spat. “And all I can think about now is how obviously I don’t fit into your world!”

“Nope.” Wade got to his feet too, hands held out peacefully. “Nope, don’t say that, Pete. Don’t say anything like that.”

“I think I’m gonna say whatever the hell I want.” Peter bared his teeth and snarled, and the sudden lash of anger breaking through his scent made the Alpha stumble back a few steps. “Because you died right here in our cabin and I cannot put that together in my mind. I’m not a mutant, I don’t
know people who come back to life. If I break my arm it takes months to heal. But you got maul and then got up and pitched hay the next morning! That’s not real, Wade! This is like something out of my books or terrible TV shows and I can’t handle it! I can’t handle it! I can’t talk about this, I’m barely making it through the day without feeling like I’m going insane!”

“Peter–”

“And I can’t feel you.” Peter’s voice cracked, broke, and just that fast the anger was replaced with an abrupt wash of devastated. “None of this seems real, I can’t handle any of it because I can’t feel you, Alpha. I can see you, and I can check your pulse a hundred times a day but I can’t feel you. It’s like your standing just out of reach and I keep reaching out but– I–I–”

Peter started crying, tears streaming down his cheeks and Wade ran forward to catch the Omega up into a tight hug, rumbling and crooning and trying to soothe his near hysterical mate.

“I can’t feel you!” Peter cried, the words muffled in Wade’s shoulder. “Not in my heart, not in my– in my soul. You’re gone and it hurts and I don’t know how you’re acting like you’re okay because I’m not okay! I don’t fit into this world because I don’t understand how to cope with this and that scares me so much! What if I can’t ever cope? What if it means we aren’t meant to be–”

“Settle.” Wade cut the Omega off before Peter could suggest his difficulty coping meant they weren’t mates. “Settle, sweetheart. C’mon, c’mon hush now. You’ve got it all wrong.”

“Don’t tell me to hush!” There was the anger again, slicing through the barely there scent and stinging bitter in Wade’s nose. “Do not tell me to hush, and don’t tell me I’ve got it wrong! I felt you die, Wade! I felt you die--!”

“Hush!” Wade repeated, louder this time and pouring an effort of Alpha into the words to compel the Omega to listen. He’d never done that before, never once attempted to command Peter by using their biology against his mate but he did it now, and Peter’s mouth shut with an audible click, eyes wide.

“I’m never going to do that again.” The second Peter was still, Wade gentled again, tipping the Omega’s head back and brushing their noses together. “Do you understand? I will never ever command you to do anything, not to be quiet, not to be loud and certainly not to do anything else. I promise. Pete, my mate, you have my word. But right now, I need you to listen. Just listen.”

“I– I’m listening.” Peter stammered shakily. “I’m listening.”

“You’ve got it wrong, sweetheart.” Wade softened his tone further, leaned his forehead against Peter and rumbled in quiet relief when the Omega automatically reached to clasp at his wrist, both holding Wade close and trying to count his pulse. “You don’t ‘fit into’ my world, Pete. You aren’t ‘part’ of my world. You are my entire world. Do you hear me? My entire world.”

“Alpha.” Tears again, and Wade wiped them away with tender fingers.

“Everything about my day revolves around you, sweetheart. I wake up in the morning so I can see your smile, the only reason I want to sleep is so I can hold you. I waited seventy years and didn’t even realize I was waiting until the first time I caught your scent. You are my whole world whether we are from different times or not, whether you have a hard time with my abilities or not. All that matters is that you are here with me now, and that you want to stay. Do you want to stay, Pete?”

The Omega nodded and Wade whispered into his ear, “My Omega, my mate. Thirty one times I’ve
gone and come back and this time makes thirty two and Pete I promise— I promise, this is the only
time I’ve ever prayed to come back out the other side, the only time feeling my heart stop was
terrifying instead of a relief. I prayed and hoped and when I opened my eyes again, I’ve never been
so happy in my life.”

The implication of truth behind the words, the idea that thirty one times Wade had gone and would
have been happy to never come back hurt Peter to his very soul and the Omega whimpered quietly,
held his Alpha’s wrist tighter.

“I should have stayed away when I was hurt.” Wade admitted gruffly. “I should have let it happen
in the woods, then came home to you when it was over. I could’a told you I got too far away and
couldn’t make it back at night or that I rescued baby mountain lions from a tree and they got a wee
bit scratchy—”

Peter hiccuped a laugh and the Alpha murmured something grateful into his mate’s forehead. “I
could’ve done a hundred things different but I didn’t cos all I wanted to do was see you. All I
wanted to do was see you, Pete. It hurts to die and I didn’t want to do it alone, I wanted to see you
and to have you hold me through the worst of it and not once did I think about what it would do to
you. I was wrong to think you knew my healing extended that far and I’m sorry.”

The Omega was quiet, and Wade nuzzled at his cheek. “You said you can’t feel me, Pete. But I can
still feel you, alright? You’re my mate and nothing is going to change that, not even me being gone.
Okay?”

“Okay.” Peter sniffed.

“Do you believe me?” Wade pressed, and the Omega sniffed again, but mumbled, “I believe you,
Alpha.”

“Come here, then.” Wade closed his eyes in relief when Peter hurried to press tight again, but
couldn’t quiet a ribbon of concern when the Omega went worryingly limp against his frame. “My
poor mate, you’re exhausted.”

“I haven’t slept in three days.” Peter admitted after a few minutes. “I keep sitting up and checking
your pulse cos I can’t feel you. You’ve been basically comatose each night and I worry.”

“You haven’t slept in three days?” A negative shake of the Omega’s head and Wade sighed. “Oh
sweetheart, please let me take you to bed.”

“I keep thinking we should go ahead and bond.” Peter stated instead and the Alpha’s heart thudded
to a stop, then picked up double time in his chest. “I mean, that would fix this, right? I’d be able to
feel you all the time, I wouldn’t have to worry. Bonding wipe away all this stress and the way I’ve
been obsessively counting your heartbeats every night, would settle the tension between us since
before… before everything, we were ready to change our enough, right?”

“…right…” Wade hedged, and the Omega finished softly, “But we don’t want a bond that starts
out of trauma, do we?”

“No.” Wade had never imagined a day he’d say no to a bond with his mate, but here he was
anyway. “No Pete, we don’t want a bond outta trauma. Just— love. — we’re waiting until we’re
ready and this sorta sadness isn’t ready.”

“Yeah. We’re not ready.” Peter sounded like he might cry again and Wade cleared his throat to
change the subject, not willing to keep talking when his mate was suffering.
“Let’s go to bed, my mate. We can figure this all out another day.”

“Wade, I just told you I can’t sleep.”

“Do you feel me, Pete?” Wade picked up Peter’s hand and put it over his own heart, watching the Omega mouth numbers silently as he counted. “Do you feel me right here? Is this enough for you?”

“…no.” Peter hung his head. “I’m sorry. I can’t feel you. It’s not enough.”

“I’m gonna do whatever it takes to change that.” Wade swore. “You tell me what to do to fix it, my mate. What do you need from me so you can sleep, so you can feel me again? Tell me.”

“I um—” Peter thought back to before that awful day, back to that morning when Wade had admitted to needing just as much as Peter did, when they’d decided to change their enough. He had been half desperate that morning to get to his Alpha, practically frantic to strip down and lay together just so he could feel–

“Skin.” he blurted and Wade raised his eyebrows in question. “I need to touch you, need to see you. I want um– I want skin. I want you.”

“I can do that.” Wade stripped off his shirt without hesitation, yanking it up and over broad shoulders and tossing it away. “What else?”

“I need more skin.” Peter tugged at the Alpha’s waist band. “Please?”

“Oh.” This time Wade paused for a moment, covering Peter’s hand at the clasp of his pants. “Pete, are you sure?”

“You said whatever it takes.”

“I know I did, and I meant it, but this isn’t–” Wade swallowed uncomfortably. “I’m not pretty like you are, Pete. I know you saw all of me the other day but touching me, seeing it up close is something else. My skin is rough, worse on my legs than it is on my arms and chest. I don’t want you to be—” fuck, this was hard to say. “—disgusted. I don’t want you to be disgusted by me, my mate. That would break my heart.”

“You’re my mate.” Peter shuffled closer and rubbed his forehead into Wade’s chest. “Every way you feel is going to be perfect. I need more of you and this is what I want. Please?”

“You need more.” Wade gathered his courage and undid the buttons of his pants and pushed them down his hips. “Okay. I can do that.”

The Alpha walked Peter back towards the bed, rumbling encouragingly as the Omega ran his hands up and over Wade’s chest and shoulders, down over his hips and around to his back to track the newest scars.

“Can I have this?” Peter was too busy exploring to bother helping when Wade plucked at his shirt, but he nodded assent that Wade could undress him so they could fall into the blankets nearly naked together.

The Omega shuddered through a sigh when Wade immediately nuzzled into his throat, turned his head and arched up into the sting of a gentle bite, and when the Alpha bit down harder, Peter whimpered in sheer relief, going still beneath his mate when his heart finally settled with Wade’s presence.
“Come here, right here.” Wade soothed at the red marks on Peter’s neck, then rolled his mate onto his stomach and crowded close to his side, tangling their feet and legs to give the Omega as much skin to skin contact as possible, and running his hands up and down Peter’s back in slow, soothing circles.

“Settle, baby boy.” Peter hadn’t gone soft and floaty for Wade for days, and the Alpha missed it. To be fair, he hadn’t had the mental energy to support his mate going under, but he still missed it and right now Wade wanted nothing more than to send his mate past all this stress and tears and right into that soft spot where the Omega was loose limbed and pliant, trusting and steady and beautiful.

“I’ve got you.” he murmured when Peter whined and tried to inch closer. “M’right here, my mate. I won’t leave you.”

“Promise.”

“I promise.” Wade pulled the blankets over Peter’s shoulders and leaned a little more weight onto the Omega’s frame until Peter stopped wriggling. “I’m never going to leave you again.”

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Peter didn’t go down that night, nor did he relax enough when Wade made a point of cuddling him for half the next afternoon, or when the Alpha lingered in bed the following morning sharing short kisses and soft touches.

Peter didn’t go hazy and sweet, didn’t float away in bliss like he’d done so easily before but at least he was letting Wade hold him now, and the Alpha took advantage of every second to keep his mate close.

The request for skin led to going to bed hours early instead of lingering by the fire, Peter content to lay over Wade’s heart and trace the myriad of scars across the broad chest and down to his waist, Wade thrilled with his chance to explore the beauty spots on Peter’s ribs, to draw his fingers down the graceful arch of the Omega’s back.

The intimacy was breathtaking, whether his mate was loopy and dazed or not. After chores, there were unhurried hours for Wade to map lean muscles and tempting curves. Before they drifted off, Peter could indulge his need to know his Alpha was here and whole and he spent half the night lost in the feel of Wade’s rough skin beneath his palms, breathing in his mate’s scent and humming in delight when the cedar and licorice notes blended and brightened the longer they lay together.

Intimate.

Breathtaking.

“More.” Peter mumbled one night almost a week later, his lips brushing Wade’s collarbone. “I want more, Alpha.”

“We’re fine right here, my mate.” Wade was practically asleep, half drunk on the feel of his Omega tangled up against his body. “Don’t need anything else to eat tonight, I’ll make you breakfast later.”

Peter laughed softly, the sound so surprising after so many quiet, tense days that the Alpha peeked his eye open just to be sure Peter was really smiling. “Why do you think I’m asking for more
“Shit, I dunno Pete.” Wade tucked the slim frame closer to his own and rumbled in contentment. “M’half asleep already, why aren’t you?”

“Cos I want more.”

“Whiny brat.” the Alpha huffed affectionately. “Want more what?”

“More of you.” Whisper soft, and arresting Wade’s entire attention. “Please?”

“…are you sure?” More meant naked, meant getting rid of the last bit of clothing between them and Wade wouldn’t dare without knowing for sure… “Big step, Pete.”

“Jus’ wanna feel you.” Peter slid his fingers along the line of Wade’s hip, down along the jut of the Alpha’s hip bone. “Is that okay?”

“It’s okay. Whatever we gotta do to get past this is– is okay.” It hurt the Alpha to his core to know his mate still couldn’t feel him. He’d asked several times, every time he tried to get Peter down in fact, and the answer was always the same.

“Can you feel me, baby boy?”

“No, Alpha. I can’t. I still can’t feel you.”

“It’s okay.” he said again, because dammit he would do anything to make sure the Omega could feel him, feel their bond like he had before Wade had died and come back. “It’s okay, my mate. Come here and let me hold you.”

It wasn’t like it was a hardship to kick out of his underwear and help Peter to do the same, but Wade held his breath through the motions anyway. This is a big step. And while the Alpha might have been hesitant, Peter mewled in pure pleasure when he could feel his mate clear from shoulders to toes, his body lighting up with sparks when the heavy weight of the Alpha’s cock slotted against his own, more slender length.

“Alpha.”

Wade made a noise that might have been a groan, might have been a growl, fangs cutting bloody into his bottom lip and grip tightening to almost painful at Peter’s waist as he pulled on every bit of his self control to settle.

This was about holding Pete and about being together, and the Alpha was rewarded for his patience when Peter notched his nose into Wade’s neck and inhaled deep, exhaling on a contented sigh, “You feel so good Alpha, thank you.”

Wade didn’t trust himself to say anything, neither did he trust himself to kiss Peter like he wanted to right then. They’d hardly kissed at all since the lion attack, at least not anything more than near perfunctory pecks and sleepy good nights but Wade couldn’t think about sleepy kisses right now.

All the times he’d imagined their first time naked together, Wade had never thought it would be because his mate was unsure of their bond, because Peter was half desperate to be close enough to know the Alpha was alive.

No, he’d imagined kissing red lips made redder by Peter biting them as he laughed, he’d imagined thick hair mussed beyond repair and skin flushed with excitement. Wade had thought forever about
the Omega gasping over the press of fangs, long legs falling open to searching fingers, the way Peter would feel clenching down around him in pleasure, the way lavender and honeysuckle would flush intoxicating until Wade could taste it mixed with slick on his tongue.

He’d imagined so many ways for this first time naked to go, but even as Wade hardened against Peter’s thigh and couldn’t help the slightest thrust forward in response to the Omega’s wiggling when Peter tried to get impossibly closer, Wade forced himself again to settle.

*When we’re ready.* He reminded himself. *When we’re ready, when we’re ready, when we’re—*--a feather light brush of lips at his own, and Wade’s circular thoughts promptly derailed.

“Good night, Alpha my Alpha.”

*Bliss.*

“Good night, my mate.”

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It was storming again, but Wade couldn’t be bothered to stress about it when he got to re-shore up the storm proofing with a smiling Omega. The howling wind didn’t seem quite so loud when Peter finally laughed as Arthur nearly knocked him over with a too enthusiastic ‘hello’ head bump.

The sudden cold snap that broke only to unleash piles and *piles* of snow was barely worth noting when Wade was sharing the cabin with a mate who was suddenly eager to sit in his lap, to smile and peek up from beneath thick lashes over morning coffee, to strip down at night and press bare bodies together because for some incredible reason, Peter loved the way Wade felt against him.

The Omega still hadn’t floated for Wade, still wouldn’t soothe and settle enough to go hazy in his Alpha’s arms, but Wade wasn’t discouraged. Every night Peter clung a little tighter, every morning he lingered a little longer and now, almost two weeks after the attack, Peter stopped on the way to put dishes in the sink to leave a long, slow kiss on his Alpha’s mouth.

“Well *hey.*” Wade waggled non existent eyebrows. “What was that for?”

“I didn’t get enough for dinner so I ate the mess you left on your face.” Peter retorted, and Wade was so pleased by the unexpected *familiar* snark that he let his tip-of-the-tongue response go and just laughed out loud instead.

The lightheartedness carried past dinner into their nightly hours by the fire, Peter secure and humming on Wade’s lap as he watched another whittled toy take shape.

“I think the flowers should be bigger.” Peter felt the edges of a sanded smooth flower petal. “Everybody likes big flowers. Also I think you should add a bumble bee right here. In my timeline the bees are on their way to going extinct and a fat little bumble bee would be adorable right there. Oh and I think—”

“Aren’t you just full of opinions tonight.” Wade said in mock exasperation. “You got a better idea how to do this, you do it then.” he handed Peter the small knife and waited while his mate stared down at the blade and then over at the half formed toy. “Hm? What’s that? Do I hear crickets cos my mouthy mate suddenly doesn’t have anything to say?”
“It’s a beautiful toy.” Peter said crossly and Wade chuckled at him, dropped a kiss on the Omega’s cheek and took the knife back. “And you’re very talented.”

After a moment— “I don’t mind your opinions, sweetheart.” Wade set to work carving an appropriately chunky bumble bee out of the wood above the flower. “I’m just glad you’re talking to me again.”

“Yeah.” The Omega turned into his arms a little more. “I um— I’m sorry, Alpha. I’m sorry for how I yelled at you.”

“You don’t have to be sorry, my mate.”

“I really do.” Peter countered quietly. “Because I couldn’t get past what I was feeling to think about how hard it all was for you.”

“Pete—”

“You died, Wade.” the Omega interrupted. “And that wasn’t– obviously I can’t say it was easy for me. But what you went through with the lion and hurting like that, and you said you just wanted to get home so I could hold you through the worst of it but then I screamed at you when you tried to tell me you were okay. I screamed at you.”

“Shock and grief is a bitch, my mate.” Wade shook his head. “You don’t need to apologize.”

“I’m apologizing anyway.” Peter purred into the Alpha’s throat, scraped his teeth over Wade’s pulse and hummed when he felt it pick up in response to the touch. “Not for how I reacted but for taking so long to realize you are hurting too.”

And softer, “Alpha my Alpha, I’m so glad you wanted to come back this time.”

Wade set his knife aside and cupped Peter’s chin for a kiss that nearly melted the Omega in his arms and then because he so badly wanted to see his mate smile again, the Alpha deadpanned, “I’ll always come back, Pete. Have you seen your butt? That’s worth resurrecting forever for.”

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Later, when the Alpha finally put away the near finished toy, he patted at the honestly delightful rump and told his mate, “Let’s go to bed, Pete. It’s late and I want to hold you.”

“For the record, I feel like spanking is a whole other level of enough we have yet to arrive at.” Peter informed him as he clambered out of Wade’s lap and the Alpha bared his fangs in a teasing smile, but his snarky reply slipped away into awe when Pete began undressing for bed.

Wade would never get enough of this– the casual way Peter tossed his shirt like the sight of so much perfection didn’t make the Alpha’s breath catch, the easy way he wriggled out of pants as if the expanse of long long leg didn’t make Wade’s stomach clench in longing. And Peter ducking under the covers before ditching his underwear was wholly innocent in the most endearing of ways and Wade would never get enough.

But he really would never get enough of Peter laying back into the pillows and opening his arms expectantly, waiting with a smile for Wade to join him.

My mate.
There will never be enough nights like this.

Wade shucked his shirt and pants and settled under the blankets, chuckling a little when Peter immediately glommed on to him, then backed away to fuss and tug at his briefs.

“Give a man two seconds to get undressed, Pete.” the Alpha laughed. “Damn.”

“No, I don’t think I will.” Peter plastered himself right back to Wade the second the last bit of clothing was gone, winding their legs together and locking his arms around Wade’s waist, sighing in relief when they were pressed heart to heart and the steady *thump thump* of his Alpha was beating into his skin. “You feel good, my mate.”

“You feel good too, Omega.” Wade tried hard to ignore the Omega’s cock at his thigh and focused instead of how much clearer Peter’s scent had become in the last week, how the honeysuckle had leveled out sweet and steady, the lavender sleepy and *luring*. It had nearly sent him to his knees the first day Peter scented *normal* again, and Wade had taken it to heart as a good sign that his mate was moving past what had happened, that perhaps the Omega was believing everything Wade had promised, that maybe Peter was getting closer to trusting their bond again.

That hope grew brighter when Peter stayed awake longer tonight, well past caught up on his missed sleep and seemingly content to feather kisses across Wade’s collarbone and curve of his throat, to wind their fingers together and squeeze at the Alpha’s palm, to drag his toes up the back of Wade’s calf and use the leverage to stay close enough to feel the rise and fall of his mate’s every breath.

“Alright?” Wade asked later as the moon was rising and shining through the cabin window, and Peter was still wide awake. “Having a hard time sleeping?”

“Having a hard time wanting to sleep and miss out on this.” The Omega replied, leaning in for kiss the Alpha was quick to scoot forward and give. “Mmm, Alpha, kiss me again? A real one this time.”

“Shit, Pete I was startin’ to think you’d never ask.” Wade huffed a laugh and kissed Peter again, and then *again* when the Omega parted his lips in an obvious invite.

They lost long moments in kisses that went on and on and *on*, tongues tangling and teeth stinging just lightly *always lightly* until an unsteady breath caught on a moan, until the moan translated to grasping fingers at sides and then *lower*, a shift of hips more purposeful than the previous when a questioning touch was answered tentative but eager all the same.

Wade ghosted his palms over Peter’s rear, but returned when the Omega pushed into the touch, and this time he gathered up big handfuls of the flawless curves and yanked Peter right up against him, rumbling low when the Omega broke their kiss to gasp, “Yes.” and “Alpha, *more*.”

“Peter.” Wade chased the kiss and groaned into his mate’s mouth when Peter lifted up into him, wedged a thigh between the Omega’s knees and groaned all over again when the covers lifted with their movements and he got a noseful of sweet Omega *slick*, cloying ad *heady* and *addictive*.

“Fuck you smell good.” the Alpha’s hands stuttered at Peter’s ass, kneading rough patterns into the sensitive skin. “My mate, you smell incredible.”

Peter purred at the compliment, arched his back and rubbed on his Alpha wantonly, then cried out in surprise when Wade flipped him over with no effort at all. The Omega *oohphed* when he was quite suddenly pinned face down to the mattress, then clenched his fingers into the sheets
and *keened* in delight when the Alpha stretched out nearly on top of him and he was held safe beneath his mate’s bulk.

“Enough?” Wade worked his knee between Peter’s legs again as he touched his lips to the Omega’s ear to ask, “Baby boy, *enough*?”

“No.” The noise Peter made was delicious, the unsubtle way he twisted closer so more of Wade’s weight lay against him, *gorgeous*. “You feel so good, Alpha my Alpha, don’t stop.”

“I’ve got you.” Wade spread his fingers wide across the Omega’s back, watching the flex and play of lean muscles as Peter tried to arc up into his palm. “My beauty, you are so perfect.”

“Beauty.” Peter echoed and Wade nodded, then realizing his mate couldn’t see the nod, decided to share his agreement by way of connecting the freckles on Peter’s shoulders with his lips. The Alpha dragged the hooked edges of his fangs down shoulder blades and the bump of vertebra and when Peter shivered and trilled encouragingly, Wade left a sharp bite at the dip of the Omega’s waist as well. He lingered over a long kiss in each of the twin dimples just above Peter’s ass and dipped his tongue into the shallow divots, tasting the arousal hovering on his mate’s skin and reveling in the openness he could feel from the Omega.

After so may days of feeling shut away, Wade would never have enough of being close again.

“Perfect.” Wade said again, and shifted his weight only enough to make room for his fingers to travel up and down Peter’s long legs, tickling lightly at the Omega’s knee and massaging at his calves. His mate obliged by bending his knee to offer Wade his foot and Wade pushed the blankets away to rub his thumb purposefully into the arch until Peter made a satisfied noise and went boneless in the blankets.

The Omega was bared to the low firelight now and Wade watched in fascination as gold flickered across his mate’s body, highlighting all the tempting places he couldn’t wait to know, casting shadows on the parts he had yet to discover.

*Perfect.*

“My mate.” he whispered and the corner of Peter’s mouth lifted in a smile. “You’re gorgeous.”

Peter was slipping under now, warm and safe in blankets that scented like *them*, his Alpha surrounding him, Wade’s cock burning hot onto his hip. Arousal and desire mixed in the Omega’s stomach and spread like liquid heat through his veins, limbs weighted and sluggish but not like they’d been the morning Wade had… had gone. Peter felt heavy and lazy and like he’d never ever want to leave this exact spot, not with his mate rumbling sweet praise into his ear and over his skin, and especially not when it hadn’t been more than a week since he’d thought he would never have this with Wade.

*I almost lost you.*

“Where are you, baby boy?” Wade leaned far over Peter’s body and mouthed along the shell of his ear, the hinge of the Omega’s jaw and down over the bonding spot. “You with me?”

“I’m here, Alpha.” Peter’s words were starting to slur, and he smiled again when he felt the bump of *hope* in his mate’s scent. “I’m still here with you. Don’t stop touching me.”

“I won’t.” Wade hesitated before bringing his fingertips along the inside of Peter’s thigh, pausing just short of the tell tale shine of *slick* from his Omega’s entrance. “Enough, my mate?”
Peter shook his head, took a deep breath and parted his thighs to make room for his Alpha’s fingers between. *Not enough.* “More, my mate. Please.”

Anticipation lit Wade’s hazel eyes dark red as he wiped through the slick, and raw *lust* blew sparks behind his temples when he shoved his fingers into his mouth and could finally taste his mate on his tongue. “Oh fuck, Omega you taste you so good.”

“My love.” Peter moaned, rocking through a jolt of *heat* that had him panting, twisting in the sheets as the haze hovering at the edge of his vision fuzzed even further, leaving him half blissed out with nothing more than a few touches and the sound of his Alpha *enjoying* him. “Wade, don’t stop.”

“Say it again.” The Alpha ordered, light *so so light* against his Omega’s entrance, light *so light* with the pad of his thumb as he circled the puckered rim, tasting blood when his fangs cut through his lip to quiet a hungry snarl when he came away *wet* with fresh arousal from his mate. “My Omega, say it again.”

“My love.” Peter drove his hips into the bed again, whining at the lack of friction for his cock even as he pushed back into the maddening bluntness at his hole. “Please? I’m – I’m–” he flushed at the words that nearly spilled out with his sudden neediness.

*I’m empty.*

And it wasn’t *sudden* neediness, not really. Before Wade had been hurt Peter had been half out his mind with need, leaking slick every time his Alpha growled, falling into day dreams that made his romance novels seem tame by comparison.

No, it wasn’t *sudden* neediness at all. Just the *same* neediness compounded by strained emotions, by fear and the resulting resolution, by an entire week of relearning everything about his Alpha and all the ways they fit together without even crossing that particular boundary.

It wasn’t *sudden* neediness but it was undeniable and all consuming and Peter knew without a doubt his Alpha was *right there* with him so he gathered his courage and tried to steady his voice and said—

– begged–

– *whimpered*, “I’m empty, Alpha my Alpha. *Empty.*”

This time Wade’s snarl broke free and echoed around the room, practically vicious in it’s intensity, and Peter’s whine wasn’t one of fear but one of *anticipation* when the Alpha pushed his legs open further and lay hot and *hard* against his ass, wicked fangs digging in at Peter’s throat for a tense, heart stopping few seconds.

*Yes.*

*More.*

Wade’s murmur of “Enough?” was answered with an arch of Peter’s back to rub himself into the Alpha’s cock, another check in and Peter all but sobbed through a litany of ‘*Yes yes yes*’ when Wade’s reached under the his stomach to circle Peter’s length, slipping through the wet gathering at the tip to ease his way up and down, up and down, *up and down* until his mate was humping into his fist and then pressing back in increasing desperation.

“Enough?” the Alpha asked before fitting his cock into the cleft of Peter’s ass, dragging the fat
head through the slick at the Omega’s thighs so he could thrust into the softness, swearing out loud every time Peter tried to grind up into each stroke. The Omega’s cock was twitching and leaking in Wade’s palm, driving him half mad with the need to see his mate lost in bliss and the need made the Alpha redouble his efforts, pushing aside his own blistering arousal so he could make Peter come first.

“Oh please Alpha.” Peter gasped when Wade twisted his wrist just right over the head of his cock. “Please please—” he cried when the pressure returned at his entrance, his entire body clenching around nothing, blanking his mind and popping behind his eyes. “Oh f-f-fuck. Alpha, Wade—”

“Tell me enough.” Wade demanded, pleaded maybe, giving his mate every chance to say no and to decide any of this was too far before either was carried away but Peter only shook his head, bared his neck and spread his thighs and whispered a ragged, “Alpha my Alpha, I need you.”

Fire at the Omega’s throat when Wade’s fangs pierced into his bonding spot, sinking through skin and past veins to puncture scent gland. Wade growled through a mouthful of pheromone laced blood, and the vibration rattled through the Omega’s center, clear to his entrance where Wade’s finger had only just moved inside, and Peter lost himself as the very first hint of pain turned to a flood of pure ecstasy when he could finally feel his mate.

The world went very still, very sharp and Peter thought maybe he could feel his heart beat slowing, his breath muted beneath Wade’s panting on his skin. Every inch of his body rippled hot, molten gold spilling from the burn of the Alpha’s fangs at his neck and spread clear through to the edge of his fingers, down to his toes as they curled in pleasure.

Only dimly, the Omega registered Wade rutting off against his ass and finally coming on his lower back and Peter purred in contentment when the Alpha fell forward against him and they could lay together to come down.

Sweat cooled, heartbeats synced and breathing settled and for a long time Wade stayed over Peter, thrusting idly through the pool of spend and stroking gently over the Omega’s softened length, lapping at the still bleeding marks at Peter’s throat and rumbling sweet nonsense to each of Peter’s quiet mewls, murmuring, “My mate, my Omega.” when Peter whispered his name.

“My love.” Peter’s first words were nearly inaudible, slurred and lazy and Wade pulled himself from the daze of a shattering orgasm enough to brush his fingers over Peter’s cheek and check his scent.

Clear honeysuckle and deep lavender and then a ribbon of cedar, warm and rich at the base of the Omega’s natural sweetness.

“Baby boy.” Wade hardly dared hope, but he asked anyway, “You with me?”

“M’with you, Alpha.” Peter was so far under he could barely speak and Wade loved it. “M’here. Jus’–jus’– floating.”

“Sweetheart.” the Alpha swallowed and leaned in to whisper, “Can you feel me?”

“….I feel you, Alpha.” Peter felt around for Wade’s hand and linked their fingers tight, keeping the Alpha over him for a long time. “I feel you, my mate.”

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“Felt like having the ground give out beneath me.” Peter was still hazy and under by the time Wade got them both cleaned up and resettled in bed, his dark eyes clouded with bliss and mouth lax.
and luscious as the Alpha kissed him over and over, unable to resist his mate when Peter was so very soft.

“What’s that, beauty?” Wade tucked Peter into his chest, rolled until the Omega was straddled up over his waist and held close over his heart. “What did you say?”

“Felt like the ground giving out.” Peter repeated, rubbing his nose into Wade’s chest. “When you were holding me like that. Felt like I should have fallen but all the sudden I could fly.”

“Oh.” Wade closed his eyes in relief and cuddled his mate closer. “That’s– I love that, Pete. That’s incredible.”

“You’re incredible.” the Omega whispered back, his newly cedar scent lifting with happiness. “My mate. I’m so happy you’re back, so happy you’re with me again.”

“I’ll never leave you again, Pete.” Wade let his hand settle possessive and protective at Peter’s hips, the other tangled up in messy brown strands. “I promise. I will always always be here with you.”

“I believe you.” Peter murmured. “My mate.. I believe you.”

The Omega fell asleep first tonight, lulled to easy slumber by the feel of his Alpha holding him safe, heart and soul firmly back in line with the bond that wound around and through their entire selves.

“Never again.” Wade whispered into his mate’s hair before dropping off to sleep hours later. “I will always be here for you.”

Outside the storm raged, the wind howled and snow piled up against the door, but inside Alpha and Omega were safe and more importantly, they were together, so the weather didn’t matter.

They were together and for now, nothing else mattered.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Ho-ho-holy long chapter, guys. The boys work through their newest level of intimacy with their patented brand of disaster flirting, Peter learns more about Wade’s past/ Vanessa/ Eddie and Venom and makes a sort of sweet confession to his Alpha, then we top it all off with some fluffy goodness. I love love demisexual!Pete.

Generic TW for mentions of violence related to Wade’s past and Eddie/Venom. Violence/gore to some extent is canon to both those characters, but it’s just mentioned and moved on from in this chapter. Eddie/Venom’s story is heartbreaking in this verse, so mind the additional warnings in chapter.

“Go back to sleep, Pete.” Wade mumbled. “S’too fuckin’ early for you to be looking at me so much. I can feel you staring.”

“The hell you can.” Came the pert reply. “Your eyes are closed, you don’t know what I’m doing.”

“How are you this sassy this early in the morning?” Wade rolled to his back and opened his eyes purposefully wide. “There, now my eyes are open and would you look at that? You’re staring at me. Go back to sleep.”

“Can’t sleep.” Peter pillowed his chin onto Wade’s chest, but when the Alpha’s gaze flickered in concern, he corrected, “I don’t want to sleep. I’ve only been awake a few minutes, though. I slept last night, don’t worry.”

“Glad you slept, baby boy.” Wade let his arm rest over the Omega’s shoulders, holding Peter comfortably close. “So why are you staring at me?”

“Cos you’re gorgeous.” Peter shrugged as if the reply made all the sense in the world, and turned his head so his ear lay over his mate’s heart. “Why wouldn’t I stare?”

“Sure, Pete.” The Alpha chuckled quietly and closed his eyes again. “Whatever you say. I’m surprised you’re even coherent right now, hard as you went under for me last night.”

“I was pretty far gone, wasn’t I?” Newly acquired habit had Peter tracing the still raised scars at Wade’s side where the mountain lion had ripped into him. “Felt good, though. Felt like coming home after being gone for a long time, like— like settling. Diving into the ocean and not being afraid of drowning even though I can’t breathe. I dunno, it’s hard to explain.”

“Thought you said it felt like flying.” Wade rubbed his thumb over the Omega’s bonding spot, moving carefully over the bruised bite mark. “What’s with all the different descriptions now?”

“Are you saying I can’t describe how you make me feel in two different ways?” Peter pinched at Wade’s side in playful exasperation. “I’m a journalist, Alpha. A writer. I’ve got a hundred different ways to describe any given circumstance, so don’t test me cos I’ll unleash them all.”

The Omega leaned into another pass at his bonding spot and trilled encouragingly when Wade lingered over the bite. “Doesn’t hurt, you know. Just feels good.”

“You’re lying.” Wade felt gingerly around the twin punctures. “That has to hurt, sweetheart. I bit you real hard and outta heat you don’t get all the hormones to take the pain away. You’re gonna be black and blue for a few days.”

“It doesn’t hurt.” Peter maintained and he meant every word. “Just feels good, just feels like…” he hesitated. “…you. Worth the bruising.”

“Worth the bruising, huh?” The Alpha dropped his free hand to Pete’s butt and used it as leverage to haul his mate up along his body. The moment they were face to face, he planted a firm kiss on Peter’s lips and asked, “Does that mean I can bite you some more?”

It was a deceptively loaded question– a quiet check on the bounds of their new enough, a not subtle request to do everything about last night all over again, an acknowledgement that maybe last night was further than either had planned to go, and the chance to talk about what happened before the day intruded and conversation was shelved for later.

A deceptively loaded question and Peter smiled when he read all the extras in his mate’s eyes.

“A thousand steps, right?” He smoothed his index finger along Wade’s jawline, tapped lightly at the Alpha’s nose. “Between knowing we are meant to be together and actually bonding.”

“That’s right.” The Alpha turned his nose into Peter’s palm and left a tiny kiss on his fingers. “A thousand steps.”

“MJ would never let me live this down.” Peter’s cheeks went pink with anticipation. “But yes Alpha, please bite me some more.”

Wade growled right on cue, flashing his hooked fangs and making the Omega shriek in surprise and then laugh out loud at him. “Oooh, scary vicious Alpha. Please bite me.”

“Maybe once you’re healed up and not so sore.” Wade licked over the sharp points, then tugged Peter in for another quick kiss. “Why would MJ never let you live something like that down? What’s wrong with admitting you like your mate to bite you?”

“Ugh, it’s stupid.” Peter settled back onto Wade’s broad chest, nuzzling at the Alpha’s throat and leaving a tiny bite of his own. “The day before I went to meet Cable, MJ was swooning over the Alpha in my romance novel. He’s fanged and has entirely too many muscles and awkwardly prominent nipples–”

Wade snorted a laugh and the Omega grinned. “–and she was saying how much fun it would be to reduce an Alpha to their basest instincts and have them push you up against a door and you know… grrrr.”

“Fuck, your growl is so sweet.” The Alpha’s hips lifted helplessly in an instant, interested reaction to the noise from his mate and Peter ground back into him for a few seconds, breath stuttering as he felt Wade thicken beneath him. “Do it again and then keep talking.”

“I think if I give my ultra scary growl again, there won’t be much talking at all.” Peter decided and Wade shrugged in unrepentant agreement. “Anyway, she said all that, I accused her of just being a horny Omega in need of a good knotting–”

“–and here you are wanting to be bitten.” Wade finished, and even though he couldn’t see the
Omega’s face at the moment, he knew from experience that Peter’s blush had darkened. “Does this mean I can call you a horny Omega and accuse you of needing a good knotting?”

“Do that and you might get bit where you don’t wanna get bit.” Peter threatened. “Let’s see how much of that particular appendage grows back!”

The Alpha made a high pitched, hilariously girly noise of outright fear, promptly letting go of his mate to cover more sensitive areas while the Omega all but cackled in delight at having won the upper hand in the conversation.

Wade muttered and grumbled at being threatened in his own house, but eventually he settled down and after receiving a conciliatory kiss on the cheek, even turned them in bed so they were tangled up together, nose to nose and forehead to forehead.

For a while all was quiet in the cabin, Alpha and Omega content to lie together in the early morning stillness and bask in the newness of their new normal. It was a relief to be laughing together again, comforting to hold each other all night long. There was an undercurrent of arousal lingering in their scents after the previous evening, but despite the nudity and occasional kisses, both lay relaxed and at ease together.

Wade lifted his chin to leave a kiss on Peter’s forehead and to breathe in his mate’s changing scent, possessiveness flashing through his core when he scented lines of cedar again. Peter’s scent was changing to resemble Wade’s own earther tones and when the Omega made a surprised noise and cuddled closer over Wade’s bonding spot, he knew Peter had discovered the sweetness winding through the usual dark of licorice as well.

“You smell good today, my mate.” The Omega left an open mouthed kiss over Wade’s pulse. “Stay in bed a little longer with me.”

Wade didn’t answer, not out loud at least, but Peter hummed happily when the Alpha’s grip tightened at his side and Wade’s scent mellowed in contentment.

He felt as if he could read everything from his Alpha today, every heart beat more clear and each breath more defined than Peter had ever noticed before. Every inch of Wade seemed important, from the length of Wade’s legs to the span of his chest, the callouses on the Alpha’s palms and the oddly familiar texture to the Alpha’s skin.

Peter’s neck was throbbing from the bites and even the bit of pain twisted into awareness of his mate— the curve of fangs and prick of dangerous edges, hazel eyes flashing red and a growl that got deeper the more Wade wanted.

That line of thought sent warmth skittering down the Omega’s spine, spreading into his core and settling as an ache between his legs, and the Alpha shifted next to him, murmuring, “Easy, my mate.” when Peter’s scent hazed in desire. “What are you thinking about?”

“N-nothing.” Peter bit his lip to quiet a little gasp, and tried for a more offended tone, “My thoughts are none of your business, nosy Alpha.”

“Ridiculous.” Wade left a quick swat on Peter’s rear and the Omega giggled. “Tell me why you scent so sweet.”

“I wasn’t really thinking about anything.” Peter admitted after a moment. “Just about how much I can feel from you this morning. Last night you asked me if I could feel you, and I thought it would be the same as before, but it’s more this morning. I can feel so much of you.”
“I can feel a lot from you too.” Wade slid his hand up Peter’s back to tangle in his hair. “And you don’t need to tell me everything you’re thinking, there’s only one reason your scent changes like that. Settle before you make me crazy, alright?”

“I’m settling.” Peter promised, and this time when his scent changed it was with a swell of wonder at the strength of their still growing bond.

For most of his life, Peter always assumed a bond was just a bite and a knot, the necessary physical joining of bodies to consummate a legal union. He’d known some couples who had never bonded at all, rings sparkling on their fingers but no silvered mating bite at their throats, and he hadn’t seen a difference between those relationships and others marked with teeth.

In a world where scent matching didn’t exist, and biologies were muted with suppressants and blockers, Peter had decided mating was completely unnecessary for a successful, long term relationship. There was no valid reason for someone to wear a mark of ownership other than a ring, what was the point of an Omega willingly giving an Alpha the chance to influence so much of their hormones and emotions and day to day life?

Marriage gave plenty of that, there didn’t need to be a biological component as well.

And perhaps that was still true for some people– mating less necessary than marriage, perhaps neither set of vows necessary at all. Peter hadn’t planned to do either of those things but here he was snuggled in bed with Wade his Alpha his mate, and Peter had never been so sure this was exactly what he wanted.

These few months with Wade had made it plainly obvious to the Omega that mating was more than a simple bite and a knot. It was making room for that person in every aspect of life, it was feeling thoughts align and heartbeats sync and scents combine, it was wanting to know everything about them and more importantly, being allowed to know everything.

Bonding meant that questions were answered and the searching was over, that the pang of empty would be filled, bonding meant safety and security, bonding meant knowing and being known and even without a silver mark at his throat, even without having experienced the weight of his Alpha’s knot–

“This is exactly what I want. What I was searching for my whole life. I can’t believe I finally found you.”

Peter didn’t mean to say the words out loud, but the Alpha heard the barely there whisper anyway and his entire being surged in happiness.

“My mate.” he answered in the same, nearly inaudible whisper and because there wasn’t any words to do the moment justice, Wade simply pressed Peter back into the pillows and fit his teeth over his Omega’s bonding spot, re-breaking skin and tasting blood all over again.

It hurt but the pain turned to drugging pleasure within a breath, and both Alpha and Omega moaned at the spark that resonated through their bodies. Last night Peter had arched into the bite and begged for more but this morning he went pliant and submissive beneath his Alpha, slim fingers gentle at Wade’s scalp as quiet permission to stay, one long leg hooked around Wade’s knee as a silent plea to never let go.

I love you.

My mate.
“I’m sorry about using an Alpha command on you by the way.” Wade said later, after they’d dragged themselves from bed and got ready for the day. “I um– I don’t like that sorta thing and to be honest, nowadays you get in a lotta trouble for forcin’ an Omega’s biology against them like that. You know I didn’t mean any harm and I’m real glad it all worked out, but I’m sorry all the same. I won’t do it again.”

“I know you didn’t mean any harm.” Peter answered promptly, pushing aside his questions about what sort of trouble Alpha’s got into for using commands, and reassuring his mate, “And you’re right, it all worked out. I settled and hushed and last night was amazing. It’s fine.”

“I won’t do it again.” the Alpha repeated. “I promise.”

“Well-l-l-l–” Peter buttoned his coat and shrugged. “Here’s something I never thought I would say. But I don’t mind if you tell me what to do sometimes, Alpha. You’d never hurt me.

“No.” Wade said immediately. “I sure wouldn’t. But Pete, I won’t–”

“I’m not saying you have to.” Peter stepped close to his mate and stood on his toes to kiss Wade sweetly. “I’m saying I trust you not to hurt me. Now come on. That goat’s gonna headbutt me half down the mountain if we don’t get in there and milk her.”

“Fine.” Wade hooked an arm around Peter’s waist and yanked him close for another kiss, bruising the Omega’s bottom lip with his fangs. “But then we should–”

His eyes widened when Peter’s scent rocked with arousal. “P-Pete? What’s up?”

“Chores.” Peter squeaked and turned on his heel, practically running out the door to the barn and leaving one confused and halfway to turned on Alpha behind in the cabin.

“Uhhhh… wow.”

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“This is nice.” The next afternoon, Peter knelt and ran his hand over a fur rug that definitely hadn’t been on the floor that morning, and looked up at his mate curiously. “Where did you get this? Do you have more storage I don’t know about? I feel like I would have noticed a big bearskin rug before now.”

“I keep it wrapped up and boxed in the lean to.” Wade passed his flask to Peter, watching with a smirk as his mate took a very tiny, very cautious sip of the moonshine. “Few years ago I helped some trappers that got caught up in a storm, let them hunker down in the cabin for a few days. They didn’t have much by way of supplies so I shared mine, and in return, they gave me this rug. It’s worth all sorts’a money down in the city, but I kept it instead. The money doesn’t do me a whole lot of good since I never leave Haven, and now it fits just right in the cabin.”

“Huh.” The Omega said a quiet prayer of relief that the rug wasn’t one with head and teeth and claws included, and turned a corner over to look at the stitching on the other side. “Well why’d you bring it in now?”

“Is this gonna bother you like dealing with the chickens bothered you?”
Peter smiled at the reminder of how panicked he’d been—how close to veganism he’d been—those first few days and shook his head. “No. I never felt any certain way about fur products. I never used them because I’d look frankly ridiculous in a fur coat, and taxidermy makes me uncomfortable but this rug doesn’t have eyes so no worries.”

Wade grunted in approval, and the Omega repeated, “Why did you bring it out now? It’s been cold for weeks, why the sudden need for a bear skin rug?”

“You spent a whole week staring at that spot.” Wade nodded towards the now covered area in front of the fire where he’d died. “And you don’t stare at it a whole lot now but I caught you looking at it last night and you uh—” the Alpha shook his head. “—you looked so sad, Pete. Figured it was about time I did something about it.”

“You’ve done plenty about me being sad.” Peter’s hand went automatically to his neck, to the still fresh bruise from yesterday morning. “I don’t need a rug—”

“I don’t want you to look at anything in here and feel sad.” Wade interrupted. “So we got a new rug and now we can sit here at night and talk and kiss and hold each other, maybe you’ll go all soft and floaty for me and we’ll get some good memories right in this spot, alright?”

Oh.

“My Alpha, you’re so sweet.” Peter jumped up and kissed his Alpha soundly. “Thank you. I have an idea how we can start on all that right away.”

“Oh yeah?” Wade raised his eyebrows, hazel eyes sparking red in anticipation. Even with their new enough, nothing more than kisses had happened in a few days, and the Alpha was beyond ready for more. “What did you have in mind?”

The Omega held up a small tub of lotion in one hand and oh Wade’s heart rate tripled—

—and then Peter held up his notebook in his other hand and announced, “I have a million questions about you and your healing and your past!”

Cockblocked by curiosity. That’s a new one. Wade’s heart rate went back to normal, but his smile stayed fond. “Yeah alright sweetheart. What’s the lotion for, though?”

“You bought it for me for my hands in Haven.” Peter explained. “Aloe lotion for when they get chapped from twisting hay or dealing with the animals, and I thought it would feel good on your skin.

The Omega pressed gingerly at a scar at Wade’s forearm. “I can work on your shoulders and back and ask questions? I know you’re still sore and I’ve been known to give pretty great back rubs.”

“You want to ask me a bunch of questions while rubbing me down with lotion?” Wade asked faux suspiciously. “That seems counterproductive, Pete. You get your hands on me and my brain sorta stops working.”

Peter’s lavender scent spiced abruptly, just like it had the other day and the Omega made a visible, concentrated effort to move past the moment while Wade watched in both amusement and curiosity.

What was going on with his wacky mate? If Pete wanted a kiss or something, all he had to do was take one.
“You alright, Pete?”

“Fine.” Peter was nearly scarlet, but he still shook his head and motioned towards the rug. “Assume the position, Alpha. Face down, ass up.”

Wade was too busy laughing at the outrageous expression to think anymore about why Peter had scented so vividly interested out of the blue, and once he was on the rug with his mate rubbing the soothing lotion all over his skin, the Alpha put it from his mind and let himself melt beneath his Omega’s hands.

“Feel good, Pete.” he mumbled, and the Omega nipped lightly at his bonding spot, whispering, “Oh Alpha, you feel good too.”

Wade blew out a deep breath and closed his eyes, concentrated on the cool aloe cream ad the warmth of Peter’s fingers as they skated carefully over the newer scars, then kneaded more purposefully into the older ones, breaking up knots and working at tense lines.

The Alpha didn’t know the last time anyone had really touched him at all, much less touched him to help relax overworked muscles or to calm his always irritated skin. The act of service from his mate had the Alpha almost purring in delight, and the quiet approving kisses Peter left on his shoulders and each sore spot had him loopy, just about floating really.

It had been a long time since Wade had been taken care of.

“My mate?” Wade ha been quiet for a long time when Peter put his lips to the Alpha’s ear and hummed softly. “Where are you? With me?”

“I’m here, Pete.” Just barely. “You ready to ask some questions?”

“I don’t have to.” Wade’s scent was soaked with longing and something needy, cedar and licorice and the hint of sweetness ringed with contentment and the Omega loved every bit of it. “Just relax, my mate.”

“Ask me questions.” Wade tried to sound reassuring. “S’fine Pete. Go on, you know you want to.”

Peter did want to, but he kept his voice soft and hands comforting so his Alpha wouldn’t slip out of near euphoria, and asked, “Will you tell me about growing up? About your mutation?”

“Hmm.” the Alpha sighed, shifted, but nodded into the rug. “Alright. I uh– I dunno when I was born exactly, but I was old enough that the neighbors called me the man of the house. I remember my Pa coming home from fightin’ the English for independence and life got real shitty, real quick after that. He stopped hittin’ redcoats and started hittin’ us instead. Dunno if he was a mutant but I’m pretty sure my Ma was mutant, or at least a bonafide angel.”

Peter’s hands stilled for a moment, eyes closing in quiet grief before asking, “Why do you say that?”

{{Author’s Note: It's Deadpool canon that Thomas Wilson was an abusive piece of shit. TW for brief mentions of domestic violence}}
“Cos she made sure Pa never laid a hand on me.” Wade said flatly. “And the day she was gone, all that protection went away.”

“I– I’m sorry, Alpha.”

“It was a fever.” Wade grimaced over a particularly sore spot and Peter gentled his touch. “Got me and Ma real bad, and when I finally woke up she was gone. I think that’s when my mutation kicked in, cos there was no way I should have survived. She was gone and everything got worse between me and Pa.”

“When did you know for sure your mutation had been triggered?”

“Right about the time I presented as an Alpha?” the Alpha hazarded a guess. “It was only a year or so after Ma passed. Pa said I was getting too cocky, swagglin’ around the place like I was top Alpha so he decided to put me in my place and broke my arm in a few different places.”

“He what?”

“S’alright, my mate.” Wade rumbled comfortingly when the Omega whined in distress. “Bones were all healed before I made it out of the cabin, so I just kept right on walking. Figured if Pa couldn’t kill me, there wasn’t much out there that could and I was old enough to make my way in the world.”

“So what did you do after that?” Peter scooted down till he was sitting on Wade’s rear and could dig his fingers into the base of his Alpha’s back. “You were just a kid when you presented right? Fourteen, maybe fifteen?”

“That’s practically grown, Pete. Or at least old enough to hold a gun.” the Alpha grunted. “Funny thing about healing from everything is that you get real fearless, and being fearless leads right into a knack for killing whether from talent or sheer recklessness. I tried the militia, but found better money as a mercenary.”

“You–” Peter’s hands faltered again. “You killed people for money?”

“Every war needs soldiers, Pete.” Wade hadn’t thought about his time as a mercenary in years, and his scent soured in remembrance of all the blood he’d spilled.

“Every war needs soldiers.” he repeated. “And on this continent, there is always a war. I was good at it. The fight kept me away from home, away from the cabin and all the memories of Ma, kept me from wanting to settle down too quickly or giving in to how lonely I was all the time. Collected my paycheck and collected my scars and kept right on going.”

“You were lonely.”

“Every day.”

“Well, what convinced you to stop?”

“…Vanessa.” A picture of long dark hair and wickedly bright eyes flitted through the Alpha’s mind, delicately curved fangs and a growl to rival Wade’s own ringing as memory in his ears. “Vanessa convinced me to stop.”

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“I think I know Doctor Banner.” Peter paused in tossing hay into Arthur’s stall and leaned against
the pitchfork to peer down at his Alpha on the barn floor. “He looks familiar for some reason.”

“I’m sure there’s lots of doctors with hilarious hair and big glasses, Pete.” Wade countered
nonchalantly. “Think it’s a rule or something for them.”

“Thank you for that.” Peter scowled and kicked a tuft of hay down at his mate. “But I’m serious, I
really think I know him. Or you know, not know him. But I think I read about him in one of my
science classes before I switched degrees. He’s not from this time either, is he?”

“Nope.” Wade patted at the goat and sent her away, then scooped out some oats for Bea. “I don’t
know when the Doc is from exactly but he’s been here since before the last big war. Cable brought
him to Haven, introduced him around and Banner’s been here ever since. Long time, I guess.”

“What’s a long time to you?” Peter moved over to Bea’s stall to give her fresh hay. “Twenty years?
Fifty? When you’re over a hundred years old, what’s a ‘long time’ for you?”

“Couldn’t tell you, sweetheart.” Wade confessed. “No real reason to keep track of time when
nothing much changes, you know? Especially here. Most of us in Haven either age real slow or
don’t age at all and since I live up here, winter sticks around for so long I can’t even measure a
year by the seasons, not accurately anyway. I can go an entire winter without seeing anyone else,
but how long is that? Five months? Eight months? I’ve got no idea.”

“Right.” Something sad tugged at Peter’s heart over his Alpha’s words. “Time is irrelevant when
you live forever.”

“Sorry, Omega.” the Alpha apologized. “I’ve got no idea how long Doc has been around, but I bet
Eddie could tell you though, bet he could tell you to the exact day.”

“Why’s that?”

“Eddie is the whole reason Doc is in Haven.” Wade trilled to Arthur, patting at the old war horse’s
nose. “Cable brought Banner around to keep Eddie under control.”

“Under control.” The Omega echoed, with more than a twinge of uneasiness. “Why? Is that
because of whatever is inside of Eddie? What happened?”

“Shit, Pete, that’s not a good story.” Wade finished in Arthur’s stall and coaxed the horse back
inside onto the clean hay. “You don’t wanna ask questions about that one.”

“No?” Peter challenged. “I asked Clint if he used feathers for his nest. You think I don’t want to
know about Eddie?”

{{Author’s Note: TW for mentions of kidnapping, implied assault, and Eddie/Venom canon
typical violence}}

“Yeah, you did ask Clint about a nest.” Wade chuckled. “Alright um– I guess it’s been long enough
now it won’t hurt to talk about it. The shorter, less bloody story is that one day Eddie’s mate Anne
went missing. Turns out she was snatched by a contingent of soldiers from the fort a few valleys
over, and they took her back to the post.”

Peter set the pitchfork aside and furrowed his brow as he thought over everything he’d studied
about this area before meeting Cable. “I didn’t know there was a fort up here.”

“There isn’t anymore.” The Alpha set his jaw, eyes flickering red with unease. “There used to be,
but there isn’t anymore.”

“Shit.”

We told Eddie to stay behind in Haven and we’d go bring Annie home but he didn’t listen. Can’t blame the guy, no one would keep me from going to rescue my mate either but when Eddie saw what they’d done to Anne, he let that thing inside him out into the open and there—” Wade swallowed hard. “There was nothing we could do, Pete. We couldn’t stop him. We didn’t stand a chance.”

“So what did you do?” Peter whispered. “ Afterwards.”

“We cleaned up.” he said flatly. “After that thing was finished and it was just Eddie again, we cleaned up. Burned anything left standing and buried anything that didn’t burn. It only took a few hours because he– they– had destroyed everything.”

“Eddie was broken after that.” the Alpha continued, softer now. “He was ruined. We used to fight and laugh and drink together, he was one of my friends, right along with Clint and Logan and after that he was just ruined. Tried to die a few times but whatever that thing is, kept it from happening, kept Eddie from getting some fuckin’ peace. Nobody should have to live after that, but that thing wouldn’t let him go.”

“What did you do? How did Bruce get here?”

“A mutant from Westchester came up to Haven.” Wade motioned for Peter to jump down from the loft, and caught his mate easily, handling Peter’s slight weight without even grimacing. “His name was Charles and he was a real powerful telepath. He put some sort of blanket effect over the area, ended up convincing everyone that there wasn’t a fort, that nothing had happened, that Eddie was fine. That sort of thing doesn’t work on me and Logan though, but who would we tell? Who would believe us?”

“Charles spent weeks holed up with Eddie putting blocks in his mind so he wouldn’t remember what happened to Anne and what he’d done afterwards and then Cable showed up with Doc Banner a while after that, and it’s just the way things are now.”

“So no one outside of Haven knows what happened?” Peter picked up the basket of eggs and followed his Alpha towards the door. “A fort and all the soldiers just disappeared and no one knows?”

“Eventually someone will come along who knows there’s supposed to be a fort up here.” Wade acknowledged. “But they won’t find anything.”

“And Eddie is stuck like this?” Peter thought back to the way Eddie had seemed only half coherent, how the thing inside him– them– was so horrible. “Halfway between himself and a monster? He could barely put a sentence together when I met him.”

“He isn’t always that bad.” Wade said grimly. “Being half alive like this is better than how he was after Anne. Sometimes I think that thing is the worst thing to ever happen to Eddie, sometimes I know it’s the only thing saving my friend from tearing himself apart at the seams.”

“And Bruce?”

“Cable said that whatever Eddie has isn’t a match for whatever Doc has.” Wade grabbed the milk bucket and reached for his Omega’s hand, squeezing lightly. “They balance each other out, or maybe cancel each other out, I dunno. Apparently Doc knows a lot about losing out to monsters,
but none of us have seen his mutation. He scents off like Eddie does, so maybe he’s got one of those things too. Maybe Cable brought him to Haven cos Doc handles it all better and can take care of Eddie. Whatever the reason is, he and Eddie trust each other. They keep each other safe, which means the rest of us are safe too.”

“That’s so sad.” Peter hunched close to Wade’s shoulder when they stepped back out into the cold. “I can’t imagine losing a mate to something so horrible, but to rage out like that? To need the evidence burned and for blocks to be put in people’s minds? That seems…” he shook his head. “I can’t imagine.”

“Oh I can.” Wade pushed Peter ahead into the cabin and shut the door behind them, prodding his mate towards the fire to get warm. “If someone tried to take my mate away from me, I’d unleash hell Pete.”

“Well sure you’d be upset but–”

“They used to call me Deadpool.” Wade’s eyes flickered bloody red in the firelight, fangs glinting when he snarled. “When I was a mercenary, they called me Deadpool. I carried a rifle and a pistol and two swords on my back. Wore red so no one would see me bleed and since I couldn’t die, all they ever knew was that I never stopped walking towards them. I got rid of all that after Vanessa but if anyone had tried to take her away from me, or if anyone ever hurt you like they hurt Anne, there wouldn’t be a corner of this fuckin’ world I wouldn’t cover in carnage.”

“Alpha.”

“I saw what Eddie did to those men” The words were nothing more than a growl. “And I’d do the same thing two times over. No one will ever hurt my mate. Ever.”

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“My mate?” Peter hadn’t said much since their talk the previous afternoon when Wade had announced so viciously what he would do if anyone tried to hurt his mate, but this morning the omega pushed aside his breakfast and reached for his mate’s hand. “You said time doesn’t mean anything to you.”

“Not really.” Wade lifted the Omega’s fingers to his mouth for a kiss. “Is that weird for you? You used to complain that you never knew what day it was when you wrote in your notebooks. Is it weird that I don’t mark that sort of thing?”

“How–” Peter worried at the inside of his cheek. “How long have I been here, Alpha? How long have you known me?”

“You’ve been here seventy six days.” Wade didn’t even hesitate to answer. “Seventy five since you woke up, but seventy three altogether. Why?”

“No reason.” Peter flushed in pleasure, lavender and honeysuckle rolling sweet with elation. “I was just curious.”

“Seventy six days.” Wade leaned over the table and kissed his mate for a long time. “Time matters for the important things, Pete. It matters for you. Every single day I get with you matters. I will always know exactly how long you’ve been mine.”

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“Tell me about Vanessa.” Peter stretched out on the bear skin rug and folded his hands behind his head, turning his head so he could see his Alpha whittling. “Your first mate. Was she a soldier?”

“Why do you want to hear about Vanessa, Pete?” Wade scraped the tip of his blade along the roly poly body of a soon to be bumble bee to create one of the signature stripes on the insect. “Why curious all the sudden?”

“I’m curious about everything” Peter reminded him. “I had my notebook and a million questions, remember?”

“I vividly remember the million questions.” The Alpha laughed quietly and nudged his foot out until it rested at his mate’s side. “Why Vanessa though?”

“Well you don’t have to talk about her if you don’t want.” Peter propped himself up on his elbow and breathed in deep to check the Alpha’s scent for any insecurity or anger. “But it doesn’t bother me.”

“It doesn’t bother you to talk about my first mate.”

“Does it bother you?” The Omega returned. “It doesn’t bother me, Alpha. Vanessa was a whole lifetime ago and I don’t doubt that you—” love me. “— want me as yours. I’d like to know about her because she was important to you. She was part of you and I want to know that part of you too. I want to know everything about you, Alpha.”

“Oh yeah?” Wade focused on carving another stripe on the bee so it wasn’t quite as obvious how affected he was by the simple sentence.

_I want to know everything about you, Alpha._

Sometimes Wade forgot about little moments like these, moments where mates learned to know each other. So often a bond was complete before the _knowing_ even began, the physical mating rushed through to soothe the _itch_ beneath their skin and then in the years that followed, a pair would have to learn and grow and find all the ways they completed each other.

But it was different with Peter, some would say backwards even. He and Wade spent hours just talking, mornings cooking together and afternoons figuring out how to make the other laugh, evenings mapping each others bodies above and under clothes. There was no silver bite at Peter’s throat but Wade thought he knew the Omega completely without it, and though their kisses were _heated_, the Alpha still reveled in the freedom to count Peter’s freckles and to understand the different smiles and to recognize every single dip and lift of his mate’s scent.

Little moments like _these_ were when mates became one in all the beautiful ways, and Wade had forgotten just how amazing the little moments could be.

“Alpha?” Peter sat up and wrapped his hand around Wade’s ankle, squeezing lightly. “Where’d you go? If you don’t want to talk about her, it’s alright, I just thought—”

“She would have liked you.” Wade kept his eyes trained on the bumble bee taking shape on the toy. “Vanessa’s life had made her hard, harder than other Alpha’s because she was female and she was gorgeous and somehow that means she had to be twice as tough as anyone. But she would have liked you, would have been soft with you like she was soft with me.”

“Oh.” The Omega scrunched his nose in open delight. “You think so?”

“I know so.” Wade put the toy down only long enough to pull Peter up to his lap, then went back to
carving. “Vanessa wasn’t a soldier, I paid for her company the first night we met. I was coming off a job and she was working in the bar and I couldn’t take my eyes off her. I offered her every bit of money in my pocket to spend the night with me, she told me I could have an hour, I argued that we’d just be getting started in an hour and Vanessa—”

The Alpha chuckled. “Vanessa laughed until she fell off the bar stool at the idea that anyone could make it an hour in bed with her. She told me I’d either be up and done and deflating before she finished undressing, or I’d be begging for mercy before the half hour mark.”

“Wait.” Peter laughed at his mate. “Wait. You promised her an hour of good times, and she said you were either a quick draw or a quitter?”

“Yep. That’s right.”

“And you still wanted to sleep with her?!”

“Oh it gets better.” Wade tucked the Omega tighter to his chest. “My healing factor means I can be ready over and over all night long—”

“What?! I didn’t know about that!”

“—well, you were due to find out eventually. Anyway, when Vanessa didn’t wear me out in that first half hour, she took it as a challenge and we ended up spending the night together.”

“So what.” Peter was still stuck on the whole all night long thing. “You guys had marathon sex and when no one won, you just fell asleep? Then what happened?”

“I rolled out of bed in the morning and tried to get dressed.” Wade turned the toy over and started on the other side. “Vanessa laughed at me and told me I was stupid if I thought I was walking away now. We mated right then and there, packed her stuff and walked out the door together.”

“You knew that fast? That she was meant to be yours?”

“That fast.” The Alpha confirmed. “She stopped working the cat house, I stopped the mercenary work, we built a cabin and lived our life. She was fierce and funny and if I hadn’t loved her so much, I’d be insecure that she was a scarier Alpha than me. Everything was a contest and she almost always won.”

Peter muffled a laugh over the idea of a pretty female being scarier than his mate. “Are you serious?”

“To be fair, she cheated.” Wade countered. “Anytime she’d thought she would lose anything, she’d just take her top off. Have you ever seen a woman shoot a gun topless, Pete? I didn’t stand a chance.”

“That sounds very unfair.” Peter laughed up at him again. “Poor Alpha.”

“Yeah well, I’d never been happier to lose a contest in my life.” Wade’s scent dulled towards melancholy, and the Omega on his lap went very still. “Vanessa got sick one year and never quite shook it. I’d gone so long healing from everything, and she was so fearless that I forgot the people I loved could even get hurt. But she got sick and I lost her, and after I lost her, I lost myself.”

“You went back to war.”

“I went back to killing.” The Alpha corrected. “Picked up my swords again and went back to killing
and that’s just what I did until Logan found me. He dragged me up here to Haven, helped me build the cabin and I’ve been here ever since.”

“Did you have any children?” Peter smoothed careful fingers over the toy, his heart clenching thinking of his Alpha carving gifts for his and Vanessa’s children, rambunctious boys and smartmouthed little girls who would be delighted to have their Papa make trinkets to play with. “Or— or try for children?”

“No.” Wade’s steady carving faltered for a second. “No children. My mutation means I hover somewhere between living and dead and that’s not the sort of biology that allows for kids. We were happy just the two of us, and after she passed, I think maybe I was relieved to not have a couple brats running around. I lost myself after Vanessa, and kiddos would have suffered for it and that just isn’t right. S’what my Pa did to me and the lifestyle’s gotta end sometime, right? Ending terrible cycles?”

“Right.” The Omega twined his fingers over Wade’s and pressed comfortingly at him. “But it makes me sad that you’ve been alone all this time.”

“I’m not alone anymore.” Wade leaned his cheek into Peter’s hair and closed his eyes. “You want kids, Pete?”

“I never imagined I’d have any.” Peter answered honestly. “But I never imagined I’d want a mate either so…”

He let the sentence trail off, and Wade nodded against his temple, gathered his courage and asked softly, “Well, can you settle for just a mate? Just— just this? Just me and you?”

“Alpha my Alpha.” Peter took the toy and knife from his mate, then wriggled sideways on Wade’s lap and drew gentle fingers over the Alpha’s brow, down his cheek to rest at Wade’s mouth. “What makes you think I’m settling?”

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Something was going on with Peter.

The Omega was fidgety in bed, restless and unable to stay asleep for more than an hour at a time. Sometimes he glommed on to Wade’s body and other times Peter acted as if he didn’t want to touch the Alpha at all.

Peter talked a lot, which wasn’t really anything was nothing new, but now it seemed like he was chatting just to fill the silence, words forming rapid fire from the Omega every time Wade paused in conversation, Peter’s voice almost too loud in moments that deserved quiet.

Wade caught Peter staring at off moments, biting at his lip and clenching his fist while his scent swelled hot and other times, the Omega snapped his head around to look at the wall when Wade undressed. Lingering kisses were cut off abruptly, perfunctory passing kisses made the Omega whine and Wade was confused.

He was just outright confused.

At first the Alpha thought Peter was still working through some lingering angst from The Incident, but as the days went on, Wade had to think his mate was being more affected by their often serious talks than Peter wanted to admit.
And that— that was understandable. Sure it had been almost therapeutic for Wade to open up about his past and tell those stories without fear of judgment or disgust from his beautiful mate, but it couldn’t be easy for Peter to hear about how awful Thomas Wilson had been to Wade growing up. It was most likely uncomfortable to talk about dangerous mutants like Eddie and the blood soaked ground they had left behind, and despite Peter’s quiet reassurance, it had to be unsettling or maybe even upsetting to spend hours talking about Vanessa.

Peter struggling with all of that was understandable, so Wade tried to give his mate space to work through the conflicting feelings and tried to just be patient until Peter was ready to talk.

But after several days with no change in sight, the Alpha gave up trying to tip toe through the conflicting signals and confronted Peter about it over lunch.

“My mate.” He waited until Peter looked up from his sandwich. “What is going on with you?”

“Nothing.” Peter said quickly, too quickly. “Nothing’s wrong, Alpha. Why? What’s going on with you?”

“Nothing.” Wade folded his arms and squinted at his Omega. “But something is going on with you. You’re clingy and then not clingy, you’ve been wanting to talk about all sorta things and say it doesn’t bother you then you can’t talk to me after. Some days you look at me like you wanna tear my clothes off, but then you pull away from kisses like I’ve burned you or something. What’s going on?”

“Wade—”

“I can’t read your mind, Pete.” the Alpha interrupted bluntly. “And I know after the lion you had a real hard time so I was being patient, but this is enough. Tell me what’s wrong and what I can do to fix it so I can stop worrying.”

“No really, nothing’s wrong. I just—” Lavender and honeysuckle twisted anxious and Wade automatically rumbled low in an attempt to calm his mate. “I just um—”

“Talk to me, sweetheart.”

“Holy shit, I’m so bad at this.” Peter dug his fingers into his hair and groaned out loud. “I’m sorry Alpha, I didn’t mean to stress you out. I’m so bad at this.”

“So bad at what, Pete?”

“At this!” The Omega burst out. “At being sexy with you!”

“…being sexy with me.” It was only the anxious rapidly turning to frustration in his mate’s scent that kept Wade from laughing. “This is— you are—” he cleared his throat to quiet a burble of incredulous laughter and tried again. “What do you mean, trying to be sexy? Can you explain that?”

“I have never needed an Alpha outside the last possible moment of my heat.” Peter explained to the top of the table, too embarrassed to meet his Alpha’s gaze. “Never even wanted an Alpha really. So I have no idea how to—” the Omega made a broad gesture that meant exactly nothing. “— you know?”

“Um—” the Alpha pursed his lips. “Nope. Gonna need more than that.”

“We’ve been talking about some really serious things lately.” Peter pointed out. “And it’s been
really great to connect with you like that. I already felt like I knew you, but now I feel like I really know you and it’s incredible.”

“It’s been good for me too, Omega. But if it’s starting to stress you out–”

“Not stressing me out.” Peter denied. “Sort of the opposite actually.”

Wade waited with raised eyebrows and after another minute the Omega admitted, “We sorta crossed a big line a few days ago, Wade. A big one. But we’ve been so busy talking that we haven’t um– revisited?– that line and I don’t know– I mean, is there a nice way to ask you to pin me down and get me off, or…?”

The Alpha didn’t mean for his eyes to about pop from his head, neither did he mean for his jaw to practically dislocate when his mouth dropped open, and he certainly didn’t mean to shout “What?!” out loud but honestly, out of all the ways he’d thought this conversation would go, his Omega wanting to know if there was a nice way to ask for an orgasm hadn’t made the list.

“Is there a nice way to what?!”

“Never mind, I shouldn’t have said anything. This is so stupid.” There were real tears in Peter’s eyes as he got to his feet with a huff and stomped away, slamming the door behind him as he went. “Leave it alone, Alpha!”

Wade left it alone for all of five minutes, then went to find his mate and try for a real conversation again, not willing to let it go when Peter was so weirdly upset by it, and certainly not willing to let it go when the talk could end with his Omega naked.

He found the Omega in the barn brushing Arthur, and he leaned against the stall door to watch for several minutes before finally asking, “Pete. Are you telling me you’ve been weird lately cos you’re horny?”

Peter grit his teeth, worked studiously at a spot in Arthur’s coat and muttered, “I’m not good at this, Alpha. We are mates and that makes the emotional stuff all okay. I know in my heart and my soul that we’re supposed to be together so whatever I’m feeling is fine, and usually I’m okay with saying it to you too but…”

Wade swooped in and smacked a kiss on his mates cheek, and Peter blinked at him in confusion.

“Keep talking.” The Alpha went back to leaning on the stall door. “I just love when you say things like that, about us being mates and meant to be. Keep talking.”

“Oh.” Peter’s smile was a little shy, and he continued in a softer tone, “I feel like I’ve told you this before, but I’ve never had a serious relationship. I’ve never even hooked up with people outside of heat. I used to get made fun of for it, called Pete the Virgin or Pete the Prude or about a thousand other things from people who thought sex was the most important thing in the world. Everyone I knew was hooking up in high school and college outside of heat, and I never did. I never did. I never wanted to and I had too much going on to waste time on relationships I knew weren’t going anywhere.”

“Keep talking.” Wade said again and the Omega sighed, shoulders hunching self consciously. “I’ve never had an Alpha outside of heat. I don’t even know what to do with one. I don’t know how to act–” another one of those broad gestures. “– or you know–” yet another gesture that meant absolutely nothing. “Right? I don’t know how to do that. How to kiss you and– and all that.”
“You’ve never been shy about kissing me.” Wade disagreed, latching on to the one part of Peter’s less than stellar explanation he understood. “You almost ate my face this morning, remember?”

“I did almost eat your face.” Peter conceded and the Alpha flashed his fangs in a teasing, encouraging smile. “And when kissing was enough for us then it was fine but now our enough is different, isn’t it? We aren’t just kissing anymore.”

“We aren’t just kissing anymore.” Wade agreed slowly, still trying and failing to figure out where Peter was going with it all. “Is that a problem?”

“It’s only a problem because I’m making myself anxious about it.” Peter switched to working at Arthur’s mane so he wouldn’t have to look at his mate. “That’s why I’ve been weird. It’s like I’ve built this moment up in my head so much and now I don’t know how to just start it. Trying for a second time didn’t seem like a big deal after we were in bed that one night, but then we spent so much time talking about serious things and I started worrying about timing, because It’s unsexy to talk about what happened to Eddie or Bruce or with your Pa.”

“…unsexy…?”

“And it’s definitely weird to bring it up after we’ve sat and talked about your other mate? That’s not the right time. Then I thought about just creating a mood, but I don’t know how to do that. No experience with how to create a mood or what to say to create the mood. And then, what would I do if you didn’t want to do anything because I’d ruined the mood with all my questions and…”

“Pete.” Wade finally held up his hand to stop the rambling. “What are you talking about? What moment? What mood?”

“Okay, um.” Peter rubbed at the back of his neck and blushed bright red. “Alpha, I dunno how to take the conversation from how many eggs the chickens are laying, to asking if you’d like to eat me out till I come on your face. I feel like there’s no tactful way to do that, especially in light of everything we’ve been talking about. But that’s exactly what I want, and since I can’t seem to figure out the most reasonable time to bring it up, you can see why I’ve been awkward, right?”

“…right, Alpha?” he repeated when Wade didn’t answer. “You understand?”

Arthur startled in his stall when the Alpha practically roared with laughter, and when Peter scowled angrily, Wade only laughed louder, clutching at his side and full on guffawing at his mates ridiculousness.

“You know what?” The brush bounced off Wade’s head when Peter winged it at the obnoxious Alpha. “Comment withdrawn. Opportunity lost. Leave me alone, I have chores to do.”

Wade was still cackling something about “tactful” and “middle of the day” when Peter stalked back to the cabin, and the Omega briefly considered barring the door and making his mate sleep outside for the night.

“Idiot Alpha.” He muttered. “I’ll get myself off. Who needs him?”

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Peter was still embarrassed a full hour later when Wade finished some work on the barn and came to knock at the cabin door, calling through the thick wood– “My Omega. Let me in so we can talk.”

“The door’s unlocked.” Peter turned his back on the door and tucked further into bed. “And it’s
“Your cabin, you don’t have to ask to come in.”

“Yeah, I know,” the Alpha slipped inside and shut the door gently. “But I thought I’d give you the option of kicking me out if that’s what you wanted.”

Silence from the Omega shaped lump beneath the blankets, and Wade went to get one of the chairs from the fireplace, dragging it over to the bedside.

“I shouldn’t have laughed at you.” he started first. “But you sorta caught me off guard with all that. I was really worrying that you were still having a hard time with me dying and I was trying to figure out how to fix it. I really wasn’t expectin’ you to say you were horny.”

“I didn’t say I was horned.” the blankets said crossly. “I said I was–”

“Anxious.” The Alpha cut in. “Right. Which is worse cos I hate that you’d be anxious about anything with us, sweetie. Whether you’ve done this before with another Alpha or not, this is me Pete. It’s us. The first day we met, you asked to see my butt. You initiated our first kiss. I guess I don’t understand why it’s suddenly so hard for you to be with me.”

“It’s not hard to be with you.” Peter popped up in a split second, hair hilariously askew but eyes shining bright and earnest. “It’s not hard to be with you, Alpha.”

“Then why–”

“It’s me.” the Omega interrupted. “It’s me. I’ve never done this. Heat sex doesn’t count for anything cos it’s all biology and instinct at that point but this right here? Outside of heat? I don’t know how to do it. And I want you, Alpha I want you like I am in heat. That’s what it feels like. I can’t deal with wanting you like I’m in heat. It’s just–”

Peter’s nose flared when Wade’s scent jolted with arousal, the Alpha’s eyes flickering red. “Oh holy shit, what was that?”

“You used the sentence wanting you like I’m in heat.” Wade rumbled. “Did’ja think I could sit still through that?”

“… you want me like I want you.” Peter muttered, and Wade didn’t bother answering. Of course he wanted Peter, they needed each other and that had been proven over and over in the last few months. “But you’ve had a mate before so you know how to do this. How to deal with needing each other and still going about a normal day. I’m having a hard time dealing with it. Can’t seem to find the right time to ask you to take me back to bed, and even if I found the right time between chores and all the damn questions I’ve been asking, I don’t have the right words to ask. I’ve never had to find words to get from this particular point A to that particular point B.”

Wade rubbed his hands together slowly, thinking his answer through before deciding on, “Is that point A for ass and point B for butt?”

“Oh my god, Wade.” Peter went to dive back down beneath the covers but the Alpha reached out and snagged him before he could disappear, and Peter couldn’t do much more than squawk in indignation as he was pulled gently but steadily from under the blankets and right off the bed onto his mate’s lap.

“First of all.” Wade wrestled Peter around until the Omega was straddling his lap, Peter’s knees wedged onto either side of the Alpha’s waist. “First of all, just because I’ve had a mate before doesn’t mean this is easy or familiar or that I know what the hell I’m doing, alright? The only thing familiar about having a mate again is how fuckin’ happy I am, but even that’s different. Everything
about you and I is different from Vanessa and I and I would never compare you. Not ever. Do you understand?”

“I–” Peter hadn’t meant to imply Wade compared he and Vanessa, but the reassurance calmed something in him all the same. “I understand.”

“Second of all.” Wade swept his hands up Peter’s back to tangle in his bed rumpled hair. “You want me, baby boy? Tell me. Use your words, or use your hands, or get your scent all sweet and addicting and bat your eyelashes at me. Leave me a note, drag me away from chores, I don’t care. Just look at me. Look at me and smile and I– I’m gone. I’m yours, Omega. Nothing to it. Any time of day or night.”

“But what if–”

“Any time of day or night.” the Alpha repeated. “I’ve got a hundred years of patience on you Pete, that’s the only reason I’m not all over you all the time. We’ve been talking a lot, you have questions and nothing’s worse than having conversation pushed away cos someone’s tryna get naked, right?”

“I guess.” Peter pushed his nose into Wade’s throat and inhaled shakily. “I’m sorry I’ve been so crazy. I should have just talked to you.”

“Maybe. But then again, should I maybe apologize for trying to give you space to figure it out?” Wade settled one hand at the base of Peter’s neck and palmed low over the Omega’s rear with the other. “Did I do the right thing giving you a few days or should I have thrown you in bed the first time you looked like you wanted to take a bite out of me?”

“Wade.” Peter finally smiled. “You’re ridiculous.”

“To be fair, you just had a meltdown cos you want me to get you off, my mate. Which one of us is more ridiculous right now?”

“To be fair.” he threw the Alpha’s words right back at him. “It was more of a meltdown cos I don’t know how to suggest that sort of thing, not for– not for the other reason.”

“Is it really that big of a deal, Pete?” Wade coaxed his Omega’s head to the side and nipped at the soft skin just behind Peter’s ear. “To not have had an Alpha outside heat?”

“The older I got, the more it seemed like a big deal.” Peter confessed quietly. “It felt like this big thing I’d have to admit to on a date and then maybe the Alpha wouldn’t want to bother with someone inexperienced or worse they’d take it as a challenge and I don’t– I don’t want to feel like a conquest, like a notch on some Alpha’s belt. And I never even really wanted to try. I always felt like I’d need to be in love before I wanted an Alpha and I never met anyone I thought would be willing to wait.”

“So the other night when we were together–”

“My first.” the Omega confirmed. “My first outside of heat and even then, heat isn’t–”

“–intimate.” Wade finished and Peter nodded, grateful that his Alpha finally understood. “Heat isn’t intimate, it’s just bodies. Just parts fitting into other parts where neither person is coherent enough to really care what happens. You needed more than that before you were ready to be with anyone, so you’re… shy … about bringing it up with me. You think your inexperience is something to worry about.”
“Isn’t it?”

“Do I seem real worried, Pete?”

“No.” The Omega tugged at Wade’s shirt and lifted it free, slipping his hands beneath to press at the Alpha’s abdomen, smiling to himself when Wade sighed and relaxed beneath the touch. “No you don’t. Thank you.”

They sat in comfortable quiet for a moment, then Peter whispered, “Was there a third point? First of all, you don’t compare me and Vanessa, second of all, if I want you I just need to tell you. Was there a third?”

“Third.” the Alpha tightened his grip at Peter’s narrow hips, then with one quick movement, threw the Omega back onto the bed and lunged forward to cover Peter’s surprised screech with a messy kiss. “Third, I think it’s fuckin’ beautiful that you kept waiting for someone but you didn’t think you had to wait with me. I love that, Pete. I love that you know we are right, and meant to be and that means you worry about being too horny, instead of worrying about not being horny enough like you did with other people.”

“I hate how you describe that.” Peter decided, but their next kiss was packed full of adoration. “But I love that you said it. Thank you.”

“That was my third point.” Wade sucked at Peter’s tongue when it ventured into his mouth. “And here’s my fourth.”

“Oh my god, there’s a fourth?”

“Fourth point– I should be suffocating between your thighs right now, don’t you think?!”

“Wade!” Peter screamed in laughter when Wade started yanking at his pants. “Alpha, oh my god!”

“Use your words, Pete!” Wade goaded, stripping the trousers right off and tossing them over his shoulder and getting to work on Peter’s underwear as well. “Let’s hear you ask me to eat you out!”

“ALPHA!” The Omega could have died of mortification, but the feeling was abruptly squashed in favor of a startled moan when Wade shoved his knees open and buried his face right into the vee of Peter’s hip. “Ohhh-oh oh oh Alpha–”

“Smell good, Pete.” Wade’s growl was low and filthy, the teasing and laughter erased once he got up close to his mate. “Fuck, you smell good.”

“Wade.” Peter’s back arched at the first warm swipe of Wade’s tongue over his cock, and he could have sobbed when the pressure was only fleeting, there and gone again. “Wade, please.”

“Please what?” Another light lick, this time further down over nearly hairless skin and still too far from where Peter needed him to be. “Use your words, Omega.”

“Please, I–” Need you. Want you. I’m empty. “–Wade please–”

“Pete.” A rumble and only the barest pressure at the Omega’s rim. “Tell me what you want.”

“There aren’t any words.” Peter choked out and the Alpha paused to listen. ‘There aren’t any words, my Alpha. This is more than– than whatever I can say or– or ask for. I just need you, I need you, I need–”
“I’ve got you.” A kiss at his navel so tender it brought tears to Peter’s eyes. “My mate. I need you too.”

Afterwards, when Peter was still gasping for air, still shivering and trying to clench his knees together to keep from spilling more slick onto the bed, he managed a shaky, “Will it always be like this? Will you always be able to take me apart so easily? Is it cos I’m practically pure or–”

“It’s cos you’re mine.” Wade didn’t lift his head from Peter’s stomach, closing his eyes and breathing in time to the rise and fall of the Omega’s breath. “How we are together? It’s cos you’re mine, baby boy. We’re mates. You’re made to need me and I’m made to be hopelessly addicted drunk on the way you taste.”

The Alpha licked at the wet still on his lips, and Peter keened helplessly when Wade’s big hands squeezed tighter at his waist. “You taste so good, my mate.”

“Would you like me to um–” Peter hesitated, shy again. “I’ve never gone down on anyone and I feel like you’re probably too big to fit in my mouth but I’d love to try for you.”

“Some other time, baby boy.” Wade eased off the Omega and rolled onto his back, tugging at the front of his pants meaningfully. “Been there, done that, need to do laundry.”

“You already…?” Peter propped up on his elbow and glanced down, then up at his Alpha in shock. “Really? Just from listening to me?”

“From feelin’ you come on my tongue and my fingers.” the Alpha corrected, and Peter blushed prettily. “Hearing you scream my name. Tastin’ how sweet you get gushing like that. Getting to hold you up against my mouth and have those long legs around my neck. I was only teasing about you suffocating me between your thighs, you know. I guess its a good thing I can hold my breath so long.”

“Wade!”

“Gorgeous.” Wade pushed the Omega’s hands away when Peter tried to hide and leaned in to bump their noses together. “Can I kiss you?”

“Of course, why would you even ask?” Peter murmured and pressed their mouths together, whimpering when his mate immediately bit at his lip, and then sighing into the soothing lick Wade gave afterwards. “Alpha if you want to bite me–”

“I want to eat you whole.” Wade groaned and the Omega laughed softly into their next kiss. “But more than that, I want to hold you so let me get cleaned up first.”

“Okay, my mate.” Peter fell back onto the blankets, naked and unabashed, one knee bent and the other leg stretched out, arms above his head and entire body on full display. He wasn’t floating but he sure felt like flying, his entire being humming with lingering sparks from his Alpha’s fingers and tongue.

Peter almost wanted to laugh at how anxious he’d been just that morning, tongue tied and awkward and unable to tell his Alpha what he wanted. He knew– he knew a bond was more than just sex, but the Omega also knew that the soul deep, core shaking need to be together was central to preserving a bond. Physical touch, physical affection, even just platonic skin to skin contact was essential for mates to remain settled and centered and beautifully, almost spiritually, in tune with one another.
Sex wasn’t necessary, but physical affection was and Peter was nearly euphoric over the combination of a shattering orgasm and the knowledge that his mate had been the one to bring such pleasure.

*My mate.*

The Omega was suddenly grateful he’d never been one to hook up, to chase casual interactions. Why would he possibly want empty moments with strangers when he could feel like this?

“My mate.” The bed dipped when Wade came back, and Peter hummed happily when the Alpha’s rough hands skated over his bare skin and their lips met in another lingering kiss. “You smell perfect right now.”

“Mmmm, hows that?” Peter rolled onto his side and tucked into Wade’s arms, snuggling into his chest. “What do I smell like?”

“Like us.” Wade’s voice dropped and the inflection made Peter shudder. “Like me and like you, like you’re about as happy as you’ve ever been. What are you thinking about?”

“I’m thinking…” the Omega licked at a drop of sweat on his mate’s collarbone and wound their legs together. “I’m thinking I’ll never get over how good your skin feels against mine. I love being naked with you.”

The Alpha’s scent bumped with joy and Peter budged closer. “And I’m thinking I’m suddenly glad I never hooked up with anyone else. It used to be embarrassing that I’d never experienced anything other than a last minute knot in the worst part of my heat but now I– I sort of love it. You’re the first Alpha to ever know me like this.” Wade growled and Peter huffed a quiet laugh. “What, you’re gonna be possessive over me now that you know you’re my first?”

“I’d be possessive over you even if I was your one hundredth Alpha.” Wade countered. “Numbers don’t matter, my mate. I only care that you’re with me now.”

“Numbers don’t matter?” Peter scraped his teeth along Wade’s throat and predictably, the Alpha’s cock twitched against his stomach. “That sounds like something someone would say if they’ve had hundreds of partners.”

“Outside of a rut, I’ve only been with two people, Pete.”

“But you’ve been around over a hundred years.”

“Yep.” The Alpha nodded. “And other than the occasional rut before Vanessa, I never needed to be with anyone that wasn’t my mate, anyone I didn’t love. After Vanessa I wasn’t with anyone even in a rut. You are my mate, the first person I’ve wanted since losing Vanessa, which brings my grand total of real partners up to two with you being the first in…sixty years. Try not to be intimidated by my vast years of prowess and experience, hm?”

“I’ll try.” Peter said solemnly, and Wade laughed, gave him another quick kiss.

The conversation shifted to something more mundane, but Peter’s mind was stuck in a cycle, repeating Wade’s words over and over in his head.

*I never needed to be with anyone that wasn’t my mate, anyone I didn’t love.*

*Oh, he loves me.*
The next morning Peter popped out of bed with a smile on his face, sated from spending the night with his Alpha, thrilled with how their talk had gone yesterday afternoon. The entire week had been full of surprising revelations and heart rending truths, small moments of beautiful intimacy and larger instances of trust and oh yes impossible pleasure that Peter knew– he knew still wasn’t as intense as being fully mated.

But after Wade had inadvertently admitted to loving Peter, the Omega was ready to put into action a plan that had been forming all week long, a plan that included courting his Alpha much the same way Wade tried to court him– with gentle touches and unfailing understanding and small gestures throughout their day that showed love, whether it was taking over a chore so Wade wouldn’t have to do it, or working at the Alpha’s shoulders while he whittled at night, and – if Peter could work up the courage– gifting his mate with the same sort of attention Wade had given him yesterday.

Courting, because his Alpha deserved to be spoiled too and Peter was determined to give it a try.

I’m here for you. I want you. My mate.

“You look like you’re busy thinking already.” Wade teased from over the rim of his cup. “What could possibly be on your mind before you’ve had your coffee?”

“I was thinking I’d feed the animals today so you could–” Peter stopped in his tracks when he saw a new notebook on the table, and a handful of sharpened pencils. “What’s that?”

“No no, finish your thought.” the Alpha protested. “Are you going to do my chores today so I have the energy necessary to get you screaming again? Have I been regulated to an Alpha of carnal delights only?”

“Wade.”

“I humbly accept the position. I’ll require three meals a day and a lack of clothing allowance.”

“Oh my god.” Peter tossed one of the pencils at his mate in exasperation. “Seriously, what is this?”

“Did you think I only bought you one notebook in town?” the Alpha nodded towards the new one. “Feel like that would’ve been foolish on my part, right? Especially since you’re already writing along th’edges with your old one. And I know you got at least a dozen pens in your pack, but I thought a few pencils wouldn’t hurt.”

“Thank you.” Peter thought he could cry as he picked up the new notebook. Who knew such simple gifts could mean so much. “I um– I didn’t–” he shook his head. “Thank you, my mate.”

“Anything for you, baby boy.” Wade leaned over the table to give him a kiss. “Ready for coffee?”

“Yes please.” Peter sat down and picked up one of the sharpened pencils, turning it over in his hand a few times before opening the notebook to the first blank page and starting to write. “I filled the other one up with everything we talked about the last few days. Eddie and Vanessa and your Pa. All of that.”

“It’s your notebook, Pete. Fill it up with whatever you want.”

“Well maybe I’ll stop writing about all that stuff and just start writing about us.” Peter commented,
and when Wade looked up in interest, he added slyly, “Turning an Alpha into the sort of drooling mess that comes in his pants is definitely an event for the history books, don’t you think?”

“Nah.” the Alpha disagreed with a snort. “It’s no surprise to anyone that I couldn’t resist you making those sort of noises and begging real pretty for me. No Alpha in the world could resist that, least of all your mate. Don’t get cocky, Pete. Making me spill in my pants is definitely not a superpower.”

“Oh, I think it very well is.” Peter flung back. “Whether I use these powers for good or for evil is the real question!”

“Mouthy mate.” Wade muttered, and Peter retorted, “Slutty Alpha!”

“Slutty Alpha!” Wade thunked the coffee down on the table and snatched Peter right off the seat, throwing the Omega over his shoulder and heading for the bed. “Slutty Alpha says the one who about soaked through his pants just thinking about what my tongue can do!”

Peter laughed and laughed and laughed when Wade wrestled him into the blankets, when only recently acquired clothes were torn right back off. He’d been so worried yesterday about broaching the topic of more and again with his mate but this morning it was the easiest thing in the world, the most right thing in the world and Peter delighted in every reassurance from the Alpha that Wade wanted and needed just as badly as he did.

The coffee on the table grew cold long before the bonded pair had finished, and the notebook lay open and forgotten on that first page.

And if Wade could read the Omega’s chicken scratch penmanship, the short entry would have ensured he didn’t let his mate leave the bed for days.

I never thought I wanted a bond but now I know I’m ready.

I’ve never loved anyone as much as I love my Alpha.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

This is naked slidey times and then some sweetness and like, three lines of semi plot.

Enjoy!

Oh also, yay! We broke 100k words and we aren’t even halfway done! Holla!

It was like a scratch at the back of Peter’s throat, like a tickle or the need to cough or maybe like he couldn’t get enough to drink.

The Omega was parched, lips chapped and tongue sticking to the roof of his mouth, dehydrated and burning up and the only thing that seemed to soothe it was the taste of his mate, so that’s exactly what Peter did.

Taste.

“Pete.” Wade dug calloused fingers into Peter’s hair and hissed out a harsh breath when blunt teeth landed at his nipple and sent sparks popping behind his breath. Warm lips followed immediately after, then a wet tongue and the noise the Alpha made when Peter hummed and pulled at him was nearly embarrassing. “Shit. Baby boy, don’t stop.”

“I’m not even halfway to where I wanna be yet.” The Omega whispered over Wade’s heart, plucking and teasing with deft fingers at one nipple before moving to seal his mouth to the other. “I’ve got no intention of stopping. Think I might starve without you, Alpha.”

The Alpha groaned out loud when Peter scraped over the clawed scars at his side, and Peter made an equally appreciative noise as he nosed at the hard planes of his mate’s abdomen and left open mouthed kisses on the tensed muscles. “You’re so gorgeous, my mate.”

“Right, I’m the gorgeous one.” Wade managed a tense laugh from behind gritted teeth as the Omega moved lower towards his hips, Peter pushing the blankets out of the way as he went. “You got any idea how pretty you are right now, Pete? All lit up in the fire like this?”

“Don’t care about that.” Peter swirled his tongue into Wade’s navel, dipping and licking and leaving tiny, sharp bites in a chaotic pattern of red marks until the Alpha gasped and tugged at his hair harder. “All I can see is you, my love.”

“God dammit.” the Alpha propped up on his elbows up so he could watch his mate better, unwilling to miss even one second of Peter kneeling between his legs and kissing down his body. The Omega was purring, rubbing his cheek into Wade’s stomach and nuzzling into the vee of his hips, fingers tight first at Wade’s waist and then lower onto his thighs. Peter’s picture perfect rear was up in the air, the graceful line of his back on full display, beguiling mouth fully immersed in tracing the nearly faded scar that ran from Wade’s hip almost down to the base of his cock.

The Alpha’s mutation had cost him his hair decades ago, and while Wade had long been self conscious of his bare scalp and lack of eyebrows, he couldn’t be bothered to care about the lack of hair anywhere else now that his Omega was moaning and dragging his tongue along the bare and
mostly unmarked skin.

Wade had been hard for ages now, ever since the Omega had pushed him towards the bed and climbed on top with a delighted sort of giggle that had made Wade’s blood pressure sky rocket, and now that Peter’s satin lips were quite nearly there, the Alpha’s cock twitched, flexed beneath a puff of breath and leaked white onto his stomach.

“Can I taste you?” the Omega flicked his tongue out to lap at the dribble of liquid and Wade managed only a strangled gasp of agreement. “Mmmm, so good.”

Peter looked incredible kneeling there on the bed, lips parted and tongue dark red in the shadows as he licked along the length of the Alpha’s cock. Staring up at Wade from beneath his lashes and digging his fingers into Wade’s hips to hold him still, the Omega’s cheeks were flushed, eyes blown wide and shining with anticipation and Wade knew he’d never seen anything half as beautiful ever.

“You’re beautiful, Omega.” he muttered, slipping his hand from Peter’s hair to strain down and cup his jaw for a moment. “My mate. Perfect.”

“My Alpha.” Peter reached up to flatten his palm to Wade’s heart, and the Alpha automatically covered the slim fingers with his own. “Can you feel me? Right here?”

“I feel you, Pete.” Wade wanted to watch, god he wanted to watch and stare and ingrain every millisecond of this night into his mind, but the moment his Omega’s lips touched the tip of his cock, the Alpha fell back into the pillows with a hoarse cry. “Ah fuck baby boy, I feel you. I feel you, I feel you, I feel you–!”

“Stay with me.” Peter flexed his fingers against Wade’s and took a deep breath, wetting his lips and wrapping his other hand around the Alpha’s cock so he could learn the weight and length of his mate intimately. “You with me?”

Stay with me.

Wade was thick, hot, throbbing against Peter’s palm and spilling wet when the Omega gave a experimental kiss over his slit, suckling lightly at the spongy tip to coax even more from his mate. Peter stroked slowly from base to flared head, swiping his tongue through the gathering pre come and using it to ease his way up and down again to where he could feel just the beginning of the Alpha’s knot starting to swell.

There was no way Peter could take all of Wade, but he still took a deep breath and tried, keeping his lips tight as he moved down Wade’s length, tongue flicking out to taste sweat and musk and to trace the bulging vein at the underside of the Alpha’s cock. He took as much as he dared, more and more until the blunt head bumped at the back of his throat and made him cough.

“Shit.” Wade jerked in surprise, tightening his fingers against Peter’s at his heart. “Omega.”

Stay with me.

Peter relaxed his jaw and softened his tongue, opening his throat and bobbing up and down over the thick length, suckling hard at the tip and using his fingers to stroke the few inches closest to Wade’s knot that he couldn’t quite get to. Up and down and up and down, warm and wet and so so soft and Wade only lasted a few minutes before he was groaning, pleading, “‘M’gonna come if you don’t let up, baby boy. Slow down and give me a minute.”

The Omega was dizzy, head spinning with the heady scent of licorice and cedar and the primal
scent of Alpha, half drunk on the odd power of spoiling his Alpha like this. He loved it, loved the flex of Wade on his tongue, the bulge of the heavy cock at his cheek and the way he could scarcely breath every time the Alpha pushed deeper into his throat.

“I wish I could swallow you.” he gasped, coming up for a ragged breath and popping his already sore jaw. “Oh my god Alpha, I wish I could take all of you.”

“Damn it, c’mere before I lose my mind.” Wade lunged forward and got both hands beneath Peter’s arms, hauling the Omega up and over his body and crushing their mouths together. “Gotta kiss you, Pete. Gotta kiss you, need to hold you, come here.”

The Omega whined into Wade’s kiss, thrusting his tongue through to tangle with the Alpha, shuddering when Wade groaned over the taste of himself on Peter’s lips. He threw back his head and shouted when the Alpha planted both hands at his ass and lifted up to rub himself into the cleft of Peter’s rear, right over his dripping hole.

“Shit, you’re so wet.” Wade gasped and Peter keened when his body reacted immediately, drenching the Alpha as he clenched and shivered in want. “Pete– my mate– ride me, ride me like this. Come on.”

Peter rocked his hips back so his entrance slid right down Wade’s cock, shoved forward until the fat tip budged at his rim, then backwards again, scratching his nails down his mate’s chest and nearly sobbing in relief when Wade left one hand at his ass and used the other to sweep low between Peter’s legs, collecting a palmful of slick so he could pull over the Omega’s length in time with their movements.

“Ride me.” the Alpha ordered hoarsely. “Almost like you would if you were in heat, come on baby boy, get yourself off against my cock, grind on me, come on.”

Any other time the Omega would have blushed over the obscene squelch their bodies made rocking together, but not today, not now. His thighs were soaked and shining where he straddled Wade’s hips, the Alpha’s stomach a mess of Omega slick and the spend dribbling steady from his cock. Wade’s gorgeous hazel eyes had snapped dark red at that first tentative lick and now they glowed eerie in the firelight, fangs bared as he panted and gasped and snarled over a kiss that started sweet but turned bloody and sharp when Peter growled into his mouth and the Alpha bit him in return.

“Again.” Wade left bruises at his mate’s when he held Peter down and rutted up into him desperately. “Growl at me again, baby boy. Let me here it, fuckin’ gorgeous, let me hear it.”

Peter gave himself over to the need rocking his core, let himself fall entirely into Wade’s hands so the Alpha could direct the way they rubbed and touched and ground together, and when Wade urged again, “Growl, sweetheart, give me a bite, just a little one, let me feel you–” Peter leaned into the Alpha’s body to close his teeth over Wade’s ear, letting his purr grow into a quiet snarl and then finally a real growl, as deep as he could manage.

“Fuck.” Instinct took over and Wade wrenched his head to the side to bury his fangs in Peter’s neck, breaking skin and spilling blood and feeling the Omega’s scream vibrate across his tongue.

“Alpha!” The pain triggered immediate pleasure, white hot and overwhelming and Peter dug his nails into Wade’s shoulders and screamed again when the Alpha’s cock hardened further against his own and flooded heat between their bodies. He was only a few seconds behind his mate, losing himself over the edge of near madness at the feel of the Alpha in his throat, at his heart and down where he needed so badly.
I can feel you, Alpha.

My Alpha. My mate.

I can feel you.

The Omega didn’t realize he was almost crying the words, until Wade unlocked his jaw from Peter’s throat and began to pepper kisses all over the torn skin, up to Peter’s jaw and across his cheek and nose, finally to his lips. Peter caught the kiss with a sob, framing Wade’s face with both hands and kissing his mate soundly, whimpering through each jolt, every spark that lit up his spine as the Alpha kept moving them languidly together, sliding through the mess pooling on their stomaches.

“Shh shh shh.” Wade rumbled.“Shh baby boy. I feel you too. I feel you.”

“My love.” Peter stammered, and Wade’s rumble softened to an adoring croon, cedar and licorice rising thrilled before settling and sweetening to contentment. “My Alpha. You’re beautiful.”

“Sweetheart.” Wade wiped his hand clean on the sheets before resting his palm at the back of Peter’s neck, pressing his thumb carefully over the bite mark and imagining how it would look shining silver against the Omega’s perfect skin. I love you. “My mate.”

“My mate.” the Omega echoed softly, and went boneless on the Alpha’s chest, sated to the point of exhaustion, the burn in his throat calmed now that he had the taste of his mate on his tongue. “Mine.”

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Later, after they’d gotten their breath back and managed to clean up, stripping the sheets from the bed and replacing them with dry ones, later the Alpha cupped Peter’s jaw and lay a searing kiss to his lips before murmuring, “Enough, my mate?”

…and Peter shook his head, tears in his eyes as he answered, “Not yet. It’s not enough yet.”

“Yeah.” Wade rested his forehead against the Omega and nodded. “Yeah, not for me either.”

Shit.

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The tingle in Wade’s fingertips felt like brambles and thorns, like he’d grabbed at poison ivy or touched the parsnip leaves and gotten a rash. His fingers tingled and his palms itched and sometimes his hands shook and it only went away when he was touching his mate, so that’s exactly what Wade did.

Touch.

“Alpha, Alpha, Alpha.” spread out on their bed, head down by the foot board and legs tossed over Wade’s shoulders, Peter couldn’t do much more than clutch at the sheets and cry out for his Alpha as Wade worked at his sopping rim and deep into his body. “Wade! Please–!”

The Alpha’s response was muffled into Peter’s core, far too busy fucking the Omega on his tongue
to bother coming up for air or a proper answer. He lapped at Peter’s entrance, drug his tongue along the furled skin and suckled it loose and pliant, then held his mate steady so he could dip into the slick and push his nose into the secret spot behind the Omega’s sac.

Peter’s entire frame jerked when Wade left the tiniest scrape of fangs high up on the inside of his thigh, and the Alpha groaned in encouragement when long legs locked around his neck, and redoubled his efforts with his mouth until the lean thighs were trembling by his ears.

“Growl.” the Omega gasped. “Wade— my Alpha, growl for me. Come on. You think you like to hear mine, but if you g-growl when you’re down there I might actually—”

The noise came from deep in the Alpha’s chest, working from low in Wade’s throat and resonating through Peter’s center, throbbing in the Omega’s core and making his eyes roll back in his head. Wade did it again, shoving his tongue deep inside his mate and growling low and hungry until Peter screamed in pleasure.

“More more more!” Peter bucked his hips and grabbed at Wade’s head to shove the Alpha deeper and Wade obliged by circling Peter’s rim first with one finger and then two, and when the Omega babbled something nonsensical and pleading, pushed into his mate’s hole with both fingers, licking and slurping at the slick that flowed over his nose and dripped onto his lips.

The Omega was nearly hairless between his thighs and Wade loved it. He lost entire minutes mouthing gently over smooth smooth skin at Peter’s sac before finally moving up to kiss and nip at the clear perfection close to the base of Peter’s cock.

“Your mouth.” Peter tightened his legs and tried to yank the Alpha even closer, struggling and flailing on the bed to get his mate’s tongue back where he wanted it. “Wade— please— I need—”

“I’ve got you.” Wade meant to sound reassuring, but it only came out ravenous and he had to grip Peter’s hips hard when the Omega nearly came off the bed with a needy cry. “Hold still, baby boy, let me just—”

Peter was ready to scream if his mate didn’t get back down at his hole again, but he arched his back an screamed for an entirely different reason when Wade flattened his tongue and dragged it clear to the head of Peter’s cock, licking at the leaking tip and then swallowing him down to the root.

Stars lit bright behind the Omega’s temples, and tomorrow he would be sore, abdomen in stitches from the effort of thrusting into Wade’s throat but that didn’t stop Peter from doing it anyway. He planted his hands on the bed for leverage so he could toss his head back and first, fuck through his Alpha’s lips, and then shove himself back onto Wade’s fingers, crying out for more for relief from the constant need.

It was too much and it wasn’t enough, Peter needed, he needed—

“I’ve got you, my mate.” Wade rumbled, and the Omega fell apart.

Peter only needed his mate, and Wade’s fingers felt like they lit on fire when the Omega’s body clenched down around him, rippling and shaking and gorgeous as Peter came with a hoarse cry. Wade swallowed greedily as his Omega’s cock emptied down his throat, groaning in satisfaction when Peter could only gasp and shiver and sob as he tried breathe through the crash of euphoria.

“Easy, easy, easy, sweetheart.” Wade took his time cleaning Peter off with lazy licks and light lips until he finally pulled away with a wet sounding pop. He took longer to pull his fingers free
though, stroking lazily inside his mate to wring every last whimper from the Omega and turning his head to press tender kisses to the inside of soft thighs as he eased Peter’s legs apart and settled them back on the bed.

Only when Peter was flat on his back again did Wade try work his fingers out, eyes wide and shifting back and forth between possessive red as he watched his mate twitch and wriggle and complain in quiet whines at being empty.

“Omega.” Another quick clean up– they’d have to wash sheets soon– and Wade stretched out on the bed to rest his head on his mate’s stomach, habit and instinct prompting him to reach up and lay his hand over Peter’s heart. “You with me?”

“I’m with you.” Peter moaned, grabbing at Wade’s hand and squeezing tight. “I feel you, Alpha.”

“Yeah.” Wade licked the last taste of Omega from his mouth and nodded. “Yeah, I can feel you too, sweetheart.”

“You–do you– I um–” Peter dragged a hand over his face and tried again. “You didn’t finish? Do you want me to–”

“I want you to lay here with me.” The Alpha interrupted. “Just lay here with me, my mate. I need to hold you for a while.”

“Okay.” Peter ran gentle fingers over Wade’s scalp and breathed out shakily, settling into the blankets and cuddling his Alpha as close as their position allowed. “Okay okay. This is good for me too.”

It was good, but by the time they actually got up and got ready for bed, Wade’s fingers were tingling again and Peter was guzzling water like he was going to die of thirst and when their eyes met over the rim of Peter’s cup, Wade muttered, “It’s not enough, is it? Not yet.”

“No.” Peter’s knuckles were white where they clenched around the cup. “It’s not enough yet. Not–not yet.”

**************

“Alpha.” Peter tipped his head up for a kiss and Wade bent immediately to give it to him, lingering over Peter’s sweet lips for far longer than necessary.

The tingle in his fingers had grown to a throbbing in his fangs, the burn at the back of Peter’s throat spreading to an ache over his bonding spot and now it had settled like a buzz beneath the pair’s skin. It was electric, itchy and uncomfortable every minute of the day until they finally gave up and just sat together, lay together naked or cuddled up close to inhale each other into their senses.

It was almost painful to be apart, and tonight Wade hadn’t woken up when Peter left their bed, but woke up almost twenty minutes later when the electric running beneath his skin grew too sharp to ignore.

But the moment their mouths met, the second his Omega was sighing against his lips and leaving a
sharply sweet bite on his tongue, the buzzing faded to merely background noise and Wade sighed in relief.

“Are you alright?” Wade left one last kiss on his mate before simply scooping Peter out of the chair, taking the Omega’s place on the cushions and tucking Peter into his lap to nose over the fang bruised bonding spot.

“Oh fuck, that’s better.” Peter lay his head back on Wade’s shoulder and moaned quietly. “It’s gettin’ awful, my Alpha. Feel like I can’t go more than a few minutes without touching you.”

“I know.” Wade mumbled into his mate’s throat. “But it’s fine. S’fine now that I’m holding you, right?”

“Right.”

The Alpha fussed at the blanket wrapped around his mate, opening up one of the ends so he could reach beneath and feel skin. “What are you doing awake anyway? It’s the middle of the night.”

“I know. I know it’s late, and m’sorry for waking you.” Peter held up his notebook, then inclined his head to the other two on the end table. “I’m counting my days.”

“Eighty six.” The Alpha answered promptly. “Eight six days, baby boy. I told you I keep track of that sort of thing, what are you counting for?”

“…it’s cos we need to bond, isn’t it?” Peter dodged the question and changed the subject. “The way I feel like I’m going to starve to death or die of thirst if I’m not touching you? How much we’ve needed to be together lately? I mean, I know some of it is just cos we’re all keyed up about each other right now—”

“–you can say horny, Pete.”

“–keyed up about each other right now, and because it’s new relationship and new boundaries and all that. But the–the–” the Omega searched for the right word. “It almost hurts sometimes, right? How bad we need to be together?”

“That’s one way to put it.” Wade grunted, and shifted his mate more squarely on his lap. “Don’t really like to think about you and hurting in the same sentence, but yeah. Sometimes it about hurts if I can’t get my hands on you.”

“Because we need to bond.” Peter prompted. “Right?”

“Right. It’s cos we need to bond.” the Alpha worked to keep his voice neutral as he finished, “But we haven’t really talked about that yet, and we decided there’s a thousand steps being knowing we’re mates and actually bonding. Besides, we can’t actually bond until—”

“–until I have a heat.” Peter finished. “I know. That’s why I’m counting.”

“Eight six days.” Wade said again, and then, “Wait, you’re counting the day until your heat?”

“I had one in June.” Peter tapped at his notebook. “And I’m usually due every six months like clockwork. I suppose it might be different because of the time travel, maybe later because of stress or earlier because I’ve met you my mate, but either way, I’m most likely due here within a month.”

“A month.” Wade’s arms tightened at Peter’s waist as a bolt of longing colored his cedar scent. “That’s all, huh? All the time we have to figure out whether or not we’re going through with it?”
“What do you mean, whether or not we’re going through with it?” Peter set his notebook aside and rotated in Wade’s lap so he could see his Alpha better. “That isn’t even a question, or at least it’s not a question for me.”

The Alpha blinked a few times at the unexpected—and wholly welcome—admission that Peter was ready to bond, but the Omega didn’t seem to notice the pause, throwing his hands up in the air and exclaiming, “You are my mate, Wade. My Alpha. Mine. Even before our biology started going haywire, I knew I was ready to bond and now that enough isn’t enough anymore, it isn’t a question of if we bond, it’s only a question of—mmph!”

He shut up when Wade bent and kissed him thoroughly, and when they parted, the Omega scrunched his nose to whisper, “You love when I say things like that, don’t you?”

“So much.”

“Well, I was going to say it’s a question of when.” Peter flushed pink when Wade trilled into his ear. “It’s only a question of when we are going to bond, and the answer to that question is as soon ‘as I get my heat’, and the answer to that is—”

“About a month.” Wade finished. “That’s all I have to wait?”

“That’s all you have to wait.” Peter murmured, and leaned in to kiss his mate again. “That’s all we have to wait.”

“I’ll be counting down.” Wade promised, and the Omega laughed softly again before cuddling close and resting his head on Wade’s shoulder, content to sit and watch the coals burn down so long as his Alpha there too.

Wade was half asleep when Peter spoke again, but he jostled awake and let loose a jaw cracking yawn to ask, “Sorry sweetheart, what was that? What did you say?”

“I said I don’t want our first time to be in heat.” the Omega whispered, and Wade straightened up in confusion. “I mean, we’ve had so many other firsts together. In fact everything lately has been a first for me but I don’t want the first time you knot me to be when I’m out of my mind in heat.”

Wade growled at the mention of heats and knots and Peter smiled, “I’m sure heat with you will be incredible—” predictably, Wade growled again and the Omega’s smile grew. “—but I want to be fully present for everything, you know? I don’t want to be lost in hormones or gagging for a knot and miss how good it is. I want to remember every single second of how we are together, my mate.”

“Well then I better make sure it’s unforgettable, huh.” Wade buded a kiss to his mates temple. “Even though I’d sure love to see you gagging for my knot.”

“Alpha—”

“Seriously Pete, you won’t say you’re horny for me, but you’ll say you’re gagging for a knot?”

“Oh my god.”

“If that’s how you modern folks talk about intimate subjects then my god—”

“Stop.” Peter put his hand to Wade’s mouth, grinning when the Alpha automatically kissed his palm. “Does this mean you’re okay with taking that step before heat?”
“Are you asking me if I mind getting to knot my mate sooner rather than later?” Wade asked blankly. “I’ve been outta my mind trying to take this all one step at a time and now you tell me you not only want to bond, but that you want our first time to be sooner so you can pay attention to all of it? To all of me? Why would I mind that? What Alpha ever would mind that?”

“Alright.” Peter chuckled a little. “You’re right, that sounds dumb.”

The Alpha held up his fingers a bare inch apart. “Little bit.”

“I’m only asking cos—” Peter wriggled out of the rest of his blanket so they were skin to skin, and Wade picked it up to lay over Peter’s bare shoulders and ward off the late night chill in the cabin. “—cos won’t it make all this worse if we keep going? Needing you all the time wasn’t as bad when we were just kissing, but now it’s worse, right? Won’t it get worse again if we cross that—”

The Omega cleared his throat delicately, “—if we cross that particular line. If we have real sex but still don’t bond. Won’t it make everything we’re already feeling just about unbearable?”

“Unbearable.” Wade repeated. “Sweetheart, there are at least a thousand things more unbearable than spending the next month figuring out how well we fit together, do you understand?”

“But it’s already—”

“At least a thousand things more unbearable than spending a month figuring out how we fit together.” Wade repeated. “Pete, I don’t care if it makes us both bat shit crazy waiting for your heat. I don’t care if I have to have you fucked out and drooling on my knot—”

“—Wade!”

“— every day until you go into heat to make sure you always feel close to me.” the Alpha finished. “Because I want to be close to you, Pete. I don’t care if it takes your heat six months to show up and we’re this desperate all the time. You know why?”

Peter didn’t answer and Wade lowered his voice, “A few months ago I didn’t have you at all, Omega, and now I’m never going to let you go. M’gonna give you whatever you want because you are mine. You want our first time to be out of heat, I’m going to get working on a real special night for us so you can have it. I don’t care if it means I hurt every second of every day until we can finally mate. I don’t care.”

And even softer, “Do you care?”

“Not even a little bit.” Peter whispered back.

“So that means you’re willing to suffer with needing to be with all the time?” Wade pressed. “Let’s hear it. You’re willing so suffer cos you’re horny and want to have sex soon. Say exactly that for me.”

Peter rolled his eyes hard enough to give himself a headache. “Yes, Alpha. I’m willing to suffer because I’m horny.”

“That’s all I ever wanted you to say.” Wade stood up with his mate in his arms and headed back towards their bed, setting Peter down so the Omega could curl up into his spot. “Were you really awake worrying about whether or not us being together before heat would be unbearable?”

Peter opened his arms for the Alpha and Wade clambered under the blankets to hold his mate tight. “I’m just saying, unbearable seems like a harsh word, especially if you’re talking about sex.”
“Sorry.” Peter muffled a giggle into Wade’s shoulder as he pressed close to his Alpha. “I won’t use unbearable when talking about sex.”

“Gee, thanks.” Wade said dryly, and the Omega laughed one more time before closing his eyes and sighing, halfway to asleep already just being back where he belonged.

Wade stayed awake for a few minutes more though, thinking back over their conversation, and not entirely sure if he was sad that Peter had been worrying about making things worse, or if he was relieved the Omega had brought up bonding and heat first.

They didn’t talk about the inevitable anymore, that one day Cable would come back and rip Peter away from their comfortable life. They didn’t talk about the unknown looming goodbye, but Wade thought of it at least once a day.

He’d argued with himself a hundred times since that very first meeting, wondering if goodbye would be worse if they were mated, if separation would be easier if they didn’t bond. Would it would be torture to know Peter heart and soul, mind and body, clear through to his very being like only mates could and then to be ripped apart? Or would it be easier to surrender the Omega back to the other timeline if they stayed unbonded?

Wade thought about it every single day, arguing back and forth with himself. Should he ask Peter about heat? A schedule? Should he suggest giving in to the need pulsing between them before heat? Was it a step too far to ask to knot the Omega when they couldn’t fully mate yet?

Having their first time outside of heat meant that both Alpha and Omega would remember every single second in excruciating detail, they would have the presence of mind to talk and to kiss and to laugh together, to learn and explore with out the single minded focus of heat consuming their senses.

It was a good idea, but Peter was right to worry it would make them half mad needing to finish their bond. There was only so much physical joining to be done before souls had to mingle too and sex would only make the waiting all that more potent.

And yet…

Wade had a sudden flash of inspiration, a sudden flash of idea, something Clint had mentioned at in confidence one time when they’d both been drunk. The winged Alpha had hinted at the realities of having a mate like Logan, one who wasn’t bound by the limits of lifetimes and normal mortality, one who only had heats every few years which made mating all but impossible.

Somehow Clint and Logan had mated anyway and maybe that meant…

…maybe he and Peter could still…

Wade was half tempted to get out of bed right then and send word for Clint that very second. There was a flag he could raise on the top of the mountain, and so long as it was a clear day, Clint’s eyesight could pick out with no problem. It had long been a sign for the other Alpha to come see Wade immediately and immediately would be perfect cos Wade had questions.

Lots and lots of questions.

He was half tempted to get out of bed right then, but Peter sighed and shuffled closer in his sleep, nuzzling into his Alpha’s chest and leaving sleepy kisses over Wade’s heart and Wade couldn’t have left the bed if his life depended on it.
In the morning. Wade decided, curling around his mate and closing his eyes. I’ll talk to Clint in the morning.

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Sometime during that night they ended up switching sleeping positions, and when Wade woke up, Peter was clinging to his back, long limbs wrapped tight around the Alpha’s waist and cold toes tucked up under Wade’s calves.

“Baby boy?” Wade asked groggily. “Hey, roll over so I can hold you.”

“Nope.” Peter plastered himself tighter to his Alpha and shook his head, hair tickling the back of Wade’s neck and ears. “I’m fine right here.”

“Okay.” Wade chuckled and reached back to pat at his Omega’s butt. “That’s cute and all, but I’ve carried bags that weigh more than you. Feels like I’m giving someone a piggy back ride all night, roll over so we can cuddle up proper.”

“No.” the Omega tucked his nose over Wade’s bonding spot, and breathed in deep of his mate’s scent. “You smell good and I want to stay here.”

“Pete—”

“I said no. I want to hold you.”

“There’s better ways to hold me that don’t involve you poking me in the butt with your morning ‘rise and shine’.” The Alpha informed him, and Peter hid a giggle into his mate’s shoulder, humping against Wade’s rear a few times for good measure. “Okay you know what, that’s enough of you. C’mere, brat.”

Wade flipped over in a split second and Peter ack!ed when two hundred plus pounds of Alpha landed on top of him, but he was quick to open his arms and gather his mate close when Wade wedged between his knees and settled solid over his frame.

“Oh I see.” Peter tipped his head to the side so Wade would scent him, trilling in encouragement when the Alpha’s fangs pricked at his throat. “You can’t handle my morning ‘rise and shine’ poking you, but I’m supposed to be just fine with yours?”

“You knew how this was going to work when you got in bed with me.” Wade maintained, and covered Peter’s shriek of laughter with a long kiss that slipped into a shared moan when the Alpha rolled his hips. “There see? Isn’t this better than your half pint sized self trying to cuddle me?”

“We call it being the big spoon.” The ever present itch beneath Peter’s skin soothed the longer Wade lay over him, and the Omega ran languid hands up and down his mate’s back, dotting small kisses over the scarred skin. “And couples usually switch back and forth with who is the big or little spoon. Learn to share positions, Alpha.”

“Yeah, that sounds like something new fangled and ridiculous, and I will be clinging to my old fashioned ways.” the Alpha decided and Peter laughed again. “There’s no spoons here, Pete. Just a pretty little Omega and an Alpha who is way too big to be sleep humped.”

“I wasn’t sleep humping you!” Peter protested, and Wade retorted, “Sure you weren’t, Pete. Sure you weren’t.”

They shared a long kiss, foreheads touching and noses bumping and fingers gasping tight at each
others side as their laughter faded away, and Wade didn’t pull away until his mate was purring, melting back into the pillows and scenting sweetly content.

“I’ll never have enough of you.” Wade muttered into the Omega’s ear, shifting further on top of Peter and rumbling when his mate automatically lifted up against him in response. “You hear me? I’ll never have enough of you, Pete.”

“I’ll never have enough of you either.” Peter leaned close to nip at the Alpha’s throat, sucking a bruise over Wade’s pulse and when the Alpha growled and held him tighter, Peter turned it into a bite, worrying at the skin until it bloomed into a bright red bruise.

The color was there in a gone in a few seconds though, and Peter swept his thumb over the healed skin in disappointment. “I wish I could mark you like you mark me.”

“The only mark that matters will go right here.” Wade picked up Peter’s hand and placed it over his bonding spot. “Soon, my mate.”

“Soon.” Peter echoed with a wistful smile. “But what– what if it isn’t soon? What if being in this time line means I won’t go into heat for a long time?”

“We’ll wait.” Wade said simply. “We’ll wait and figure it out. I don’t care if being together before we can bond makes me insane, don’t care if I go mad needing to be with you all the time. I can wait until your heat. I can wait longer. I just want you here with me, Pete. I’ll be fine so long as you’re with me, alright?”

“My Alpha.” Peter’s eyes filled with tears, but he blinked them away and tugged his mate down for a slow, filthy kiss, licking over Wade’s fangs and sucking lightly at the Alpha’s tongue. “You’ll um– you’ll be my first, you know? My first outside of heat, anyway.”

“I know.” Wade chased the kiss, groaning softly when Peter came back for another and another. “I remember.

“Well, you’ll be my last too.” The Omega lowered his voice then, a streak of red high on his cheeks, bottom lip caught between his teeth in a show of heart melting shyness. “My only. Forever.”

It was a love confession that took Wade’s breath away, and the Alpha couldn’t control his eyes blurring red with possessiveness, or the greedy growl sounding from his chest. “My mate. Forever.”

Forever.

... or at last until forever was taken away.

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Clint arrived on the mountain later that same afternoon, and since he’d long mastered the hawk like reflexes that came along with his wings, he decided to have a little fun with Wade’s overly curious Omega.

Peter was fixing sandwiches in the kitchen when he heard a distinctly birdlike cry, and before he could ask his mate what the noise was or why Wade was suddenly laughing, the door to their cabin burst open and Peter screamed in surprise.
Clint landed inside the room with a ground shaking *thump*, skidding to a stop before snapping his massive wings to their full span. He made an impressive picture with wings spread and eyes glowing red, dark feathers blocking out the light from the windows and bare chest gleaming with snow crystals gathered from soaring through the clouds and Peter actually dropped the sandwiches he was holding, clutching at his heart in shock.

“Omega.” Clint drawled, and flicked his wings over towards Peter in a greeting, shocking the Omega further with just how close the feathers came to touching his legs. “How are you?”


“Alright that’s enough.” Wade snorted. “Put them away, Clint. No need to overcompensate *that* much, you’ve got an Omega of your own to impress. Get rid of the feathers before you give my mate a heart attack. He needs to only look at *me* like that. Fuck off.”

“Wade.” Clint smirked at the other Alpha’s aggravation but he gathered his wings in and tucked them away behind his shoulders anyway, sending Peter an apologetic smile. “Didn’t mean to overwhelm you, Omega. Figured a little show like that would knock you speechless.”

“You know, you’d think so.” Peter felt around for his ever present notebook and held it up, and in the background, Wade started laughing. “But instead I just have so many questions.”

“Of course he does.” Clint rolled his eyes. “Of course you do. The questions will have to wait until I talk to your mate though. Wade, wanna go outside?”

“Outside.” Wade agreed, putting aside his whittling to blow his Omega a kiss. “I’ll be right back, sweetheart.”

Peter answered something in assent as he tried to reassemble the spilled food, and Wade jerked his head for the other Alpha to follow him out to the yard.

“Been a long time since you ran the flag up the hill.” Clint let his wings stretch a little more once they were out in the clearing, rotating his shoulders and fluttering his feathers. “Not since that big ol bear got into the barn a few years back. What’s going on? Everything okay with your mate?”

The Alpha’s eyes flickered red in concern, “Has Cable come back?”

“Not yet.” Wade opened the barn door and motioned the mutant through into the relative warmth. “But I’ve got uh–” he cleared his throat. “I’ve got a question I didn’t really want to ask around either of our Omegas, you know?”

“Alright.” Clint clicked his tongue at the horses, who automatically nickered back at him in response. His mutation ran so close to wild that animals loved the Alpha almost as much as they immediately loved and trusted Logan, and Wade snorted in disbelief even the ornery goat came over to say hello. “What do you need?”

“Pete and I need to bond.” Wade said slowly, and Clint raised his eyebrows. “But we don’t know when his next heat will be. I’m real worried Cable will come back before it’s time and shit– *shit* Clint I don’t think I can handle letting Pete go without taking him as mate first. It’ll about kill me.”

“If you weren’t such a reincarnatin’ asshole, it *would* kill you.” Clint ran his hands over Arthur’s side and crooned at the gelding. “No question about it. But I don’t see the problem. You two are already bonded.”
“Well, we are meant to be mates but–”

“No, I mean you stink of happiness and sex and Omega.” Clint interrupted. “You’re already bonded, no heat needed.”

“I don’t know what that means.” Wade folded his arms and leaned back into the wall. “Explain. Was that how it was with you and Logan?”

Most Alphas would kill someone who asked about intimate things like bonding or mating or what their mates did in their private moments, but Clint had known Wade Wilson long enough to know the man wouldn’t be asking without good reason, so he cleared his throat and said, “Alright yeah. Me and Lo were already bonded way before he had a heat, just like you and your Omega. Dunno if it’s Lo’s mutation or what, but he only gets a heat once every couple years.”

“I’ve only gone into rut a few times my whole life.” Wade grunted, and Clint nodded in acknowledgment. Wade and Logan didn’t have exactly the same mutation, but since both men were nearly indestructible, it made sense that their biologies were affected in similar ways.

“Anyway, Lo doesn’t have them real often, but since we knew were meant to be mates, it was about tearing me to pieces to not be able to fully bond. Logan was needy and whiny and said it hurt to be away from me, I really thought I was losing my mind for a while there– it was hell. I had to figure out how to be with my mate and make it work.”

“…right?”

“So I made it work.” Clint said plainly, and when Wade only looked at him, the other Alpha bared his fangs, showing off the dangerous points. “Our souls were already connected, we just needed the physical part. I set up a real great night with my mate, knotted him up good and tight and then kept my fangs in Logan long enough that he couldn’t heal from it. Didn’t let up until it turned silver on his neck so his healing factor couldn’t erase it.”

“Huh.” Wade chewed at his lip. “You did that outside of heat?”

“Sure did.”

“And it worked?”

“You doubtin’ that Lo’s my mate, Wade?” Clint growled in warning, wings twitching in annoyance. “Watch your step.”

“Not doubting.” Wade said truthfully. No one in Haven could ever doubt Logan and Clint were mates. “Just– just skeptical. About it working with us, I mean.”

“It’s getting bad between you.” Clint moved towards Bea, surrounding the docile mare in feathers as he petted at her flanks. “Startin’ to hurt not to be mated, right?”

Wade nodded stiffly, digging his nails into his palms as his fingers started tingling again just thinking about Peter.

“Yeah, been there, done that.” Clint crooned at Bea when she turned to bump him with her nose. “It got so bad with me and Lo, he’d break down if I wasn’t touching him all the time. Couldn’t get nothing done, had to have him stuck on me all the time– it was bad. One night we decided we couldn’t go on like that, so I wore him out then bit him hard and it was–”

Clint’s wild scent mellowed to sheer happiness and even a flicker of vulnerability. “–it was perfect.
Right away. Everything settled and the hurt went away and we were mated. Already bonded, but finally *finally* mated. Perfect."

“Outside of heat.” Wade said again and Clint nodded in the affirmative. “Okay then.”

“Make it a good night.” The other Alpha counted off on his fingers. “Spoil your Omega first, then wear him the hell out so he gets all soft and pliant like a happy mate does. Knot him up, bite him hard and since you’re the one who keeps coming back no matter how many times Mother Nature tries to take you out, make sure he bites you hard enough to stick.”

“Oh and one more thing.” Clint waited until Wade looked up at him. “When the bond sets, an Omega’s eyes change to gold.”

“What.”

“I’ve only seen it the one time with Logan, but I heard about it from a few other Alpha’s.” Clint shrugged, heavy wings lifting and falling with the motion. “That’s how you’ll know the bond is set and final. Prettiest color you’ll ever see in your life, and you’ll be the only one who ever sees it, just the one time.”

“Just once?”

“It’s a fuckin’ gift, Wade.” the other Alpha said pointedly. “Something your Omega shows you and *only* you. It’s meant to be treasured, you got it?”

“I got it.”

“Treasured.” Clint repeated, blue eyes flickering red as he thought back to his own bonding night. “It’s the best thing I’ve ever seen and I’m humbled every day that an Omega like Logan trusts me with his heart and his bond.”

“I’ll treasure it.” Wade promised, and then immediately after, “By the way, this is a side to you I’ve never seen before. Sappy and romantic? It’s gross. I love it.”

“Fuck you.” Clint snorted. “You got anything else to talk about or can I leave? I got a sudden need to get home and hold my mate.”

“Nah, that’s all I need, but I’m sure my Omega has a question or two or thousand for you.” Wade reached out and patted Clint on the shoulder. “Thanks for this, Clint.”

“You’re an asshole but that doesn’t mean you don’t deserve to be happy.” Clint grunted, but the smile he sent Wade’s way was damn near fond. “M’glad to help anyway, it’s about time you found yourself a mate and quit rotting away alone up here.”

“Rotting away. Thanks for that.”

“Let’s go and get these questions over with.” Clint waited in the clearing while Wade re secured the barn. “How many notebooks does that kid have anyway?”

“I bought five in Haven and he’s working on number two, number three if you count the one he had on him when we met.” Wade smiled when Clint made a disbelieving noise. “Pete writes a lot. I got vaguely threatened with lots of words and descriptions the other day? I dunno, the words ‘don’t test me’ were definitely thrown around.”

Clint was laughing by the time they made it back to the cabin and Peter looked up with a delighted
smile when he saw the Alphas again.

“My mate.” the Omega had a passionate kiss for his Alpha, passionate enough that Clint looked away to give the couple a moment of privacy, grimacing when he was nearly swamped in a wave of too potent hormones. “I’m glad you’re back.”

“Shit, m’glad I’m back too.” Wade laughed into their next kiss, but he could see the distress written across his mate’s expression, so he grabbed Peter up tight to his body and rumbled into Peter’s ear, trying to let the Omega know the short distance had been awful for him too. “Felt like the longest ten minutes of my life, my mate. We’ll spend the rest of the day together.”

“Day and night.” Peter mumbled and Wade whispered, “Of course.”

Clint cleared his throat after another moment, fully sympathizing with the pairs need to be touching constantly, but also not wanting to have to watch.

“Omega. I’m assuming you got at least one question for me before I take off?”

“Oh yes definitely.” Peter wriggled around in his mate’s arm and picked up his notebook, staying securely in Wade’s embrace as he flipped past a few pages to his list. The Alpha narrowed his eyes when he caught just a quick glance at a rather interesting line on the first page, but he stayed quiet about it and let his mate ask his questions.

“Question one. I notice you’re wearing clothes—” Clint barked a laugh and Peter smiled apologetically. “—and I was just wondering how that worked with your wings. Do they disappear so you can get dressed?”

“Definitely not.” Clint turned around and spread his wings so Peter’s could see his shirt from behind. “They’re sorta backwards clothes, loops around my neck and buttons at my lower back. That way I can stay warm without crushing my feathers.”

“Got it.” Peter scribbled in his notebook. “You wear a halter top. Okay next question. How did you get in the cabin earlier? I heard you screech or something, then you what– opened the door and flew in? How does that work?”

“I put my wings back to fit through the door, opened the knob and flew in.” Clint clarified with a rather ‘no duh’ expression. “Easy.”

“He says easy, but I’ve seen him full on fly into doors cos he gets going too fast and can’t get to the knob in time.” Wade interjected and Peter muffled a laugh at Clint’s immediate, indignant expression. “Big ol bang, feathers everywhere, he was flying crooked for a week.”

“Moving on!” Clint’s wings twitched in irritation. “Last one, Omega. I need to get home to my mate.”

“Okay last one.” Peter scanned his list and tried to settle on just one. “Alright. Can I watch you fly when you leave here?”

“Oh my god.” Clint chuckled and held out his hand for the Omega. “Come on outside, I’ll take off from the ridge right above your house and you can watch me across the valley.”

Peter practically shrieked in excitement and darted out the door, then skidded to a stop and went right back to Wade, plastering himself to the Alpha’s body and purring into his ear, “Be right back, Alpha my Alpha. You’ll be here?”
“I’ll be here.”

Clint waited until Peter had ducked outside before muttering, “Damn, you said it was bad. Didn’t know ti was that bad. You should do something about it soon. He can’t hardly be outta the same room as you.”

Wade picked up Peter’s note book and flipped back to that first page, tracing the barely legible letters with his finger.

\[ I \text{ never thought I wanted a bond but now I know I'm ready.} \]

\[ I've \text{ never loved anyone as much as I love my Alpha.} \]

“Wade?”

“Planning on it.” the Alpha glanced up with a quick smile. “Believe me, I’m planning to do something about it real soon.”

\[ Soon. \]
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

And here we get slightly reacquainted with the actual plot of the story, since the last few chapters have been nothing but smutty relationship development.

“Alpha?” Peter kicked the door to the cabin shut behind him and carefully carried eggs and milk to the kitchen table. “I think it’s time to eat Soup, she hasn’t laid an egg in two weeks and since you’ve been sort of weirdly adamant about how the chickens are food and definitely not pets, I think she’s outlived her usefulness.”

“You think so?” Wade put his carving knife away and slipped the nearly finished ring into his pocket before Peter saw it, fixing his mate with an indulgent smile. “You want Soup for dinner, Pete?”

“It’s actually a fifty-fifty chance I’ll even be able to eat after feeding and cleaning up after her all these weeks.” The Omega countered. “This is like eating a pet bunny. A bunny named Stew.”

“Nobody keeps bunnies as pets.” Wade pointed out, but when Pete only saddled him with a look, the Alpha raised his non existent eyebrows and whistled. “Alright, you modern people keep bunnies as pets, I take it?”

Peter set the eggs down and stepped right up into Wade’s space, looping his arms around the Alpha’s neck and tugging him down for a sweet kiss before answering, “Yes, pet bunnies are a thing for us ‘modern people.’.”

Wade only grunted and Peter pressed, “Come on. You’re telling me you’ve never seen a Peter Cottontail rabbit with those fluffy ears and funny tail and you’ve never wanted to bring it home?”

“Wanted to bring it home to eat.” Wade’s grinned and Peter sighed at him. “Rabbits are delicious.”

“You’re a brute.” Peter informed his mate. “I don’t even know why I like you.”

“Well I certainly know why I like you.” the Alpha palmed over Peter’s rear, then yanked the slim Omega up against his body. “I feel like your reason for liking me goes right along the same lines.”

Peter huffed a laugh into Wade’s ear, but didn’t pull away from his mate, deciding instead to press close and brush a kiss to Wade’s collarbone. “You feel good, Alpha.” he murmured. “Does this ever go away? The want to be with you all the time?”

“I sure hope not, Pete.” The unfinished ring felt like it was burning a hole in Wade’s pocket, but he ignored it so he could hug on his Omega for a while. “I feel like your reason for liking me goes right along the same lines.”

“I sure hope not, Pete.” The unfinished ring felt like it was burning a hole in Wade’s pocket, but he ignored it so he could hug on his Omega for a while. “The need to touch, to taste, hadn’t diminished at all in the last day and a half, and Wade was still buzzing from the hour they’d spent in bed this morning before starting chores. He had no intention of letting go any sooner than he had to, and he told his mate exactly that, “I sure as hell don’t want to let you go anytime soon.”

“You’ll have to let go for a little bit, cos I need to do laundry today.” Peter muffled the words into
the hollow of the Alpha’s throat. “I’ll need help getting the sheets wrung out but other than that, you should make yourself scarce. I need every inch of space in here to lay it out to dry.”

“That’s fine.” Wade ran his fingers in distracting circles down Peter’s sides. “I got something I can work on in the barn, and you just whistle for me when you’re ready for help.”

“I can do that.” the Omega stood on his toes when Wade palmed down over his rear again, bit back a moan when their bodies brushed together and his cock stirred. “Seriously, how is it even possible to want you again? I’m still half floating from what you did to me this morning.”

“Only half floating?” Wade rubbed his thumb over his mate’s cheek and smiled when the Omega’s dark eyes filtered hazy. “I must not’ve done a good enough job if you’re only half floating. Should we try again?"

“If we try again I’ll be comatose for the rest of the day.” Peter notched back into his Alpha and hummed happily when Wade automatically held him tighter. “And we’ve got chores to do.”

“How about I do the chores.” Wade rumbled, low and coaxing. “You get naked and get back in bed. Stay warm and cozy for me. I’ve got a project in the barn I’ve been working on, so I can take care of the animals and then I’ll come in and work on laundry. No need for you to work too hard, my mate.”

“Part of me should insist I’m a strong, independent Omega who can do his own chores.” Peter mused out loud. “But the other part of me knows better than to turn down the chance to watch you do laundry. Nothing gets me hot like watching an Alpha be domestic.”

Wade’s shoulders shook with laughter, and the Omega teased, “But I know damn well you won’t get shit done if you know I’m naked under the covers.”

“Orrrrr I could get everything done in record time and then spend the rest of the day naked with you.” Wade pointed out. “I’ll even do that thing with my tongue you like if you want.”

Peter’s scent shocked with immediate arousal, lavender rolling thick and honeysuckle pitching sugary sweet, the lighter cedar notes heating until Wade had to throw his head back and suck in an open mouthed breath just to breathe a little oxygen. “Damn it, my mate. How do you do that?”

“Sorry.” Peter didn’t sound repentant at all, in fact he sounded fairly smug about his ability to render his Alpha a drooling mess with nothing more than a change to his scent. “I thought about you getting naked and sorta got out of control.”

Wade hid a disbelieving laugh behind a long kiss, cupping Peter’s jaw and holding his Omega close until Peter was sighing and melting against him, the abrupt spike in the Omega’s scent mellowing to content.

“Alpha, you don’t believe me, do you?” Peter whispered when they broke apart. “You don’t believe that just thinking about you naked turns me on this much.”

“Pete~” Wade hesitated, trying to find the right words to ask how the hell Peter could find him honestly attractive when he looked like this. “It’s not that I don’t believe you. I just~”

“It’s just that you don’t believe me.” the Omega swept his fingers up along Wade’s neck to his jawline, and then over to his lips. “I can read it in your scent. Reluctance and disbelief and~”

It would ever not make Wade’s knees weak to be scented by his mate, Peter’s lips and nose touching his skin as the Omega inhaled.
“–and uncertainty.” Peter finished, leaving a barely there kiss over Wade’s bonding spot. “The only time you ever scent uncertain is when you’re naked with me. I don’t understand why.”

“Omega.” Wade shrugged. “It’s not a big deal.”

“It’s a big deal.”

“It’s really not–”

“Listen.” Peter said then, softly firmly, as he guided Wade’s nose to his throat. “Listen to what I’m saying and make sure this time you believe it.”

Wade closed his eyes and breathed in deep, running his nose over Peter’s throat and up to the hinge of his jaw, to the softest spot behind Peter’s ear. His mate smelled sweet, so sweet, like lavender and honeysuckle, like acceptance and arousal and need and mine–

“My Alpha. My mate. My love. Every inch of you is perfect.”

“Mine.” Wade repeated, and Peter echoed it back with a satisfied purr, the Omega arching into the sting of Wade’s fangs at his throat.

“Mine.” this time it was growled and Peter’s scent rolled with desire all over again. “My mate.”

“Yours.” Feather soft fingers at Wade’s scalp, then Peter dug in harder at Wade’s shoulders when the Alpha shifted forward and dug the ends of curved fangs into the tender skin. “Oh-h-h fuck Alpha. I love your bite.”

“And with that sentence you’ve rendered me fuckin’ helpless for the rest of the day.” Wade left one last kiss on Peter’s bonding spot, and pulled away until he could see the blatant want in his mate’s eyes. “How am I sposed to get anything done knowing you’re in here all antsy for my bite?”

Peter only smiled, his gaze locked on Wade’s throat as he ran his tongue over his teeth. “I guess you’ll just have to try and focus until tonight.”

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The claw foot bathtub had been an impromptu purchase years ago, decades ago, maybe.

When Wade had first come to Haven– or rather, when he was first dragged to Haven by an obstinate Omega that wouldn’t take no for an answer– Logan had been adamant that Wade put down roots, all but bullying the Alpha into clearing land and building a cabin. The Omega knew from experience that stability was the only thing that kept the wild side, the feral side at bay and back in those days, Wade had only ever been one nightmare away from losing himself altogether.

Stability. Logan had insisted. Get your shit together.

Clint hadn’t been around yet, so Logan had helped set the foundations of the cabin right alongside Wade, Alpha and Omega working from sun up to sun down to raise the walls and secure the roof, to chop down the huge trees that became the beams in the barn.
It had been back breaking, grueling work, and when the months were over Wade had gained himself a house and a piece of land, and a friend with both a healing factor and a bullshit attitude that rivaled his own.

“Make it a home.” Logan had grunted as they sealed the final few logs and secured the cabin against the elements. “I can put up walls all day long, but it’s up to you to make it home, alright? Get your ass down to Haven and fit this place out. Stability, Wade. Don’t make me come up here after you cos you’ve gone bat shit, alright?”

Wade hadn’t had home since losing Vanessa, and the first time he stepped into Mr. Lee’s shop to try and find domestic pieces, the Alpha had nearly had a panic attack. Pots and pan, blankets and towels, silverware and wash basins—innocent, innocuous items turned vicious with the way they reminded Wade of his former mate and the peaceful life they’d carved out together.

It was embarrassing how many times Wade had walked to the store only to turn around and walked away, how many times he’d made it to the front door and then couldn’t make it a step further.

It was just house hold items and those weren’t scary at all, but they stood for moving on and Wade had never been good at that sort of thing.

On the fourth or fifth useless attempt, Mr. Lee had apparently had enough of watching Wade change his mind. The old Alpha hustled out the door and smacked Wade right across the head for loitering, then dragged him inside and started piling random things in his arms. Mr. Lee had chattered non stop as he filled a basket for Wade, chattered non stop as he pushed Wade towards the counter, chattered non stop as he hustled Wade out the door and back to his wagon with an entire set up for his place and at least a hundred other things he didn’t need at all.

The bathtub had caught his eye at the last minute, the only thing int he store Mr Lee didn’t think he needed, and as it turned out— the only purchase Wade made because he wanted to.

He didn’t take baths of course, but it sure felt like the sort of thing that would definitely turn a cabin into a home, so Wade pressed the extra coin into Mr. Lee’s hands and loaded the tub into the wagon alongside everything else, lugging it up the mountain and shoving it into the storage area of the barn loft where it was promptly forgotten.

It was years later though, and now the cabin was absolutely home. It was home for Wade through all the lonely years, but the last three months it had become home to Peter as well, so with Clint’s words about spoiling his mate ringing through his head, the Alpha climbed up into the barn loft and dragged the heavy tub out from beneath an old tarp.

It took most of a day to clean the dust from the basin, and Wade worked at the harder spots with sand and caustic soap until his fingers were raw, not letting up until the tub sparkled like new again. The few dents on the rim were easy enough to bang out, and once the bath was back on the barn floor, Wade poured several inches of water into the bottom to check the seals.

The old tub weighed enough to make Wade wheeze, but he flipped it over and braced the whole thing on his shoulders so he could get it around the back of the cabin, then covered up in another blanket so it would stay clean until he was ready.

Later that same afternoon while Peter was sleeping off a heavy lunch and the left over bliss from Wade’s fingers and tongue deep in his body, the Alpha left a scribbled note telling his mate to stay warm under the blankets and not worry about evening chores, that Wade would take care of them when he got home again.
The Alpha slipped into his heaviest boots for this part of his project, then loaded two water barrels from the barn into the back of his hand cart. The fresh water spring in the hills above the cabin was a difficult hike in the snow, and weighted down with water on the return journey would make it even worse, ut Wade needed at least two full water barrels and maybe even part of a third to fill the tub for Peter’s bath tonight, so he buttoned his coat against the chill and set off up the mountain.

He’d need a fire in the yard going to heat as pots of water, and he’d put the biggest cauldron over the indoor fireplace to make sure Peter had plenty of hot water. There was a still unopened package of lavender soap tucked away in the lean to, and the Alpha planned to crumble most of the bar into the bath so Peter would be covered in the gorgeous scent, his mate’s mind calmed by the fragrant oils and flawless skin pinkened by the steam.

Wade couldn’t think of a better way to start their night together— their bond together— than to lay a giggling, pliant, spoiled Omega out on the bear skin rug and kiss away the water droplets as they trailed down his body.

Tonight was the night.

Tonight Peter would be his, writhing on the Alpha’s knot as Wade marked him silver, a ring on those slender fingers and dark brown eyes brightening to brilliant gold as their bond set.

Tonight was the night and Peter would be his, time and distance and the impossibility of their love be damned.

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“I’m home, Pete!” Hours later, Wade rolled his shoulders and grimaced at the pull of sore muscles as he opened the door. Between hefting the bathtub and lugging the water, he was practically aching. He wouldn’t be sore in another hour, but for right now— “I could use a back rub, sweetheart. Are you still naked?”

The Alpha waggled his eyebrows in anticipation of his mate’s no doubt snarky come back, but he paused when Peter didn’t answer. “Pete? You in here?”

The cabin was empty, bed covers rumpled and pillows askew, fire banked into hot coals. Lunch plates had been cleared away, the last laundry from the morning folded and put away, and even though Wade poked his head into the lean to and even opened the door of the root cellar, the Omega was no where to be seen.

“Pete?”

Wade’s note had been moved from the bed to the table, and the Alpha smiled when he saw Peter’s near illegible writing scrawled beneath his own script.

_Alpha my Alpha,

_Couldn’t sleep without you, went out to get started on chores so we have more time together tonight._

There were a half dozen hearts on the bottom of the page and Wade made a mental note to tease is mate mercilessly about them later.

Hearts on the bottom of a note.
If Peter was out of the way and preoccupied with chores, Wade was going to use the time to get everything set up, so he got to work filling the huge cauldron on the fire and stoking the coals back to flame to set the water boiling. He dragged the big tub inside and set it close to the fireplace so the cold metal would warm, then went out back to start another fire and boil water in the next biggest pots.

The whole project would take at least an hour, so the Alpha piled each fire with plenty of kindling and thick pieces of oak to keep the temperature high, then went around trying to clean up the cabin a little more.

Wade wasn’t one to be overly domestic, but Peter had already teased about domestic Alpha’s making him hot, so Wade made quick work of strippin the sheets right off the bed and switching them for clean ones, fluffing up a few pillows and tossing them down onto the bear skin rug. He added extra blankets in case the Omega was chilly outside of his bath, the flask of moonshine to sip so his mate would be loose limbed and smiling, and Wade even set out some of the sugary sweet dried fruit they’d bought in Haven along with a few pieces of chocolate.

Then with a grimace—“Spose I can’t make fun of Pete for leaving hearts on the note if I’m putting out fruit and chocolate, huh?”

The flush of embarrassment over an admittedly cheesy attempt at romance didn’t stop the Alpha from trying to arrange the fruit pretty anyway, breaking up the dark chocolate to spread around the plate. He knew from experience how good his Omega tasted with chocolate melting on his lips, how sweet Peter’s kisses were with the tang of fruit on his tongue and Wade groaned a little, palming down his cock and licking over his fangs as he thought about just how good their night would go.

First a bath, then bonding and once Peter was marked and his, Wade would slip the ring onto Peter’s fourth finger and pray to whichever gods were listening that his mate would accept the hand crafted piece. The ring was simple but beautiful, a true labor of love, smoothed and polished to a high shine and Wade had painstakingly carved an infinity symbol on the inside of the band, a tiny mark meant as a promise for forever, for eternity—

—for as long as this timeline allowed him to keep his mate.

The thought made the Alpha sober, and he hurried through the rest of the preparations so everything would be ready for Peter. The water was almost boiling so Wade started emptying full pots into the bathtub and refilling them from the water barrels, knowing the scalding temperature would cool enough to soak in by the time the bath was full. He broke a few pieces of lavender soap into the hot water and set it to steaming, then swept the floor, wiped down the table and the kitchen and even took a few passes at the small mirror so if Peter wanted to admire his bonding mark the next morning, the glass would be bright and clear.

It wasn’t until after the cabin was sparkling and the bath was half full that Wade glanced out the window to see the sun setting, and then with an uncomfortable jolt, looked around the cabin and realized Peter had never come in from the barn.

It wasn’t unlike the Omega to end up cuddling close to the horses and getting drowsy, or to lose a few hours twisting hay and chirping down at the animals, but they had planned on naked spending extra time together tonight, had planned on it, even. Peter was just as desperate as Wade to get to skin and heat these days, just as needy and clingy so it didn’t make any sense that the sun was setting, and his mate wasn’t sat squarely on his lap right this very instant.
It didn’t make any sense.

Something awful settled in the pit of Wade’s stomach, the Alpha’s fists clenching and jaw working as he tried to dampen the immediate instinct to worry. There was no reason for him to think the worst, no reason for his chest to be closing with stress. Peter was probably fine, everything was probably fine, their cabin was safe and Wade had kept a close eye on any tracks around the clearing to make sure nothing bigger than a raccoon was wandering around.

It was fine. They were fine. Peter was just busy.

Peter was just busy and most definitely fine, but Wade still tipped his head back and tasted the air anyway, trying to find his mate’s scent. He would have felt any distress in the air when he came home, the horses would have been screaming and if a predator had come along and really there was no reason to think anything was wrong but suddenly the Alpha couldn’t breathe through the panic wrapping around his heart.

My mate.

Wade was out the cabin door in the next instant, halfway to the barn before he even realized he was running, eyes snapping red and a growl working from his chest as he bolted towards the heavy double doors.

“Pete!” he called, the tightness in his stomach climbing to his throat and threatening to strangle him with every breath. “Pete? Are you in there?”

“Omega!” the barn was quiet, Bea and Arthur quiet in their stalls, and the chickens dozing in their roost. “OMEGA!”

“Wade.”

The Alpha ripped around with a snarl, fangs bared and fists balled as he got a noseful of something oily and messy, danger rippling through the air and surrounding Wade as he turned on his heel ready to rip the intruder apart.


“Eddie.” Wade sent another wild glance around the barn, then whistled up to the loft. “Pete! You fall asleep twisting hay? Wake up, my mate. Now!”

“Wade.” Eddie was distressed today, black bubbling beneath his skin and his eyes flickering opaline as he shifted from one foot to the other. “I need to talk to you.”

“I need to find my mate.” Every one of Wade’s instincts screamed that something was wrong wrong wrong and he didn’t have time to tiptoe around a disjointed, fragile conversation with the compromised mutant. “I don’t have time to talk, Eddie. I need to find my mate.”

“No no Wade, listen–” Eddie hurried after Wade when he left the barn again, following the agitated Alpha across the clearing. “Please just listen–”

“Omega!” Wade put two fingers to his mouth and whistled sharply into the woods. “Peter! My mate! Answer me! Where are you?!”

“Wade–”
“Damn it, Eddie! I don’t have time to—”

“Wade!” Eddie’s teeth lengthened and clicked as they popped their jaw in agitation, and they clamped down on Wade’s arms with clawed fingers, the black beneath their skin rippling and rising until they were strong enough to yank Wade to a stop and force him still.

“M’only gonna tell you one time to let me go,” Wade warned, hazel eyes darkening to a dangerous shade of scarlet. “Let me go so I can find my mate. Now.”

“I don’t want you to think it’s my fault,” Eddie said then, and Wade went very very still, dread rocketing through his core. “I didn’t do anything, I promise. It’s not my fault, not– not our fault.”

“Eddie.” Wade stared down at the wicked claws on his arm, and then up into the opaline eyes of Eddie’s monster. “Do you know where my mate is?”

“It’s not our fault.” Eddie said again, hissing from behind a too long tongue. “We didn’t hurt him, I swear. Or at least, I don’t think we hurt him. No no no, we wouldn’t hurt the Omega, we wouldn’t hurt—”

They were babbling, rambling, shifting as the other struggled to come forward and take over when Eddie slipped up and couldn’t find the right words. “We wouldn’t hurt– not the Omega– not the—”

“EDDIE!”

“Not our fault.” came the guttural, deep voice of that thing lurking inside Eddie. “We didn’t hurt your mate.”

“Shit shit shit.” Wade yanked his arm free and dragged his hands down his face. “Fuck. Eddie, I don’t give a damn what you did or didn’t do right now, just tell me where my mate is!”

“We can show you.” the thing answered and Wade nodded “We can show you. Come with us.”

They took off into the woods, Wade hot on Eddie’s heels, trying to breathe through his fear and his panic and wanting with his whole heart to believe Eddie was telling the truth when they insisted—

Not our fault, not our fault. We didn’t hurt your Omega.

Not our fault.
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

This chapter hurts a little bit, but don’t worry, Seventeen will be better. We check back in with Dr Pym and Cable, and then the chapter has a generic TW for canon typical and verse specific mentions of violence/sort of body horror because of Eddie/Venom, also like a blink and you miss it mention of a possibility of miscarriage.

The calm afternoon ambiance was abruptly shattered when an explosion ripped through the roof of the old home and blew various shingles and debris straight up into the sky. The blast flattened the few trees in the backyard, windows shattered and glass shards rained into the garden, and the front door and most of the front wall blew out into the driveway.

It took the fire department a good hour to get the blaze under control and finally out, and it took the medical personnel at least that long to get one rather irate old Beta calmed down enough to submit to an injury check.

“Mr. Pym?” the EMT raised her voice and practically shouted at the scientist. “Mr. Pym! I need you to settle down and breathe in some oxygen! You’ve taken in a lot of smoke and since we aren’t sure which chemicals are in the air, you have to wear a mask!”

“The hell I do!” Hank Pym’s eyebrows were singed, the tips of his silver hair still smoking and clothes covered in soot, but he still slapped the Omega’s hands away and leveled a glare at the other paramedic trying to get him an IV. “And by the way, it’s Doctor Pym, I got my first doctorate back when you were still shittin’ in diapers and I’ll be damned if you’re gonna me Mister.”

“Mr. Pym.” A police officer this time, hulking and Alpha and thoroughly pissed off that he’d been assigned to collect a statement from the mouthy professor. “You could have blown up the neighborhood with this little stunt, so you need to calm down and tell me exactly what happened so we can decide which charges apply to this situation.”

“It’s Doctor Pym, damn you!”

“Mr. Pym!” Another Beta wrapped head to toe in HazMat gear. “Can you detail your project so we know if we’re dealing with anything deadly in the area? I have to make sure my men are properly covered in case of any containments.”

“The hell I am going to detail my project!” Hank blustered. “You wouldn’t understand even if I took the time to explain it, so why even bother!”

“Mr. Pym, for the last time you need to answer my questions or I’ll haul you down to the station—”

“Mr. Pym, please put on the oxygen mask sir, or I’ll be forced to sedate you first and then—”

“Mr. Pym—”

“IT’S DOCTOR PYM!” The new voice cut through the argument and even through the wail of sirens and clamor on onlookers, rolling deep with Alpha and cracking whipcord sharp with
authority. The Alpha police officer was shouldered aside, the Omega EMT pushed gently but still firmly away, and Hank’s smile was equal parts relieved and terrified when Cable’s bulk stopped in front of him, yellow and red eyes glinting down at him from beneath a hoodie.

“Ah yes, hello Mr. Summers.” Hank patted at his singed hair and made an attempt at straightening his clothes. “How nice of you to make an appearance. What brings you and your fanny pack around?”

“Probably the fireball I could see from clear across the bay.” Cable could barely talk through his growl. “Put the goddamn oxygen mask on, Beta.”

“Now see here, I’m pretty sure I know how much oxygen I need to breathe and I’ll tell you the same thing I told that EMT, I don’t need–”

“Now!”

The mask snapped into place over Hank’s face in an instant, the strength of his mutinous glower severely diminished by the apparatus covering his nose.

“You Alphas think you can just roll in and take over.” he muttered, and Cable snarled back, “What was that? Can’t hear you over the oxygen mask strapped to your face. Shut up and breathe, Pym. Christ.”

Hank took a few obligatory deep breaths, grumbling silenced as he watched the mutant get rid of the crowd with nothing more than a few growls and some well placed threats-promises to the authorities. Cable was a big man by any standard, and even with his metallic pieces covered with sleeves and a hood, there was no denying how scary the Alpha was. He scented dangerous and wild and off, and if the snarl in his words wasn’t enough to discourage any looky-loo’s, the glares he doled out left and right certainly got the job done.

Cable was sort of awesome, and Hank would go to his grave before ever admitting it out loud.

“Look at you, throwing that mutant heavy weight around.” The Beta mocked when Cable stomped back his way. “I thought your type liked to stay hidden. The tabloids will be full of stories of yellow eyed alien Alphas tomorrow, won’t that put a cramp in your travel plans.”

Cable’s good eye snapped red in warning, and Hank put up his hands in immediate surrender. “Alright. Not in the mood for jokes.”

“What. the hell. happened?” the Alpha folded massive arms across his chest and inclined his head towards the smoldering remains of Hank’s house. “How did you blow your lab up? I gave you the exact specs needed for the project and nothing should have gone wrong. The problem must have been your set up, not the piece itself.”

“My set up?” Hank huffed in annoyance. “Oh I’m sorry, is my secret genius laboratory not as good as your secret genius laboratory?”

“Apparently not!” Cable thundered, and Hank only glared at him over the rim of his oxygen mask. “What the hell happened?!”

“All the specs were fine.” the Beta finally admitted begrudgingly. “I don’t actually know what happened. Something may have overheated, maybe my breaker box couldn’t handle the extra input and sparked it might have been a weird power surge through this part of the city and my lab attracted most of it. Dunno what it was, all I know is I almost lost my eyebrows and I’m pretty pissed about it.”
“I don’t give a damn about your eyebrows.”

“Fuckin’ rude, is all you are.”

Cable tensed his jaw and hissed a breath out between tightly clenched teeth. “What happened with the device?”

“Oh, it’s pretty much fine.” Hank gave up on the oxygen mask and tossed it away. “My lab locks down the moment anything goes wrong, so the device would have dropped into a blast proof box when the alarms started going off. Worst case scenario, I lost the connector piece I was working on. No big deal. We can move the whole thing out to my place on the docks and get back to work.”

“You have a lab at the docks?”

“You don’t have a lab at the docks?” Hank shot back. “Yes, Cable. I have more than one place to make my doomsday devices. Can’t be an evil genius without a secret lair, now can I?”

“And yet, you blew up your house and half a neighborhood tonight.” Cable’s lips lifted in a reluctant half smile at the Beta’s sarcasm. “Couldn’t have done that at your dockside lab?”

“Nah, the house has better heating and more comfortable beds.” Hank made a show of combing his hair back and wiping the mess from his shoes. “I’m fine, by the way. Thank you for asking. I appreciate the concern.”

“I don’t care how you are.” Cable’s yellow eye whirred and clicked as it zoomed in on Hank’s frame, scanning and cataloging any injuries and scrapes. “I care that today is the ninety day mark and my device isn’t ready.”

“Yeah.” the Beta finally grimaced, guilt writing itself across his craggy features. “Yeah, sorry about that. I told you three months was pushing it time wise, but I really was supposed to be finished today. You could’ve zapped to the future then back to the past to get the Omega before midnight tonight.”

“How long.” Cable hauled Hank to his feet and started pushing him towards the house, sidestepping broken glass and twisted timbers to get to the blast proof lab doors hidden behind what was left of the far wall. “How long will it take to get everything put back together?”

“Shouldn’t be long at all.” Hank ducked under a shaky beam and blew the dust away from the imprint pad so it would read his palm. “No more than three days, and most of that time is needed to set things up down at the docks. If you use that shiny arm of yours for more than bullying people and actually help, I can get it done faster.”

“I’ll help.” the Alpha grunted. “So long as it goes faster. I’ll already be a day late, I can’t take any more of a risk.”

“Tell me something.” Hank muttered a curse when his first attempt at opening the lab blinked back denied. “When you snatch this kid outta there, you can plop him back right where you found him, right? Same place, same minute?”

Cable made another one of those noises that was partial grunt, partial agreement and Hank wiped his hands down his pants to try his palm print again. “So why the ninety day rush?”

“I told you, the human body—”
“I know, I know.” the scientist interrupted, trying the screen a third time. “A hundred and twenty days and his body gives out completely and ninety days is the start of the down slide. But if you can return him right back to the exact time and place you took him, why is it ninety days exactly that you have to grab him? It’s still thirty days to the point of no return so–”

“The point of no return is ninety days.” Cable grabbed at Hank’s hand and slammed it into the imprint screen, then flattened his metal hand to the console as well, yellow eye glowing bright as the tech part of himself filtered through the doors schematics and over rode whatever bug wasn’t reading the Beta’s palm. “A hundred and twenty days is death, ninety days is no return.”

Hank blinked a few times when the doors slid open unprompted. “Did– did you just hack my security door?”

“I can time travel.” the Alpha stated flatly. “Time travel, and you’re impressed cos I hacked your janky door? Get in there and get me my device.”

“Grouchy.” Hank sniffed at the mutant and jogged down the lab stairs to get to the work station. “And what do you mean, ninety days is the point of no return? Use real words and explain that to me. Last time all you did was give me a deadline and threaten me a little. Tell me what’s going on.”

Cable pushed his hood away and watched as the doctor typed in a code and retrieved the time travel device from below the warped remains of a massive desk, but only when the Beta turned back around and raised nearly gone eyebrows did the mutant answer reluctantly–

“Up until ninety days, I can return the Omega to the exact point in time when they left. After ninety days, anything they’ve gone through in a different timeline has to be compensated for in the original timeline, and any physical changes are mirrored in the original as well.”

“Mirrored.” Hank repeated. “So if the Omega breaks his leg past the ninety day mark, when he returns home his leg will still be broken.”

“Right.”

“And compensated for.” He set the device aside for a moment to gather his notes. “Too much time passes in the past, so you have to give him a little extra time in the future.”

“Instead of returning the Omega to the exact second I took him, I have to match minute for minute.” Cable confirmed. “Otherwise he won’t technically be in the right timeline, he’ll be a few days behind which will kill him anyway. Minute for minute, or he’s fucked.”

“But he–” for the first time since losing his roof, Hank actually looked worried. “–the Omega. He’ll be okay so long as you match the days and minutes? Even if this takes me a week and thirty seconds to fix, you bring him back a week and thirty seconds after he left and he’ll be okay?”

“…relatively.” the mutant hedged. “So long as he’s stayed safe in the past and nothing irreversible has happened.”

“Like broken legs.”

“Or getting real sick.” Cable added, “Or losing too much weight through malnutrition or gaining weight because his suppressants and birth controls don’t work through the time vortex and he ends up expecting.”

“If time travel is this hard on a healthy human there’s no way a fetus could survive a trip through–
”Hank blanched in horror when he mentally put two and two together. “Jesus. Before ninety days you could undo all that?”

“Dunno about pregnancy, never tried.” Cable shook his head. “But broken bones? Sure. Scars and shit? Yeah, I can erase all that within ninety days. After ninety days, I can’t erase anything.”

He lowered his voice in regret, “If the Omega gets hurt, he’ll be hurt in this time line with no way to explain it happening. And if he takes a mate or is trauma bonded because of the circumstances—”

“Then he’ll be stuck in this century, alone and more than likely dying of mate sickness.” Hank swallowed uncomfortably. “And since he and his mate belong to separate timelines, bringing his mate through to this century wouldn’t solve anything.”

“It’d be the same problem, same outcome.” Cable nodded shortly. “We aren’t meant to exist in timelines other than our own and there’s no two ways about it. So the sooner I get him back to this timeline, the better. Stop fuckin’ around and get what you need so we can get down to the docks.”

“Yes.” Hank’s glasses were hilariously crooked, but he balanced them on his nose anyway as he moved around the lab picking up a few necessary pieces. “Hey uh– do you believe in God, Cable?”

“You mean somethin’ more powerful than some’a the mutants I know?” the Alpha shook his head. “That’s fuckin’ terrifying. Why do you ask?”

“Maybe you should pray to whoever you mutants believe in to keep that Omega safe.” the Beta held up the device and showed Cable the broken covering, the scorched wires. “I’m gonna need more time to fix this. A couple weeks at least.”

“Shit.” Cable closed his eyes. “Shit.”

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“What are you even doing up here, Eddie?” Wade pounded after the other mutant, leaping over a fallen log and crashing through the brush in an attempt to keep up. “You never come up to this side of the mountain, and you never go out without Bruce. What are you doing up here?”

“Hungry.” Came the answer, and Wade’s skin itched thinking about what Eddie had to do to ease the sort of hunger that monster brought about. “We heard your mate crying for help and thought he was food. Hungry.”

“You thought my mate was food?”

“The noise.” Eddie slipped back in for a moment and Wade shuddered when the form in front of him rippled and contorted to make more room for Eddie’s presence. “We heard the noise, thought it was food. But it was your mate.”

“What the hell is Peter even doing this far out?” Wade skidded under a low hanging branch, then swore in surprise when he took another step out into—

—nothing.

“Shit—!”
“Settle.” Claws and black fingers yanked Wade back away from the ledge and onto solid ground again, opaline eyes peering at him carefully before letting go and pushing him away. “Your mate.”

Wade swallowed back a surge of uncertainty to look down over the cliff edge to where Eddie was pointing, and the uncertainty turned to strangling fear when he saw the crumpled body of his Omega sprawled onto the cold ground below, blood staining the snow crimson around Peter’s head.

No.

No no no.

There were huge boulders of snow around the Omega, broken branches and the spindly roots of an upturned tree, and Wade only had to look at the ground around him to know what happened.

“The ledge gave out.” the Alpha whispered. “He was– he was out here for some reason and the ledge gave out beneath his feet. What–what–what–”

A melancholy bleat from down below as well, and Wade’s eyes broke red when he saw the damn goat cowering behind a nearby tree. “You.”

He hadn’t noticed earlier that the goat wasn’t in the barn. Anxious to find Peter, distracted by Eddie’s unexpected presence, Wade had only briefly registered the animals, only glanced at the horses long enough to make sure Peter hadn’t done anything stupid like fall asleep in one of the stalls because he loved how the horses smelled and how warm Arthur was.

The Alpha hadn’t noticed the goat missing, hadn’t paid any attention to the empty rope or the overturned milk bucket and now–now staring down at his mate bleeding and still in the snow and that goddamn animal practically shrieking because it could smell the horror inside of Eddie–now Wade knew what happened.

“The goat took off and Peter tried to chase her down. Fell right off this ledge. Fuck. Fuck!”

There was no way to reach Peter. The ledge that had broken under the Omega’s weight had given way to sheer cliff, there were no trees to use as hand holds and even if Wade had thought to bring rope, he had no way of knowing how hurt the Omega was, or if being slung over Wade’s shoulder for the dangerous climb back towards safety would shift broken bones and ruin already torn muscles.

There was no way to reach Peter, not even if Eddie could hold a rope so Wade could climb, or if they managed to create a stretcher to keep the Omega steady they couldn’t get back up the cliff to the cabin and hiking down the mountain would take hours and hours in already fading daylight.

There was no way to reach Peter and Wade didn’t know how long his mate had been lying there cold and bleeding and hurt and it was sheer desperation, body wracking heart breaking desperation that had the Alpha turning to Eddie and holding out his hands to beg–

“Go get my mate.”

“N-no.” Eddie recoiled from Wade’s outstretched hands. “N-no. I can’t.”

“Eddie–”

“We aren’t supposed to touch.” they whispered. “We aren’t s’posed to touch, not the Omega, not
your Omega, not anyone.”

“Eddie, I’m begging you.”

“I c-can’t.” Eddie shook their head and stumbled back another step, dangerous teeth clicking in agitation, black rising beneath his skin as the other shuddered. “No. We aren’t sposed to touch. Dangerous. We are dangerous. We are–”

“Eddie!”

“Dangerous! We only hurt!”

“No.” It very well could have cost Wade his life to grab onto Eddie but he did it anyway, digging his fingers into the uncomfortably liquid skin and keep Eddie still, staring deep into the shiny eyes and trying to keep his own from sliding red when that awful tongue licked its way out of Eddie’s mouth as the monster got a little closer to the surface

“No.” he repeated. “No Eddie, you don’t only hurt. I know you don’t. I know you don’t and I need you– Eddie!” Wade’s voice sharpened when the arms in his grip bulged as the thing tried to break free. “Eddie! You didn’t hurt my mate! This isn’t your fault, you did the right thing coming to get me, you tried to save him–”

“Hungry–”

“I need you!” Wade shouted and the words caught Eddie off guard, settling the anxiety boiling in their veins until the black receded almost completely and their eyes calmed. “Eddie I need– I need–”

The Alpha dragged in a deep breath and forced it out through his nose, shoving away the panic and the worry and the heartbreak so he could whisper, “I need you, Eddie. Or my mate’s gonna– he was gonna be sick. –die. I need both of you. All of you. You’re the only one that can save him.”

“Save him.” Eddie repeated.

“I can’t save him by myself.” Wade ground out, the words paining his very soul. “Pete is my mate and I can’t save him by myself. It’s too far down, and I’ll hurt him if if I try to move him. Haven is too far away so I have to get him back home to the cabin. Please. Please.”

Eddie blinked at Wade, then down at the crumpled Omega for a long minute, and just as Wade was ready to pitch the creature right over the side of the cliff and scream for him to go save Peter, Eddie muttered, “Look away.”

“…what…”

“Look away.” Eddie jerked out of Wade’s hands and backed away several steps. “Look away as I– as I change. You don’t want to– to see me. To see us.”

“It’s fine.” It certainly wasn’t fine– after Anne Wade had had nightmares about Eddie’s us, but this time he lifted his chin and didn’t look away. “It’s fine, Eddie. For my mate. Please.”

“We didn’t hurt him.” It was more of a question this time, Eddie hesitating, plucking at their clothes and scratching self consciously at their scalp. “We don’t– we don’t want to hurt anyone anymore.”
“You didn’t hurt him.” For a split second, Eddie’s wretched scent twisted vulnerable and Wade couldn’t stop his reassuring rumble, his outstretched hand towards a man that had once been his best friend. “Eddie, I know you didn’t.”

“…look away.” Eddie said one more time, but Wade clenched his fists and stood his ground, gaze unwavering—

—and oh it was awful.

The noise, too sticky to be liquid, too wet to be natural. The color, black as night and then blacker still and eyes reflective and terrible and huge. Teeth, too many teeth crowded behind a too long tongue and drool, dripping from jagged edges and melting hot into the snow at their feet. Eddie screamed like it hurt but it turned into a screech of freedom and then fell into a low purr of relief as the thing cracked it’s neck and rolled it’s shoulders and towered over Wade, hulking and dripping and alien.

It scented like venom and sounded like terror and it took every bit of Wade’s self control not to turn and vomit, not to turn and scream, not to take it all back and try to rescue Peter himself because the thought of his Omega clutched in those awful clawed hands was too much.

It was too much.

“We will save your Omega.”

Eddie– the thing– they didn’t even move naturally, flowing over the edge of the cliff and blitzing towards the ground like there wasn’t anything solid about their frame. They landed in the snow and morphed back into themselves, something vaguely humanoid that oozed beneath Peter’s frame and absorbed the Omega into their mass, white claws too bright in the black, too big to be holding Wade’s mate so gently.

But they were gentle, cradling Peter into one arm and using the other to scale the cliff with no trouble at all, limbs lengthening and stretching, to make up the distance, their entire body forming around the Omega to be sure Peter wasn’t jostled or harmed in the ascent.

Peter was pale and barely breathing, lips blue and hair matted red, soaked clear through his clothes and Wade’s entire body shook with the need to hold his mate, to snatch Peter away from Eddie and hold him close.

No no no.

“Oh my mate.” The Alpha bit into his bottom lip until it tore and bled, aching to gather his mate up tight but he knew– he knew he couldn’t get Peter home and safe faster than Eddie could, so Wade stepped away again and stammered, “Please Eddie. My–my cabin. Go. Just go, I’ll catch up. I have to get the goat but you have to take my mate, alright?”

“Won’t hurt him.” Guttural and horrible but honest and earnest. “Will take care of the Omega, pretty Omega, such a cold Omega.”

“Take him home and then I need Bruce.”

Eddie was already moving, settling Peter more securely in his arms and taking off through the woods, and Wade shouted after him, “Take him home and then I need Bruce! Eddie! Get the doctor! Get Doc Banner and tell him we need help!”

***************
“You didn’t think I did it.” Eddie huddled into his coat, sitting close but not too close to Wade on the outside step of the cabin, both of them banished to the outside while Bruce worked on Peter. “Your mate. You didn’t think I hurt him. Or– or that I scared him and he fell.”

Wade rubbed at his neck, sore from climbing back up the near impossible cliff with the goat balanced on his shoulders, and shook his head wearily. “Why would I think you hurt Pete, Eddie?”

Eddie tilted their head and looked at Wade, tired eyes spinning reflective before blinking clear again. “You know why.”

*Oh.* “Right.” the Alpha blew out a deep breath. “You’re my friend, Eddie. I know you’d never hurt my mate. Not intentionally, and to be real honest, don’t think you’d let yourself close enough to do it on accident either. I wasn’t worried about it.”

Eddie only watched him, and after another moment Wade added, “A lot of things have changed, but I trusted you back then and I trust you now. You came to get me, right? You did the right thing. You’re still…” he searched for the right word. “You’re still *you*, Eddie. Still my friend.”

“We were hungry.” Eddie said quietly, flexing their fingers and letting their claws curve out. “So hungry. Sometimes it– it hurts. Empty and like– like nails on my insides. Need to eat, need to feast. I’m st-starving. All the time.”

Wade ran his tongue over his own fangs and asked, “When was the last time you weren’t hungry, Eddie?”

“…after Anne.” That *tongue*, curling out and tasting the air and Wade crossed his arms over his stomach so he wouldn’t jerk away. “Not hungry for a long time after that.”

“You remember Anne?” the Alpha’s heart sank with dread. *Charles had promised Eddie wouldn’t remember.* “And what happened? You remember all that?”

Eddie’s smile was awful, painful and brittle and tears shone in their broken eyes even as their teeth crowded up behind their lips, muscles and veins running *inky* as the other roiled forward to cover the soul deep scars.

“How are we supposed to forget?”

And Wade didn’t know, he didn’t know how anyone could *ever* forget what had happened that day. He and Clint had drank for most of a month trying to forget and even the alcohol hadn’t dulled the sounds of screams, of bones breaking and bodies tearing. Logan hadn’t been able to clear the scent of blood and *horror* from his nose for weeks and nothing– *nothing* had helped the shock of seeing Eddie afterwards, seeing the black clinging to his frame, the way his eyes hadn’t gone back to normal for months, the way he’d been mute for most of a year.

Only the monster had spoken after that, rough and raw and quick to rage, teeth flashing and claws slashing and one time *one time* the thing had roared at Wade and in between one breath and the next, the Alpha had heard Eddie pleading–

*No no my love. No more blood. I can’t see any more blood.*

“I can’t forget.” Eddie was back, the black receding beneath again as they hunched their shoulders and ducked their head. “Sometimes I d-don’t wanna forget. Scared I’ll forget her, don’t wanna do
He wouldn’t ever be able to fucking forget that day.

“Who would you be without your mate?” Eddie murmured, and Wade jolted back to the moment, chest tightening over a painful breath at the thought of losing Peter. “Could you forget him?”

“…no.” This time Wade didn’t look away when Eddie’s gaze flickered. “No, I could never forget Pete. Wouldn’t want to forget him.”

“Yeah.” A smile, this one less awful than the first but still uneasy. “You’re sorta a monster too, aren’t you, Wade? We’re all— all sorta monsters.”

“We’re all sorta monsters.” Wade agreed haltingly. “And losing my mate would unleash somethin’ awful.”

“We could be awful together.” Eddie whispered, turning to stare out across the clearing again. “You and me and Bruce. We could be awful together.”

Silence between them, because there was nothing to say after that, nothing that could take the— nothing that could change—

—just nothing.

There was nothing to say.

It was close to an hour later when Bruce finally opened the cabin door, his dark eyes landing first on Eddie to make sure they were alright, and then on Wade to check the Alpha’s anxiety level.

“Thanks for waiting out here.” he began slowly, both hands up placatingly when Wade jumped to his feet. “I know you didn’t want to wait away from your mate but you were too worked up to be in there. You were stressing me out and that’s never a good thing, but more importantly, your mate was picking up on your panic and I needed to keep him calm.”

“Yeah.” Wade nodded shortly, then motioned for Bruce to move. “I need to see him though, need to see him right now.”

“Wait.” Bruce stepped back into the way, and Wade instinctively snarled, low and furious that the Doctor would deny him entry. “Don’t snarl at me. You need to listen.”

Bruce’s eyes didn’t flash red like most Alphas, and no one knew if that was a result of his mutation or because his secondary biology was fairly muted. The Doctor’s eyes didn’t flash red but they ringed in bright jade when he needed to make a point, and that was usually frightening enough.

“Don’t snarl at me!” he snapped again, dark eyes flaring otherwordly green, and while Wade couldn’t make himself back down, he at least stopped growling and made a visible effort to pull himself together and hear Bruce out.

“That’s better.” Bruce calmed again, eyes fading to normal. “Now listen. The cut on Peter’s head is fairly superficial, I’m sure it looked bad in the snow but the cold kept it from bleeding too much so
I cleaned it up and it’s fine. No broken bones, though his ankle is swollen from the fall. I won’t
know about any cracked ribs until he wakes up and can tell me what hurts.”

“He’s not awake yet?” Wade’s stomach plummeted and Eddie turned away, coughing over the
choke of fear in Wade’s scent. “He hasn’t even opened his eyes?”

“Not yet.” Bruce shrugged into his jacket and buttoned it against the cold. “His pulse is steady
though, and once I got him in and out of the bath–” Wade couldn’t help another growl thinking
about anyone seeing his mate naked, and Bruce nodded in sympathetic understanding. “–it was
necessary, Wade and you damn well know it. I’m a doctor, not someone leering after your
Omega.”

“I know.” Wade ground out, and Bruce nodded again.

“Once I got him in and out of the bath and redressed, Pete’s temperature came back up but you’re
going to have to watch him carefully. The head wound was a scratch, more dangerous is the
hypothermia which can definitely lead to pneumonia.”

“Pneumonia.” Wade had a sudden flashback to losing Vanessa, how her fever had never broken
and her cough had gotten worse every day, and this time Eddie bent over and heaved when the
Alpha’s scent strangled in panic. “Bruce, you gotta do something–!”

“You need to listen to his cough.” Bruce worked to stay level as the Alpha got more and more
agitated. “Check for fevers or chills, keep an eye on his breathing. Your mate may or may not
wake up, Wade. Sometimes the best defense against injury and trauma is to simply sleep, but I’ll
come back in three days to check on you two, alright?”

“There has to be something more you can do.”

“I can try to get in touch with Cable.” the Doctor said calmly and predictably, Wade jerked away
with a furious growl. “Wade listen–”

“YOU ARE NOT CALLING CABLE!”

“Listen!” Green again, snapping in Bruce’s eyes and Wade stumbled back several steps to put some
distance between himself and the doctor, bending over and trying to force himself to breathe.
“Wade just listen.”

“You’re not calling Cable.” the Alpha choked out. “I won’t let you. I won’t let you take my mate
away.”

“Taking Peter back to his own time might be the only way to save him, Wade.” Bruce’s heart
twisted in sympathy for the distraught Alpha, but he kept his voice steady and clear. “It might be
our only option, and you don’t want to wait too long before making the decision. Think about it,
okay?”

“I won’t let you take my mate away.” Wade fell to his knees in the snow, holding his head with
both hands and repeating numbly. “I– I won’t let you. I won’t survive losing Pete, I won’t
survive–”

Don’t make me survive losing my mate.
Chapter 17

Ninety-three days and counting…

“Come here, Omega. I’ve got you.”

Wade remembered caring for Vanessa when she was sick, remembered wiping at her forehead when the fever raged, remembered wrapping her in blankets when the chills set in and she cried into her pillow.

“Right here, Pete. Just a little water for me. You’ve gotta drink something, sweetheart. Anything.”

Wade remembered cradling Vanessa’s head and helping her to swallow drops of soup, remembered petting at her hair and soothing pained whimpers, remembered lifting her slight weight into his arms to move closer to the fire on the chilly nights and sitting next to her for hours because he didn’t dare close his eyes and risk losing her.

“You cold, baby boy? Come on, I’ll get you over to the fire. Sit you on my lap, it’s okay. Everything’s fine. I’ll just hold you for a while, it’s fine.”

Wade remembered watching the spirit drain right out of the fierce women, remembered the crimson stain of blood on her fangs when the cough got worse, remembered the way her scent had twisted first bitter, then sour and faded to nearly nothing before the end.

“Oh shit. Wait wait wait, don’t shiver. Don’t shiver sweetheart, I’ve got a blanket, sorry my mate, sorry sorry hold on. I thought you’d be warm enough, hold on.”

Wade remembered holding Vanessa’s too thin hands and feeling the tremble that never went away, he remembered the rattle in her chest and the way she’d try to smile at him anyway, and he remembered how the cabin had felt so so small because his entire world had narrowed to just listening to her breathe.

“It’s just a cough, Pete. Like the sniffles, I’ve seen babies pull through this before, you’re being dramatic for no reason at all. Just breathe, baby boy. Breathe.”

Wade remembered the last time he’d ever heard Vanessa laugh at one of his stupid jokes, he remembered scenting down her neck to try and save the beauty of sweet fireweed and tangy citrus in his heart forever and more than all that he remembered going to wake her up that morning when her gorgeous eyes hadn’t opened.

“… Pete…my mate… if you don’t wake up all the way soon, I’m gonna panic.”

Wade remembered burying his mate, remembered the flowers he’d scattered over a rough wooden cross that wasn’t near enough to represent the wild that had been his gorgeous Alpha and he remembered sobbing into his hands cos he’d never feel her heart beat again and he remembered not sleeping for days cos he couldn’t handle dreaming about Vanessa and waking up again to find her gone.

Wade remembered it all and every memory was blue like bruises and purple like pain and everything was awful.

Awful.
He couldn’t do it again.

*Please don’t make me do it again.* Wade thought as he maneuvered the little Omega further up onto the pillows so Peter’s cough would ease. Three days of fever had finally broken earlier this morning and the bone rattling cough had stayed dry instead of wet and choking and terrible. His mate was still sleeping, hadn’t opened his eyes once even when Wade tried to wipe him down with a warm rag, hadn’t squeezed at the Alpha’s fingers when Wade tried to hold his hand.

Peter was still *sleeping* and Wade was so tired after days of round the clock care, but he didn’t dare close his eyes. In a moment of near hysteria the Alpha thought it was irony—a cruel sort of irony that not so long ago Peter had been afraid to close his eyes when Wade was hurt, and now Wade didn’t want to sleep in case Peter slipped away while he dozed.

Was irony the right word?

Maybe the right word was *torture*.

*Torture*, and Wade didn’t dare close his eyes. “Wake up my mate.” he muttered, holding tight to cool fingers and watching the rise and fall of the Omega’s chest. Please?”

He didn’t mean to fall asleep. He didn’t want to be dreaming about losing Vanessa and he really hadn’t wanted the dreams to twist into losing Peter too. He hadn’t wanted to dream about being alone and screaming into an endless lonely void and he hadn’t wanted to dream about finding lavender flowers to lay over another cross and–

“All my Alpha.” Soft and sweet and shaky, barely a whisper, barely even words. The cabin was freeezing, the fire long out, the sunlight through the windows offering little heat, and Wade blinked first in confusion and then in guilt.

He hadn’t meant to fall asleep and what if his mate wasn’t okay or needed help or was coughing or–

“All my Alpha.” A quiet hum and a weak cough. “Come lay with me, don’t— don’t sleep there on the side of the bed. Come on.”

— Pete.

“You— you’re awake?” Wade jolted upright and stared at his Omega in disbelief. “Pete, you’re— are you okay? You’re awake?”

“I’m awake.” Peter was *awake* and smiling and it was gorgeous. His eyes were still a little too bright after days of fever, his skin a little too pale from being sick but he was *smiling* and Wade had never seen anything so beautiful in his life.

“My mate.” The Alpha lunged forward and buried his face in the crook of Peter’s throat, pushed his nose into the bruised bonding spot and dragged his fangs over the Omega’s pulse, rumbling anxiously when he could only barely feel Peter’s heartbeat against his mouth. “Pete, my Omega. I was so worried.”

“Worried?” Peter huffed a laugh and it was too too quiet but it was *real* and the Alpha clutched him up even tighter. “You called me dramatic. How is that—” he coughed a little. “—how is that worried?”

“Oh shit, you heard that?” Wade got another too quiet laugh for his sass and he loved it.

“Everything I said to you when you were sick and the only thing you actually heard was me
accusing you of being dramatic?"

“Course that’s the one I heard, you said it pretty loud.” the Omega ran careful fingers over Wade’s cheek, rubbed his thumb over his mate’s bottom lip and trilled gently when the grasp at his waist turned desperate. “I’m– I’m still real tired, my Alpha. Will you come lay with me? Hold me?”

Peter sucked in a sharp breath when Wade’s entire body surged with need, muscles flexed and fingers tight, but when the Omega’s breath turned into a rasp, Wade wrenched away to go and get water for him first, tripping over sleepy feet and nearly falling on his way to the table.

“Mate.” Peter coughed again, bent over on the bed and grabbed at the sheets until he could get his breath back. “Wade, I’m fine just c’mere so I can–” Dizzy, and he collapsed into the pillows. “Wade, please come lay with me. Hold me. Please.”

“Water.” the Alpha hooked an arm around Peter’s neck and propped him up, holding a glass to his lips. “Come on. Just a little bit. Come on.”

“M’fine.” Peter took an obedient sip and tried to pull away. “Alpha–”

“Take another drink, my mate.” Wade insisted and this time when Peter tried to talk, the Alpha growled, “Peter. Drink.”

Oh.

Oh my Alpha.

Peter’s heart twisted in his chest when he saw that Wade was haggard, eyes blood shot and glassy, fangs peeking out behind his lips cos the Alpha couldn’t calm down enough to put them away. His hands were shaking, shoulders tense and breath coming choppy and harsh so Peter took one drink, then another, and then one more to soothe his mate.

“Thank you.” Wade muttered. “Sorry for growlin’ at you.”

“No you’re not.” Peter pushed the water away and leaned in to nuzzle at his mate’s throat.”S’okay. You’re trying to take care of me.”

“Fuck, I’m trying.” Wade slid his palm to the base of Peter’s neck and kept his mate close. “You had me real worried, my mate. Don’t do that anymore, alright?”

“I promise.” Peter whispered, and then self consciously, and holding his breath to squash another cough. “And I’m sorry I’m gross from being sick. But please. Please my mate, come lay with me. Come hold me? I– I need you. Feel like I’ve been away from you for a long time and I need you.”

The Alpha didn’t hesitate even a second, not even a second to join Peter on the bed. The sheets needed washed, the blankets were stiflingly hot and the pillows were sweaty but Wade climbed through it all to gather his mate up close over his heart.

Peter was too thin and still a little too warm, fragile and breakable and Wade was so so careful rolling them on the mattress so the Omega could cuddle into his chest. He was so so careful running his fingers through Peter’s thick hair and smoothing the strands away from his forehead, so so careful holding onto his mate’s hips to settle Peter right where he belonged, so careful driving his fangs through tender skin to taste blood and swallowing the Omega’s grateful purr.

Wade remembered everything about Vanessa being sick, he remembered everything about those
last days together, he remembered everything about the years and years of loneliness that followed. He would never forget those days and even though Peter was safe in his arms right now Wade knew he’d never forget being scared these last few days either.

The Alpha’s scent was flush with sorrow and fear and panic and a hundred other awful emotions he couldn’t put a name to so he closed his eyes and tried to force it all away. The last thing he wanted was to stress out his mate when Peter was just barely starting to recover and Wade definitely didn’t want to talk about how Peter being sick was so similar to Vanessa being sick and he didn’t want to talk about–

“Alpha.” Peter knew, he always knew, and the sweet Omega wriggled closer to his mate, arched his neck into the bite so Wade would take more. He ran his fingers along those damnable scars from the lion and purred until finally finally the ball of tension loosened in the Alpha’s chest and faded towards relief.

“M’here.” Peter whispered when Wade unlocked his jaw and licked soothingly over the bite mark, “My Alpha. You didn’t lose me. I’m here. I’m here, can you– can you feel me?”


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{{Author’s Note: If anyone cares, 1977 is the year Lou Ferrigno’s version of the Hulk started on TV, which is why I use that year as the year Bruce ‘disappeared’!}}

Ninety-five days and counting…

“You’re dehydrated.” Bruce leaned in close to peer into Peter’s eyes. “How’s the headache?”

“Awful, but I have some ibuprofen still in my pack so I’ve been taking it.” Peter obediently opened his mouth so the doctor could check his throat. “No fever for two days, but my Alpha says I was out for at least three before that.”

“I came and saw you after three days and you were still basically unconscious, apparently you woke up the morning after.” Bruce felt along Peter’s jaw and down his throat to check for any swelling. “Glad you’re up and talking again though, your mate was real worried for a while there.”

“You know what ibuprofen is.” Two days recovered had returned the spark to Peter’s eyes, and even though his cough lingered, his cheeks were red and smile easy. “You didn’t even blink when I mentioned it.”

“Take a deep breath in and hold it for me.” Bruce put the stethoscope to Peter’s chest and listened for a moment. “Okay and breathe again.”

“I figured out how I know you.”

“Stop talking and breathe, Omega.”

“I couldn’t place you at first, but I finally figured it out.” Peter breathed in deep, held it for a few seconds then released, and the moment Bruce put the stethoscope away he blurted, “Your name is Doctor Bruce Banner and you worked with gamma radiation in the seventies. You were everywhere, changing how everyone dealt with radiation and all the ways it could be used up to and including brand new super scary weapons of mass destruction and then one day you were
“How’s your pain?” Bruce picked up the bottle of ibuprofen and squinted at the label. “Manageable, or do you want something more? Only thing I keep around is morphine and opium, not much works on the population of Haven but enough morphine will usually do the trick.”

“In Nineteen seventy seven there was an explosion at your lab and you disappeared.” Peter ignored Bruce’s question about pain, watching the mutant closely for any sign of a reaction. “The original reports of the incident detail it as an accident with only one death—yours. But years later, secondary reports were found stating that all your research had been removed from the lab. Not destroyed, removed. And that no bodies had been found anywhere. Not one.”

“And then back in the nineties, a bunch of your work showed up out of the blue, no explanation, no anything and was suddenly added in to all our text books. I have a vintage copy of from 89 that doesn’t mention you, but everything published after 92 has at least one chapter, maybe even more about your life, your research and your mysterious disappearance.”

“Didn’t Wade say you were a reporter?” Bruce busied himself putting everything back in his medicine bag, purposefully not meeting the Omega’s gaze. “What does reporting have to do with lab explosions from the disco era?”

“I was planning on majoring in physics before my Uncle Ben passed.” Peter said dismissively. “I took extra classes at the university as a freshman, did a summer internship at Stark Industries and Tech, and I’ve still got a book shelf full of text books at home.”

“Hmmm interesting.”

“You’re Doctor Bruce Banner.” the Omega emphasized. “Seven doctorates under your belt. They couldn’t even measure your IQ correctly in those days so when the newer tests came out, they retroactively measured it against Einstein and some of the others and assigned you some insane number.”

“Is that so?”

“Doctor Bruce Banner.” Peter pressed at an uncomfortable twinge in his chest when he paused for breath. “That’s who—shit, this cough is killing me.”

“Don’t let your mate hear you say that.”

“Doc.” Peter shook off his concern. “Your line of thinking changed how the modern world used nuclear power. How are you here in Haven shelling out penicillin to— to—” he waved around the room. “—meta humans?”

“You can call us mutants.” Bruce said mildly. “It’s who we are. And by the way/ I don’t shell penicillin, we’re still a few decades out from that being patented and used for medicinal purposes.”

“You aren’t even going to deny being alive in the seventies?” Peter asked incredulously. “I don’t care about penicillin, I care about you being—” too many words and too much excitement sent the Omega into another coughing fit, and Bruce brought him some water, patting at his back gently.

“At least—” Peter cleared his throat and tried again. “At least tell me if I’m right or not. I gotta know.”

“You gotta know.” Bruce yanked his glasses off and rubbed at his eyes. “Jesus, with all these
questions. Alright. Alright, you really wanna know?"

“I really really do.” Peter felt around for his notebook and pen, holding both up excitedly. “Tell me everything.”

“Everything.” A deep breath in and another one out, another one in and another one out because Bruce had talked about—about this exactly twice since coming to Haven. Once with Cable at the beginning when the mutant had told him in no uncertain terms to keep calm, and once with Eddie on a day when the venom had poured from Eddie’s core and nearly unleashed itself on Haven. He wasn’t looking forward to rehashing the tale with an overly curious Omega, but Bruce took one more deep breath and started with, “The uh– the explosion in seventy-seven wasn’t an explosion. It wasn’t an accident and obviously it didn’t kill me.”

“…and?” Peter prompted, pen poised and eyes practically sparkling. “And?”

“And…it was me.” Bruce looked up then, eyes an otherworldly jade and chair cracking beneath his hands as green inched through his veins and bulged under his skin. “It was all me.”

“…holy shit.” the notebook slipped from Peter’s hands and the room spoiled with the scent of fear. “You– you have something like Eddie has something? You two are– ho-holy shit–!”

“Pete?” The door almost broke from its hinges when Wade tore through it. Bruce had banished the Alpha outside for the duration of the check up just so he wouldn’t have to deal with a huffy, anxious Alpha pacing in the background, and now of course he had a huffy anxious Alpha ready to rage out because his mated scented afraid. “Peter? What’s wrong? What happened?”

“Nothing.” Peter squeaked out, staring wide eyed at Bruce. “Nothing’s wrong, my Alpha. I’m fine.”

“Doc?” Wade whipped around to pin Bruce with a stare and when he saw the green, his own eyes snapped bright red in clear warning. “What the hell do you think you’re doing? Stand down. Now.”

“No harm.” Bruce pulled it all back inside, raised his hands placatingly and backed up a step. “Your mate was never in any danger, Wade–”

“Damn right he wasn’t in danger!”

“Wade, it’s okay.” the Omega yanked at Wade’s hand to get him to hush. “It’s okay. I was asking questions–”

“Why am I not the least bit surprised?”

“–and Bruce was just explaining a few things.” Peter tilted his head curiously. “Tell me. I want to know. I want to know everything. Keep talking.”

“I was hit with a dose of gamma radiation.” Bruce backed up another step so Wade’s shoulders would drop and the pulse of danger in the cabin would ease. “Doesn’t really matter how, or what happened. I can’t promise I remember exactly what happened and I’m sure the reports were all conflicting anyway. The point is, I should have died, should have vaporized actually, but instead I mutated.”

“The gamma radiation triggered a mutation?” the Omega’s mouth fell open. “And you absorbed it all?”
“I don’t know if you’d call it absorbing anything.” Bruce clenched his jaw and tilted his head away from the echo of screams in his memories. “I— I exploded. It was like having my body ripped away and my soul exposed to the elements and the only thing that survived it all was anger. It was just anger and I took out half the city before I came back to myself.”

“Half the city.” Peter’s face went pale. “So the riots back then. The riots and all the destruction and all the people dead—”

“Not riots. Me.”

“But— but—”

“Something they leave out of your history books?” Bruce raised his eyebrows. “Something you’ll never read in any scientific journals or articles or even the damn tabloids? The government hunted me for years. They chased me across the desert, opened fire on me with tanks and then sent the F-15 to mow me down. My mutation is triggered by stress, by anger and I couldn’t get it under control so they chased me and I got angrier and they cashed me some more…”

“Having— having machine guns opened on you didn’t help?” Peter whispered andBruce’s laugh was just ugly.

“They called me a monster. Called me the Hulk.” Green again, and Wade’s arm tightened around Peter’s waist. “Somehow someone figured out the beast tearing up Manhattan and the mild mannered scientist Bruce Banner were one and the same, so they went after the only person in the world I loved. Dragged my mate into all of it, built me up into a rampage and cute me loose, then put her right in my path.”

“Oh no no no.” Peter put a hand over his mouth, coughing over a choke of sympathy and sorrow for the doctor. “Bruce—”

“—and I had to stop.” Bruce shrugged. “I had to stop because she was my mate, and even the monster knows that. I had to stop.”

There was a creak at the door, and Bruce offered up a tired smile to Eddie when he saw them hovering in the doorway. “The powers that be dragged me to some secret facility, a holding cell built beneath a dam and spent I don’t know how many years running tests on me. Provoking me, poking and prodding me, trying to get me to Hulk out again. I don’t know how Cable found me, don’t know how he made it in to the compound but he showed up outside my containment room, tapped on the glass and asked me how I was feeling.”

“Just like that?” Peter wondered. “He just showed up to talk to you? To ask you how you were?”

“I don’t even remember what he said after that.” Bruce’s lips twisted into a grimace and Eddie made an uncomfortable noise. “I just remember a lot of screaming. Everything breaking. I remember tearing huge doors apart and falling out into the sunshine and then Cable turned around with some device that brought me right to my knees.”

“What— what was it?”

“I’ve got no idea. But it felt like being spit out, like the Hulk vomited and tossed me onto the desert floor and it hurt.” Bruce cleared his throat like he couldn’t quite say the words. “It hurt and right then, I couldn’t have hulked out even if I wanted to.”

“Why did he bring you to Haven?” Peter was wheezing again and Wade pressed a kiss to his temple. “I mean, why would he think you’d be okay here?”
“I thought he brought me here to save Eddie. Then I realized he brought me here to save myself.” Bruce shrugged. “Either way, both goals are being accomplished. It took a long time– there was most of a decade where Eddie and i couldn’t even be in the same room. Eddie couldn’t handle my scent and they only registered danger to me so we had to stay away.”

“How–” Peter sent a curious look at Eddie. “How did you ever move past that?”

“We lost ourselves.” Eddie answered for Bruce, never taking their eyes off the doctor. “We lost ourselves one day. Wanted blood. Bruce said no and we–” it was almost a purr, the noise Eddie made, clearly affectionate and damn near adoring. “–we listened. Bruce said no and we listened.”

“We moved in together so we wouldn’t have to be apart anymore.” Bruce finished. “It’s nice to share a home with someone who understands it, who lives it and can keep you from tumbling over the other side. Eddie understands and I understand.”

“You understand what?” the Omega whispered. “What do you understand?”

“Rage.” Wade spoke up, eyes shifting red when Bruce’s faded green and at the door Eddie made an unsettling clicking noise, teeth popping and black rising along his arms. “They understand rage.”

“We’re all sorta monsters.” Eddie hissed, and Bruce went back to packing his medicine bag. “Why not be monsters together?”

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Eddie didn’t like to take up space, didn’t like to enter other people’s homes or even a room without permission and even with Bruce they didn’t sit at the table and eat. They preferred to linger by the doors, to hover close to the walls, to try and disappear into the shadows because too much light and too many people made them anxious.

So tonight after Wade helped Peter to the chair closest to the fire and made sure both Bruce and the Omega had plenty to eat, the Alpha stepped outside and ate his dinner sitting next to Eddie on the front step.

He didn’t bother coaxing Eddie to go inside, didn’t bother with pleasantries or small talk. Wade just dropped an extra coat over their shoulders, pushed a plate into their hands and settled in to eat his own meal.

“You want to be with your mate.” Eddie said quietly, and just as quietly Wade replied, “And it’s been a real long time since I sat with my friend, so why don’t you just shut up and eat already?”

Eddie smiled, too sharp teeth and too much tongue. “Your mate. He hasn’t changed you?”

“Are you tryna say I’m still an asshole?” Wade raised non existent eyebrows and Eddie laughed just a little bit. “Yeah, that’s what I thought.”

Inside the cabin, Peter picked at his food, moving it from corner to corner on his plate until Bruce finally ordered, “You won’t get better if you don’t eat, Omega. Eat or I’ll tell your mate to come in here and feed you himself.”

“That’s uh–” Peter blushed soft pink. “That’s not really the threat you think it is. It feels like forever since I sat on my mate’s lap, I’d be happy for him to feed me.”

“Definitely didn’t need to know that, so why don’t you just eat.” Bruce pointed his fork at Peter’s
plate meaningfully, “You finish most of that and I’ll let you ask your questions.”

“What do you mean?” Peter tried for innocence, but his eyes darted immediately towards his notebook. “I don’t have any questions.”

“You’re a terrible liar.” There was no heat in Bruce’s words and his smile was kind. “I’m sure your mate loves that about you. And you look like you’re going to explode if you don’t ask me at least one question about what happened in the explosion so just go ahead and get it over with.”

The Omega kept playing with his food, and right when Bruce was ready to threaten to feed the Omega himself, Peter shoveled a big bite into his mouth and swallowed hurriedly so he could ask, “You were in your late thirties when you disappeared, and then you were on the run for years. And what, at least twenty here in Haven? How come you don’t look like you’re in your seventies?”

Bruce paused mid bite. “That— that was a better question than I expected. Clint said you asked about feathers and his nest.”

“Clint has wings.” Peter pointed out. “Of course I asked about a nest. So. Your age?”

“Alright.” Bruce ate in silence for a moment, then pushed his mostly finished plate away. “Alright Peter. What do you think the life expectancy of a mutant is?”

“Very low because their heart can’t keep up with the strain of a mutation, or very long because the mutation itself takes over as basic functions for your body.” the Omega answered promptly. “Mutations that manifest at puberty are probably more along the shorter life span issue, whereas those from birth are more stable. Ones that require physical changes age faster, ones with healing factors live longer.”

Peter took another bite when Bruce glanced at his plate. “Right?”

“Smart kid.” Bruce acknowledged. “Those with healing factors live a very long time, whether it’s there from birth or brought on later. I’ve seen babies born that can summon fire and they never do more than singe their blankets. Adolescents who wake up one morning and can control water and they fall apart in a matter of years, every time they use their powers it drains their soul until nothing’s left so they have to decide not to use them anymore.”

“Happens with the shifters too, it takes so much energy to move between forms they end up having to choose one or the other for the rest of their lives. In most cases, the later in life a mutation comes on, the more powerful it is and the shorter the life span.”

“I could see that in most cases.” Another quick bite so the Doctor would stop glaring. “But not in yours.”

Bruce smiled reluctantly. The Omega was damn near brilliant. “My initial mutation took at least ten years from me, the resulting rampage even more. When they put Betty in front of me and I came down from the Hulk, I’d aged through to my fifties.”

Peter’s dark eyes flicked over Bruce’s body and he nodded slowly. “Looks about right. So you stopped aging in Haven?”

“I’ve ran a few calculations with Cable and the best we can figure, the physical strain of being in a timeline that isn’t my own keeps me in some sort of stasis.” Bruce explained haltingly. “I haven’t aged at all, my bodily functions have slowed to almost nothing— I don’t even really need to eat anymore. I’ve shed all indicators of secondary biology, I’m not biologically an Alpha, can’t read the hormones and scents of other people anymore. I’m just existing. It makes me a good doctor,
especially here. I’m not afraid of anyone and I don’t react to any overt emotions when I treat people. It’s good.”

“No that’s–” Peter frowned, shook his head. “No. I’ve seen you react to scents and you said you don’t like when Wade is in here because his aggression makes you uneasy and–”

“I can’t scent your mate.” Bruce tapped at his nose. “But I’d be an idiot not to pay attention to all the other markers. Body posture, the set of his shoulders, the way his eyes turn red? Don’t need scents and hormones to know when an Alpha is pissed off.”

“What about Eddie?” Peter asked slowly. “What about him– um, them? How does that work?”

“One time I went toe to toe with Eddie.” Bruce felt along a stripe of silver in his hair. “They went black and I went green and it took me three days to recover from the episode. Whatever happened, Eddie never tested me again and we’ve been settled ever since. I exist and they stay together and it works. Stasis. Everything’s calm.”

“Stasis.” Peter’s head was starting to spin, the exhaustion stated to creep in but he had to ask another question, an important question. “So the mutants with a healing factor? You think they could live forever?”

“Theoretically.” Bruce watched the Omega for a moment before asking, “You want to know if there’s a possibility Wade is alive in your timeline.”

“…it’d be nice to think he’s around.” Peter admitted. “Somehow.”

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“Everything okay with Pete?” Wade asked before Bruce left later that night. “Seemed like a pretty serious conversation in there.”

“Yeah well.” Bruce chuckled at the Alpha. “Your mate has a lot of questions.”

“I knew that already.” Wade smiled too, but it was strained. “He alright?”

“The fever has broken and he’s eating. Those are all good signs” Bruce allowed, and stepped further out the door so Peter wouldn’t overhear. “But Wade, I don’t know if your mate will ever get his full strength back. I only survive in this timeline because of my mutation, I can’t imagine what being here so long is doing to Peter. He’s only human, you know. And Eddie says Peter is fading, that he’s–” he lowered his voice even more. “–that he’s dying.”

Wade snarled, immediate and furious and Bruce raised his hands apologetically. “I don’t know for sure, Wade, none of us do. But be careful with him all the same, alright? Just be careful.”

Wade’s throat jerked as he swallowed, and Bruce patted him carefully on the back. “I’ll be back in another three days for one final check. Make sure your mate eats and try to get him out into the sunshine, alright?”

“…Thank you.”

“Take care, Wade.”

Wade waved Eddie and Bruce down the hill and went back to the cabin to get everything cleaned up. He wanted to help Peter with at least a cursory bath before bed and maybe get some more food into his mate and then he was looking forward to just holding the Omega close for the rest of the
evening.

It had been a long few days and Wade needed—he just needed and that’s all there was to it.

“Pete?”

“My Alpha.” Peter looked up with a sweet smile and Wade immediately abandoned all plans of cleaning in favor of scooping up his mate and pressing their mouths together for a long kiss.

“Mmmm.” Peter wriggled in his arms and grinned. “Hi. I’ve missed you. But I thought of something while I was talking to Bruce and—mmph!”

He laughed when Wade just kissed him again, and pushed at the Alpha’s face to get him away. “Seriously I haven’t brushed my teeth all day and I probably still taste sick. And I have to tell you something important so—”

“Bed.” Wade was playful and gentle when he pushed Peter into the pillows, but his kiss was claiming and his fangs sharp when they dug into Peter’s bottom lip. “Need you right here, my mate. Need to hold you.”

Bruce’s words about Peter fading pounded behind Wade’s temples and he tried to quiet the noise with the sound of his Omega’s moan when he gripped down low at Peter’s perfect ass and slid his fingers between the slim thighs.

“Wade—my Alpha—” Peter’s breath stuttered. “Oh-h-h my mate, I want you. I want you. But I’m so tired—”

“I know.” Another kiss, softer but no less claiming. “And I just want to hold you, baby boy. Promise. Need to hold you.”

Peter sighed and went pliant beneath his Alpha, purring in contentment when Wade lay to the side so Peter could still feel his weight without being suffocated. “That’s good, my love. I’ve missed you.”

“Missed you too.” Wade finally settled, nose notched into Peter’s throat and his hand lying gently over the Omega’s stomach. “I’m glad you’re feeling better. Glad I didn’t—” lose you. “I’m just happy you’re feeling better.”

“Me too.” Peter stretched out and wound their legs together, tracing the lines of scars down Wade’s neck and across his shoulders. “But I have something important to tell you.”


“You can’t eat the goat.”

“The hell I can’t!” Wade burst out and Peter cried, “Wade! No! It’s not her fault! She’s just a wee goaty!”

“Well we’re gonna have wee goaty stew tomorrow night for dinner!”

“WADE!” Peter shrieked with laughter when Wade acted like he was going to wrestle away. “No! Do not leave me here in bed to go make goat stew, I’ll never forgive you, I swear! Alpha!”

“Tell me you love me and I won’t sacrifice the goat for revenge soup.” Wade challenged and Peter laughed even harder, clutching at his ribs and coughing as he tried to breathe through the teasing.
“No no, I wanna hear it! Let’s hear how badly you want to save that ornery piece of—”

“I love you, Alpha my Alpha.” Peter giggled the words but they stopped Wade in his tracks all the same, stunned the Alpha right to stillness with gorgeous truth.

“That’s— you—” Wade pushed back the urge to growl, hell he had to push back the urge to outright howl. “You love me?”

“My mate.” Peter was tired but his eyes were bright, open and honest and lovely. “I love you.”

“Well—” The Alpha bent back over the bed and leaned in to kiss Peter slow and careful and sweet. “I love you too.”

“I know.” Peter laughed quietly and fell back into the pillows, closing his eyes and breathing out slowly. “Oh my mate. I know you do.”

The Omega slept clear through the night, tucked up into Wade’s arms and snoring quietly.

Wade sat up and brushed the freckles on Peter’s cheek, ruffled his hair and checked his pulse, listened to his mate breathe to make sure there was no wheeze or strain or rattle.

“You got no idea.” he whispered when the moonlight filtered silver through Peter’s hair and lay shadows over the perfect features. “My Omega, you have no idea how much I love you.”

And then softer, “Please don’t ever leave me.”
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

So I didn’t want to write this chapter. Not because of anything awful that happens in it, just because I’m officially over the halfway point for this story and I got this huge mental block like ‘oh no the story is half over which means I’m basically writing the end??’ and freaked out for literally no reason except I really miss my characters and verses when I have to say goodbye?? Honestly, wtf is going on with me.

Anyway. This chapter is actually awesome despite my weird happening too early abandonment issues.

Enjoy!

One hundred days and counting…

“I didn’t know it would be this easy.” Peter stretched out sideways on the bed, feet kicking idly at the air on one side, arms reached out to touch the floor on the other. His hair was long enough to fall into his eyes now, and the Omega blew at his bangs half heartedly, making only the barest effort to keep them from tickling his nose. “Did you?”

“Sweetheart.” Wade peeked at his mate from over an armful of logs. “Pretty sure everything is easy when you’re lounging around lookin’ pretty all day instead of doing chores.”

“Hmmm.” Peter rolled onto his back so he could watch his mate at the fireplace. The upside down view did nothing to ease his migraine but it gave him great leverage to leer at the Alpha’s butt, so he grimaced over the headache and kept right on ogling. “Pretty sure I’d be happy to help if my bossy mate hadn’t ordered me to stay in bed. I promise I’m good for more than just looking pretty.”

“I know you’re good for more than looking pretty.” Wade got to work filling the kindling box, looking up only long enough to smile at his Omega. “But I also know that a few days ago you weren’t hardly breathing through your cough, and that scared th’hell outta me. I’d much rather do all the chores and let you stay over there being pretty than risk you getting sick again, Pete.”

“I’m not going to get sick again.” The Omega took an exaggeratedly deep breath, inhaling noisily and letting it out overly loud. “See? No cough.”

Wade’s cedar scent dipped with worry, and Peter scrambled up to sitting, holding out his hand for the Alpha and tipping his head to trill coaxingly. “M’fine, my mate. I promise.”

“We’ll see what the Doc says when he comes to check on you.” Wade grunted. “He was s’posed to be back up the hill yesterday—”

“–maybe he figured I was fine and didn’t need a last check up.”

“–but until he listens to your breathing and tells me everything is fine, you’ll keep your ass right there on that bed and let me do the work.” the Alpha finished. “Not gonna let you get sick again, Omega.”
“Wade–”

“Pete.”

“Okay okay.” Peter fell backwards into the pillows and dragged the blankets up to his chin, hunkering down so nothing more than his nose and eyes peeked out from the quilts. “Better?”

“Better.” Wade kept chopping kindling but he ran his tongue over his fangs and smiled anyway, crooning approvingly at his mate. “Thank you.”

“Big tough Alpha.” Peter scoffed teasingly, ‘Gettin’ all fussy about his Omega staying in bed. This is the wild frontier, my love, I can’t stay bed ridden because of a cough. Omegas are expected to have babies and immediately go right back to choring, aren’t they? Pretty sure that’s what my history books told me.”

“Yes, Pete.” the Alpha said blandly. “I expect you to have a child at night and then immediately haul spring water from up the mountain the next morning. The wild frontier, Omega. That’s exactly what it’s like.”

“I knew it.” Peter whispered and this time his Alpha laughed a little. “Oh thank God, you still know how to laugh. I was starting to miss that sound.”

“I’ve been missing some of the sounds you make too, Pete.” Wade admitted, his smile sliding towards wolfish, and the Omega didn’t miss a beat when he replied, “You mean the sounds I make in bed, right? Like when I snore?”

“Yes.” the Alpha sighed like the idea pained him to his very soul. “Yes, I mean when you snore. I’ve been missing that sound specifically.”

“I knew it. I knew you missed my snoring.” Peter scrunched his nose in delight, but his expression mellowed softer as he whispered the same thought he’d had earlier– “I didn’t know it would be this easy, my mate.”

“You gonna make me tease again you about how everything’s easy when you’re laying around?” Wade piled kindling in the fireplace and dropped the rest in the nearby bin. “Cos I’m sure I could find another joke or dozen to–”

“I didn’t know it would be this easy to love you.” Peter blurted, and the Alpha went very still. “I mean– I mean no, that’s not what I mean. I didn’t know it would be this easy to say I love you. I used to be scared of it and now– now it’s the easiest thing in the world.”

“What um–” Wade cleared his throat, fiddling with a piece of wood so he wouldn’t have to look up at his mate. “What was scary about telling me you love me?”

“No, not you.” the Omega shook his head. “Not that, I mean I’ve been scared about saying those words forever but now I’m not. Does that– do you know what I’m trying to say?”

“Pete, you’re saying a whole lotta things but not really saying anything at all.” Wade’s heart was tight in his chest, breath a little harsh as decades of insecurities reared their ugly heads, every fear he’d ever had about his skin and his bloody past and the differences between he and his mate rushing forward to lodge in his throat. Peter had been scared to love him? “So no, I don’t know what you mean.”

“Alright.” Peter drew his knees up under his chin, chewing at the inside of his cheek as he thought through his words. “Alright, it’s like this. I’ve read hundreds of romance novels, right?
"Literally hundreds and across all these genres and different plots and varying levels of—"

The Omega made a vaguely crude motion, blushing a little bit, "—you know, varying levels of sex in them? And I’ve gone along with Gwen and Mary Jane to at least a million romantic comedies and I’ve always loved the more romantic fairy tales cos even though I never managed anything resembling romance, I still like to watch, right?"

It was plainly obvious that Wade wasn’t really following Peter’s train of thought yet, but the Alpha nodded anyway with a slow, "…right?"

"Right. And all the books, all the movies, all the fairy tales?" Peter paused for effect. "They all end at ‘I love you’. It’s the climax of the story, the ultimate romantic ending. I’ve read through entire series or sat and watched hours worth of television and ‘I love you’ is always built up to be this huge deal! These super important words that you can only say at the end because ‘I love you’ means the story is over. All the adventures, the journey, it’s all over once ‘I love you’ is said because that’s the best, most important part of their relationship."

"…okay."

"I’ve been afraid my entire life that I would never find someone to say it to." Peter’s dark eyes dimmed in remembered sadness. "I told you I’ve never had a real relationship, I’ve never had an Alpha outside my heat. I’ve never even really wanted to date. The only people I’ve ever loved have been family and friends and I used to be terrified that I’d go my whole life without finding someone else to say these ultra important, life defining words to."

"And then." the Omega sat up straighter in the bed, clutched the blankets tight in his fist. "Then I started to worry that I actually would find a person to say ‘I love you’ to, and they wouldn’t say it back. Or maybe they would say it but it wouldn’t be true and we’d split up. So many marriages end in divorce now, and you can chemically break bonds so there’s nothing to ensure those words actually mean anything at all! But everyone acts like without those words, without ‘I love you’, you’ll never be complete, that your story isn’t worth reading or watching or even really fulfilled until someone says it and I gotta tell you—"

Peter shook his head. "That sucks. That feeling? That— that fear that you’ll never be complete? It sucks."

Wade rocked back onto his heels, clasping his hands loosely between his knees and cocking his head curiously at his mate. "I still dunno what you’re trying to say, Pete."

"Yeah, I’m doing a really bad job at this." Peter pushed his hair out of his eyes and tried again. "I’m saying that my—my whole life I thought I was probably doomed to be incomplete cos I couldn’t imagine saying ‘I love you’ to someone, I couldn’t imagine my life story just being over once that milestone was reached. No more adventures, no more goals or journeys. ‘I love you’ would be the end of that, because it’s always the end in the love stories."

“But?” the Alpha prompted. "You don’t feel like that anymore?"

"Loving you is the easiest thing I’ve ever done.” Peter finally finished. "I didn’t have to think about falling in love with you, didn’t have to worry if it was real, and when I finally said the words, I realized it was sorta weird that we hadn’t said them before."

Wade fully agreed with that, and the Omega trilled happily before continuing, “I love you my mate, and you love me, and it’s just words. Just one minute out of our day and our story isn’t over. ‘I love you’ wasn’t even a main event. This isn’t the last page in our book or the fade to black at the end of
a movie or the most exciting moment we are going to have together.”

“Not even close.” Wade allowed and Peter whispered, “I can’t believe I used to be so scared of those words. Can’t believe I used to be scared my life would be incomplete if I never heard them.”

Wade pulled out his flint stone and lit the fire, poked and prodded at the kindling until the flame held steady then asked, “Would anything be different if we hadn’t said ‘I love you’ the other night? Would you feel any different?”

“No.” the Omega answered immediately. “No. It was nice to hear it, but it was just words, just something audible for what I already knew. I already knew you loved me.”

“Yeah, Pete. That’s cos ‘I love you’ is just words.” the Alpha finally stood up and wiped his hands down his pants, checking his palms for splinters before crossing the room to the bed. “But we’re mates. Bonded. Soon to be mated–”

Peter’s honeysuckle scent lifted bright with anticipation and Wade grinned, flashing curved fangs at his Omega. “– and what we got is more than words, baby boy. Words aren’t even enough for it. That’s why ‘I love you’ isn’t scary, why it barely matters. More than words, Pete.”

Wade would never be over how pretty Peter was when he blushed, the way his freckles disappeared into pink and his smile stretched wide enough to be corny, and this time was no exception. Peter blushed and Wade did the only thing an Alpha could do when presented with his mate being so beautiful–

--bent and kissed the Omega until Peter was breathless and purring and trying to wiggle out of the blankets to throw both arms around his Alpha’s neck.

“Stay in bed.” Wade spread a hand across Peter’s hip to keep the Omega on the mattress. “Rest, Pete. You need to rest.”

“But I need some attention from my Alpha.” Peter countered, undoing the buttons at Wade’s collar and yanking clumsily at his shirt. “Especially since you were just real romantic with me. You can’t say things like that and then not take my clothes off. Stop doing chores and pay attention to me.”

“Omega, I am always paying attention to you.” Wade stilled his mate’s greedy hands and Peter pouted up at him. “You’re always on my mind, sweetheart. But until Bruce gives the okay–”

“I’d rather be on your hands than on your mind.” Quick as a flash the Omega snatched at Wade’s hand and pushed it down to his own rear, giggling triumphantly when Wade instinctively groped at him. “See, isn’t that better?”

“You’re being ridiculous.” Wade couldn’t resist just one more quick grope, but then dragged his hand away and re-deposited Peter onto the blankets. “And absolutely bratty, which means you must be feeling better. When Bruce checks you out and say you’ve recovered all the way, I’ll pay all sorts of attention to you. But until then, I won’t have you getting worn out cos you can’t keep it in your pants.”

“Okay well what if I just get wet through my pants?” Peter asked seriously. “Does that– does that count?”

“The mouth on you, Omega.” Wade tried hard not to laugh. “Guess you got over feelin’ shy when you’re horny, huh?”

“Definitely not so shy anymore.” the Omega finally relented and flopped onto his pillows. “Well if
“You aren’t going to kiss me, at least feed me? I’m hungry. What’s for lunch?”

“You know what’s for lunch.” Wade waggled non existent eyebrows at his mate. “Stew.”

“WADE!” Peter’s mouth dropped wide open. “You didn’t!”

“I absolutely did.”

“She was a wee goaty!” The Omega walloped Wade with a pillow, hitting the Alpha as hard as he could from a sitting position and then scrambling up to his knees to hit him again. “Practically a lamb! Tell me you didn’t make goat stew!”

“Stop that.” Wade snatched a pillow with a huff and shoved it into Peter’s face “Of course I didn’t cook the damn goat. It’s elk, Pete. Elk stew. Calm down.”

“On principal, I’m going to be avoiding any chunks of meat in the stew.” Peter sniffed and the Alpha retorted, “On principal you’re going to eat every bite cos you lost too much weight when you were sick and now you’re feeling bony.”

“Fine.” Peter eyed Wade suspiciously for a minute longer. “And I think you mean I’m feeling horny. And you know I hate that word so obviously it’s a serious condition.”

“I know you hate that word, and I appreciate you using it anyway.” Laughter and teasing aside, Wade bent low to leave a tender, nearly chaste kiss on Peter’s mouth. “My mate. All those other stories you read or watched or whatever might end with ‘I love you’, but ours doesn’t, alright? This is just our beginning. I promise.”

“Yeah, well I’m gonna hold you to that, Alpha.”

Peter waited until Wade had turned his back before sinking into the bed and quieting a whimper of relief.

The Omega was so tired these days and his mate was so worried, so it wouldn’t do any good to let Wade know how exhausted he was all the time, how the cold had settled in his bones like an ache and just never really went away.

Wade didn’t need to know that Peter’s fingers shook if he spent too much time writing, or that more than a few bites of food made his stomach hurt, or that his teasing and cajoling for a kiss wasn’t so much anticipation as it was desperation to be close, to be held and warm and safe.

Peter felt like time was slipping right through his fingers lately, faster and faster until the clock on their life together ran out. He didn’t know what that meant or how every thing would end but he could feel it looming all the same and the Omega was terrified.

Before all of this- before the fall, before Wade had spent days at Peter’s bedside begging him to get better, before Bruce had whispered to Wade that maybe they needed to call Cable back before all of this, Peter had asked that their first time together be outside of heat. He wanted to remember everything about a night with Wade, didn’t want to be lost in a heat daze or pushed too far into mindlessness and miss out on the wonder of his mate.

But time was running out, the end creeping closer with each wheeze and cough the Omega tried to hide and every day the need circled lower in Peter’s core, centered heavier beneath his heart, cried out louder from his soul as every inch of his entire being clamored to complete their bond.

He needed to be stretched and filled by his Alpha, burning from fangs in his throat and clenching
tight around a knot between his legs, needed to be screaming himself hoarse while his mate
growled into his ear, needed bruises at his hips from being held so tight, and needed to be full, he
needed to be full, he needed to be--

“Omega.”

Peter didn’t realize his eyes had closed until they snapped back open in response to Wade’s growl,
and he bit back a gasp when he saw hazel eyes gone dark red with desire, hooked fangs dotted with
red where Wade had bit through his bottom lip trying to force himself still.

The Omega’s back arched in instinctive response, knees falling open in a helpless reaction to the
wash of possessive from his mate, greed and mine and mine jolting heavy through the dark licorice
scent.

“Omega, what are you thinking about?” Wade licked at his fangs and Peter moaned like he could
feel it. “Smell good, sweetheart, tell me what you’re thinking about?”

The Omega only whined in response to the display, tilted his head to bare the line of his throat,
clutched at the blankets and whimpered, “I need you. Alpha I need you–”

The Alpha’s growl shook the floorboards and Peter swore he could feel it through the soles of his
feet.

“I need you too. Soon, my mate. Soon.”

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One hundred one days and counting...

“You’re fine.” Bruce put his stethoscope away and spent another minute feeling along the glands at
Peter’s throat for any swelling, down over his ribs for any additional bruising. “I don’t hear
anything in your lungs, how’s your cough?”

“Fine.” Peter started to say but his Alpha interrupted, “Still around, wacky Omega just thinks I
don’t hear him secretly coughing.”

“Well, it’s not good to keep secrets from your mate.” Bruce pressed gingerly at the healed cut on
Peter’s head. “And basically impossible when your mate is an Alpha, Wade can probably smell
the sick in you still.”

“Smell the sick–” Peter shook his head. “You said I was fine.”

“I did.” the doctor acknowledged. “You’re fine, which means I’m not worried about an onset of
pneumonia or any broken ribs from your fall. Nothing appears swollen and your color is almost
back to normal. You’re fine, meaning you don’t need any additional medical care but that doesn’t
mean you aren’t still sick. This sort of thing could linger for a while, you need to keep your activity
limited and continue resting as much as possible.”

Wade made a thoroughly disgruntled noise, one Peter almost immediately copied and Bruce
pinched at the bridge of his nose and sighed, “You are healthy enough to resume all activities but
keep it less vigorous than you might have previously done, alright? I don’t mind house calls for
emergencies but I’m not going to come up here cos neither you nor your mate listened to the
doctor’s orders and tried to break the bed frame.”
The Omega squeaked something wholly embarrassed and Bruce finally cracked a smile. “You’ll be fine, Pete. Wade, can I speak to you outside for a moment?”

“Oh, I can go outside.” Peter was off the bed before either of the other men could protest, taking Wade’s heavy jacket from the hook and bundling into it. “I promise I’m warm, my mate. I just want some fresh air. Please? You’ve barely left me off the bed for weeks, at least let me look at the stars a little.”

“Eddie is out there.” Bruce reminded him, and when Peter paused uncertainly, the Doctor clarified, “You’re in no danger with Eddie, Omega. But don’t go rushing out the door either. Slow steps, easy movements, alright? He’s fine, but even the most stable of Alphas jump and get growly when they are startled. Slow and easy.”

“Got it.” Peter waited until his Alpha met his eyes, and smiled. “Alright?”

“Go on, sweetheart.” Wade jerked his thumb towards the door. “Go get your fresh air.”

“I love you.” the Omega blew him a quick kiss and ducked out the door, and the moment it shut behind him Bruce asked–

“You haven’t mated with him yet? I thought nearly losing him would push you to hurry the bond.”

“Not yet.” Wade shook his head. “Soon, though. Can’t take the wait much longer.”

“This is how you lost Vanessa.” the word were mild but the Alpha still recoiled, still growled and Bruce clicked his tongue in sympathy. “This isn’t the same thing. Peter is not Vanessa, Wade.”

“No, he’s not.” the Alpha pulled a handful of bills from his pocket and showed them to the Doctor before dropping them in the black medicinal bag. “But Pete’s time is limited anyway. I had most of twenty years with Vanessa, I’ll be lucky to have most of six months with Pete. It hurts, Bruce.”

“I know it does.” Bruce tried to hand Wade back the money. “And I’m sorry.”

“Told me fifty years to stop missing Vanessa.” Wade took the money back, then shoved it immediately into the bag again. “Another twenty years to realize I’d finally stopped missing her. And when I lose Pete, will I have to do it all over again? Seventy years being alone before the universe sends me another mate so I can fall in love and then lose them too?”

“I know it does.” Bruce tried to hand Wade back the money. “And I’m sorry.”

“Some of us would love to have twenty years with our mate.” Bruce said quietly. “Some of us consider it a blessing to live long enough to love three mates.”

“It’s not a blessing, it’s a curse.” Wade looked away from the sadness written in the Doc’s face. “And I know you’re right, I know Cable needs to come back and take Peter to his own timeline so he can heal and continue on but I— shit. Seventy years I grieved for Vanessa before finding love again. But in Peter’s world they don’t even scent match, they don’t believe in soulmates, they just date each other and fall in love and get married. How long will it be before he moves on from missing me? Or when Cable takes him back, will Peter even remember me? Will I be stuck in this timeline with all our memories while he lives in another with nothing?”

“… I don’t know the answer to those questions, Wade.”

“That’s alright.” the Alpha fell into a chair and buried his face in his hands. “I don’t think I’d want to know the answers anyway.”

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Eddie was darker than the shadows, darker than the night sky, an unnatural stain in the gathering dusk and when Wade’s Omega stepped out from the cabin and onto the porch, they shifted further back into the trees and narrowed their eyes to watch.

The Omega was gorgeous, pretty eyes and soft soft skin and the sort of beauty Eddie wasn’t allowed to touch anymore. The Omegas in Haven ran from them, the children ducked away and stared from behind their mama’s skirts. The Alphas watched them, studied them, pretended not to jerk away from the scent of oil and danger and mess and Wade’s Omega—

—Wade’s Omega was the sort of beauty they weren’t allowed to touch anymore so Eddie clenched their fists until skin tore beneath their claws and blood pooled in their palms and forced themselves still.

“Eddie?”

They couldn’t stop their eyes from blinking wide, staring at the Omega in surprise. Was he— was he talking to them?

“Eddie? Are you out here?” Peter gathered the coat tighter around himself and perched on the bottom step. “Bruce said you were out—”

The Omega sucked in a quick breath when Eddie shifted forward, when their deeper dark separated from the shadows and moved closer. “Oh. Oh there you are. Um. Hey.”

“You shouldn’t be out here, Omega.” Eddie hovered at the edge of the porch, right at the line where light and shadows met. “It’s cold. Go back inside.”

“I’m plenty warm.” The Omega shrugged as if he didn’t realize how much danger he was in. “I have my Alpha’s jacket. Aren’t you cold though? You’re only wearing a long sleeve shirt.”

“We are never cold.” Eddie pulled themselves tighter together, a rattling sound like scales clicking into place filling the air as they hid the black away deeper and pushed closer towards human so they wouldn’t scare the Omega away. “What are you doing out here, Omega?”

“It’s just Peter.” The Omega peered into the early evening gloom like he was trying to piece together a body connected to Eddie’s glassy eyes. “And I came out here to say thank you. Wade said you saved me, that he got busy on a project and didn’t realize I was gone. You found me and save me, right? Carried me up the mountain to the cabin and then went to get Bruce?”

“Yessss.” Eddie blinked until their eyes returned to normal, until they felt nearly real. “Yes, we did.”

“Well um—” Peter cleared his throat and smiled in their direction. “Thank you for saving my life. I wish I had a— a gift for you or something, but Wade hasn’t let me leave the cabin in like two weeks so all I can say is thank you.”

Silence, because Eddie didn’t know how to respond to ‘thank you’ anymore than they knew how to respond to a willing smile.

But finally they stretched from the shadows, detached from the night and sat heavy on the other end of the porch. They needed plenty of distance between themselves and Wade’s mate, plenty of distance so they wouldn’t scare Peter. Nothing good would come of frightening the little Omega and Eddie didn’t want to scare him away, not again, not like they’d scared Peter the last time—

“Oh I’m sure it was my fault.” Peter laughed softly. “Wade warned me not everyone in Haven
wanted me to ask them a thousand questions but you know what they say about curiosity and cats, right? No harm done.”

Eddie paused, confused, and Peter realized, “Oh. You didn’t know you said all that stuff about scaring me out loud. Should I have not answered?”

“Most days we only have each other to talk to.” Eddie struggled to enunciate the words, struggled to be sure they were purposefully speaking out loud this time. “We forget other people are listening.”

“You don’t talk to Bruce?” Peter hummed sympathetically. “Clint and Logan? My Alpha said all of you are friends, or that you were friends or that um—”

“Logan’s Alpha would drop me in pieces from the sky if I came near his mate.” The urge to smile was foreign to them, but the Omega was so earnest in his questions that Eddie almost couldn’t help themselves. “Clint is not afraid of us, but we are not allowed near his mate. We are not supposed to be too close to Omegas.”

“That seems awful.” Peter scented like lavender and honeysuckle and something lower Eddie recognized as Wade. He scented like truth but more importantly he didn’t scent afraid, and for the first time in a very long time, Eddie felt a little bit less horrifying.

“Wade isn’t nervous about you being around me.” Peter was still talking when Eddie tuned back into the fairly one sided conversation. “I don’t know if that’s because Bruce trusts you whole heartedly, or because you saved me or because he has known you so long but—”

“We are sorry for scaring you that night in Haven.” Eddie interrupted and Peter’s mouth clicked audibly shut in the night air. “You are not from here, you are not mutant but you are not a human that belongs so we thought you were like me, like us. We thought you would recognize us, so we jumped out at you, but you didn’t know us.”

“You–” Peter was obviously, visibly still stuck on Eddie thinking he was like them, but he cleared his throat and said softly, “You don’t have to apologize.”

“Yes we do, it’s important. Eddie didn’t know if they said that out loud or not, but the mantra clamored through their mind all the same. Apologizing was important, it was important for others to hear, important to say so they knew what they’d done. So many things Eddie had done they could never apologize for, so now they apologized for everything.

Yes, we do.

“You don’t have to sit so far away from me.” Wade’s Omega was so honest, so unfiltered and Eddie didn’t know how to take it. “I’m not afraid of you. Come sit closer, the edge of the porch is super uncomfortable and I know I said I wasn’t cold before but seriously, it’s freezing and—”

“We aren’t supposed to touch.” Eddie whispered. “No no.”

“But I’m cold.”
“Go back inside.” Eddie was already moving, already inching across the porch closer to the pretty Omega cos they couldn’t resist– they didn’t want to resist. Any second now Peter’s scent would burn horrified and he would leave but until then Eddie wanted to maybe be just a little close. “Go inside to your mate.”

Eddie waited for the Omega to run, but when they were too close to turn away, Peter only smiled encouragingly and that– that gave them the courage to settle.

“…no one touches me but Bruce.” Eddie held out their hand slowly, fingernails lengthening to claws before shortening again, black coiling in their palm before fading away further up their arm. “Sometimes we miss– we miss it. Omegas run away, we are not allowed to be close, never too close and we miss it. We aren’t supposed to touch.”

They weren’t supposed to touch, but they held out their hand anyway and waited for the Omega to pull away–

–but Peter took Eddie’s hand with out hesitating.

It was a clear cry for physical attention, not romantic, not fond, not what mated pairs would share, not even the kind Omegas gave to Alphas they trusted. Eddie was asking for basic human contact, the sort of casual touch one would receive on the street as someone else tried to pass, no more intimate than a hand shake or pat on the back and despite the scent of oil and anger, despite the way even the air felt thick around Eddie, Peter reached out and slid his fingers across their palm and clasped their hands tight together.

No hesitation.


“Can I ask you something?” Peter watched in fascination as Eddie’s nails lengthened to claws again before retreating. “You can say no. I always have a thousand questions to ask but you don’t have to answer anything.”

“Ask.” Eddie made a visible effort to pull the black back even further, his shoulders hunching and frame folding in on itself as if he were trying to hide. “Go ahead.”

“Bruce told me Cable brought him here to help you after–” Peter squeezed lightly at Eddie’s hand. “–after everything?”

“Everything.” A ripple through Eddie’s body. “Yes. Yes, that was when Bruce came.”

“Will you tell me how… how you became they?” Peter was practically whispering. “Because you are… you are them, right? Not just you. Not just Eddie.”

“We are Eddie.”

“Right. Of course. Sorry, I just–”

“We found each other in the forest.” Eddie smiled a little, too many teeth glinting in the light from the windows, their voice gone deep and fond. “I was hunting at Starfall Peak and found a rock covered in black. I touched it, and they swarmed up through me.”

“…they.”
“I thought I would die.” Eddie said softer. “It hurt, we hurt. We were hungry all the time. Fighting for my body, fighting for my mind and my soul. But Anne— Anne helped me. We learned to be us, we learned to be together, to keep calm and hidden but when we lost Anne—”

Their fingers tightened too hard around Peter and the Omega trilled soothingly. “—when we lost Anne, we thought we would die all over again. Wanted to die all over again. Wanted to do terrible things so we— so we did. Terrible things. And when the terrible things were over and we still wanted to die, we couldn’t. We— we tried.”

“Eddie—”

“Cable stopped us.” Eddie said then. “First Cable. Then Bruce. Cable stopped us and Bruce saved us.”

“How did Bruce save you?” Peter whispered, and Eddie whispered back—

“His monster is bigger than our monster. He saves us like Anne saved us and we– we love him very much.”

“You love him?” Peter shivered in the night wind and huddled further into the coat. “Do you love him like I love my mate?”

“We are different.” Eddie said slowly. “And terrible. We are different and terrible but Bruce is— is beautiful. Like you, Omega. You are beautiful too.”

Peter reached out carefully and brushed his fingers over Eddie’s chin, swept through the loose curls around their ears and watched in fascination as the black in Eddie’s veins fled from his touch before rushing to fill in again.

“What— what are you doing?” Eddie almost sounded afraid and something twisted sad in Peter’s heart. “Omega, you shouldn’t touch, we aren’t allowed to touch.”

“You’re beautiful.” Peter said softly, earnestly, and Eddie reared back in surprise, eyes snapping reflective and teeth crowding sharp. “No no no, you are. You’re— you’re incredible. I can’t believe I have the chance to meet someone like you. I want to know everything about you but I promise I won’t ask a million questions cos I know that’s annoying but—”

Eddie leaned in slowly, gently, pushing his forehead into Peter’s and holding his breath until the Omega scooted closer so their knees bumped too.

“Sweet Omega.” their voice was raw and awful but Peter didn’t pull away and Eddie purred low in his throat in gratitude. “Thank you.”

The curtains at the cabin window twitched as Bruce turned away from the glass, and Wade asked, “Is my mate okay? Eddie?”

“They’re fine, just sitting together.” The Doctor hesitated, then added, “Your mate really is perfect, isn’t he?”

“Yes.” the Alpha answered immediately. “Yeah Pete is just about fuckin’ perfect.”

Bruce put a hand on Wade’s shoulder and murmured, “I’m real sorry he can’t stay, Wade.”

“Yep.” Another immediate answer, but shaky and pained and devastated. “Me too.”
“Alpha my Alpha.” After Bruce and Eddie had gone on their way and the cabin was quiet again, Peter came up behind Wade at the fireplace and wrapped both arms around his mate. “You scent sad, why do you scent sad? Bruce said I was okay, that my health is fine. What’s wrong?”

“Nothing’s wrong.” Wade was lying, dishonesty bleeding into his cedar scent but when Peter frowned and started to ask about it, Wade hushed him and gathered the Omega closer.

“Nothing’s wrong, baby boy. Let me take you to bed, hold you alright?”

“You can hold me naked.” Peter corrected and Wade swallowed back the threat of tears so he could tip Peter’s chin up and give him a gentle, gentle kiss.

“I’d love to hold you naked, my mate. Get that adorable ass in bed.”

***************

One hundred two days and counting…

“You aren’t supposed to be working, Pete.” Wade didn’t think he’d ever been so disapproving in his entire life, but somehow not even his best scowl stopped his mate from dunking blankets in the bathtub. “You’re supposed to be resting.”

“I’m tired of resting on sicky blankets.” the Omega didn’t pause in his chore. “And if you are going to disapprove, could you at least disapprove while helping me wring the blankets out? Because they are very heavy and I am very petite.”

“Oh, so when you want to ride Arthur while screeching like a banshee, you’re a strong independent Omega that doesn’t need a saddle, but now that you want help with laundry, you’re petite?”

“That’s exactly right.” Peter attacked one of the sheets with a scrubbie. “I’m petite and I need some help, so come and help. That’s your job, you’re my Alpha. Help me wash sheets.”

Wade pursed his lips and growled in frustration, but his mouthy mate only held out a bar of soap and made his eyes extra big and extra soft and damn it, the Alpha had no chance of resisting that.

“I’m only helping cos resting on clean blankets will make sure you recover faster.” he informed the Omega and Peter’s smile nearly split his face in two. “Not because you’re petite or beautiful or because I love your smile. Stop smiling. You haven’t actually won this argument.”

“Are we arguing, Alpha my Alpha?” It was impossible for Peter’s smile to get any bigger, but it stretched anyway. “What are we arguing about? I thought we were just doing laundry together like couples do when they are in committed, healthy and mutually beneficial relationships.”

“Throwing big words at me isn’t going to get you outta trouble for workin’, Pete.” Wade stripped out of his shirt and tossed it away, then dragged over the big pot so he had something to drop the wet blankets in. “After this I want you to sleep th’rest of the day. I’ll take care of the chores, alright? I want you in bed.”

“I wasn’t planning on helping with chores anyway.” the Omega said pertly and Wade retorted, “If I wasn’t so happy you’re feeling good enough to sass me, I’d make you do the chores yourself. Feed that stupid goat you won’t let me eat.”
“You’d never make me do chores alone.” Peter’s dark eyes tracked over Wade’s shoulders, down his chest and across his abdomen to the sharp cut of the Alpha’s hipbones above his pants. “I miss you, Alpha.”

“I miss you too.” Wade hefted one of the soaking blankets up and began wringing it out as best he could before dropping it in the pot. “But if you keep looking at me like that, we won’t get this laundry done and I’m pretty sure you’ll shriek at me if I try to get you naked on wet blankets.”

Peter muffled a laugh and set to work on the next blanket. “Are you gonna try and get me naked tonight, Alpha?”

“Last night you threatened to throw my clothes away if I didn’t get undressed exactly when you wanted.” The Alpha pointed out. “I figured I wouldn’t have to try to get you naked at all.”

“You don’t have to try.” Peter was blushing, but his smile was half past wicked. “But you’re right. I’d shriek about wet blankets. We better get the laundry done first.”

It took another hour, but Wade managed to get the blankets and sheets scrubbed to his mate’s specifications, and after a meal that involved Peter poking suspiciously at chunks of meat and whining when the Alpha all but forced him to bundle up in the one dry blanket left in the cabin, the Omega finally fell asleep.

Then Wade got to work stoking the fire extra high and re-hanging a cauldron of water, started a fire in the yard and piled full pots there as well, wiped out the tub to get rid of harsh lye residue and crumbled up pieces of lavender soap instead.

It had been two weeks since the first attempt at a bath, but this time Wade wasn’t letting Peter out of the cabin so there would be no missing Omega, no panicked searching, no nights and nights of terror waiting for his mate to wake up.

Today it would just be a bath, just Peter splashing around in the water and ending up gorgeous and soft and scenting so sweet. It’d be drinking and teasing and kissing until his Omega was purring and pliant and hazy in Wade’s arms. It’d be the present Wade had bought in Haven so many weeks ago, the one he’d wrapped and hidden away so his mate would be properly surprised. It’d be clean blankets and freshly plumped pillows and the firelight on Peter’s skin and the taste of his mate on his tongue and that gorgeous body spread out beneath his own and–

Wade shook his head and forced the thoughts away before he burned himself on a too hot pot and woke Peter up with a very un-Alpha like yelp of pain. Nope, tonight had to be perfect. No injuries, no accidents, no drama. Just perfect.

Absolutely perfect.

Before leaving to get more firewood and start the evening chores, Wade tore a piece of paper from one of Peter’s notebooks and scribbled a quick note to his mate:

Pete,

For the love of god, do not leave the cabin. Having to look for you in the woods once was bad enough, I’m not ready to try it again. Open your present, take a long bath, I’ll be back in after chores to spend all night with you.

And then feeling absolutely ridiculous, but knowing full well Peter loved when he was ridiculous, the Alpha put a dozen or so hearts at the bottom of the note too.
“This Omega is making me soft.” he muttered, and left the note on top of the beautifully wrapped present at the foot of their bed, lingering long enough to brush gentle fingers down his mate’s cheek. “S’good thing you’re gorgeous.”

Wade closed the door as quietly as he could, and the literal second it latched shut, Peter’s eyes popped open and he lunged for the present the Alpha had left behind.

“Yayyyyy presents.” he whispered, tearing at the paper and already laughing a little. The Omega was well aware how weird it was to be excited by new notebooks but there was something very good about piles of blank pages and brand new pencils, there was something exciting about having all that space to fill up with thoughts and ideas and memories. The most recent book was only halfway full but seeing as how the enough with his mate was going to change very soon–

--Peter clenched his thighs together and bit his lip to quiet a thready moan, focused on opening his present instead of how long it had been since Wade had held him down in bed and kissed him senseless or let those thick fingers track low between his thighs or growled into his ear just before baring his fangs and--

“Whoo boy.” the Omega shifted on the bed uncomfortably and fanned at his face with a self conscious blush. “Alright. Presents not--” naked. “– yep. Presents. New notebooks and maybe new pencils and this will be…”

The words trailed off when the last of the paper fell away and Peter gulped when he saw his present. “…amazing. This will be amazing.”

{{Peter’s present looks something like this}}

A vanity set wasn’t what Peter had expected from his mate, but the gesture took his breath away all the same. Beautiful rose gold gleamed in the afternoon sun, the scrolled details on the brush handle perfectly matching the design on the coordinating hand mirror, and the ivory comb was fine tipped, delicate and gorgeous.

This was a courting gift, the sort of thing Alphas used to give to their intended. Intimate and personal, a vanity set meant to lay in an Omegas boudoir and be used in their private dressing rooms. Vanity sets were wedding gifts, expensive and usually custom made and meant to last decades, carefully restored when they began to fade, meticulously repaired if the mirror cracked or the comb bent.

A gift from one mate to another, intimate and beautiful and thoughtful and after weeks of being sick, Peter could blame his sudden tears on emotional exhaustion and not on the overtly romantic gesture from his Alpha. It was left over achiness that had his breath catching, not the thought that Wade must have picked this set out months ago when they spent the night in Haven. His rough around the edges, mountain man Alpha had wandered through Mr. Lee’s store to find this pretty set, or at the very least let Mr. Lee’s store to find this pretty set, or at the very least let Mr. Lee talk his ear off about a thousand different options before settling on this one and it was incredible.

Peter lay the pieces aside gently and clambered off the bed to see his other present– a still steaming bath full of fragrant soap, fluffy towels laid out to warm by the fire and a small plate of dark chocolate and tangy, dried fruit.

“Romance novels and love stories have nothing on you, my mate.” the Omega whispered as he dipped his fingers into the almost too hot water. “Nothing at all.”

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“So how long after I left did you wait to open your present?” Wade shook the snow from his boots and jacket and set them aside, eyeing the full bath tub and water wrinkled Omega with a knowing smirk. “Five minutes? Ten?”

“I opened my present the second the door closed.” Peter’s cheeks were pink, hair curling around his ears from the steam, skin flushed from the heat. “And I love them. I love you.”

“I love you too.” Wade bent over the tub and kissed a dot of dart chocolate from his mate’s lips. “I know the vanity set is sort of a useless gift, and courting gifts probably aren’t a real thing in your time line but–”

“I’ve combed my hair ten times.” the Omega interrupted. “Ten times, Alpha. And if the mirror wouldn’t fog up in the bathtub, I’d have that over here too. I love it. Thank you.”

“Well your hair is amazing.” the Alpha kissed Peter one more time, hiding any lingering self consciousness from the gift in the motion. Peter was from a time line without scent matches, without old fashioned traditions like courting, hell the Omega had barely believed in soulmates when they met. A vanity set was a useless present, especially here on the mountain where Peter didn’t have a private dressing room or even an actual bedroom. A useless present but his mate was smiling anyway, so maybe it was alright.

“Come in here with me.” Peter wove their fingers together and tugged at his Alpha coaxingly. “Please?”

“Pete.” Helplessly, Wade’s gaze dropped to the bathwater and all the perfect skin on display beneath the water. “We should get something to eat and then maybe–”

“Two weeks, Alpha.” Peter cut in. “Two weeks since I fell and got sick. I miss you. I miss holding you and kissing you and I miss your bite.” he tilted his head and tapped at his bonding spot. “Don’t you miss me?”

“Of course I miss you.” the Alpha’s voice went rough, cedar scent jolting hungry. “My mate, I miss you so bad I can’t even stand it. Want you, want to bite you, want you–” Peter’s eyes widened and Wade swallowed. “– so I should get naked right now.”

“Right now.” Peter laughed in delight when Wade started stripping right away, but the laughter fell away to quiet awe as the Omega suddenly remembered just how big his mate was. Wade was huge, massive shoulders and a broad chest, thick arms and heavy legs and the Alpha’s cock was–

“Eyes up here, my mate.” Wade teased and Peter didn’t even make an effort to look away, going so far as to lick his lips as he answered, “I’ve made my viewing choice and I’m happy with the decision.”

The Alpha practically preened under the scrutiny and approval from his mate as he scrubbed down with the cloth in the wash basin, but he raised his eyebrows when he stepped towards the bath and Peter was still staring.

“Gonna make me self conscious, Omega.” Wade hissed a little as he settled into the water. “Starin’ at an Alpha like that.”

“Is that all I’m going to make you?” Peter’s eyes were practically glowing, mouth swollen and slick from biting at his bottom lip in anticipation. “Self conscious? Not anything else… bigger?”

“Jesus, the mouth on you.” Wade grinned and felt around in the water until he could wrap a hand around each of Peter’s slim ankles, tugging gently until the Omega slumped further into the bath so
Wade could massage up his calves to the back of his knees. “I’ve missed your sass, my mate. You were so quiet when you were sick, m’glad you’re smiling again.”

“You make me smile, Alpha.” Peter settled back into the hot water and lay his head on the rim of the tub, closing his eyes and thoroughly enjoying the feel of his Alpha’s legs crowded up against his hips. Wade was so big he had to bend his knees just to fit in the bath and when Peter stretched out he could put his toes against the Alpha’s stomach and feel every breath his mate took.

Perfect.

Skin on skin was perfect after so long apart, and the water made every moment slick and smooth. The air was hazy with steam, the fire crackling and light spilling gold onto the water, and Peter felt like he could happily drown in the warmth, slip under for his mate and float away into bliss with nothing more than Wade’s touch grounding him.

“Settle.” Wade’s hazel eyes had gone soft red as he watched his mate drift, voice pitching low and coaxing. “My mate, settle.”

“I’m settled, my love.” Peter ran his fingers through his hair, shaking the droplets away only to have them land on his lashes and drip down his cheek. “So so settled.”

“More.” The cabin seemed small tonight, secure and safe and hidden away from the winter, from the cold, from how sick Peter had been and how inevitable Cable was and Wade couldn’t believe how badly he suddenly needed to see his mate soft. “Give me more, Pete. Settle. Relax. Get all sweet for me, yeah?”

“Mmm, my Alpha. I’ll be sweet for you when you put me to bed.” Peter’s gorgeous mouth curved into an adoring smile. “You know, I can feel you staring at me. What are you thinking about? Besides me being naked, I mean.”

Wade watched the Omega– his Omega– for another moment, and his voice cracked, his fingers tightening at Peter’s knee when he finally whispered, “I want you to be mine, Pete.”

“Alpha.”

“I can’t stand not having you anymore.” his fingers tightened at Peter’s knee and the Omega shuddered. “We were ready for another enough before you got sick, and I know bonds don’t usually take outside of heat but we are soulmates, Pete. We are soulmates and you came through time to find me. We’re meant to be.”

“I–” Wade’s throat jerked as he swallowed. “I’m tired of waiting. I want you.”

“You have me.” the Omega shifted forward in the bath until he was straddling Wade’s thighs, inched closer until he was sat squarely on his mate’s lap. “Alpha my Alpha, you have me. We don’t need to wait for a heat, we don’t need to wait at all anymore.”

Peter flattened his hand to Wade’s heart and counted the beats for a moment. “Don’t you feel it? Don’t you feel me?”

“Yeah, baby boy.” Just like he’d done every other time, Wade covered Peter’s hand with his own. “Yeah, I feel you.”

“I’m yours.” the Omega pushed their foreheads together, notched tighter on Wade’s lap and mewled when he felt his Alpha harden beneath him. “My mate. I’m yours. You’re mine. We don’t need to wait.”
“You’re mine.” Barely audible, hushed and almost reverent. “I’m yours, Omega. I swear it. This is your first time and I swear I’ll take care of you. I’ll be everything for you baby boy. Gonna give you everything, anything, whatever you want. I promise.”

“My mate.” Peter turned his nose into the Alpha’s palm, purred soft and sweet and submissive. “I only want you.”
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

The long awaited bonding scene, the obligatory d*cking down, teeth rotting sweetness, unbearable fluffiness… all the things we love about ABO Spideypool smexy times.

Oh also, you guys all know I have a biting king and since Wade has fangs that usually means things get a little bloody? Sort of a TW for bonding bites and blood? Idk, you’ve all read my stuff before you know what you’re getting into lol

“Stay in the water where it’s warm.” Wade eased the Omega off his lap and back into the water, erasing Peter’s protest with a quick kiss. “I’m gonna lay some blankets out, get everything ready for us, okay? You stay here, stay real soft and I’ll come get you in a minute.”

Peter desperately wanted to be sassy right then, wanted to snark something about getting to be lazy while Wade did all the work, or tell the Alpha to move slowly so he had plenty of time to ogle, but for the life of him, he couldn’t manage much more than a breathless, “Yes, Alpha.”

“Damn it, you’re sweet.” Wade came back for another kiss, wound his fingers into wet hair and let his fangs prick at his mate’s bottom lip. “You’re so sweet like this Pete, thank you.”

The Omega only nodded, eyes wide and heart pounding as he watched his Alpha step from the tub and pat carelessly dry with one of their towels. Wade was gorgeous, all bold muscles and rough skin and hard lines and Peter was suddenly parched, suddenly starving, itching to get his hands on his mate.

“Settle.” Wade’s voice dropped to a rumble and Peter about bit through his tongue trying to stop his whine. “Just a minute, Omega. Wanna make sure everything is perfect for you.”

Freshly laundered and finally dry blankets were pulled from the line and laid out over the bear skin rug in front of the fire, pillows grabbed from the bed and scattered around the floor. The Alpha made sure the door was barred, pulled the curtains over the windows and even pushed the table and chairs back out of the glow of firelight so the cabin seemed to narrow down to just them and their space on the floor.

“Come here.” Peter had never weighed much, but after being sick he weighed hardly anything at all and Wade was gentle, so gentle lifting the Omega from the tub and helping him stand on the floor. He was was gentle, so gentle as he took a towel and ran it over Peter’s thick hair and down lean shoulders, over the flat planes of his mate’s stomach and around to the rise and curve of Peter’s rear.

“My mate.” Peter sighed shakily when the Alpha dropped to his knees right there on the floor, held onto Wade’s shoulders for balance as his mate dried down his legs and to his feet and when Wade tipped his head back and looked up at him, Peter murmured, “Didn’t realize seeing you on your knees would be so incredible.”

“Incredible, huh?” Wade tossed the towel away and ran possessive, knowing hands up the back of
Peter’s legs to his ass and up around the narrow waist. “You should see my view.”

The Omega flushed pretty pink and the Alpha crooned in response, then leaned in to bury his nose in the vee of Peter’s hips. His mate gasped out loud over the scrape of fangs on sensitive skin and Wade dragged his tongue through the sparse hair at the base of his mate’s cock, breathing in deep until he could scent pure Omega beneath the lavender soap.

“Ohhh-h-h-Alpha.” Peter squeezed at Wade’s shoulder until the Alpha had no choice but to back away a little bit. “I love– well I mean I um– we should–” Wade raised his eyebrows and Peter’s blush got darker. “Well I love you, first of all. I love you.”

“I love you too.” Wade left another open mouth kiss on the Omega’s hip.

“And second of all, you on your knees like this is just about killing me.” Peter squeaked when Wade’s fingers dipped lower between his thighs. “But um I really need to–” Peter made a helpless, vague sort of gesture towards the blankets. “I don’t want you to ever stop touching me but I also feel like if I don’t do a little nesting right now I might actually freak out so–”

To his credit, the Alpha didn’t laugh at all despite the near hilarity of his wacky mate putting a stop to sex because he needed to nest. Nesting was a bonding instinct, the sort of thing Omega’s did before inviting an Alpha into their home, into their body and soul and heart. It was Peter trying to create a place just for the two of them, trying to carve out a quiet sanctuary that was only theirs, somewhere safe and soft and scenting like mates and trust and love.

So no, Wade didn’t laugh at all. Instead, he let his eyes darken red until Peter’s mouth fell open in a wordless pant, and he rumbled and crooned at the Omega until Peter dropped to his knees and crushed their mouths together and only once the Omega was whining into the kiss and letting his fingers trail downward did the Alpha pull away.

“Nest, sweetheart.” he said simply, cupping Peter’s jaw and smoothing away tiny lines of distress from the corner of Peter’s mouth. “Whatever you need to do. I can wait.”

“I love you.” Peter breathed, then pushed back from the Alpha and got to work right away reorganizing the blankets and pillows Wade settled in to watch and wait, fully content knowing there had never been anything as precious as his Omega nesting in their home.

Just fucking gorgeous.

Peter couldn’t help the instinct to rumple up the blankets and arrange them in a rough circle just like he couldn’t help the instinct to go back to the bed for more pillows. He was well aware of his Alpha’s gaze the entire time, the way Wade didn’t look away once and that the smile on the Alpha’s lips was equal parts amused and pleased as hell.

The Omega glanced over only once to smile at his mate, and he eep!ed in surprise and delight when Wade automatically grinned at him, fangs flashing in the firelight.

“I need your clothes.” Peter said a tad sheepishly as he rummaged through the laundry for a few shirts that scented wholly Alpha and pushed them into the pile of blankets. He shoved at the quilts a little more until he could see the bear rug beneath and then asked, “Could you um– could you move the bath back? I don’t want to see anything but you, alright?Not tables and chairs or any furniture, not even the bath. Is that alright?”

The Alpha stood without a word, braced his hands on the side of the still full tub and shoved the entire thing back several feet, turning back to find his mate outright gaping at the show of strength.
He tilted his head with a little smirk and Peter stammered, “F-fuck, I forget how strong you are sometimes. You should do more things like that so I can watch and you know… drool over it? More things like that, please?”

“How about I do things like this instead?” One arm was all it took to lift the Omega right off the floor, right off his feet and flush against Wade’s body and Peter hummed in excitement when he found himself a few inches off the ground, held effortlessly by his mate. “All done nesting, Pete?”

“All–all done nesting.”

“C’mere then.” Wade carried his little mate over to the middle of the nest and without letting go once, lowered Peter onto the bear skin rug. He followed immediately after, laying out on top of the Omega and pushing Peter’s hands up into the blankets so his mate was stretched out beneath him, on full display in the low light.

“Gorgeous.” the Alpha said approvingly and Peter went pink again as he whispered, “Hi, Alpha.”

“Hi.” Wade would have been lying if he said he wasn’t nervous all the sudden, practically quaking as he bent down to kiss his mate. It could have been the first time for all his heart was pounding, their very first kiss for the way he held his breath and tried to be tender.

“Mmmm my love.” Peter sighed into from the kiss, wound both arms round Wade’s neck and arched his back so their bodies rubbed together. “Kiss me again. I want more of you, I’ll never have enough.”

“I’ll never have enough of you either, Pete.” the Alpha dipped low to kiss his mate again– and again and again and again. “Not ever.”

For a long time they lay together and simply kissed, licking through open lips and moaning into welcome softness, tangling tongues and exploring deep for another taste, always another. Two weeks was a long time to be apart because of sickness, it was a long time to worry and a long to think about all the what if’s and Wade could have spent forever silencing all those what if’s with his mate’s sweet mouth.

Peter ran his fingers in idle designs up and down his Alpha’s back as their lips met over and over, tracing the scars he already knew by memory, brushing a top the clearer skin with no intent other than to make Wade shiver in his arms, to make his love press closer and tighter so the last of the water droplets from the bath dried between their bodies and all they could feel was warm.

The Alpha scented like anticipation and it was heartbreakingly endearing, cedar and licorice almost tentative when Peter nuzzled at Wade’s pulse and closed his teeth over the steady heartbeat. Wade groaned something indecipherable between taking open mouth inhales of lavender and honeysuckle from the softest spot behind his mate’s ear and down along the hinge of Peter’s jaw, reveling in the unfiltered sweetness, in the absence of sick from his mate’s scent.

“Smell good, Pete.” he muttered and the Omega mmm’d in to his ear before finding his mouth again and sealing their lips together for a long time. “So so sweet, my Omega.”

“Touch me.” Peter lifted up into Wade’s body, rubbed his cock into the tense of his Alpha’s abs and moaned when Wade throbbed against his stomach in reply. “My mate. Please.”

“No rush baby boy, we’ve got all night.” Wade reminded him, slow and easy with those first touches, slow and easy with his fingers as he stroked up and down Peter’s length, slipped through the damp gathering at the tip and used it to ease his way. “I don’t wanna miss any of this, any
“It’s been two weeks.” Peter worked his hand south until he could circle his palm confidently around Wade, squeezing only enough to make the Alpha groan low in his throat. “Two weeks since I’ve had you, Alpha. We can hurry this time and go slow later. You won’t miss anything if we do this multiple times.”

Wade laughed under his breath when the Omega thrust up into his palm, then spread those long legs and wriggled invitingly. “Impatient.”

“Too slow.” Peter retorted, eyes soft and mouth even softer as it swept over Wade’s collarbone and across a particularly long scar at his shoulder. “Touch me.”

The Omega tossed his head back and cried out helplessly when Wade opened him around one finger. He was slick, wet shining clear on his thighs, pliant and open for his mate when a second finger joined almost immediately after.

“Fuck, you’re tight.” Wade said through gritted teeth and Peter only canted his hips up and bore down on the digits until they slipped past that first resistance and deep into his body. “Fuck, Omega.”

“Yesssss….” Peter hissed out a breath but it turned into an exhilarated sort of giggle, pleasure already sparkling behind his eyes and shocking through his veins, cock jumping against his stomach and dribbling a pool of bittersweet liquid at the hollow of his navel. “Oh oh oh my Alpha. Yes. More. More.”

“Beautiful.” Wade ran his thumb around the Omega’s stretched rim and hooked it just gently at the edge to open his mate a little more, crooked his fingers inside until he could feel for the raised pad that had Peter coming off the blankets with a startled yelp, then just as quickly shoving back onto his wrist for another.

“Missed you Pete, missed having you like this.” the Alpha could have stared at his mate all night, watched the lean body writhing on the blankets and rolling further onto his fingers. He could have watched for hours as Peter spread his legs and bent his knees so Wade would get deeper, grabbed at a pillow and then tossed it away to grab at him instead as heat built steadily in his core.

“That’s right baby, hold on to me.” Three fingers and Peter bit down into the meat of Wade’s shoulder, curled up into the Alpha’s body and nearly wept, lush and drenched and suffocating the Alpha with the scent of heady arousal as it pooled liquid in his center and dripped out around Wade’s hand to soak into the rug. “I’ve got you, I’ve got you–”

“I need you.” Raspy and gorgeous in Wade’s ear and when Peter pulled away his eyes were dilated to nearly black, wild and ravenous and if the Alpha didn’t know better, he’d think his mate was lost in heat for all Peter was slurring his words and so desperately trying to get more of Wade inside him. “My mate. I need you– you– not your fingers, not your mouth, I need you. Need your knot.”

“Pete–”

“I’m ready for you.” Peter was panting now, a steady purr broken by gasps for air. He was clutching at the blankets and arching his back, little bites at the Alpha’s neck turning sharper and sharper until he finally bit down hard and Wade instinctively snarled right back and shoved the Omega down against the blankets.

“Yes.” Not intimidated in the least, Peter only moaned, stretched, lay out long on the rug and turned
his head to bare his neck, clearly showing off for his mate, clearly asking for his mate. “Growl at me, Alpha. Bite me. I’m ready for you.”

Wade still hesitated, waited long enough to fit a knee between Peter’s thighs and rock down into his mate tentatively, murmuring, “I’m big sweetheart, let me get you ready some more.”

“My love.” Somehow still sassy even in this moment, Peter’s eyes sparkled nearly wicked– and in the firelight, almost gold. “I wouldn’t love you half as much if you weren’t big.”

“Brat.” A searing kiss covered whatever Peter snarked in response and when Wade moved to lay fully against his mate, even the kiss fell away in favor of a welcoming purr from the Omega and a greedy, grasping growl from the Alpha.

“You’ll tell me to stop if I hurt you.” Wade asked once he could breathe again, once the Omega had let him go and was trilling eagerly at the swell of the Alpha’s cock next to his own. “Promise me.”

“You won’t hurt me.” Peter ran his tongue over his disappointingly blunt teeth, then leaned up and licked over his mate’s sharper fangs, practically trembling in excitement. “But I’ll tell you to stop all the same. I promise.”

“I love you.” Wade said again, just one more time because his mate needed to hear it, because he needed to say it, because someday soon the inevitable would happen and he wouldn’t be able to say it again. “My mate.”

“My mate.” the Omega repeated. “Come here.”

There was a difference between heat and simply being with an Alpha, an excruciating too vivid awareness that had Peter’s eyes rolling back and mouth falling open, nails digging lines down his mate’s back as Wade pushed forward and in. The Alpha was huge, blunt and heavy and so so hot and Peter thought he could be on fire, thought he could be melting when the burn was sharp enough to bring tears to his eyes.

Fuck it was good, it was good it was good it was good and when Wade fit all of himself into Peter, the Omega choked on his mate’s name, couldn’t breathe through the weight, couldn’t do anything but lie there and feel himself fuller than he’d ever imagined possible.

Wade wove their fingers tight when Peter reached out blindly for him, pushed their foreheads together and told himself not to move when a tear leaked out from the corner of the Omega’s eyes and trailed down his face.

“Too much?” he whispered hoarsely. “Baby boy, tell me–”

“Wade.” Peter’s entire body shuddered, rippling around the Alpha’s cock. “Wade, I– I–”

“Pete?” The Alpha didn’t even dare breathe, counting the fan of dark lashes at Peter’s cheek, the dusting of freckles, watching the Omega’s mouth fall open and white teeth bite down into crimson lips, feeling each ragged breath through Peter’s chest and down to where they were connected. “… sweetheart…”

“Alpha.” Peter fell apart with a quiet sob, and the Alpha stared in awe as his mate shattered right there in his arms. The Omega’s cock spilled between their bodies, pulsing in time to the devastating clench in Peter’s center and it was all Wade could do to stay still when he could already feel his knot swelling, his cock tightening, his entire body surging as the Omega keened and rolled through white hot pleasure.
“Ohhh-h-h-h….” Peter opened his eyes and he was *gone*, gorgeous and hazy and *gone* as he whispered, “My Alpha. M’so full, so full of you, didn’t know it would be—” one last shiver and Wade tried hard not to groan out loud. “—didn’t know it would be like this. Never knew it was like this.”

“Jesus Christ, Omega.”

“More of you.” the Omega was floating, blissed out and lax and pliant everywhere except where Wade was fit inside, and he reached up for another kiss, always always another kiss that the Alpha would *die* before refusing.

“More of you.” Peter whispered again, and this time he hooked his leg around Wade’s calf and pressed against him. “Please. I’ll never have enough.”

The Alpha wanted to be slow and he wanted to be careful. Peter was still fragile in his hands, collarbones a little too prominent, skin just a shade too pale and the Alpha wanted to be *slow*, but his mate had other ideas.

“Yes!” Peter actually laughed at the first full thrust, loopy and giggly and *elated*. He felt like his soul could claw from his chest if they didn’t complete their bond *right now* and knowing this was just the first step made him almost giddy. “My mate, again.”

And the Alpha *wanted* to be slow but his mate was so good, so good beneath him, begging so sweetly and pushing into each stroke so wantonly, that Wade asked just one more time, “You’re sure?”

Peter’s only reply was to press his lips to Wade’s ear and *growl*, and the Alpha took it as the obvious permission it was.

So he wasn’t slow, and he wasn’t gentle and all the Alpha’s good intentions about taking their time and savoring every second fell by the wayside in favor of grabbing at Peter’s hips and shoving himself deep inside. Peter *shouted* for him and Wade shut him up with a bruising kiss, the Omega scratched at his back and Wade gripped at that gorgeous rear and used it as leverage to take his mate *harder*. Their kisses were sharp and messy, teeth and tongues clashing and blood tasting copper on their lips when Wade forgot to cover his fangs and Peter kept panting for a bite. His knot caught, *pulled* and the Omega screamed, Peter wrapped his legs around Wade’s waist to force him closer and the Alpha *growled* *vicious* and rutted against him.

“My mate.” Wade couldn’t hardly talk, a rumble steady from his chest distorting the words until he sounded half feral and Peter only whined and crushed their mouths together and pleaded for more of his mate, always more of his Alpha, he needed to feel him, he needed to *feel* him, can you feel me Alpha, *can you feel me right here*?

It was bloody red and seeing stars when the Alpha’s knot locked inside Peter for the first time, when his fangs punctured Peter’s bonding spot and sank deep enough to be painful, when he finished with a hoarse cry and the Omega followed him into a second orgasm with a throaty, satisfied purr.

Bloody red and seeing stars and *enough*—

—but no, it *wasn’t* enough, because Peter was already whining impatiently before Wade had even unlocked his jaw and pulled away, whining impatiently and shoving at the Alpha with tears in his eyes, “It’s not enough, Alpha. I need more. *More.*”
“Settle.” A groan punched out of the Alpha’s chest when Peter tried to fuck himself down on the still distended knot. “Baby boy, give me a minute.”

“No no no, I need you.” Peter jerked up and bit into Wade’s throat, into his shoulder and into his chest. “I need you, it’s not enough, I don’t have enough of you yet.”

Wade didn’t know if he was thrilled or worried that Peter needed another round so quickly, but he pushed the thought aside and settled his mate with quiet words and soothing licks over the bite marks for a long moment, nuzzling close and thwarting Peter’s attempts at sharper kisses, answering the Omega’s frantic, “It’s not enough yet!” with calmer, “I’ll give you enough baby, just wait, just wait, just a minute sweetheart—”

The moment his knot eased enough to pull out, Wade rolled Peter over onto all fours, pushed blankets under his mate’s head to offer a pillow and with a quick check of, “Are you sure, my mate?” gripped the Omega tight and thrust back in.

This time wasn’t gentle, not even a little bit. The Alpha left bruises at Peter’s narrow hips as he yanked him back onto his cock, he reached far over the Omega’s back to tug at the thick hair and pull sharply enough for Peter to cry out and arch into the pain. This position was dominance, it was rut, it was claiming, and the Alpha lost himself a little in the thrill of finally having his mate presenting in front of him, finally being able to hear the submissive whimpers and halting pleas of, “S’good, Alpha, Alpha Alpha Alpha, so good, I love you, please don’t stop, don’t stop, I don’t want you to stop.”

He tried to touch his mate, tried to reach under and close his hand around Peter’s length but the Omega slapped his fingers away and did it himself, jerking at his cock and trying hard to push himself back onto Wade to get the Alpha a little deeper each time, a little harder with every stroke. Peter screamed into the blankets as he came this time, and he screamed again when Wade bit him, the second bite in too few minutes brutal before it fell away into body drugging bliss as the Alpha’s knot locked up once again.

And for a moment, they were okay.

For a moment Peter was lost and floating and so so happy with his mate draped over his back and surrounding his frame. He could feel Wade pulsing inside him, the heavy Alpha cock keeping him plugged so nothing fell out and dripped down his legs to the rug, and for a moment everything felt right.

But then–

“Shit.” Wade unhooked his fangs from Peter’s throat and pushed his forehead between the Omega’s shoulder blades. “My mate, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry but—”

“It’s not enough.” Peter was hoarse, sounded weary. “It’s not enough yet, is it?”

“…it’s not enough.” the Alpha whispered. “I know this isn’t heat—”

“–but I feel like I could die if I don’t get enough of you.” Peter finished. “I know, Alpha my Alpha. I know.”

“I need you again.”

“I need you again too.”

Wade didn’t wait for his knot to go down, only eased the Omega carefully carefully onto his side
so they were lying together in the nest of blankets, pillowed on a few quilts and stuck tight together with sweat cooling on their skin and sex drenching the air in the cabin.

“Smells like you.” Peter mumbled tiredly, feeling around behind him until he could dig his fingers into Wade’s leg. “Smells like us. I love it. Love you.”

“I love you too.” This time Wade was gentle, this time he was slow, feathering sweet kisses onto his mate’s temple and down along his cheek, holding Peter close with one hand protective over the Omega’s heart. “I’ve got you sweetheart, come here.”

Peter went limp against his Alpha’s chest, content to close his eyes and just breathe as Wade ground into him from behind, slow, shallow strokes that kept him filled and sated, only enough movement to make his entrance twitch and clench in protest over even the thought of being empty. The knot was heavy, weighted in his core and Peter ran trembling fingers over his stomach where he was full, down his cock that was still hard and aching even after a third orgasm, down lower to where he was almost embarrassingly wet, the noise slick and soaked every time Wade withdrew even the slightest bit.

“S’good, Alpha.” he whispered, and Wade mumbled agreement into his throat, over the already bruising bite marks “So good, so good, bite me again. Wanna feel you all over.”

The Alpha crooned obediently and shifted forward enough to get his fangs back through the pierced skin, the curved edges and hooked ends spilling bloody honey and aphrodisia down his throat.

“Yes.” Peter spread his hand to the back of Wade’s scalp and kept the Alpha pinned there at his neck, rocking back into every too shallow push of his mate’s hips and focusing on the prick of fangs, the stretch of his Alpha between his legs and the pleasure rolling up his spine and spinning behind temples until everything went hot again and he was shaking, shivering, spilling into the blankets as his vision blanked out.

“Here.” Wade had to lean far over Peter’s body to keep them connected, guided the nearly gone Omega to his own neck and whispered, “Bite me, Pete. Hard. Don’t let up, don’t— don’t let go, alright? I’m not ready let you go.”

Peter licked languidly over Wade’s bonding spot before biting down, holding the Alpha steady and growling sweetly until he broke skin and tasted red, and still Wade gasped for more, held the Omega tight and begged, “Don’t stop, don’t let go, my mate, I’m not ready— I’m not ready—”

The bond sparked first where they were locked together, where Wade was coming again inside his mate, a barely there ripple that spread through their centers and out to their limbs, curling toes and clenching fists and burning at their throats. Peter whimpered when it brightened blinding behind his eyes before settling beautiful in his heart, the Alpha rumbled something sweet and relieved when his mind finally eased and hazed and all he could feel was Peter.

“…I’m yours.” Quietly, reverently, with neither Alpha nor Omega having any idea how much time had passed. It could have been an hour since Peter had bit Wade, it could have been half the night where they lay curled together in their nest before Peter stirred enough to speak.

And when he finally did speak— “Alpha my Alpha, I’m yours. And you’re mine.”

Wade brushed the Omega’s hair out of the way and stared down into eyes that swirled gorgeous, molten gold before blinking back to perfect brown, then whispered, “You’re mine. You’re mine Omega, and I am yours.”
It was more than words, it was a pull at their very souls and Peter arched into it with a breathy sigh that Wade swallowed into a kiss packed full of adoration and longing and everything all their words would never be able to say.

“I’m yours.”

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I wanted to share a little of my thought process for this chapter with you guys– the three ways Wade and Peter *ahem* connect are supposed to represent their relationship up to this point.

First missionary ie: fairly vanilla and loving like they were in the beginning.

Then doggy style which lets things get rough and a little crazy, which is for how desperate they’ve become for each other where their “enough” is changing is almost every day because they can’t seem to settle down.

And finally spooning, which is very protective, sort of shockingly intimate and also gentle because now that Peter is sick and they both know Cable is most likely coming back soon, all they want to do is hold each other and revel in the slow, easy minutes together.

I hope everyone enjoyed the chapter!
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Uh yep, this is short and terrible. Good times. I cut a longer chapter in two parts because I didn’t want this part to overshadow all the literal greatness hours of effort and thought I put into the origin story for Cable in the next part!

One hundred three days and counting...

“Are you going to let me help with chores this morning, Alpha?” Peter hugged his knees to his chest and watched Wade toss back the rest of his coffee. “Or do you still think I’m recovering from being sick? I miss Bea and Arthur and I honestly think I’m starting to miss the goat. That’s how long you’ve kept me trapped in the cabin, Wade. I’m starting to miss the goat.”

“Yes, you are still recovering from being sick, and I’m sure the animals miss you too.” The Alpha shrugged into his jacket and bent to lace his boots. “But I’ll tell you what, sweetheart. If you can get off that bed and walk without waddling, you can help with chores.”

“I--” Peter opened his mouth to argue, even put a finger in the air as if that would help him make a convincing point, but when Wade only raised his eyebrows and waited, the Omega sighed, “Alright. I can’t walk without waddling. Or you know. Leaking. But--”

Wade flashed his fangs in a too cocky grin and Peter finished, “But I still think it won’t hurt anything to help a little bit! I’m not coughing, I haven’t had a fever in a week and if last night didn’t prove that I’m feeling better than I don’t know how to convince you I’m okay! I’m sick of being stuck inside!”

“All last night proved is that you can take a knot like a champ.” Wade said flatly and Peter squawked in embarrassment. “So I’m gonna go do chores, you’re going to stay right here and eat some breakfast and when both those things are done, I’m gonna get you stuck on my knot again, alright?”

“WADE!” The Omega dove under the covers to hide scarlet cheeks but after a few seconds came a muffled, “Okay, that sounds good.”

Wade gave Pete’s butt an affectionate swat as he passed by the bed, then stopped to tug the blankets down far enough to land a gentle gentle kiss on Peter’s cheek. “I love you, my mate.” He notched his nose into Peter’s throat and breathed in the addicting scent of mated. “You scent like home now, you know? Like the only place I ever wanna be anymore. Gorgeous.”

“What the fuck, that’s the most romantic thing I’ve ever heard.” Peter laughed as he hugged his Alpha tight. “For the record, you’re the only place I ever want to be anymore, too.”

“I’ll be back soon.” Wade lingered a moment longer, nuzzling over his Omega’s bonding spot and losing himself just a little bit in the sweetness of being together. “You uh… you aren’t really too sore, are you my mate? I wasn’t too rough with you?”

“I’m sore enough that there’s no way I could possibly get out of bed without my knees giving out
and splatting me on the floor.” Peter confirmed, giggling into a kiss. “But not so sore I don’t want you to hurry back and um--”

“--Get you stuck on me again?”

“I’m never going to say that, so give it up.”

“Never say never, I got you to say hairy, didn’t I?”

“Get out.” Peter’s scent lifted clear and happy, his perfect mouth stretched in a smile. “Get out and go do chores. Go on.”

“Just say it one time, Pete.” The Alpha cajoled. “Just one time for me as a bonding present. Tell me you want to be stuck on my knot. Just say the words and--”

“Oh my god, go!”

Wade was laughing and dodging pillows as he ran for the door, growing teasingly at his mate while the Omega screeched about how awkward he was making everything and how he was too damn sore to be moving this much and how Wade should be more mature since he was at least a hundred years old--

-- but when the Alpha opened the door, all laughter stopped, all smiles dropped away and from the bed, Peter stilled mid throw and let the pillow fall from his fingers to land on the floor.

“Wade.” Cable’s voice was familiar and terrible and Peter didn’t think he’d hated anything more in his life at that exact moment. “Omega. How are you?”

“Don’t.” Wade’s throat jerked as he swallowed, his knuckles white where he grasped at the door, his body a barrier between Cable and Peter, between the mutant and them, between the reality they’d been ignoring and the bliss of the last few days. “Don’t take him from me. Don’t do this. This isn’t-- please don’t--”

“You know as well as I do, we don’t have a choice in the matter.” the other Alpha said gravely. “Step aside, please.”

“Nope.” The door cracked beneath Wade’s fingers, the Alpha’s strength surging as he tried to keep himself under control. “Cable--”

“I really am sorry about this.” Cable was every bit as big as Wade, and even if he hadn’t been huge the techno organic pieces of his biology made it possible to push Wade aside as if he didn’t weigh a thing. “But let’s not make this more difficult than it has to be.”

Wade backpedaled into the cabin and towards the bed, one hand outstretched towards the intruder, the other reaching for Peter to protect him.

“Step aside, Wade.”

“The fuck I will.” the Alpha’s eyes snapped dark red, curved fangs glinting when his lips drew back in a snarl. “Don’t you come near my mate.”

“Omega.” Cable tried to look around Wade, but was cut off by a growl bordering on savage.

“You are not to look at my Omega when he’s in bed, look away now. Now!”

Not a battle worth fighting, Cable told himself and obediently averted his eyes from Peter’s near
nakedness until Wade had settled down a little bit.

“Omega.” Cable tried again. “You are going to have to come with me.”

“No.” Peter shook his head and fit his hand into Wade’s palm, squeezing tight. “I’m not leaving my Alpha. I don’t care what you say.”

“Peter.” The gears in Cable’s arm ground together as he clenched his first. “You’ve been in this timeline too long and your life is in literal danger. I know you don’t want to leave this Alpha, but one way or another, you’re going with me back to your own time, do you understand?”

“One way or another?” the Omega repeated. “Are you-- are you serious? No! No, you can’t leave me here for months and then show back up and think I’ll just leave with you!”

“Wade?” he yanked at his Alpha’s hand, pressed at Wade’s fingers until his mate finally looked down at him. “Say something. Tell Cable this is crazy, that there’s no way we’re going to be apart from each other, he can’t just walk in and take me!”

“Wade.” Cable kept his gaze firmly off Peter and squarely on the Alpha. “I know Bruce has talked to you, I know he’s warned you. You know what it could mean if Peter stays much longer.”

“What does he mean Bruce has talked to you?” Peter cut in. “What does that-- Wade, what is he talking about? Is this cos I’ve been sick? I’m getting better!”

The Omega was edging towards hysterical, the abrupt switch from teasing his Alpha to facing down Cable enough to make him choke, the sudden threat of leaving enough to make him want to vomit. “Alpha! Talk to me!”

...but something devastated bled into Wade’s eyes, something that looked an awful lot like resignation and maybe even like this was exactly what the Alpha had been expecting all along and Peter’s heart plummeted towards the floor.

“...My--my mate?”

“I’ve got chores to do.” Wade pulled his hand from Peter’s grasp, ignored the Omega’s wounded noise so he could order, “Cable, you stay outside until my Omega gets dressed, you are not allowed to see him without clothes, not even a fuckin’ hint of skin alright? Get outside.”

“Wade.” Peter whispered in disbelief and Cable reached to touch the Alpha’s shoulder with a grave, “Wade.” but he pushed past them both and stomped out the door, across the yard to the barn.

“I’ll step out while you get dressed.” Cable slid his hood over his face and turned from the bed. “Let me know when you’re ready and we can talk about what’s going to happen. I’m sure you’ve got questions and I’ll do my best to answer them but we can’t waste much time, alright? Hurry.”

Peter snarled at the mutant, furious and hurt and confused and Cable paused at the door, thinking through his words before saying, “I never meant to leave you here this long, do you understand? This is my fault, you never should have been here long enough to get tangled up with an Alpha and certainly never long enough to be put in harms way. I’m sorry.”

“Get out.” the Omega whispered, breath stuttering over a sob. “Just-- just get out. I don’t even know what’s happening right now or why my Alpha walked just walked away from me-- please leave me alone. Leave me alone.”

Guilt settled heavy in Cable’s core, and the Alpha was fully honest when he muttered, “For what
it’s worth, I really am sorry.”

“Get out!!” A lantern shattered on the floor, then a book, spine snapping and pages tearing as it bounced into the wall. “GET OUT!”

Cable swallowed back everything else he’d planned to say and nodded, closed the door behind him so the Omega could come to terms with it all in privacy.

Peter wasn’t the problem anyway.

Convincing Wade to give up his mate would be a conversation that would most certainly end in bloodshed, and Cable didn’t relish the thought of having his throat ripped out by a heartbroken Alpha.

“I’m sorry.” he said to the empty air outside, listening to the noise from the cabin as Peter raged out against everything unfair. “Jesus Christ, how did this get so out of control?”
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Uh yes.
Tissues.

The noise in the cabin ceased ten minutes before the door finally pushed open, and Cable turned from gazing out at the forest to watch the Omega step out onto the porch.

Peter shut the door behind him with a louder slam than necessary and in a tone that was damn near a snarl told the mutant, “If you want to talk to me, you’ll do it out here. You are not welcome in our home. You aren’t welcome on our property either, but so long as my Alpha doesn’t intend to tear you apart this exact second, I’ll sit and listen to what you have to say.”

Cable held his hands up peacefully, and Peter looked over towards the barn doors before finally sitting on the top step and wrapping his arms around himself. “Why are you here?”

For a minute Cable just watched the Omega, watched Peter huddle down into what was obviously his mate’s coat. He was thin– too thin– but time in the past and being sick hadn’t done anything to tame the stubbornness flashing in his eyes or the determined set to his jaw.

Peter had taken Cable by surprise all those months ago when they met in the forest, feisty and determined and not willing to back down until he got what he wanted. Cable had been impressed– if not annoyed by the Omega back then– and he was still impressed now.

Peter was a good, strong Omega for a wildly fierce Alpha and admiration filtered slow into Cable’s scent, a begrudging smile tugging at the corner of his mouth. Wade had chosen his mate well and it was too bad the universe didn’t care one whit for scent matches, for true love, for the desperation that came along with the need to stay stay stay.

No the universe didn’t care at all, or the Omega wouldn’t be fading right in front of his eyes.

The moment of mutual silence stretched long enough to be awkward, long enough to be almost painful as the Omega glared up at Cable balefully, so finally the mutant cleared his throat and went to join Peter at the step, moving slow and careful and trying hard not to make an already terrible situation worse.

Peter stiffened when Cable sat next to him, but didn’t shy away and after another moment of silence Cable realized the Omega had no intention of speaking first, no intention of making this easy in the least, so with another grudging bit of admiration, the mutant reached into his utility pack and pulled out a photograph.

The edges were worn and crumpled, the creases almost white from being folded and re-folded tens of thousands of times. The colors were long faded, but the smiles were every bit as brilliant as Cable remembered and he ran careful fingers over the familiar faces before finally saying, “How did you adjust to a world full of mutants? Change your mind about all that research you did beforehand?”
“Nope.” Peter shook his head. “Nope. Don’t do that. You don’t get to come here and try to ruin us, then make small talk like we are friends. Say what you need to say and get it over with so I can find my Alpha.”

“I just thought–”

“Nope!” the Omega said louder. “First time we met you threw me into a tree and threatened to kill me, this time around you’re barging in uninvited to my home and threatening to take me from my Alpha. You are not allowed to make small talk. Cut it out.”

“Stubborn Omega.” Cable muttered. “You seem very well matched to Wade.”

Peter finally flinched just a very little bit, but his tone was still halfway to furious, “We are a perfect match.” and Cable nodded in understanding, then changed the subject.

“This is my wife and mate, Aliya.” the Alpha turned the photo to show Peter, pointing to the older woman first. “And this is our daughter, Hope. This is a snapshot from my original time line, the only picture I have of them anymore, the only piece of that life I still carry with me. War tore my entire world apart and Hope and Aliya were just two in a list of millions of casualties.”

“I’m– I’m sorry.” Peter didn’t want to give a damn about Cable, but looking at the picture and the grief on the mutant’s features still hurt his heart. “I can’t imagine how difficult that was.”

“No.” Cable agreed gruffly. “No, you can’t. But after they were gone and after the war had tempered enough to allow some of us to step away, I learned how easy time travel was.”

He refolded the picture and put it back in his bag. “In my reality, time travel is nothing more complicated than a device you clip to your belt, the necessary batteries required to get you from one point to another, and a little bit of common sense to not do anything stupid in a timeline that isn’t your own.”

Peter waited, curiosity warring with the innate need to hate everything about Cable, and after another minute the Alpha continued, “I went looking through every timeline I could trying to find Aliya and Hope again. Fifty nine different eras because I couldn’t stand the thought of existing without them, fifty nine different worlds scoured because I didn’t know who I was without my family.”

“…did you find them?”

“Fifty nine different times.” Cable confirmed. “Fifty nine different times I found my mate and my daughter. Playing, smiling, existing in fifty nine different realities.”

“And?”

“And in every universe where Aliya loved me, every place she called a version of me mate, she was doomed to die.” Cable’s good eye flickered red with heartbreak. “Every single time, she and Hope. Over and over and over. Sometimes it was war, sometimes it was sickness, sometimes it was random, careless, some twist of fate that tore them from my arms. I watched them die fifty nine different times, watched myself stand in the rain and grieve after they were gone.”

His smile was painful, fangs bared like he wanted to growl instead. “Fifty nine timelines and the funeral was always the same– No one but me standing there, the rain soaking through my suit, a preacher talking about heaven and better places and finding happiness cos they aren’t suffering anymore.”
“Oh.” The Omega’s scent flattened into sadness. “I’m so— shit, I’m so sorry. I wouldn’t have asked if—”

“This timeline here.” Cable ignored Peter’s apology and pulled out another photo, this one newer and still crisp and clear. “This timeline and this Haven is the only place I don’t exist. This world is the only one I’ve found without Cable in it, and in this world, Aliya went away to the coast the year she was nineteen. She had a wild summer fling with a stranger, they parted on fond terms and she returned to Haven without realizing she’d conceived.”

The Omega reached for the picture cautiously, his heart twisting when he saw the same smiles beaming up at him, Hope and Aliya laughing together and posing in the Haven town square.

“She’s raising Hope with the help of friends and family.” The mutant said slowly. “I don’t know the name of their family Alpha and I won’t allow myself to look. This life is theirs and the closest I can get without ruining their happiness is watching from the shadows.”

“This is why the device sent me here when I activated it.” Peter realized. “You come here all the time to see them.”

“As often as I can.” Cable agreed. “This is my favorite time line. This place, this Haven. Look how beautiful Aliya is, how she smiles so much. Our life together was—” he shook his head regretfully. “Our life was difficult, and I made things more difficult by choosing to be a soldier. Aliya used to laugh to hide how hard things were, how sad she was all the time and I only saw her smile— saw her truly smile— a time or two.”

The Alpha took the picture back from Peter and folded it just as carefully as he’d done the first, tucking it away in his pack. “My mate smiles all the time here in Haven, and Hope has the sweetest laugh I’ve ever heard. She sings and she dances and Aliya teaches the little children in the mornings and they are safe and content, away from war, from hunger, from all the pain a life with me brought to their hearts.”

And softer— “If a world without me is the only place Hope and Aliya are happy, then I’ll choose to stay away.”

Peter grimaced at the grind of Cable’s arms, the gears and plates shifting and whirring as the mutant rolled his shoulders. “Doesn’t— doesn’t that hurt?”

“Every day.” Cable flexed his fingers and clenched his fist. “It’s a virus and I was infected as a baby. My mental powers kept it at bay for a long time but time travel ruins bodies and minds, so the longer I am outside my own time line, every time I come here to see Aliya and Hope, the stronger the virus grows.”

“I have so many questions.” Peter muttered and Cable grunted in agreement. “But um, I guess the most important one is if being here makes the virus stronger, then one day won’t it take over your body?”

“One day I won’t be anything more than a consciousness inside a robot.” He nodded. “Maybe I won’t even be that. Maybe I’ll just cease to exist altogether, die the day the virus sinks itself into my brain. Death might even be a relief after all I’ve seen and all I’ve done.”

“To die would be an awfully big adventure.” The Omega quoted, and Cable thought he recognized the line from some this–Earth fairy tale. “I never thought near immorality would be a curse.”

“Most of life is a curse, kid.” the mutant snorted. “But until the day I physically cannot take
anymore, I’ll let the curse consume more and more of me so long as I get to see my family smile. A worthwhile sacrifice.”

“I’m sorry.” The last bit of irritation drained from Peter’s scent as his shoulders drooped. “I can’t imagine how awful this is. I don’t even want to think about a world where I couldn’t be with my mate. Or one where I’d have to keep my distance because—”

“You can’t stay here.” Cable interrupted and the Omega switched gears to automatically growl at him. “Growl all you want kiddo, but you can’t stay.”

“You aren’t taking me away!”

“It’s not up to me!” Cable raised his voice when Peter did. “Didn’t you hear what I said? Being out of your own time line ruins bodies and mind. If this is what’s it doing to me?” he gestured to his body. “What the hell do you think it’s doing to you?”

“But I’m getting better!” Peter insisted. “I’m getting better, I promise!”

“No. You’re not.” Cable said flatly. “You’re not getting better. You are never going to recover from being sick, Peter. You will get weaker every single day, more and more tired until you can’t even get out of bed. Your body will give up, first your limbs, then your breathing and finally your heart. You will waste away right there in front of your mate and it will be neither peaceful nor quick. Why do you want to do that to your Alpha?”

“I–” Peter started to yell, but his mouth clicked shut in shock. “–I don’t want to do anything to Wade. Not anything that hurts, anyway.”

“Haven’t you wondered why you haven’t gone into a mating heat?” Cable switched tactics and pointed at Peter’s throat. “Why those bruised fang marks haven’t turned silver? You and Wade are scent matched, soulmates and you haven’t gone into a regular heat much less a bonding heat. Your body stopped reviving itself the second you ended up here and that will not change.”

“Well, I don’t need a mating heat to bond with my Alpha.” Peter said stubbornly. “We are mates whether my bite mark ever turns silver or not.”

“You’re smarter than this.” Cable pointed at him warningly. “I’ve done my research, Peter Parker and you are way too smart to not understand what I’m saying. Bruce told me he talked to you about being in stasis and that you understand the stress a mutation can put on a body. You are smart enough to know—”

“Don’t do that to me.” Peter snapped. “Don’t use my intelligence against me. Yes I’m smart enough to know it doesn’t make sense for a human to survive outside their timeline, but I’m also smart enough to know I’ll die of a broken heart if I leave my mate! What’s the difference?”

“Dying of a broken heart will be easier than what will happen if you stay.” the mutant insisted. “Why would you want to hurt your mate by making him watch you die?”

“You’re hurting my mate by taking me away!” Peter shouted. “And you are doing the same thing to Aliya and Hope! You are killing yourself just to be around them! Why can’t I do it too!”

“Aliya and Hope don’t even know I exist.” Cable retorted, popping his teeth in warning so the Omega would back off the topic of his family. “They don’t know I am dying or how it hurts, their lives are no different when I am alive, their days will be no different when I am gone. I’ve never intervened in their lives, but you have changed your mate’s life and it will destroy him to lose you this way. It will ruin that Alpha, do you understand? Ruin him.”
Peter’s scent twisted in terror for a split second before settling, and Cable was once again impressed by how self contained the Omega was. He’d panicked for only a second and now he was calm, almost too calm really as if he’d already made a decision about the future, and Cable narrowed his eyes warily as he waited for the Omega to speak again.

“How much time do I have?” Peter finally asked and Cable supplied, “You don’t have any time, Omega. One hundred and twenty days is the end and you’ve been here one hundred and three.”

“So I have two weeks.”

“No, son.” Regret, layering in the mutants voice. “You’re sick and I have to get you home. Even if you weren’t sick, you have to go back. You’ll never survive here, and I won’t be responsible for your death.”

“But—”

“I’ll give you forty eight hours with your mate.” Cable stood to his feet, bringing an abrupt end to the conversation despite Peter’s protests. “And then you’ll have to come with me. I should still be able to get you home and back to your life before it’s too late.”

“I won’t go.” Peter dug his fingers into his thighs until it hurt. “I won’t go. I’m not leaving my mate.”

“Omega.” Cable’s good eye flashed dark red, his yellow one sparking eerie. “I’m not actually giving you a choice. Forty eight hours.”

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Peter didn’t know how long he sat out there in the cold before the barn door shoved open again, but he didn’t bother looking up when hesitant steps crunched through the snow, or when his Alpha crouched down in front of him and reached for his hands.

“My mate.” Wade sounded like he’d been crying or maybe even screaming, his deep voice ragged on the edges, pitched low and hoarse. “Back inside before your cough comes back.”

Peter didn’t answer and Wade pressed at the Omega’s fingers, bringing them to his lips for a gentle kiss. “Come on, sweetheart. There’s no reason to sit out here. Let’s go inside and we can– we can–” the Alpha swallowed hard. “– we can talk about all this, okay?”

“Did you get the chores done?” the Omega asked and Wade frowned– “Uh no. No Pete, I didn’t get anything done. Couldn’t focus on nothin’ when Cable was–”

“Well it’s not fair to let the animals go hungry just cos we’re having a bad day.” Peter pulled his hands free from Wade’s grip and struggled to his feet, shoulders hunched and eyes exhausted, the emotional toll from the morning settling weighted on his soul. “Come on, I’ll help.”

“Omega, you shouldn’t be–” Wade started to protest, started to list all the reasons why his mate should definitely not be working too hard or even out in the weather for this long, started to say all the things he’d said a hundred times since Peter had gotten sick. But the sentiment fell flat once he could see the despair in his mate’s dark eyes and scent the sorrow in the dimming lavender.

And Wade didn’t know what to say to make anything better, he didn’t even know where to begin. There weren’t any words for the sort of grief clawing at his soul and there weren’t any words for
the awful resignation he could already feel from his mate.

No words, so the Alpha didn’t bother even trying. Instead he pulled Peter in close for a long hug, held the Omega tighter when Peter’s slim shoulders shook with sobs, rumbled and crooned and tried hard to keep his own sadness from leeching into his scent and making everything worse.

Wade contented himself with letting a few tears fall into Peter’s hair, and after the Omega had calmed down and whispered a halting, “I want to help with the animals today.” Wade only nodded and whispered back, “Yeah, baby boy. They’ll be real happy to see you.”

It didn’t seem right to go about their normal chores when the morning had been so devastating, but the mated pair went through the motions anyway. Stalls had to be mucked out and fresh hay laid for the horses, feed buckets emptied and refilled, the goat milked for what little bit she was still giving and eggs gathered from the remaining chickens. Wade patched a seam where a board had shifted in the last storm and was letting snow through, and Peter spent more time than usual grooming first Bea and then Arthur, whispering quiet things to the giant beasts and smiling when they nickered in reply and bumped at him with soft noses.

Inside in the cabin the Alpha stacked split logs and piled the kindling box high while Peter made the bed and sorted through the wardrobe. There was minimal laundry to do but the Omega did it anyway, heating up a small pot of water to put into the machine they’d bought in Haven and scrubbing at socks and underwear and a few shirts for good measure. Wade sanded at a rough spot on the kitchen table and Peter swapped out a cracked plate for one of the ones still wrapped in paper high on a shelf in the lean to. Wade spent way too much time cleaning out the bathtub and wiping it dry while Peter swept at the hearth and floor.

It was busy work– mostly pointless chores that weren’t even urgent on a normal day much less a day when they needed to simply sit and talk. They just needed to be distracted so neither would break down, they needed to be working so the inevitable countdown of forty eight hours didn’t drive them mad.

But it was a small cabin and a windy day, so eventually there wasn’t anything left to do inside besides cook a hot meal and sit down across the kitchen table to eat.

Or rather, sit down and look at the plates as the untouched food grew colder and colder and the silence stretched longer and longer and worse and worse.

And then finally–

“Where did you go?” the Omega spoke first, staring dully at his food. “Dunno how many times you’ve told me you never want to let me go, but then Cable shows up and you just walk away?”

“…M’sorry, Pete.” Wade said woodenly. “I– I’m sorry.”

“What the fuck was that?” Peter’s voice caught, breath hitching. “I expected you to rip him apart for even coming to our door but instead you walked out and left me there? He could have taken me the second you turned your back.”

The Alpha’s jaw worked as he ground his teeth together, cedar scent rippling furious for a split second. “Yeah. I wasn’t thinkin’ real clear right then.”

“But you weren’t surprised by what he said.” Peter picked up his cup and took a tiny sip of the moonshine, grimacing at the taste. “You weren’t surprised at all. What did he mean, Bruce warned you? Did you know my time here was so limited?”
“We both knew Cable would come back, Pete.” Wade rubbed at his eyes and finally ventured a glance at his mate. “We both knew that, from day one. We talked about it, remember? We knew this could happen.”

“Knowing Cable would come back eventually and knowing he’d show up and announce that I’m dying are two different things!” The Omega pointed out loudly. “Is that what Bruce warned you about? That once I got sick, I’d never get better? Is that why you’ve been so crazy about me not doing any work and staying inside?”

“Bruce told me you probably wouldn’t recover all the way.” The admission tasted like bile in Wade’s throat, burning and gagging and he emptied his own drink in an attempt to get rid of it. “And I didn’t want to listen to him but he’s— he’s right Pete. Bruce is right and Cable is—”

God, he wanted to vomit. “—Cable is right. You’re not getting better and I hate that, but we can’t fight it, you know? You gotta get better, that’s all there is to it.”

“So that’s why you left.” Peter stated. “You already knew why Cable would insist on taking me and you didn’t bother trying to stop it.”

“Didn’t bother trying to stop it, is that really what you think?” Wade finally just pushed his plate away and leaned back in the chair to cross massive arms over his chest. “Pete, I could’a torn his throat out just for daring to step foot in our home. But I didn’t cos saving you is more important. than whatever I want to do or whatever blood I want to spill.”

“Well, I wouldn’t mind watching you spill his blood.” the Omega looked away, folded his arms in a show just as stubborn as his mate’s display. “And I’m not leaving you. You’re my mate and I’m not going. I don’t care if I never get all the way better again, I’d rather be here like this than away from you at all. I’m not going.”

“It’s not about you never gettin’ better again, Pete.” Wade smothered a frustrated, heartbroken, growl when the Omega only scoffed. “It’s about me losing you. I dunno know when it’s gonna happen or how it’s gonna happen, but it’s just about a guarantee and I can’t handle that. I can’t.”

“I’m not leaving you.” Peter insisted again. “We’re mates, Wade. And you— you heal from everything. What if because of our mate bond some of that transferred to me and I’ll be fine? What if Cable is wrong and nothing bad is going to happen?”

“I wish I was selfish enough to take that chance.” the Alpha said softly, quietly, like the words weren’t tearing him apart inside. “And maybe a few months ago I would’a been. When you were healthy and laughing every day and givin’ me a run for my money with everything we got up to, yeah maybe I would’a been selfish enough to try and test that theory. But you’re not healthy any more Pete. And you’re too thin and your scent is—”

Wade shook his head and tried to keep his voice from breaking. “I’m losing you, Pete. Don’t know how much longer we have even if Cable hadn’t come back, but now that he’s here and givin’ us a way to save you, we gotta take it.”

“No we don’t.” Peter wound their fingers together and held on tight. “We don’t have to take it. I’ll be the selfish one and stay so you don’t have to make the decision.”

“No, Pete.” Wade said grimly. “No. That’s not an option.”

“…n—no?” the blood drained from the Omega’s face, leaving him too pale, eyes wide and scared. “What do you mean, no? You— you won’t let me stay even though I want to? Even though I need
to? You’re my *mate*, how can you want me to go?"

“I *want* you to be alright, sweetheart.” the Alpha’s eyes deepened to a shade of devastating red, licorice scent breaking jagged with pain. “I want you to be okay. And you won’t be okay if you stay with me.”

“But I don’t want to be okay without you.” A tear slid down Peter’s cheek and fell to the table. “I don’t care that I’m sick, Alpha. I don’t care if I never get any healthier than this right here. I never thought I’d find a mate and then I found you and now I’d rather stay here sick than be walking around somewhere without you.”

“Omega.”

“Just talk to me!” Hysteria now, building *acrid* beneath honeysuckle. “Just talk to me. All you’ve done is say I should go but I really really want to hear you ask me to stay! Even if I can’t stay, even if Cable comes back and snatches me away please ask me to stay. Tell me you want me to stay.”

“Pete, staying means that you’ll get worse and I’m not gonna say that.”

“I don’t care!” the Omega shoved back from the table and scrambled to his feet. “I don’t care! You’ve obviously gone and made your peace about letting Cable take me but I haven’t heard you say *once* that you want me to stay! Tell me not to go! Just say it!”

“Honey, I’m not gonna say anything that means you won’t get better.”

“*Alpha!*” Peter was shouting now, *begging*, tears streaming down his face. “Tell me not to go! Say it! Say you want me to stay! Tell me you love me and that you don’t want me to go, cos you haven’t said that yet and I need to hear it, please please please–”

“YOU WILL NOT STAY HERE AND MAKE ME BURY YOU!” Wade jumped to his feet and *roared*, and Peter screamed in fright, jerking away and cowering beneath the fury.

“You will not stay here and make me bury you.” the Alpha repeated, each syllable like *thunder* in the still cabin. “Because *that’s* what you’re asking, Pete. You are begging me to tell you to stay, you are asking me to agree to bury you and I won’t do it. I *won’t* do it.”

The Omega put both hands over his mouth and whimpered and Wade drew in a shaky breath. “You are my *mate*, Pete. My Omega. And I would never do anything to hurt you, not ever. I can’t. If that means I let Cable take you away so I know you’re walking around somewhere healthy and whole and beautiful, then that’s what I’m gonna do.”

“You’re telling me to ask you to stay, but you’re really asking me to bury you.” The rage washed out of the Alpha and left him limp, haggard. “You’re asking me to sit at your side as you waste away, you’re asking me to dig a hole and build a cross and put flowers on your grave every few days. You’re asking me to sleep in our bed alone, asking me to come home to an empty cabin, asking me to keep living every single day for another hundred years knowing I probably could’a saved you but I didn’t.”

“W-Wade–”

“I wish I could say losing you would kill me.” Wade spread his hands helplessly, voice ringing in defeat. “But it won’t. It *won’t*. Cos losin’ Vanessa didn’t kill me, even though I tried real fuckin’ hard to follow her into the ground. Losin’ you won’t kill me, so I’ll just be here by myself wishin’ it *had*. Don’t do that to me. Please don’t do that to me.”
“I’m sorry.” Peter wrapped his arms around his midsection, bent double so he could breathe through the sobs. “My Alpha, I’m sorry. M’sorry, so sorry, I just don’t want to leave you, I don’t want to leave you—”

“I knew when I found you we’d have to say goodbye.” the Alpha whispered. “But I don’t regret a single minute. And it’s just a few years you know, just a few years separating us and that’s not much at all. I can stay here knowin’ you’re alright out there. I can do that. But I can’t– I can’t ask you to stay, Pete. Don’t make me ask you to stay.”

He reached for his mate pleadingly, forced Peter’s arms apart and hauled the Omega in over his heart. “You’re mine,” he growled, and Peter only cried harder. “You’re mine and I’m yours, Omega. Nothin’s ever gonna change that. Not Cable, not time, not distance, not anything. You’re mine.”

“I’m yours.” Peter clutched at his Alpha tight, burrowed in close until he could feel Wade’s heart beating against his own. “T’m– I’m yours. Always.”

“Let me take you to bed.” Wade ran rough fingers through Peter’s hair, down the Omega’s back to grasp at his hips. “Let me take you to bed and we can forget about all this for the night okay? We can talk some more in the morning but right now I really need to hold you, really need to–”

“Are you gonna eat the goat?” Peter tried for a smile, tried to tease through his tears, tried for anything that would ease the pain his mate’s scent. “Cable says we got forty eight hours, are you gonna eat the goat?”

“Literally the second you’re gone.” Wade swore, and Peter’s laugh turned into a sob half way through. “Come on to bed with me, huh? Please?”

“Bed sounds like a really good idea.” Peter looped his arms around Wade’s neck and held on when the Alpha swooped him up into his arms. “Wanna be stuck on you until the sun rises, okay? All night long.”

“Til the sun rises.” Wade dug the points of his fangs into Peter’s throat and the Omega went immediately, beautifully pliant against him. “I love you, Pete.”

“I love you too, Alpha my Alpha.”

…please please please don’t make me go.

…please please please ask me to stay.
The entire cabin smelled sugary sweet by the time the sun went down, like over ripe fruit cooked too long into jam and when Peter peeked curiously into the pan his Alpha was stirring, he was greeted by mushy fruity contents that looked _skeptical_ at best.

“I’m not eating that.” he decided. “I thought you were making dinner not–” he poked at the mess with a spoon. “–not gross, hot jello.”

“Dunno what jello is, sweetheart.” Wade’s laugh sounded forced but at least the Alpha didn’t scent like _misery_ anymore. “But this isn’t to eat. Gonna cook down this fruit and mix it with the moonshine so you don’t choke every time you take a sip. Sugar cuts the bitterness, fruit cuts the aftertaste. Perfect for a delicate little Omega like you to drink lots of.”

“*Lots* of, huh?” Peter scrunched his nose and pressed a little closer. “Alpha my Alpha, if I didn’t know better I’d think you were trying to get me drunk. What exactly are your intentions with me this evening?”

“Tryna get you absolutely sloshed, baby boy.” Wade hooked an arm around Peter’s waist and bent down to give him a kiss. “*That’s* my intentions. Want you good and giggly and drunk so all we do is laugh all night long.”

“I feel like after too much moonshine I won’t be so much *giggly* as I will be comatose.” the Omega pointed out, bumping their shoulders together affectionately. “But if you’re alright with an unconscious mate, then bring it on.”

“Alright, maybe we give you half servings of moonshine.” Wade poured a tiny tiny amount of alcohol into Peter’s cup. “How’s that?”

“I’m an Omega, not a *mouse*.”

“Well then quit bitchin’ and drink like a real man!” Wade huffed. “I know you like to swallow so–”

“WADE!” The Alpha received a sharp elbow to the side for his sass, and Peter’s cheeks flushed scarlet when his obnoxious mate only leered at him. “Oh my god. Never mind, I’m going to bed.”

“Nope.” Wade’s fingers gripped reflexively at Peter’s side when the Omega made to move away, and when Peter faux struggled a little, the Alpha’s fangs made an appearance as he wet his lips. “M’having a hard time letting you be away from me right now, Pete. I know we said we’d talk tomorrow but you gotta stay close to me okay?”

“Wade.”
“Right *here*, Omega.”

“I *am* right here.” Peter pushed his mate away from the stove until there was room to stand on his toes and cover Wade’s mouth in a long kiss. He licked over the dangerous fangs and nibbled at his Alpha’s lips and purred just as sweetly as he could until Wade finally shuddered and kissed him back.

“I’m right here.” he whispered again when the Alpha held him tight enough to hurt, when an anxious rumble shook against Peter’s chest as Wade struggled to keep himself under control.

“My mate, I’m right here.” Peter flattened his palm to Wade’s heart and pressed hard. “Right here, my love. Can’t you feel me?”

…for the first time ever, Wade didn’t answer and the Omega had to close his eyes and swallow back a scream because everything was so unfair right now.

“Can–can you feel me?” he asked again, a lump in his throat making it almost impossible to speak, a throbbing behind his temples as his entire being wavered on breaking down. “Alpha?”

“I should pull some-- some food for dinner.” the Alpha pushed their foreheads together and held onto Peter’s hand. “You need to eat, keep your strength up–”

“Alpha.”

“–we’ll get drunk together.” Wade shook his head when Peter tried to interrupt. “We’ll start drinking and then I’ll feed you and then I’m gonna get you all hazed out and floatin’ for me and that’s– that’s just what we’ll do, yeah? It’ll be fun. We can celebrate being bonded and that sorta thing. That’s what we’ll do and then in the morning we can--”

“Okay.” *Fuck* Peter needed to scream, but he settled for cutting in before his mate talked about the morning, before his Alpha talked about saying goodbye.”Okay, that’s what we’ll do. It'll be fun.”

“Right.” the Alpha’s throat jerked as he swallowed. “Fun.”

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As it turned out, being drunk together *was* fun.

The moonshine was sweet and a little bitter and went down Peter’s throat shot after shot like water until the Omega was lush and laughing and tripping over his feet, knocking into his Alpha and bouncing off Wade’s solid frame as they tried to make something resembling food from the mess on the stove.

Wade held his liquor better than his tiny mate, but once the bottle of moonshine lay tipped on it’s side and empty he was every bit as stumbly as Peter was, laughing over nothing at all, teasing and growling and doing whatever it took to keep his Omega smiling.

Dinner was an absolute failure, the bread toasted burnt and the meat pink enough that Peter bellowed, “MOOOO!” when he stabbed it with a fork. Rice was passably edible but still uncomfortably crunchy so after a few cursory bites Wade abandoned his plate in favor of dragging the Omega over the table and into his arms, sinking his teeth into Peter’s *throat* instead.

“Oh oh oh oh–!” Peter tossed his head back and cried out, tipsy laughter turning to dizzying *want* in a too quick half second. “My Alpha, *yes*.”
Wade growled in satisfaction when blood spilled bright onto his tongue and Peter rolled his hips down onto his Alpha’s lap, moaning out loud when Wade lifted up against him in return. “My Alpha, yes.”

“Mine.” The moment shifted again and now the Alpha sounded half gone towards feral as he tumbled Peter down onto the bear skin rug and shoved his mate’s knees apart. “Omega. My mate, mine.”

“Always.” Peter arched his back and splayed his legs wantonly, bared his neck and racked his nails along Wade’s side until the Alpha surged forward to kiss him. “Yours. My Alpha. My love.”

“C’mere.” Liquor drunk and far too desperate for skin, Wade forgot to check his strength and just ripped at Peter’s sleep pants, splitting the worn fabric right at the seams and yanking it apart, tossing the pieces over his shoulder and fully ready to bury his face between his mate’s thighs—

“Alpha my Alpha.” Peter was giggling, biting at his lip teasingly while his eyes flashed entirely wicked. “See something that makes you speechless? Never thought I’d see the day.”

Urgency banked in view of– of this, Wade’s jaw dropped open, then all but dislocated when his innocent little mate ran provocative fingers down his stomach and past the cut of his hip to just barely dip along the band of sheer lace shorties.

“Um–” the Alpha couldn’t have formed real words if his life depended on it, and Peter’s excited, satisfied little laugh made it all worth it. “How– what–?”

“It was Mr. Lee.” The Omega stretched his arms up above his head just so he could watch his mate’s eyes burn dark red, played at nonchalant even though his core clenched hot in anticipation. “He suggested something lacy to keep my Alpha’s attention on my um–my gams? Which I think means legs? But I bought them and then was—”

Predictably, adorably, Peter flushed pink. “–I was too shy to wear them, so I hid them and waited for a good moment.”

“This is a good moment?” the Alpha was suddenly parched, burning up like he might actually combust as he traced the length of his mate through the satiny fabric, rubbed his thumb through a damp spot staining the lace darker. “You aren’t um– aren’t shy any more, my mate?”

“Still shy.” Peter leaned up and pressed a kiss to his mate’s mouth, sighing when Wade immediately turned the kiss messy and sharp. “But I– I might be too drunk to care.”

“Good.” Wade growled and the Omega giggled into it. “My plan is working perfectly.”

Peter’s giggles turned into a shriek of laughter and then lowered to a purr of contentment when the Alpha rolled them abruptly and he was suddenly on top, knees spread wide on either side of Wade’s waist and body on full display in the firelight. The moonshine had left Peter nearly liquid, loose limbed and effortless, too excited to be shy and too happy to tolerate any thoughts of Cable or morning or goodbye.

Wade was staring up at him with bright red eyes, heavy scent packed with desire and longing and love and Peter could have been drunk on just that, tipsy just because of how his mate wanted him. It was intoxicating and it was powerful and the Omega’s head was swimming as they shared kiss after kiss, as clothes were torn off and shoved away, when he could bite at his mate’s neck and trail lips and teeth and tongue down Wade’s stomach until his Alpha was bucking up beneath him and leaving urgent bruises at his waist.
“Right here baby boy, right here.” It was so easy for Wade to get at the intricate lace and tear, soaking his fingers in heady Omega slick and opening up his mate just long enough to have Peter swearing and panting for him and rubbing warm and wet over his cock.

“Want you just like this, yeah? Wanna watch you, c’mere.” The way Peter gasped and whined and whimpered as he stretched around Wade was almost obscene, red lips falling open and eyes dilating to nearly black as the Alpha filled him almost too full. The moment their hips met Peter fell forward into a loud, desperate kiss, already rocking back against the beginnings of Wade’s knot and not bothering to hide his noise against his mate’s lips.

“Fuck, you’re gorgeous, Omega.” Tonight wasn’t a night to be quiet or timid, and Peter was neither of those things as he moved on top of his Alpha. Wade would never have enough of watching his Omega need him, would never have enough of Peter tossing his head back and leaving red lines down Wade’s abdomen when they rolled together just right. The Omega’s slick tasted sweet, the sweat at the crease of his hips salty and Wade came back for more and more every single time, thrusting into every downward slide of his mate and dragging his fingers through the wet to shove them into his mouth.

“Alpha, Alpha, Alpha I need– I need–” Wade would have been content to simply watch all night long while his mate took and took and took from him, he would have died a happy Alpha if he could kiss the moans from Peter’s tongue and taste honey and blood at his Omega’s throat until dawn turned the sky outside golden.

But more beautiful than a golden dawn was the way Peter’s dark eyes swirled molten when he shattered apart above his Alpha, the way they lit brilliant and heavenly as the Omega ground back onto Wade’s knot, as he ruined the lacy shorts when his cock throbbed and pulsed and spilled white onto the delicate fabric.

“Peter.” The Omega’s eyes were still flickering gold when Wade turned them back over and shoved himself deeper, and Peter wailed when his body stretched further, tore at the rug beneath them and stammered, “I’ll– I’ll never be f-full enough of you, my mate.”

It hurt like hell when Peter jolted up to stab his teeth into Wade’s bonding spot, but the pain lost itself in soul deep pleasure when their bond resparked brilliant and consuming and sent the Omega spiraling all over again. Wade didn’t bother waiting, didn’t bother holding back after that, losing himself heart and soul and eternity inside his mate as Peter clung tight and whispered, “Mine mine mine, Alpha you are mine.” into his ear.

Peter was giggling again when they finally made it back to centered, exhausted and loopy and unable to keep his smile tempered or blissful laughter under control as he hooked both legs at Wade’s waist and tried to get his Alpha even closer.

“Baby boy.” Wade rumbled and Peter nipped playfully at him, an adoring, “I love you.” falling from the Omega’s lips before he went lax and nearly boneless into the rug. “Alpha my Alpha, you are perfect. Perfect, I love you so much.”

Peter could have been flying for all his feet were on the ground, the edges of his vision blurry and heart pounding so loud he thought it could leap from his chest. Everything was slow and picture perfect, his body tuned to each breath from his Alpha, his mind settled and thoughts stilled and suddenly grief seemed like a far off place, a word he didn’t know, a feeling he could never have.

**Right here in this moment, grief wasn’t possible.**

“I love you.” he slurred again and this time Wade kissed him soft and sweet and tender, cupping
Peter’s jaw and brushing loving fingers over his cheeks. “My Alpha. I’m yours. I’m yours and you’re mine.”

“You’re mine.” Wade notched his nose at Peter’s bonding spot and breathed in deep of sweetest honeysuckle and drugging lavender, the low scent of cedar and darker licorice that marked the Omega as mated. “You’re mine.”

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Peter fell asleep there in front of the fire and Wade left his side only long enough to grab a few blankets, then to tug the thoroughly sodden shorts down his mate’s legs and give the Omega a cursory wipe down.

Then he lay right back down on the floor and coaxed his mate up and onto his waist, arranging the long limbs so Peter was straddling his legs and tucked in over his heart, the pert nose set at his throat where their scents mingled gorgeous.

“I love you, Pete.” he whispered and the Omega purred happily before dropping off completely, leaving the Alpha to lie awake as the hours ticked by and the stars rose and fell outside the windows.

Morning came and Wade’s eyes were still open, his hands still drawing soothing circles and idle designs on Peter’s back, his lips moving silently as he counted Peter’s heart beats and mouthed nonsensical sweet things into the Omega’s hair.

Peter stirred only a little, legs tightening around Wade’s frame and mouth dotting tiny kisses over his Alpha’s pulse, but he didn’t say anything so neither did Wade. The morning seemed sacred and slow and words felt like they would ruin it, so neither Alpha nor Omega spoke for a long time as the world woke up around them.

“One hundred and four days.” Wade broke the silence only when he felt the first uptick of anxiety and awareness in Peter’s sleepy scent. “That’s how long you’ve been mine, baby boy. One hundred and four days.”

“Seems like forever.” Last night grief hadn’t seemed possible but this morning it tasted burnt on the back of Peter’s tongue and he swallowed painfully around it. “But it’s not long enough yet, either.

“Yeah.” Wade watched as his mate sat up and stretched, early morning sun glinting off too prominent ribs and too pale skin. “Yeah, it’s not long enough at all, is it?”

“Not even close.” Peter clicked his tongue and trilled comfortingly when the Alpha’s scent wavered with distress. “But I’m still here now, my mate. Please don’t be sad, we can do that later, right? We can be sad later, not right now.”

Wade tried for a smile and sat up as well, the motion making his Omega gasp in delight when their bodies rubbed together again. “I got you something, sweetheart.”

“Presents!” Peter looked exhausted, emotionally and physically worn out from the previous day, but his eyes brightened in excitement anyway. “I love presents! Is it more soap? Another notebook? Are you going to fill up the bath for me later so we can bathe together cos that would be—”

His pretty mouth fell open in surprise when Wade plucked a small bundle off the nearby chair and pushed aside the soft leather to reveal a ring.
“M-my mate?” Peter’s fingers were trembling as he took the beautiful piece. “When did you make this?”

“Ages ago.” Wade smiled a little when the ring slid onto the Omega’s fourth finger perfectly. “Probably about the time you hid those little lace shorts and decided to wait to show me.”

“Why?”

“Cos I was shy about it?” he offered and Peter gave him a doubtful glance. “What, I can be shy!”

“There’s not a shy bone in your body.” the Omega scoffed, then wriggled pointedly on Wade’s lap and finished, “Especially not that particular bone.”

“Later we should talk about how thrilled I am you’ve started talking like me.” Wade decided, but then sobered up to explain, “You told me once that sometimes people don’t even bond in your time line, right?”

Peter nodded slowly, and the Alpha thumbed over the bruised bites at his mate’s neck. “You said they just get married and wear rings cos bonding isn’t necessary and I don’t really understand that. I can’t imagine not wanting and— and needing to bond with you, my mate. But I made you a ring anyway so we’re bonded this way and in a way that fits into your world.”

Tears, spilling down Peter’s cheeks and Wade wiped them away gently. “This way even if your mark never turns silver, you and me and the entire world will know you’re mine, alright Pete? Silver mark or not, a hundred something years or not. You are mine.”

“Infinity.” The Omega took the ring back off and traced the tiny symbol inside. “Yours. Forever.”

“Forever.”

“My Alpha.” Peter’s face crumpled and the Alpha caught him up close in a fierce hug. “I don’t want to leave you.”

“I know, baby.” Wade didn’t let himself cry, wouldn’t let himself break down right now when his mate was falling to pieces. Instead he just smoothed Peter’s hair back and rumbled into the Omega’s ear and murmured quiet comfort over the sound of Peter’s sobs. “Oh baby, I know. It’s okay, we’re gonna be okay. You’re mine, mine, and I’m yours. Infinity, sweetheart. Forever. Time ain’t got nothin’ on us, I swear it. I swear it.”

He kept it up until Peter went limp in his arms again, the unexpected bout of tears sapping what little energy the Omega had woken up with, and Peter couldn’t offer more than a whimpered protest when Wade eased them apart and wrapped him up in a heavy blanket to carry him towards the bed.

“I’ve gotta go feed the animals.” Wade nuzzled at his mate’s cheek and left a tiny kiss at the corner of Peter’s mouth. “I’ll be right back alright? Just a few minutes and I’ll be back to hold you.”

“Hurry.” Peter turned into the pillows and clutched tight at the blanket that smelled so much like them. “I need you close, my mate. I don’t want to be away from you.”

“I’m right here, sweetheart.” The Alpha tapped at the ring. “Right here. Always. Don’t forget.”

“Never forget you.” Peter was slipping towards sleep again and it was heartbreaking how much less the Omega had left anymore. “Love you.”
“I love you too.”

Wade lingered just a moment longer making sure his mate was tucked in and safe, then hurried into his clothes and out the door, breaking into a run on the way to the barn so he could rush through the morning chores and be back at his Omega’s side.

And the very second the barn doors closed and Wade called to the horses—

—Cable appeared from the shadows in the forest.

It took nothing more than a flex of his power to bar the barn doors from the outside, effectively trapping the Alpha inside with no way to get out until after the mutant had finished what he came to do.

The cabin door swung open with no resistance at all, and Peter was so close to asleep that Cable was at his side and silencing a panicked scream against his palm before the Omega even fully understood what was happening.

“I’m sorry for this.” Cable muttered, cocking his head as he heard the first shout of rage from behind the barn doors. The Alpha would have caught his scent immediately and was no doubt tearing the barn apart with his bare hands right this second, they had no time to waste.

“I’m sorry for this.” he said again as Peter scrabbled fruitlessly at his metal hand, eyes wide and terrified and legs kicking out in a futile attempt to push him away. “And I know I promised you more time, but you and I both know you weren’t going to leave and honestly, I don’t know if your Alpha is strong enough to let you go. This is for the best, Omega. I promise.”

“He’s my mate!” Peter jerked his head away and screamed for Wade, “Wade! My Alpha! Please—!!”

“I’m sorry, son.” Cable wrapped the blanket tighter to cover the Omega’s nakedness then swung Peter up into his arms. “But you’ll thank me later.”

A quick check at the time—*one hundred four days, eight hours, fifty seven minutes and thirty six seconds*—and Cable activated his device, shielded the Omega from the worst of the light with his body, and with a rush of hot air they were gone.

The hold on the barn gave way the second Cable disappeared and Wade broke through with a ground shaking roar. Bloody cuts on his hands and arms healed in the few seconds it took the Alpha to bolt across the clearing, the cabin door broke from its hinges as he barreled through but he was already too late.

The bed was empty, the floor scorched where Cable had stood, the air choked with the scent of burnt honeysuckle and withering lavender.

“No.” Wade fell to his knees beside the bed, tore his fingers bloody against the scorch marks. “No no no no—!!”

…The forest itself went still and quiet as Wade howled his heartbreak to the empty sky, birds huddling in the branches and animals hiding away in their dens as the Alpha raged and wailed for his lost mate to a universe that didn’t care at all.

And somewhere in the in-between, racing through time lines and across universes until he made it back to the one where the Omega belonged, Cable hung his head and muttered one last, useless apology.
“I’m sorry.”

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{{Chapter Notes: the ‘eight hours, fifty seven minutes and thirty six seconds’ is the combined run time of The Amazing Spider-man 1 & 2, and Deadpool 1 & 2, if anyone cares where I got those numbers from!}}
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Peter arrives back in his own timeline and Jean Grey makes an appearance.

Please heed posted TW within the chapter as the doctors/May discuss what they think happened to Peter and how to help him heal. We know that nothing bad happened to Peter, but they don’t, so there is discussion of a few TW worthy issues, I’ll mark with in the fic as needed.

Also hey, I’ve been in love with Jean Grey since the first XMen (2000) so you’ll have to excuse my blatant Thirsting via the Omega nurses

Present Day

Fourteen days, eight hours, fifty seven minutes, thirty seven seconds after Peter accidentally activated Cable’s time travel device and disappeared into the past, the Omega reappeared in the emergency room of Haven Mercy Hospital wrapped in nothing but a blanket, a ring on his finger and a note with his name and contact information for one May Parker folded into his hand.

No one knew how he arrived or where he’d had come from, but one look at the bruises marring the Omegas hips and thighs, at the ravaged bite marks on his neck, at the way his ribs sat too visible beneath his skin and the nurses screamed for doctors, for a bed, for a room and for the police.

A week later, May Parker had answered no less than a thousand questions from a handful of different police officers and detectives, had told them over and over with tears in her eyes and panic wrecking her scent that no, she didn’t know where her nephew had gone for a few weeks, no, she didn’t know why he’d been bruised and hurt, no, she didn’t have any reason to think someone would have hurt him.

After the questions came the assumptions, and May had to sit and wonder if Peter had been kidnapped and hurt, if some Alpha out there was stalking around trying to find him, if her baby was still in danger even though she was sitting right there.

After the questions and assumptions came the doctors, one right behind another with their white coats and clipboards, trailing in and out of the room taking notes and running tests and glancing at and then purposefully away from May as if somehow any of this could possibly her fault.

Peter might not be her child, but he was her child all the same and after a week of non stop questions, assumptions that got worse every day and doctors that couldn’t seem to muster up the energy to even pretend they cared, the Alpha female was ready to take a swing at the next person that was even remotely obnoxious.

“He woke up last night?” Today was yet another new doctor, someone May had never seen or talked to and someone who didn’t seem to care one whit about the boy lying unconscious in the white sheets. He didn’t look up from the chart long enough to greet May or offer her a conciliatory smile, and she had to work hard not to snarl over the doctor’s apathetic tone and bored expression.
“Yes.” May grit her teeth and tried for some semblance of politeness. “Yes, right around midnight. But we had to–”

“–sedate him.” the doctor interrupted. “Yes, I can see that here on his charts. The Omega woke up hysterical?”

“His name is Peter.” the Alpha’s eyes blipped red in annoyance. “And yes. Peter woke up screaming and trying to hit someone or maybe to hit something. He was calling out for an Alpha, begging someone to stop and said that it–”

May swallowed back the threat of tears. “–he said that it hurt. That it burned and that it hurt. The nurses gave him a sedative, but I don’t even know if Peter was actually awake at all. I think it might have been a nightmare.”

“Mm-hmm.” the Beta put the chart down and moved up the bed to check on Peter’s bruises, flicking the blankets aside and opening the hospital gown to peer at the Omegas waist and hips. “Has the hospital psychiatrist been by to speak with you yet?”

“No, no psychiatrist has been by to– don’t do that!” May said sharply, and the doctor only raised his eyebrows in question. “Don’t just poke and prod at my nephew! He’s not a piece of meat, he’s a person! And Peter is an Omega! You shouldn’t be touching him without permission at all, much less grabbing at him like that!

“I’m hardly grabbing at him Mrs. Parker.” A bland smile and barely leashed irritation. “I’m a doctor and a professional and it’s my job to check a patients bruises. To be quite honest with you, I don’t need your permission to inspect the Omega, and since it’s real difficult to ask permission from unconscious bodies, I’m going to assume he’ll want me doing this, and just move on alright?”

The sixth floor of Haven Mercy was usually quiet, little to no activity from mostly unconscious or still heavily sedated patients, and only a few visitors at a time. Most days, there wasn’t anything going on at all so the nurses did their paperwork in between rounds and chat quietly to a background of bland easy-listening music.

This morning, the normally peaceful floor was wrecked with the sound of an Alpha’s roar and startled curses from the Beta doctor as he tripped over his own feet bolting away from the room and towards the elevator.

“Doctor Asswipe strikes again.” One of the nurses muttered, and her coworker muffled a laugh. “Dunno what the hospital was thinking assigning him to Mrs. Parker’s case. The guy makes me want to get feral, can you imagine what he does to a stressed out Alpha?”

“I think it’s good for him to be scared every once in a while.” The other Omega decided. “Doctors think they can be terrible just because they have a little bit of training, it’s not the worst thing for them to be forcefully reminded that they actually work for the patients and not the other way around.”

“I’m sure May Parker feels the same way.” the first one stood to her feet and trilled comfortingly at the female Alpha currently barreling her way towards the nurses station. “Mrs. Parker. Don’t take it too personally, hm? That particular doctor has the bedside manner of a jackass and the looks to go along with it. I’ll be sure to register a complaint and have him removed from your nephew’s rotation.”

May Parker wasn’t as old fashioned as some of the older Alphas that clung to outdated notions
about Omegas being inferior or overly delicate, but she still made an effort to temper her tone and blink the red from her eyes so she wouldn’t frighten the nurses. “I would appreciate that, thank you.”

“Oh anything specific, ma’am?”

“He uh–” May breathed out a laugh and it wasn’t a good one at all. “He said something about touching unconscious Omegas and just assuming they wanted it, and I’m sure I’m overreacting but I was pretty close to breaking his neck anyway. After everything they’ve told me about how Peter was hurt, the thought of someone putting their hands on my baby when he can’t even protest…”

She shook her head and tried for calm again. “Before I scared the crap out of him, he mentioned something about a psychiatrist? Is there one scheduled to speak with us today?”

“Yes ma’am.” the nurse said promptly. “Should be here any minute now and I’ll send them right in.”

“Thank you.” May turned on her heel and strode away, and once the door had shut behind her, one of the Omega’s whispered, “Everyone knows that poor kid went through something horrible. What the hell was the doctor thinking, saying something like that.”

“I’m sure he wasn’t thinking.” The other nurse was already documenting the complaint. “But that’s a shitty thing to say about anyone, much less an Omega we’re pretty sure has been–”

“Don’t even say it.” the Omega interrupted. “We won’t know anything for sure until Mr. Parker wakes up, and we shouldn’t say that sort of thing out loud anyway. That child needs positive thoughts and healing prayer, not speculation over what he went through and why he wakes up screaming in the middle of the night.”

“Yeah.” the complaint went into a file along with a few others from May about the quality of care her nephew was or wasn’t receiving. “You’re absolutely right about– oh hello Doctor Grey!”

The Omega nurse stopped mid motion and handed the file to the psychiatrist instead, smiling up at the lady Alpha. “How are you today?”

>{{JEAN GREY/PHOENIX}}

“Talking people through tragedies may be one of my greatest strengths, but it’s also my least favorite part of this job, so it seems rude to say I’m doing well, doesn’t it?” Jean answered mildly. “How are you today, loves?”

“Oh I’m–” predictably, the Omega blushed and even though the other nurse elbowed her teasingly, neither one managed to do anything other than smile at the intimidating woman for a moment.

Doctor Jean Grey was astonishingly smart and intensely beautiful, all iron clad will and steel determination and even today with her long hair pinned back and green eyes tempered to look kindly at the nurses, she still seemed… fierce.

She was an unstoppable force when it came to fighting for the rights of her patients, an immovable object when she decided something was wrong and the staff at Haven Mercy were never sure if they loved the unorthodox doctor, or if they jumped to do her bidding because the Alpha was so intense.

Either way- when Jean Grey spoke, even the other Alphas hurried to listen, and when she chose to smile and flirt a little there wasn’t an Omega in existence who didn’t want to be the sole recipient
of that soul searching gaze.

“Ah, another complaint about Haven’s worst doctor.” Jean tapped at the most recent page in Peter’s file, licked at the points where her fangs used to be and pursed her lips. “Should I dump him in the river for you, darlings? Save us all the Human Resources complaints and the board members doing absolutely nothing when the women complain he’s damn near assaulting us with every breath he takes?”

“Our lips would be sealed, Dr. Grey.” one Omega answered immediately, and the other one stammered, “What–whatever you’d like, Doctor.”

Fully aware of her affect on the Omegas, Jean sent them both a wink. “I’d bring you along as accomplices, but I don’t think my mate would approve of me bringing home such beautiful Omegas. Let me do the killing, loves.”

Modern Omegas would never admit to being turned on at the thought of Alphas being vicious and bloody and fanged, but that core deep knowing was there all the same and Jean hid a smile into the folder when one of the nurses squeaked in alarm.

“We um–” the other tried for a semblance of professionalism while her coworker just gave right up and sat down to fan herself. “We’re surprised to see you on call today Dr. Grey. Aren’t you supposed to be on vacation?”

“Yes, and Scott wasn’t happy about me leaving him there on the beach.” the Alpha marked a few things in Peter’s file. “But an old friend called in a favor so I packed up and came home. Wish he would have given me a few more details about Mr. Parker, but I suppose I’ll work with what I have. If I send prescriptions from the room, you’ll get them started right away for me?”

“Yes ma’am, Dr. Grey.”

“Of course, Dr. Grey.”

Jean turned on her heel and strode away towards Peter’s room, and one Omega sighed, “Do you ever feel like she’s reading your mind?”

“All the time.” the other nurse confirmed. “Makes me want to think dirty things just to see if I could get her to blush.”

“She doesn’t blush.” the first one countered. “Nothing affects her. One time I heard her go toe to toe with the Director because he changed her schedule around with no notice and I swear her eyes went yellow and then black.”

“Black?!”

“Yeah, which begs the question, what sort of person can call in a favor and make Dr. Grey cut her vacation short?”

“Someone scarier than her?” her co worker suggested, and after a few seconds of staring at each other, the two Omegas collapsed into laughter.

As if there was anyone out there scarier than Jean Grey.

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“Good morning Mrs. Parker, I am Doctor Jean Grey.” The Alpha paused at the door to Peter’s
room and waited for May to stand and motion her in. “I am a fully licensed physician as well as a currently practicing psychiatrist and I also hold a doctorate in psychology. I don’t work here in Haven Mercy full time but frequent the campus often to treat my own clients, and the staff knows me well. If you need further credentials I am happy to provide them but for now, why don’t we sit and talk for a while?”

“I suppose that would be alright.” Even after days of little sleep and hours upon hours of worried vigil, May’s eyes were sharp as they tracked over Jean’s clothing, lingering at the buttons of her suit jacket, then dropping to the toes of her overly expensive shoes. “Tell me though, why does my unconscious nephew need a psychiatrist, a psychologist and another doctor?”

“A valid question.” Jean’s smile was tight and a little forced as she mentally cursed the cranky Alpha who had set her onto the Parker’s trail. She had been on vacation, damn it. “As a psychiatrist and physician I can prescribe medications to help keep yourself and your nephew as mentally and physically balanced as possible during this ordeal, and as a psychologist I am ready and willing to offer therapy as you come to terms with all the possible outcomes of the situation. I specialize in these…delicate cases, so you can be confident working with me.”

“Myself and my nephew.” May straightened in her chair and cocked a knowing eyebrow at the other Alpha. “So you aren’t here just for Peter, you’re here to prescribe medication in case I can’t handle whatever has happened. Is this because of how I yelled at that other doctor?”

“I am here because we cannot help the people we love until we ourselves are stable.” Jean countered smoothly. “You cannot save others if you are drowning. And as far as the other doctor is concerned, if you’d like I’ll call him back to the room and we can yell at him together.”

Her smile was sharp and bordering on wicked, and May finally smiled a little in return, shoulders relaxing a touch when she realized the doctor was there with only good intentions.

“You said you specialize in these cases?” she prompted. “You’ve helped others through this sort of trauma?”

“I’ve never worked on a situation like this specifically.” Jean clarified carefully, “But I work every day assisting adolescents and young adults as they transition through life changing events. I am the resident doctor at a private school in Westchester if you’d like to call my employer Charles and ask about me.”

“No.” May waved away the offer and slumped back a little, pulling her sweater tight around her body and folding her arms. “You can be sure I’ll research you after you leave but for now if you can help…” she waved her hand again. “Please.”

{{TW: Because Omegas are the ‘female’ gender, the doctors are approaching Peter’s case/condition like IRL would approach a woman who disappeared without a trace for weeks at a time and reappeared with specific bruising/trauma to her body. We know Peter wasn’t assaulted in any way, but the doctors do not so this part talks about healing from a s*xual assault in an ABOverse specific way. Nothing explicit, but it deserves a warning anyway}}

Jean gave another one of those tight smiles and sat down across from May with pen and paper at the ready. “Now then, Mrs. Parker. I want you to know I’m going to suggest some terrible things in the next few minutes I’ll be making assumptions as to Peter’s mental and emotional trauma based on the physical findings in his chart and it won’t be easy.”

“Nothing about this is easy.” May muttered. “But you won’t be able to tell me anything I haven’t already thought about. I’ve been sitting here for a week with all the worst case scenarios tumbling
around in my head, and all of them seem perfectly, terribly plausible.”

“Mm.” Jean clicked her tongue comfortingly. “I understand this has been awful, but it’s important to remember that the police, the doctors and I could all be wrong about this, okay? The moment Peter opens his eyes and can talk to us, we could find out that we were way off base and none of this will even matter. But right now it’s very important that we plan for the worst, so we are prepared to help Peter through it.”

The other Alpha made a distressed but agreeable noise, so the Doctor began- “First thing, I’ll be writing you a prescription for an additional suppressant. Any strong emotions can bleed through a blocker, but grief and fear are always the strongest. If you’re going to stay in the hospital with your nephew, we can’t have anxious Alpha scent making it difficult for anyone else to work.”

“That’s probably not the worst idea.” May closed her eyes in a moment of weariness. “Thank you.”

“We have to be stable before we can help those we love.” Jean repeated firmly, but not unkindly. “I’ll have the nurses down the way fill this for you immediately, it’s actually one I take myself since I have to keep my scent at complete neutral for all my clients. It works quickly, efficiently, and once you’ve settled it leaves you system within twenty four hours.”

“That’s what’s off about you.” May realized, tipping her head back and breathing in deep to try and find Jean beneath the smell of antiseptic. “You scent of nothing real, just a bland sort of chemical. Do all psychiatrists mask their scent so much?”

“The smart ones do.” Doctor Grey deflected. It wouldn’t do any good to tell Mrs. Parker that she took seven different pills whenever she traveled outside of Westchester to mask the odor of mutant in her blood. It was a lot of effort just to blend in enough to not raise any alarms and it was exhausting.

“The smart ones do.” she said again, then cleared her throat. “I’m going to briefly with review the most obvious physical evidence on Peter and then move towards talking about ways we can help once he wakes up. If at any time you feel as if you can’t continue, tell me to stop and we’ll pick it up another time.”

May indicated that she understood, and Jean tapped at her notebook a few times before say quietly, “I’m sure the police explained to you what it means for an Omega to be bruised like Peter is, hips and thighs and especially with the extensive damage over his bonding spot.”

“Yes.” May’s knuckles went white as she clenched her fists. “Yes they explained it to me, and if you don’t mind, I’d rather not go through it all again.”

Jean dipped her head in sympathy and gestured briefly to the bed. “While an attack of that nature could need it’s own round of therapy and medication, I’m more concerned that I cannot actually scent your nephew, Mrs. Parker. Could you tell me what Peter usually scents like?”

“Yes.” May’s knuckles went white as she clenched her fists. “Yes they explained it to me, and if you don’t mind, I’d rather not go through it all again.”

Jean dipped her head in sympathy and gestured briefly to the bed. “While an attack of that nature could need it’s own round of therapy and medication, I’m more concerned that I cannot actually scent your nephew, Mrs. Parker. Could you tell me what Peter usually scents like?”

“Honeysuckle and lavender.” May answered promptly. “Ever since he presented. It’s usually faint since Peter is diligent about his suppressants but it’s always noticeable even under the blockers.”

“Such a sweet scent would be very distinctive, yes.” the Doctor made a note on her pad. “Now when a patient is unconscious, doctors won’t administer suppressants and blockers since a person’s scent is the first marker of an intolerance to medication or a change in their condition and we need to be able to read it. Did you know that?”
"I assumed they weren’t giving him suppressants yes, but I thought his lack of scent was because he was unconscious." May’s stomach twisted with dread and she whispered, “Oh no. It’s something awful, isn’t it? Something I haven’t thought about yet?”

“Medically speaking, there isn’t actually a reason for someone’s scent to blank out.” Jean wet her lips, kept her tone measured. “From an emotional standpoint, there is only one reason, and since your bonding mark is bronzed instead of silver, I’m sure you know that particular reason well.”

The Alpha’s fingers went to her mating bite, brow furrowed as she felt along the muted mark. “… My mark changed from silver to bronze ten years ago after my mate passed away. But that doesn’t have anything to do with Peter, he doesn’t have a mark at all. Why—”

May’s heart about dropped out of her chest, her throat closing up with fear. “My scent blanked for most of a year while I worked through my mate sickness. The bites on Peter’s neck and he doesn’t have a scent– you think he bonded with someone? With– with whoever did this to him? You think the Alpha that hurt him forced—”

“Based on the physical evidence alone, we need to assume Peter is bonded to whoever he spent the past two weeks with.” Jean watched closely as the other Alpha nearly folded in half with a sob of grief. “His mark isn’t silver so there was no mating heat and yes, that usually implies a forced or trauma bond.”

“No.” May gagged like she might throw up, covered her mouth with both hands to try and muffle a wail. “No no no.”

“If an Omega’s psyche is damaged to the point of a mental break, they will try and bond with the closest Alpha that is even remotely stable.” the Doctor stated slowly, calmly, keeping her voice level as May’s scent spiked with fury again before bleeding into sheer pain. “And in the worst cases, even abuse can seem like stability.”

“A mate bond is a mate bond no matter how it’s forged.” she leaned over and pressed a tissue into May’s hands. “And even though two weeks doesn’t seem like much time at all when things are good, when things are bad two weeks could be a lifetime. No matter what Peter’s gone through, it’s very important we don’t rush his healing. He will need time and maybe even space, he might be angry or because a trauma bond is the worst form of Stockholm’s Syndrome, he might be devastated. We just don’t know yet.”

“… Peter never even had a serious partner.” May shredded the tissue between her fingers. “He– he never paid attention to anyone in a romantic light, I can’t think he’d willingly bond with anyone he hasn’t known forever and that means– it means–”

“I could be wrong.” Jean was quick to say. “Mrs. Parker, please. I could be wrong but there is also a chance I am correct and if that’s the case we need to take the appropriate steps to help Peter come through this as best he can. It’d be better to have everything ready and him wake up to say we’re wrong, than to assume the best and be unprepared for whatever Peter needs.”

She allowed the other Alpha a moment to steady and then asked, “As you well know, familial bonds and mate bonds are two different parts of our biologies, so is there a familiar Alpha presence in Peter’s life besides yourself? One he’s shared a heat with, maybe?”

“Um–” May breathed out shakily. “Three of his closest friends are Alphas. I know he’s shared at least one heat with each of them. Harry and Johnny, then Gwen.”

“That’s good.” Jean made another note on her pad. “It will be healthy for Peter to have an Alpha
close by that could be a potential romantic partner. Not that he is any state to have a relationship, 
but just the thought, do you understand? Familiar Alphas, only good memories, and previous heats 
shared? If this is indeed a trauma or forced bond, it’s good for Peter to have a constant reminder 
that stable, healthy relationships are not only possible but also within his reach. Any Omegas 
within his friend group?”

“Mary Jane.” came the unsteady answer. “MJ and Peter have been friends the longest, worked 
through their earliest heats together before either was old enough for an Alpha. She texts me at 
least once an hour to check on him. The others do too. They’re all worried about him.” ”

“I think Mary Jane would be a good choice for a first visitor.” Jean decided. “Having a close 
Omega friend could go a long way towards his emotional healing, especially since his first reaction 
to an Alpha might be fear, no matter who the Alpha is.”

May grimaced and the Doctor added in a softer tone, “I know you are his family, Mrs. Parker, but 
there’s no controlling the consequences of something like this. We just have to try and stay one 
step ahead of what could happen. When Peter wakes up I’ll give him an in depth evaluation and 
hopefully—”

She sighed. “– hopefully everything I’m assuming is just flat out wrong. Until then I’ll recommend 
light sedation continue until the worst of the bruising fades so if there’s immediate memory issues 
he isn’t sent into a panic at being so obviously hurt.”

“Right. Um– of course.” May nodded jerkily, clearly overwhelmed and very close to tears all over 
again. “I just um– I just–”

“Mrs. Parker.” Jean put a comforting hand on May’s knee. “I am the best at what I do. I’ve helped 
kids and families find their footing through some truly awful situations and I promise you, I will do 
everything in my power to help your nephew.”

“…alright.” The Alpha made a half hearted attempt to smooth her hair and wipe at her face as Jean 
moved to gather her things. “Could I ask you how you heard about Peter if you work in 
Westchester? You said your own clients come here for treatment, but if there is an on staff 
psychiatrist here at Haven Mercy, why did they call you specifically?”

“Oh.” Doctor Grey paused at the door, wondering exactly how to explain a psychic impression of 
‘help’, a fleeting picture of Peter shoved into her mind at some ungodly hour, the too strong scent 
of burning like time had literally whirled around her and the lingering, nagging feeling to call 
Haven Mercy and ask about a young man who might have ended up there under.. unusual… 
circumstances.

“I received a tip from a friend in the hospital.” she finally said, refusing to acknowledge 
the friend had been here for no more than the split second it had taken to deposit the Omega 
unseen in the emergency room. “He knows I work special cases involving youth so he–” hijacked 
my brain. “– called me.”

“Well if you see him any time soon, thank him for me.” May moved to sit at Peter’s side again, 
resting her fingers against his thready pulse. “And thank you for coming to speak with me, this was 
a lot less irritating than talking with that asshole from earlier.”

“Oh and Doctor?” Jean turned back one more time when May called for her. “Is there– is there any 
reason besides trauma or being forced that Peter would be mate sick? Any reason at all?”

“…do you believe in soulmates, Mrs. Parker?” Jean asked softly. “Scent matches and soul bonding
and knowing your mate the moment you see them?”

“I—” May gaped at her. “Soulmates? People don’t even scent match anymore. Soulmates?”

“It’s the only other reason.” the Doctor tapped at her own silvered bite mark and decided to call her own mate immediately. She needed to hear his voice after being so close to so much heartbreak. “Send for me if you need anything at all, Mrs. Parker.”

May didn’t answer and Jean let herself out without another word, stopped at the nurses station long enough to drop off a prescription for stronger suppressants and one for a sleeping pill, then hurried out the door.

And not for the first time, Doctor Jean Grey M.D., PhD., Licensed Therapist and all around bad ass wished she could reach through time and smack the hell out of one metal armed cyborg.

She had jumped at the chance to see inside someone who had somehow ran into Cable and survived but since it was too dangerous to poke about in an unconscious mind, she’d have to wait until Peter woke up again.

But now that Jean had seen the bruises and scars, she didn’t know if she could handle looking deep and knowing what Peter had gone through.

Cable being involved or not, curiosity or not, some things weren’t meant for prying eyes.

_Cable, what the hell have you gotten me into?_ 

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“I say,’ cried John, ‘the kennel!’ and he dashed across to look into it. ‘Perhaps Nana is inside it’ Wendy said, but John whistled, ‘Hullo! There’s a man inside it!’” Mary Jane paused in her reading out loud to take a drink of water then went right back to the book. This was her third time through _Peter Pan_ since she’d come to the hospital last night, and she had every intention of reading Peter’s favorite story over and over until he woke up.

“‘It’s Father!’ exclaimed Wendy. ‘Well let me see Father.’ Michael begged eagerly and he took a good look. ‘Oh, he is not so big as the pirate I killed’. He said with such frank disappointment that I am glad Mr. Darling was asleep; it would have been sad if those had been the first words he heard his little Michael say.”

“Wendy and John had been taken aback somewhat at finding their father in the—” the pretty Omega stopped again when Peter’s heart monitor ticked up in speed. “—in the dog house. ‘Surely,’ said John, like one who had lost faith in his memory, ‘he used not to sleep in the kennel?’”

The monitor ticked up another notch, then settled.

“‘John,’ Wendy said faltering, ‘perhaps we don’t remember the old life as well as we thought we did.’ A chill fell upon them; and serve them right. ‘It is very careless of mother,’” said that young scoundrel John, ‘not to be here—’”

“–whem’we com’back.” Faint and raspy and for a moment Mary Jane thought she’d imagined it. “‘Twes then Ms. Darlin’—”

“–began playing again!” MJ tossed the book aside and grabbed onto Peter’s hand, vision blurring
with tears when sleepy, hazy brown eyes blinked back at her. “Pete? Oh my god, are you awake?”

“...MJ?”

“It’s me.” She trilled encouragingly, gratefully, when Peter managed to focus on her. “Heya Tiger. We’ve been real worried about you. Welcome home.”

“I’m–” Peter tried to look around the room, grimaced away from the wires and cords and the IV on his arm. “I’m home? Where– how–”

“Well, I guess you’re not quite home, this is still the hospital.” Mary Jane’s smile stretched forced and anxious as she tried to hide a little bit of panic. “But you’re safe. You’re safe, Pete. Back with us and we’re gonna get you all better, okay? I’m going to call a nurse for you and then I’ll call May and I want to– I mean, the guys will want to see you right away and Gwen’s been foaming at the mouth because the nurses won’t let anyone back here except me and May and–”

“Wait– but–.”

“–sorry sorry, I’m rambling.” The Omega wiped carelessly at her face then just leaned down and kissed Peter square on the mouth, combing through his hair and trying hard not to cry right on him. “I’m rambling, but I’m so so happy you’re awake. We were so worried and you finally opened your eyes and–”

“MJ.” Peter grabbed at her wrist, cursing under his breath when his fingers shook over just that simple motion. “Stop. Please. Just tell me something.”

“Anything.” MJ kept touching him, playing with his hair and nuzzling close to his cheek and Peter hated how much he hated what should have been comfort from his oldest friend. “What do you need? What i it? Bathroom? Pain medication? May?”

“How–” He wet his lips and pushed the words past the migraine, past the numbness in his limbs, past the clamoring in his head that should have been relief at being home but was tipping quickly into terror. “How long was I gone?”

“Two weeks.” Mary Jane said haltingly. “You were gone two whole weeks and you’ve been laying here in the hospital another week and a half. We thought we lost you, Pete. Didn’t know if you’d ever come home.”

“I was only gone two weeks?” A tear trickled from the corner of Peter’s eye and fell onto the thin hospital pillow. “It was only two weeks? That’s all I was–” he reached trembling fingers up to feel at his bonding spot, touching gingerly over the fading bruises and the darker puncture marks that had darkened to nearly black on his skin. “–Two weeks? That’s it? And I– I’m back?”

“What do you mean, that’s it?” MJ whispered. “Are you– should I call May? Or the doctor or–”

“I’m back again?” Peter made a noise like his very heart was being torn in two, doubled up in the bed and cried out in agony, one arm wrapped around his stomach as if he were trying to keep himself from splitting apart, and the other pressed hard over the scarred bite marks. “How– I don’t understand– I need– where’s my Alpha? My Alpha! I don’t want to be here, don’t want to be back, I want to go home!”

“Pete?!”

“I want to go home!”
The nurses came running down the hall with a sedative when Peter started *screaming*, and Mary Jane watched with tears pouring down her face and her hand over her mouth as her best friend thrashed on the bed, pulled at his IV’s and shouted for some one named *Cable*, someone named *Wade*, shouted that he wanted to go *home*.

“It’s not fair.” The Omega was sobbing as the sedation hit his veins and stunned him lax. “It’s not fair– not fair– I wanna go home. Don’t wanna be back. Home–please–”

*I want to go home.*

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“Peter Parker, I’m Doctor Jean Grey.” Jean sat down next to Peter’s bed and stared deep into his blank eyes. “I understand you had a hard time when you woke up the other day. Would you like to talk about it?”

Two days since being forcefully sedated, Peter had been awake almost the entire time, unable to close his eyes and unable to *sleep*. Visitors weren’t allowed until he was cleared by the psychiatrist, so he’d spent long hours alone staring at a spot in the wall and rubbing his thumb over the fang marks at his throat. Peter’s dark eyes were unsettlingly flat, his voice pitched low and monotone and even though he’d obediently taken bites of whatever food was brought around, it was obvious even at a glance that he was still underweight.

Still underweight and still too *quiet* and Jean waited a full two minutes for the Omega to speak before prompting again “Would you like to talk about what happened when you woke up, Peter?”

“No.” Peter’s gaze flickered just briefly, if the Alpha would have blinked she would have missed the twitch. “M’fine now. Everything’s fine. I’m fine. It’s fine.”

“You’re fully off your sedation now?”

“Yes.”

“And how are your nightmares?”

“Don’t have nightmares.” Peter *flickered* again, his absent scent and unnaturally stiff posture making the tiny motion seem almost alien. “Just memories.”

“Right. Memories.” Jean set her notepad away and held out her hand. “Could I touch you, Peter? Would you take my hand?”

She’d gone back and forth for *days* about peering into the Omega’s mind like this. On one hand, reading his mind and memories was the only way to know just how much Peter had been through and how to help him. On the other hand, considering how the Omega had *screamed* both times he’d woken up, Jean didn’t know if she wanted to see what he’d been through.

But the urge to *help* overrode any hesitancy, and the Alpha curled her fingers coaxingly. “Right here, would you take my hand for a moment?”

“…you smell like him.” Peter didn’t make any move to take Jean’s hand, and his head lolled back alarmingly limp against the pillows as he repeated, “You smell like him. I probably wouldn’t have recognized it before, but I do now. Seems so obvious now that I know what I’m looking for. Probably won’t smell it again though, there’s hardly any of you left. Maybe none of you. I bet
you’re halfway to ancient, just don’t age. Healing factor.”

“I smell like him.” Jean withdrew her hand slowly, something uncomfortable settling low in her stomach as the Omega rambled in broken sentences about her scent and healing factors. “Can you explain what that means? Who do I smell like?”

“Like Bruce.” Peter closed his eyes and sighed like it was the last breath left in his body. “You smell like Bruce. Off. Muted. Mutant but you’ve suspended your– your energy. Or something. I can’t really feel you like I could Logan. It’s probably extra suppressants. Or one of your powers, cloaking yourself. Eddie couldn’t do that, couldn’t cloak himself, couldn’t even pretend to be anything like normal. But you can. You can pretend. You can hide.”

“I can hide?” Jean was starting to feel like a broken record, echoing everything the Omega said. “Why would I be hidden, Peter? And who is Bruce?”

“You’re old enough to know who Bruce is.” Peter said listlessly. “I’m old enough to know who Bruce is but only through science books. You’re probably old enough to remember when he went missing. The explosion and all the gamma radiation and the government shutting it down.”

“You’re talking about Bruce Banner.” the Alpha pieced together. “The scientist who was killed when his lab exploded in 1977. Your Aunt said you studied physics for a while before giving it up to be a reporter, isn’t that right?”

“He didn’t die, he just disappeared. Was taken somewhere else.” Peter’s head dipped to the side and Jean found herself pinned by a suddenly aware gaze, the Omega’s eyes boring into hers. “But you know that. I’m sure you keep tabs on your own like that.”

On your own.

It moved past unsettling and right towards frightening when the Omega kept stating facts about things he should have no way of knowing, kept talking about healing factors and recalling truths that humans weren’t allowed to know anymore. Peter wasn’t even asking questions, just talking in a detached sort of voice like it was all normal.

Nothing about this was remotely normal.

“Give me your hand, Omega.” Jean laced the sentence with a touch of Alpha, just a little persuasion to make Peter comply. “Right now. Let me see you.”

And Peter– Peter almost smiled like he already knew what Jean wanted, his wrist too thin and bones too delicate as he offered up his hand and despite her mounting worry, Jean held onto his palm carefully before closing her eyes and pushing forward into the Omega’s being--

--and a moment later she was placing his hand carefully back on the bed and recoiling in shock, bending over to cough and clear her throat as a tidal wave of sorrow crashed drowning against the back of her mind, echoes of the misery and mate sickness flooding Peter’s soul.

The Omega was hurting, heart sick and bone weary, torn too soon from his mate and ripped through body rending time, sat back in the present day and abandoned as if he were supposed to be able to cope.

It was brutal, all consuming and painful, noisy and wretched, a million bits of happiness– smiles and teasing, fangs and kisses, horses and chickens, journals and questions– all overshadowed by the gray of separation and anxiety, the sort of despair that sat black on top of shoulders and
weighted heavy blue beneath every single breath.

Peter was suffering.

The Omega was suffering and the scope of it took Jean’s breath away.

“Sweet Omega.” she managed after another moment, and Peter’s smile wavered at the edges as the Alpha bent to push their foreheads together. “Such a sad Omega, so much hurt for such a sweet Omega, I am sorry. So so sorry, love. I had no idea. I had no idea—”

“S’funny how all you Alphas talk alike around Omegas.” Peter turned his head away to break the contact. “The second you know some thing is wrong it’s all ‘sweet Omega’ and ‘such a sad Omega’. Even my Auntie talks like that to me now and she never used to. Or maybe she always did and I never noticed. I went away for a little bit and now I feel like I’m noticing everything.”

“Peter.” Jean sat back in her seat and cleared her throat a few times before she could talk. “How–how long were you gone?”

“Two weeks.” the Omega plucked at the bed sheets, smoothed out the cords of all the various monitors, the motions unconscious and maybe a touch compulsive. “Two weeks. Then unconscious for six days. Sedated. Unconscious for another four days. Sedated. Awake for two days now. “

“I mean, how long were you gone when you met Bruce.” she clarified quietly. “And–and your mate. How long were you gone?”

“One hundred and four days.”

“One hundred and four days.” Peter nodded, then went right back to rearranging the cords, straightening the blankets. “Is that– I mean, do I have to stay here one hundred and four days to even it out? I was there a hundred and four days, I can be here a hundred and four days and then I can go home again. Then I’ll go home again.”

“….Peter–”

“Do you know who Cable is?” Peter whispered, broken and sharp. “Will you ask him if one hundred and four days is enough and then he can take me back? Is that enough time to stay away and get healthy and then I can go home again? Will you ask him?”

“…will you ask him?”

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“You don’t have to hover at the doorway, I’m fine.” Another few days, and Peter’s smile almost looked real when he motioned his friends into the room. “Stop being crazy and come here and see me. Give me a hug.”

“Pretty Omega.” Harry was the first to get to Peter’s bed and he wasted no time wrapping both arms around the Omega’s slim frame and hauling him up into a bone crushing embrace. “Been so worried about you Pete. Missed you. You doing okay?”
“He’d be better if you stopped trying to suffocate him! Move and let me see him!” Gwen shoved Harry out of the way and snatched Peter up into an *equally* tight hug. “Are they feeding you okay in here? Need me to sneak in some pizza? Where’d your cute tummy go! You’re so skinny!”

“Call it a tummy again and I’ll bite you.” Peter said flatly and it must have sounded convincingly enough like his old self, because both the Alphas laughed. “C’mere, MJ.”

“Heya Tiger.” The other Omega still got a little teary eyed every time she came in the room, but she controlled it enough to kiss Peter gently hello and nuzzle at his cheek with a sweet purr. “You look better, finally got some color back huh? Are they making you get up and exercise every day?”

“May’s been dragging me around whether I want to be moving or not.” Peter informed her, and Harry interjected, “That’s *good*, Pete. Lay around too long and you get all weak and useless. Ask Gwen, her office got moved next to the elevator–”

“– and I haven’t taken the stairs in weeks!” the pretty Alpha finished proudly. “I haven’t climbed a single step in like twenty days! Not to my apartment, not to my work, and you know I took the elevator up here! Dunno if i could climb a step if my life depended on it actually. I’ve gotta *waaaaaay* too used to being elevated around places.”

They all laughed again and Peter settled back into his pillows with a fixed smile and purposefully agreeable expression. Being with his friends was easy– Gwen could keep up a conversation with a rock if she needed to, Harry was full of stories about the company and whatever weird mad scientist stuff his dad was doing and Mary Jane was pure and perfect and never once stopped checking on Peter to fix his pillows or grab him a water or–

“Where’s Johnny?” Peter suddenly asked, and the Alphas fell silent, MJ hesitating a little before replying, “He um– he was busy, Pete. Couldn’t make it up this time. I’m sure he’ll be by soon though. Don’t worry, he’s half out of his mind wanting to see you again.”

She was *lying*, and Peter didn’t know why. Did Johnny not want to see him? Was it too weird to be in the hospital? Was he freaked out because Peter’d had to be sedated and was talking with a psychiatrist?

*Where the hell was Johnny?*

He pushed the thought away though, because he could only concentrate on one thing at a time these days. He could work at pretending to be okay only if he wasn’t thinking about anyone else, he could eat his food as long as he didn’t also need to talk to a Doctor, he could shower by himself as long as his mind stayed firmly on the task and didn’t wander beneath the white noise of the water.

So no, he couldn’t think about all the reasons why Johnny wasn’t here with everyone else, not if he wanted to keep them convinced he was okay.

Besides, Johnny would come the next time, right? He had to come, otherwise Peter would have to stop smiling and sit and think about how that meeting with Cable had not only led to soulmates and heartbreak, but had also ended up costing him a best friend.

Nope. Couldn’t think about that.

Johnny would come next time around.

But Johnny *didn’t* come next time, or the time after that, and when the hospital finally released
Peter into May’s care and Jean had given him both a subscription for sleeping pills and her number at the school in Westchester in case he ever needed help coping. Peter had all but forgotten why it had been so important in the first place.

He was tired of pretending to be okay, tired of sitting on his hands so he wouldn’t touch his bonding spot in front of anyone, tired of smiling until his face hurt just so he didn’t break down and fall to pieces, tired of reaching for his ring and remembering that the nurses had put it in a bag along with the blanket he’d arrived in, and that was just as well because how would he explain a ring to everyone?

Peter wanted to be home but not this home, not the apartment May unlocked and urged him into. He wanted to sleep but he didn’t want to sleep without his Alpha and he didn’t know if he could sleep without his Alpha, so the moment the Omega sat down on his bed he opened the bottle of sleeping pills and shook a few out into his hand.

“Just the one, sweetheart.” May set a glass of water down on the end table and watched until Peter put the pills back. “Just one since you’re still a little underweight, okay? You’ll sleep for most of a week if you take too big a dose and we need to keep you on a schedule.”

“Sure.” Peter lay back onto his pillows and settled his expression into something approaching compliant. “That’s fine. It’s fine. The apartment is fine.”

“This is home, Peter.” the Alpha said quietly. “Not the apartment. Your apartment. Home. Or if it doesn’t feel right you can always come home with me, move back in for a while and—”


May watched with watery eyes as Peter rolled to the other side and hid his face in the pillows, turning his back on her and effectively shutting May out of whatever he was feeling.

Doctor Grey had been adamant that Peter hadn’t been hurt like—like that, she’d promised over and over that his pain was more of a broken heart and less about any physical trauma but May still had a hundred different questions.

Who could have stolen and then broken Peter’s heart in the span of two weeks? Her nephew, who had never showed any interest in relationships showing up unconscious and bruised, how could that not be trauma? Why was the Doctor suddenly so sure? Why had Peter clutched at that plastic bag with a ratty blanket inside like it was the only thing real in his life?

May had a hundred different questions but for now she settled for having Peter home and safe again. The Omega was far from whole, but at least he was safe.

“I’ll be out on the couch if you need anything.” she said into the dark room and Peter mumbled back, “Just gonna sleep, Auntie. M’okay, you don’t have to stay. It’s fine.”

“I’ll be out on the couch.” she said again, firmer this time, and Peter whispered, “Okay. Thank you.”

After the door had mostly shut and he could hear May moving around in the kitchen, Peter rolled back over and scrambled for the plastic bag that held the blanket from the cabin and his ring. He wrapped the blanket around himself as many times as he could and inhaled deep the already fading scent of his Alpha, of them.

And with his ring back on his finger, slipping loose from weight loss and seeming dull in the low
light, the Omega opened the medicine bottle again and shook another few pills into his palm.

He just wanted to sleep, just wanted to dream about his Alpha and maybe if he dreamed enough, if he slept enough, he’d wake up next to Wade again and everything about the past few weeks would just be some horrible nightmare.

Just a nightmare.

That’s all it was.

He just needed to sleep enough to wake up in the right place again.

*I want to go home.*
Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Ohhh this chapter is sad, but honestly the scene with Johnny is beautiful. TW for mentions of depression/Peter coping by way of too many pills. Just basically what you’d expect after last chapter. Tissues are needed.

Three months later…

Afterwards, after everything, after mysteriously appearing at Haven Mercy Hospital and being lost unconscious for most of two weeks, after the panic and anxiety and screaming, after repeated sedation and psychological evaluations, after multiple prescriptions for pain pills and sleep aids and mood stabilizers—

—afterwards, even three months afterwards, Peter just never quite recovered.

The Omega had always been lean, but afterwards Peter couldn’t seem to put on weight at all. His cheekbones stayed sharply defined, his collarbone oddly prominent beneath his shirts. His wrists were fragile, skinny jeans loose at his waist, and the dusting of freckles across his nose stark against skin that stayed pale no matter how often his friends came along to drag him out into the winter sun.

The aches and pains from his ordeal lingered far longer than they should have, and the Omega compensated with prescription level narcotics to keep himself numb. And if he wasn’t numb then Peter was angry, sharp and caustic and swinging between furious that Cable had ruined his life and devastated thinking about Wade left alone without him.

It wreaked havoc on his mind to be so constantly close to out of control, so Peter took dose after dose of the stabilizers to keep himself steady and empty and disassociated from it all.

Once he was numb and steady, the Omega was only ever tired, but nightmares were a constant companion since leaving the hospital so Peter took the sleeping pills every night before passing out comatose in his bed so he could make it till morning.


The world was dull, extra strength blockers muting the Omega to the emotions or scent of anyone who passed by, extra strength suppressants keeping him so far past blank that other Omega’s stopped in the street and stared at him in shock, Alphas started to go out of their way to understand why such a pretty Omega scented so pale but then turned and left again when they caught sight of the empty in Peter’s eyes.

This new reality was far away from the giddy happiness that had been days with his Alpha, the drugging lust of unbridled moments when touches grew careless and kisses grew sharp, the hazy beauty of trust and love and adoration sank deep into dark red eyes…

This was so far away from everything and the thought never failed to make Peter’s mood dive, to make his body ache as if grief left physical bruises, to bring his nightmares back around into vivid
But the pain pills helped. The mood stabilizers helped. The sleep aids helped. And the Omega refilled the prescriptions as often as allowed and took the pills all together so he didn’t have to go a single moment without something to shield his heart and soul from the mate sickness tearing ragged edges at his sanity.

The award money from the expose against Justin Hammer paid the bills, and even though Peter had been offered several different jobs and several glowing recommendations both from his former boss at the Bugle and Tony Stark himself, the Omega turned every opportunity down.

He didn’t have to work quite yet and he didn’t want to work maybe ever again, so the Omega simply didn’t.

He simply didn’t.

The Omega didn’t do much of anything, really. It was a miserable winter in New York so most reasons for wanting to stay home were at least partially credible. His reasons for avoiding going to the movies or out for dinner with his friends and May were less credible, but everyone tried to be patient, tried to be understanding, tried to give Peter the benefit of the doubt and all the time he needed to work past whatever had happened.

They didn’t really know what had happened of course. Doctor Grey had assured May that Peter’s hurt hadn’t been everything awful like they’d initially feared but she couldn’t– or wouldn’t– say more than that.

Nobody knew and Peter wasn’t inclined to say much of anything anymore, much less to talk about his time away, so May never pushed but only offered, “I’m here if you want to talk, Peter.” and his friends acted as if nothing was wrong, acted like he was being a cranky Omega and just needed a little bit of time to get over it.

From a doctor’s standpoint, neither approach was ideal but on the days Peter felt anything at all, he felt a little grateful for people who loved him and tried.

Gwen and Mary Jane came over at least once a week to bring Peter food and invade his space by way of cuddles and movie marathons. Mary Jane would snuggle close into Peter’s side and purr into his ear, rub her cheek into his shoulder and try to share her muted scent with the other Omega, giving comfort by way of shared biologies and the knowing that sometimes only an Omega could understand how someone else was hurting.

Gwen’s approach was more along the lines of loving bullying, the Alpha pushing and prodding and practically manhandling Peter up against her body until they were plastered together on the couch, or hauling Pete’s lean frame right on her lap and hand feeding him whatever food they’d brought along, growling and teasing and being as obnoxious an Alpha as she dared until the Omega would finally, reluctantly eat.

Harry came over more often than the girls did, the instinct to protect an Omega he loved overriding the other responsibilities in his life. The best thing about being Norman Osborn’s son was a guaranteed paycheck and position at the company whether he was physically present or not, and Harry took full advantage of the privilege.

Some mornings he brought along the newspaper and a new book for Peter and cajoled the Omega outside and at least down to a little café for breakfast, other times he dropped by for lunch with a stack of applications for internships or jobs he thought Peter would be interested in. Every once in a
while he’d get the Omega out of the house after dark for a movie or even just a walk through the park to look at the stars and Peter always smiled a little bit those nights, smiled and one time even stood on his toes to give Harry a very soft kiss on the cheek.

Johnny only came by a few times, once or twice with the girls where he sat awkwardly in the other chair and watched as Gwen and MJ chatted amiably about their days while brushing at Peter’s hair and fussing about his clothes, and once or twice with Harry when they went for lunch or a walk. The Alpha was withdrawn and quiet, never quite looking at Peter but unable to look away all at the same time.

If Peter were healthy and normal and whole he might push Johnny up to a wall and demand to know what was wrong, why the Alpha was being weird, or he might even cry and ask why Johnny hadn’t come to the hospital.

But the Omega wasn’t healthy and normal and whole so he ignored his friend and kept his very limited energy focused on the people that were actively trying to engage him, not the person who couldn’t seem to find anything to say, the person who seemed content to let ten years of friendship fade away because Peter had been gone.

“How’s Johnny?” May would ask when she called every single night, and every single night Peter answered, “He’s fine, Auntie. He’s fine and I’m fine and we’re all– we’re all fine.”

And it was a lie, it was always a lie. Peter wasn’t fine and his friends weren’t fine and nothing about anything was fine.

It was a lie, and as the days out of the hospital turned into weeks, and the weeks turned into months, the prescriptions got refilled and the curtains stayed drawn and Peter sank further and further into himself. He cancelled plans and turned down invitations and snapped at the girls when they came in uninvited, dodged Harry’s attempts at drawing him out and the few times that Johnny looked up and met his eyes, Peter simply looked away.

He was tired and he couldn’t pretend otherwise anymore.

He was tired, but May and Gwen and MJ and Harry and Johnny didn’t seem to get it, because every time the Omega cancelled plans yet again, they just made a date for later and tried again.

Again and again and again.

And again and again and again until Peter quit answering the door and started avoiding their calls.

“Leave me alone.” he whispered to his phone as it rang shrill in the silent apartment, the screen over bright and noise jarring. It was Gwen or it was Mary Jane, it was May or it was Harry, it wouldn’t be Johnny but it was maybe Doctor Grey calling to check on him and the Omega couldn’t do it any more.

“Please just leave me alone.”

***************

“Peter, you should come for dinner tonight. I’m inviting the neighbor across the street, do you remember her? Her grandson Flash used to go to school with you and Gwen ages ago. He’s home from the military and…”

“I’m already in bed, May.” Peter could hardly lift his head from the pillow, the sedatives running drugged and lethargic through his system. “Maybe another time.”
“…I’m worried about you, Peter.” the Alpha whispered. “It’s been weeks since I’ve seen you, love. Have you thought any more about coming to stay with me? We could move you out of that place over a weekend and you could just come home with me.”

“M’fine, Auntie.”

“No you’re not.”

“No.” the phone slipped from the Omega’s hand and clattered on the floor as he fell into thankfully dreamless sleep. “No m’not.”

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“Pete?” One windy, awful day Johnny let himself into Peter’s apartment and called for the Omega. “Pete are you– it’s Johnny. I um– I knocked but you didn’t answer so I used my key.”

There was no answer, and the Alpha took another step into the entry way. “Pete? Are you home?”

“M’here.” Peter was sat on the floor in the very middle of his living room, fingers clenched into the shaggy carpet, back ram rod straight, face washed bloodless and frightened. “Johnny, I’m here.”

“Hey hey hey.” Johnny shucked away his scarf and hurried to kneel at Peter’s side, three months of awkwardness dissolving in an instant as protect won out over uncertain in the Alpha’s core. “What’s going on? Pete? What happened, what happened?”

He pried the Omega’s fingers out of the rug and rubbed them between his palms, blowing gently to try and warm him up. “It’s freezing in here, honey. How long have you been sitting in the cold? Is your heater working?”

“Dunno.” Peter shook his head. “Dunno how long I’ve been here. How long have you been here? Has my door been open the entire time?”

“…no.” Johnny cursed under his breath when he got a peek into Peter’s glazed eyes. “No, Pete. Your door’s only open cos I came through a minute ago. What happened? What is going on with you?”

“I got in a taxi. Told him to take me to the movie theater.” It was outright eerie how Peter talked these days, as if he was reciting memorized facts, like he’d told himself the story over and over before telling anyone else. “Haven’t left the house in four days, thought it was time. We drove eight blocks, maybe nine and then a big truck changed lanes too quickly and we almost crashed.”

“Shit, that’s scary.” the Alpha inched closer so he could rub at Peter’s shoulders too. “You’re alright though? Nobody got hurt and you made it home. Everything’s okay?”

“I panicked.” Peter said dully. “Started screaming, pretty sure I started screaming. There was a lot of noise and I don’t usually hear much noise. Guess it was me. Must have been me, right? I must have been screaming.”

He was unfocused, staring, and missed the way Johnny grimaced away from the monotone words. “I told the cab driver to take me home, told him to take me back and he brought me here instead so I just– I just sat down. You came in. I’m freezing.”

“Yeah, yeah you’re practically frozen solid.” Johnny pushed back all his questions and worry about Peter panicking, ignored the nagging feeling of unease when the Omega referred to his apartment as here instead of home, and focused instead on getting Peter warm. “Come on, come here with
me. Nice hot shower and I’ll get you some food, alright? Thai food from that place down the way you like so much. How many egg rolls do you want?”

“I’m not hungry.” Peter was awkwardly pliant as Johnny got him to his feet and helped him down the hall, almost limp as the Alpha yanked his shirt up over his head and then his jeans down and off as well. He’d never been much of a shy Omega, not around his friends, not around the people he knew and loved and trusted, but it was awkward how Peter just stood there and let Johnny get him nearly naked without protest. “Not– not hungry.”

“Sure you are.” the Alpha kept his eyes on Peter’s face and forced a cheerful smile. “We’re due for a lunch date anyway, right? It’s about time I start helping out, sorry I’ve been MIA but I’m here now and we can get warm and then we’ll eat and then we can talk and then–”

“I’m not hungry.” The Omega said again and this time he sounded exhausted. “Just tired. Cold. Will you shower with me?”

Before everything, Johnny would have jumped at the chance to shower with the pretty Omega. Lathering shampoo into Peter’s thick hair and getting his hands to wash down that gorgeous body was the sort of thing every Alpha dreamed about, especially an Alpha that had been half in love with the Omega Peter Parker since he’d been old enough to know what love was.

Before everything, Johnny would have made an absolute fool of himself clambering into the shower and grabbing the Omega up tight, but this was after everything and the Alpha couldn’t think about all the things he’d wanted to do with Peter someday.

After everything, all Johnny could think about was how small Peter looked with his hair too long and curling by his ears, shaggy and stringy and falling into empty brown eyes, and how Peter’s hands shook as he reached for Johnny’s belt and the way that damn ring looked so big and out of place on the Omega’s slim fingers.

“Peter…” he started lamely, uselessly. “Maybe I’m not the best person to–”

“Where have you been, Johnny?” the Omega asked softly, and guilt rose bitter in the back of Johnny’s throat. “You didn’t come to the hospital, don’t have anything to say if you come around with everyone else. I don’t want to see anyone but at least at first I would’a liked to see you. Where have you been?”

“I’m sorry.” There were a whole lot of things the Alpha should have said right then, but all he could manage was, “I’m sorry. I– I’m here now though, Pete. If you want me to stay.”

“I’m cold.” Came the simple answer, and In the small bathroom it was more obvious than ever how Peter didn’t scent of anything these days, not honeysuckle and lavender, not even panic and heartbreak and pain. His scent was blank like his eyes and expression were blank and Johnny felt the emptiness like a knife to the gut.

“I can keep you warm.” the words were out in the air between them before the Alpha had even fully decided to say it. “I– I can keep you warm, Pete.”

The shower was barely big enough for the both of them, so Johnny held Peter tight up against his body, cuddling the Omega over his heart and wrapping his arms around the frightfully thin frame. “Such a sad Omega.” he whispered when Peter shivered and tried to curl closer. “So many bad things for such a pretty, perfect Omega to go through. M’so sorry, Pete. So sorry. C’mere love, right here, c’mere.”
The Alpha kept up a steady litany of sweet nothings as they stood beneath the water, picking up shampoo and working it gently through the Omega’s hair, sweeping the bubbles over Peter’s skin and down his back until they swirled away down the drain. They didn’t need to talk– or rather, they did need to talk but not right this second– and Johnny didn’t think he could handle hearing Peter lie about being fine, so he stayed whispering quiet comfort and careful touches until the shower ran cold and it was time to get out.

He left the Omega swathed in a thick towel and then dried himself off and jogged for his phone. An order into the Thai place Peter liked so much meant Johnny would hopefully have an easier time getting the Omega to eat and if Peter would eat then they could maybe talk and Johnny could stop feeling like he was going to lose his mind.

“Hey sweetheart.” he set his phone down when Peter came shuffling into the living room wrapped in a threadbare blanket. “Let me get you some clothes, alright? I already turned up the heat but you can’t be warm in just that blanket so I’ll get you some pajamas. Give me a sec, okay?”

“What are you doing here, Johnny?” Peter sounded more alert, though his eyes were still dull and tone flat. “I’ve only seen you a few times in the last three months, why the hell are you showing up and showering with me and calling me honey. What are you doing?”

The Alpha swallowed uncomfortably. “I ordered some food, Pete. Why don’t we eat and then we can talk?”

“Tell me why you’re here, or get the hell out.” Peter interrupted, a flash of anger in his eyes that was there and gone in less than a blink. “I’m tired. And I’m cold. And I wanna sleep. Don’t have the energy to entertain anyone today or listen to half ass apologies or– or pity.”

There it was again, anger extinguished almost as soon as it sparked. “Why are you here?”

“… I’m sorry I didn’t come see you in the hospital.” Johnny began slowly, haltingly, sinking down into a chair opposite the couch and clasping his hands between his knees. “I should’ve been there. They weren’t letting any of us back to see you except Mary Jane and when I heard why they thought seeing an Alpha might– might bother you, I couldn’t handle it. I ran. Didn’t want to be there.”

Peter only blinked at him, and the Alpha cursed his own weakness before continuing, “Wish I could say I was strong enough to handle it like Gwen and Harry were but I kept thinking about you hurt and it made me throw up every time. Eventually I figured I’d only upset you if I came around and I didn’t want to do that. I know everyone thinks I’m an asshole for leaving you alone but–”

Johnny spread his hands helplessly. “–I’m here now, okay? I’m here.”

Peter didn’t reply, and Johnny nodded in weary understanding. “It’s not enough, I know. Too little, too late. But I just, I gotta say something Pete and I want you to let me get all the way through it before you reply or yell at me or throw me out, alright? Can I– can I ask that?”

“Ask whatever you want.” Peter burrowed back further into the blanket, playing idly with the ring loose around his finger. “Everyone sorta says what they want these days anyway. Go ahead.”

It was permission but it was also a tiny bit bitter and the Alpha hesitated for a moment. “Um–okay. Okay here we go. I know you and I aren’t as close as you and MJ are, and I know you’ve got more history with Harry and Gwen than with me. But I–” Johnny cleared his throat. “I love you just as much as they do. I know I’ve been gone and that’s real shitty of me, but I love you Pete, I do.”
The Omega twitched uncomfortably, and Johnny rushed on before he lost his nerve, “I know you
don’t want to talk about what happened and shit, I dunno if I could handle hearing it but I’m not
stupid, Pete. You’re barely functioning, your neck is all scarred up, you don’t scent like nothing
anymore and that’s all mate sickness. I know it is. The lady doctor told us you weren’t hurt the way
we–”

The Alpha’s eyes flickered red in distress, and Peter looked away. “–the way we all thought you’d
been, but you were still hurt and it’s killing me. I hate thinking about you sitting here alone and–
and sad and I just– okay you know what? I’m just gonna say it.”

Johnny dug his fingers into his legs in an attempt to ground himself, and blurted, “Pete. I want to
bond with you.”

The Omega made a horrified sort of noise that cut deep deep into Johnny’s heart but he ignored the
pain and the way Peter jerked away from him as if terrified, and hurried to finish– “I just mean a
platonic bond, Omega. Nothing romantic, nothing like that. I love you and we’ve had great heats in
the past so we know we are compatible at least that way and once it was over, once the mating heat
passed I wouldn’t ask anything from you, Pete. Nothing. Ever. Not regular, uh, sexy things and not
even your other heats if you wanted to work through them alone.”

“Johnny.”

“I’m not asking you to play house Omega with me.” The words tumbled out faster and faster now.
“Could you move in with me if you wanted cos I’ve got an extra bedroom or you could stay here
or move in with May or do whatever you want. The only way to fix this, to keep you from hurting
this bad is another bond and Pete, I’d platonic bond with my best friend– with you– in a second to
save you.”

“Johnny–!”

“No questions asked, Pete.” the Alpha looked like he might be close to breaking
down, distress forcing it’s way through his blockers and soaking his scent gray. “You don’t have to
tell me anything, or give me anything or owe me anything. You tell me ‘yes’ and we’ll take care of
it right now so you can move on past all this. You tell me ‘no’ and I’ll drop it right now and never
say it again. I promise. Pete, I promise.”

“No.” The thought of mating with anyone other than his Alpha made Peter’s heart wrench in two.
“Johnny, no. I– I can’t. I can’t.”

Silence in the room, and for a long minute the Omega thought Johnny would get angry and demand
an explanation, for a longer minute he thought the Alpha might actually cry, but Johnny didn’t do
either of those things.

The Alpha only looked away to gather himself, and then cleared his throat, “Okay. The offer is
here if you want it, alright? Any time. I love you, Pete.”

“I love you too.” Barely even a whisper, and Peter tried to smile but it was awful and not enough to
fill the void that had so suddenly ripped open between the two friends. “Johnny, I love you. And
you’re a good Alpha. But I can’t. I can’t.”

“Okay.” Johnny said again, and got to his feet. “Okay that’s– I um, I ordered food, alright? It’s
already paid for and all you’ll have to do is sign for it. I’m gonna go before I mess things up
anymore, so I’ll see you around, yeah? Next time Harry comes or maybe when MJ shows up or
maybe when Gwen convinces us all to do something stupid like roller skate or–”
“I’m already bonded, Johnny!” Peter wasn’t really sure why he went ahead and nearly shouted it, but the truth was there now and Johnny froze mid step, expression washing with disbelief. “And it’s not– it’s not a trauma bond okay? I wasn’t scared or searching for stability after something terrible, I wasn’t coerced into anything, I’m bonded. Mated. And that’s why I can’t– I can’t with you. I can’t do it.”

“What do you mean it wasn’t a trauma bond?” Johnny didn’t sit back down quite yet, but he didn’t reach for his scarf and coat either. “What else could it be, Pete? I don’t– I don’t understand.”

“Everyone thinks my Alpha hurt me.” Fury, snapping in Peter’s eyes for a split second. “They keep saying things like forced and Stockholm Syndrome as if my Alpha is capable of doing anything besides taking care of me and loving me and keeping me safe. All my mate ever did was try to keep me safe and I wanted to rip the doctor’s throats out for talking about my Alpha like he was some sort of a monster.”

“…your mate.” This time the Alpha did sit down, eyes wide and wondering. “Pete, are you telling me that while you were gone you found your mate?”

“We scent matched.” It felt so good to tell the truth, so good to finally talk and the admission ran honey warm through Peter’s veins. “My suppressants bled out for some reason—” time travel. “– and I knew him more certainly than I’d ever known anyone or anything before in my life.”

“You scent matched.” Johnny repeated. “I didn’t know that was a real thing anymore.”

“I didn’t either.” the Omega whispered. “But we are soulmates, me and my Alpha. Scent matched and bonded and my mark—” he touched the scars reverently. “I wasn’t with him long enough to have a mating heat but that doesn’t change that we’re bonded. Meant to be together. I’m his and he is—”

It felt like a prayer, like a confession, something sacred and beautiful and meant to be hushed, so Peter lowered his voice even more, “—he is mine. I’m his and he is mine and it’s so much more than those words, I can’t explain it, Johnny. I can’t explain it.”

“The ring—”

“His. He made it for me.”

“But how did you end up in the hospital? Why were you unconscious for so long? If this was soulmates and true love then where is your Alpha?” Johnny didn’t mean to sound upset, truth be told he was relieved through to his very core that Peter could tell him it was love and not trauma, but he was upset all the same. “Where is your Alpha and why is he letting you suffer like this? It’s been months, Pete! Where is he!”

“…I don’t know how to find him.” And just like that, the smile was gone from Peter’s face, the warmth leeching from his body and leaving him shaking, shivering, eyes gone flat and dull again. “We are mates but somehow we aren’t meant to be together so we– we aren’t. We can’t be together so I’m here and he’s– he’s out there.”

“Oh, Pete.”

“I’m here and my mate is somewhere out there.” Peter said again, motioning listlessly to the air. “And I don’t know how to find my way back to him. I miss him, Johnny. Every single day. Every single minute. I didn’t know I could grieve like this and still survive, but here I am anyway, whether I want to be or not. Grieving and surviving even if I don’t want to be.”
“Why didn’t you tell anyone?”

“This is the first time I’ve been able to say it out loud without breaking down.” the Omega dug his fingers into his hair and tugged at the damp strands. “I dunno if that means I’m healing or— or if I’m finally numb enough that it doesn’t hurt so bad. Dunno which would be better.”

“Such a sad Omega.” Offer to bond swept aside, misgivings and worry and guilt over his own shortcomings as a friend pushed away, Johnny moved to sit next to the Omega, gathered Peter’s thin frame up into his arms and hugged him close. “Oh such a sad Omega, so so sorry honey. So sorry. Sweet pretty thing, so much sad for such a perfect Omega—”

Peter tried to laugh hearing the Alpha talk that way, but it caught over a sob and turned right into tears and Johnny only held him tighter, crooning into his ear and rumbling quiet comfort into his skin for a long long time.

It wasn’t all the way the truth, Peter had said nothing about time travel and one hundred and four days and mutants, but he could say something about his mate and it felt like maybe the steel bands at his chest loosened enough to let the him breathe a tiny bit.

And later after the food had come and Peter had managed a few bites, the Omega looked up and asked, “You would have platonic bonded with me to save me?”

“In a heartbeat.” Johnny broke an egg roll in half and handed half to Peter. “Still would if you really wanted me to.”

“But you’d be stuck with me.” Peter pointed out. “Couldn’t get a real mate or move on with your life and get married. Even if you wanted to keep hooking up with random people, they’d see the silver mark on your neck and know you’re bonded. No one sleeps with someone who is bonded, you wouldn’t even be able to date anymore.”

“There’s worse things out there than to be bonded to my best friend, Pete.” Johnny leaned over and lay a very sweet, very chaste kiss on the Omega’s lips. “You want me to stay the night tonight? We could watch bad shark movies and if you feel up to it, you could tell me more about your mate.”

“I could handle a bad shark movie.” Peter decided and the, ‘I can’t handle talking more about my mate’ went unspoken between them. “Thank you, Johnny. You’re— you’re a good Alpha.”

“We’ll figure this out, Pete.” the Alpha tried hard to keep the worry from his tone and from his scent as he offered Peter another bite of rice. “I promise, okay? We’ll figure it out.”

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It was easier after talking with Johnny.

Or maybe not easier, because nothing was easier and everything was still miserable but it was… it was less after talking with Johnny. Being able to say that he was mated, that he was bonded and in love with his Alpha was a relief and some days Peter felt like maybe he was edging towards coping.

Out of all his friends, Johnny would be the one not to ask questions, the one to simply accept what he was told and move on from it. Peter didn’t have to try and justify how he’d fallen in love in what everyone thought was two weeks, he didn’t have to explain the nightmares or why it was taking so long to recover. Johnny was relieved just to know and in the days following the Alpha’s
platonic proposal, Peter found himself hiding a little less, withdrawing a little less, being numb just a little less now that he knew someone had at least a piece of the truth.

So one day when Mary Jane stopped by with arms full of groceries and that patented, beautiful smile that promised everything would be okay, Peter actually opened the door before she had to use her key and when the pretty Omega quietly suggested they all go out for dinner to celebrate Gwen’s recent promotion, Peter actually agreed.

“Really?” Mary Jane’s green eyes widened in delight. “Pete! She’ll be so happy, oh my gosh! Everyone’s going and we’ll have so much fun, it will be just like old times!”

Nothing would ever be just like old times and MJ didn’t mean anything by it of course, so Peter swallowed back the urge to flinch and run and pasted a focused, cheerful smile on his face as she badgered him into the shower to get clean and fussed through combing his hair back out of his eyes and exclaimed loudly over the state of his clothing before finally settling on something that hung at least somewhat flattering on Peter’s still too thin frame.

It was almost worth the mild panic attack over being out in public to see the way Harry grinned at him and to hear the excited whoop as Gwen flung herself into Peter’s arms and tried to squeeze the life from him. The Alpha was gorgeous tonight, dressed up and glammed out with hair done and jewelry sparkling and smile lit to mega watt as she screeched in excitement about her new job and all the perks and the uptick in her bank account and how happy she was to be celebrating with all her friends.

“All right?” Johnny pressed close for a long hug and murmured into Peter’s ear, crooning comfortably when Peter clung a little too tight. “Hard to be out with everyone?”

“Dunno the last time we did this.” Peter’s smile was practiced and forced, his tone purposefully cheerfully and eyes wide to combat the exhaustion sinking in around his nerves. He’d forgone the usual several sleep aids today so he’d be awake and present for Gwen’s big night but after so long dependent on the pills he still felt slow, lethargic, as if the entire world was moving just a half step too fast and he couldn’t quite keep up.

“You need to leave, you let me know.” the Alpha murmured and Peter nodded gratefully before pulling away.

The evening wasn’t all bad. Someone popped the cork on a bottle of champagne and Peter nearly cracked his glass when he jumped, applause and the Happy Birthday chorus from further back in the restaurant abruptly brought to mind the fact that Peter didn’t even know his Alphas birthday and he had to clear his throat several times to get rid of the sorrow that clouded up behind his eyes.

The evening wasn’t all bad, he managed to laugh a few times over Gwen’s hilarity and the champagne ticked not unpleasantly and what little Peter ate tasted expensive going down.

The evening wasn’t all bad.

The worst moment came as Harry finished giving Gwen a toast, glasses raised and smiles bright as he congratulated their friend on her promotion, promised to definitely take advantage of the discounts she was going to get as senior staff and teased the other Alpha about finally moving out of her tiny apartment and into a real place like a real adult—

—the worst moment came just then, when Peter was struggling to stay focused amid all the noise and all the chatter, anxiety doubling up beneath his chest and making it hard to focus, his head swimming with all the sensory input after months of self imposed isolation and drug dulled hours—
the worst moment came as the Alpha at the table next to them got to his knees and opened a ring box with a flourish, showing off a diamond glinting beneath the festive lights as he professed his love for his Omega in deep tones and flowery phrases, promising to love her forever, promising to cherish her forever, promising infinity if she would be his.

And that was the very worst moment, as the suppressants and blockers bled from Peter’s system abruptly to make way for soul deep grief that burst sour and spoiled into the air, lavender and honeysuckle tinging bright for just a second before it drowned beneath the weighted black of sheer despair and Johnny turned to his side and vomited onto the floor as the scent of hopelessness and fear rolled from the Omega and poisoned the atmosphere in the room.

Gwen gagged and Harry had to turn away as desperate Omega clogged their senses and and fogged their mind and Mary Jane reached out for Peter with a frightened cry but the Omega was already on his feet and running away, stumbling over his feet and knocking into tables and he tried to get outside and away.

The cabbie had seen his fair share of compromised passengers, but tonight he thanked his lucky stars he was a Beta and only partly susceptible to the misery hanging around the half coherent Omega in his back seat. The scent was still potent enough to make him nauseous though, and when they finally made it to the apartment building and the distraught Omega stumbled out, the Beta turned his sign off for a few minutes and lurched from the cab so he could try and breathe again.

The bottle of sleeping pills rattled in Peter’s hands as he tried to open it, the cap tearing off and medication scattering everywhere alongside the pain pills he’d tried to open just a minute before and Peter stared at the mess in horror for a full minute before another wave of sickness hit him hard and he went down to his knees, pushing his forehead into the floor and screaming.

Across town, May grabbed for her phone when it rang with Peter’s number, ignoring the missed calls from Harry, from Gwen, from Johnny and Mary Jane so she could ask, “Peter? Sweetheart are you alright? What’s going on? What’s going on?!”

“I miss my mate.” Peter was sobbing, choking, the words muffled because he couldn’t manage to lift his head long enough to talk clearly. “Auntie, I miss my mate. I miss my Alpha. I want to go home. I want to go home.”

And May slid down the wall to sit on the floor, phone pressed close to her ear and hand over her eyes as she cried right along with her nephew.

I want to go home.

Oh sweetheart, I know. I know.

I’m so so sorry.

So so sorry.

******************

Hey! We broke 160k with this chapter which makes MTW officially my second longest single fic after PH! And we aren’t done yet! Holla!
Also, for anyone who wants to know, there is a very specific reason why we are only seeing Peter’s side of the story right now, but once we start seeing Wade’s side of the story, it will all make sense!
Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

So this one got loooooong. Cable comes back, we learn what happened to Haven and why the mutants are thought to be extinct and then we get to see Wade! Please heed posted TW in the chapter for in-verse typical mentions of grief and treatment/history of mutants.

Peter didn’t remember calling a car service from his apartment sometime in the early morning. He didn’t even remember hanging up with May and he certainly didn’t remember changing out of his nicer clothes and into worn jeans and a t shirt and wrapping up in the blanket from their cabin to sit by the window and stare for hours until the sun came up.

So no, he didn’t remember calling a car service and he didn’t really remember almost falling down the stairs in his rush to meet the driver in the street and he didn’t remember rattling off an address that only led to an abandoned camp ground in the national forest closest to the border.

All the Omega remembered was falling asleep in the backseat with Wade’s blanket clutched to his chest, holding onto his ring tight enough to leave indents in his palm, and biting his tongue until it bled just so he wouldn’t cry.

The driver was a kindly old Alpha with bright white hair and over sized glasses, and he’d been gentle so gentle shaking Peter awake and helping him from the back of the cab to stand on shaky legs in the gravel parking lot.

“Um.” Peter glanced around the empty lot and wondered briefly for the first time ever what had happened to his car from the first time ever what had happened to his car from the first time he’d driven up here. “Thanks. I’m– I’m fine. You don’t have to wait for me. I’m fine.”

“You’re fine.” the Alpha repeated. “You sure, kiddo? This is a helluva long way from absolutely nothin’.”

“I’m fine, everything’s fine.” Peter dug his wallet out and shoved some bills at the driver. “Thank you.”

After hours asleep in the cramped back seat the Omega’s legs barely worked and he staggered towards the trees more than he actually walked, tripping over his feet and lurching side to side as he tried to get his balance back. It was freezing cold but Peter couldn’t think about that right now, just like he couldn’t think about how punishingly bright the sun was at it filtered through empty branches or how nothing nothing nothing looked the same as it had just a few months ago when he’d walked the streets of Haven with his Alpha.

A few months ago was all it was, and the Omega’s head throbbed with the knowledge that it had been a few months and over a hundred years all at the same time. The trees towering over his head right now hadn’t even been saplings when he’d wandered down Haven’s main street, the open spaces and overgrown fields had been houses and stores and a school and the barely there game path through scrubby bush had been sidewalks where children played.
A few months ago was all it was and Peter thought he could suffocate beneath *everything* he knew wasn’t there anymore.

It was like walking on ghosts, on memories, on answers to questions most people didn’t care to ask and the people that cared would ever understand.

It was like walking in a dream that had slowly and steadily turned to a nightmare and echoed as screams around and around in Peter’s mind.


He was hot. It was frigid outside but the Omega was hot and itchy and nervous, jittery as he wandered in circles through winter-silenced evergreens, brittle as the bark that scraped away beneath his fingers. A hundred and fifty years had changed the mountain side, waterfalls wearing through the rock and carving new pieces in the face of the hills, and Peter splashed icy water on his face so he could concentrate through the anxiety and scan the surrounding bluffs for a ridge he’d maybe recognize as home.

Peter was sorely under dressed for hiking but when he caught sight of a familiar peak he set off up the hill anyway, tennis shoes slipping and sliding on loose rock and icy inclines, the blanket at his shoulders doing little to lessen the bite of winter wind to his bones.

But the Omega was _hot_ so he ignored the wind, and he was _itchy_ so he hiked until his calves burned and distracted from the nervousness bubbling beneath his skin. Peter was jittery but he felt calmer the higher he climbed into the hills, the further he got from the city and a life that was supposed to be _normal_.

Nothing was normal, but he felt better the higher he climbed, so Peter kept on going.

If the air seemed warmer closer to the top of the mountain, it was only a trick of the Omega’s mind. It was nothing more than wishful thinking when certain trees and a partially frozen stream look familiar. Wade’s laugh ringing through the trees and the rumble of his growl vibrating on Peter’s lips was full on _delusion_, nothing more than a broken heart crying out for relief, for a break, for anything that would calm him even a little bit.

“I’m sure I’ve officially gone crazy.” He talked out loud to the forest as he trudged another several steps upwards towards a cabin and a home that no longer existed. “I’m hiking up a goddamn mountain in the middle of the winter, talking to no one and going absolutely no where but I feel like if I stop I’ll lose my mind, so I guess I’ll keep on climbing.”

And a while later, as he side stepped a fallen log— “I know there’s nothing up here. I would have found evidence of a cabin when I did all my research before meeting Cable. There’s nothing up here but I have to see it anyway. Maybe seeing an empty clearing will force me to move on. My psychiatrist will be thrilled.”

The Omega stopped to scoop snow into his mouth when his throat burned parched, pressed a hand to his stomach when it twisted uncomfortably. “I guess after three months of sleeping too much and doping up on pain pills and stabilizers I shouldn’a thought I could hike.”

Catching his breath was was harder than it should have been, and Peter leaned against a massive boulder to rest when his chest constricted and didn’t want to ease. “You’d laugh at me if you saw me. Probably poke me and tell me I’m ridiculous and then you’d pick me up and— and—”

It was even harder to breathe when he was crying, and Peter sniffled as a few tears fall and melted
through a patch of snow. “–and then you’d carry me to bed and tuck me in and tell me to stay warm. That you’d do all the chores and that I’d better be naked when you came back.”

A cramp sliced unexpected through Peter’s core and he bit off a pained cry. His feet slipped and he pitched forward, tore up his palm on the rough rock and hit the ground hard.

“Oh f-fuck.” The Omegas eyes glazed over, crossing as they tried to focus and the re focus on the torn skin and bloody patches on his hand. “Ow. I’m hurt, Alpha. I’m– I’m hurt. Where are you?”

It suddenly felt like Wade was just right there, just right there over his shoulder and waiting to swoop in for a rescue, and even though Peter knew it was just delirium and his psyche most likely ready to break, he still tried to talk to his Alpha, “I’m losing my mind, aren’t I?”

His voice cracked as he admitted, “I’m going crazy with out you. I’m miserable all the time, I can’t sleep, can’t eat, can’t even be out in public without causing a scene.”

The breeze picked up and Peter told the empty trees, “Being here was supposed to save me, so I thought it would get better being apart, maybe I hoped it would get better being apart but it isn’t. Three months I’ve been gone from my Alpha and it only ever gets worse. Why does it only get worse?”

There was no answer from the hills, nothing but the rasp of dry branches in the wind and the murmur of the water in the nearby stream, but the Omega still held his breath waiting for a reply that would have to come from some distant point in the past just to be real.

Nothing.

And into the nothing, Peter whispered the words he’d been screaming inside his head and inside his heart over and over for months on end.

“I miss you, Alpha…I want to go home.”

***

_Further up the mountain in a clearing long over grown and in a cabin long sent to ruin in Peter’s time, a hundred and fifty years in the past Wade raised blood shot eyes to the fireplace and whispered, “Please come home, baby boy.”_

***

“I can’t do this without you.” Peter sat back onto his heels, then onto his rear and knocked his head against the solid rock. “I fell and I’m hurt and I wish I was strong enough to deal with it, but I’m not. I need you to take care of me. My mate, I can’t do this without–”

***

“–you.” It was too painful to look over at their empty bed, at the backpack Peter had left behind, at the beautifully ornate vanity set the Omega had loved so much, so Wade kept staring at the fire as he drank and drank and drank so he could be numb for at least a few minutes. “M’not gonna survive another hundred years with out you. Not gonna survive, not even sure I want to. Don’t make me do this–”

***

“– alone.” the Omega packed snow into his injured palm and tried to muster the energy to wince at
the sting. “Don’t make me do this alone, Alpha. I dunno how I went so long thinking I didn’t need a relationship or- or a bond, but I take it back. I take it all back. I can’t even open my eyes in the morning without missing you and facing whole days is–”

***

“—impossible,” the flames jumped when the empty bottle shattered against the logs, leftover liquor igniting in a rush. “A whole day without you is impossible, months without is fuckin–” Wade laughed, broken and bitter. “And I got so long to be without you, Pete. So long to be alone. I can’t do it. It’s not fair I only had you for a little bit, sometimes I think it was better if I didn’t have you at all, but who the hell would I be–”

***

“—if I’d never known you?” Peter wrapped both arms around his waist and hissed a breath out through clenched teeth as his entire body seized. “I wasn’t anybody before you, but I’m not anybody without you either. How is that fair? It isn’t fair that I lost everything when I lost you! It isn’t–”

***

“—fair!” the Alpha was shouting now, raging into an empty cabin and out into an uncaring forest. “This isn’t fair! I don’t want to be with out you anymore! I don’t want to be without you ever! Give him back to me, Cable you bastard! Give him back!”

***

“Take me back to him.” Peter rolled sideways into the snow when the pain grew too much to bear, sparks popping behind his eyes and stomach twisting as he tried to vomit, heart aching like it might actually break. “Please. Please take me back to him. This isn’t fair.”

***

“This isn’t fair.” Wade rubbed at his bonding spot, where Peter’s bite had darkened into an already fading scar, the only thing he had left of his mate, of the Omega that had dropped into his life and taken his entire heart with nothing more than a smile…this isn’t fair.”

***

Somewhere far away from where Peter lay crying in the forest and further still from Wade’s grief in Haven, Cable was asleep in his own time.

Twisted dreams of saying goodbye to Aliya and Hope mingled with the ever present worry and guilt over what had happened with the Omega Peter and his Alpha mate and the mutant’s sleep was restless and uneasy, shifty and anxious and then suddenly his sleep was over and Cable cried out in shock as his entire being surged into awareness.

The tech organism that climbed his arms and neck whirred to life before the Alpha’s mortal side even knew what was happening. His head was pounding, chest clamping down on each breath, brain scrambling to decipher the garble of communication invading his subconscious and spilling into the present. Noisy, persistent, screeching behind his temples and burning in his mouth until the mutant threw back his head and roared in anger and disbelief–

–then grabbed the circular device from his side table and punched in a year, slammed the button to go and ripped himself right out of his timeline and clear into another one, unable to ignore the command sounding off in his core.
Damn it. This was Cable’s least favorite timeline and one he’d been purposefully avoiding for the last three months, and when the rift opened between timelines to let him through, the Alpha shoved through and nearly fell onto a gravel parking lot, fangs already bared despite the ringing in his ears, a growl working from his throat and breaking sharp even though his nose was bleeding from the sting of a migraine.

“Who the hell are you?” he snarled, panting and tripping to gain his footing. “And how the hell did you call me this far? How did you force me between timelines? Who are you?”

The mutant stopped in his tracks when he saw the cab driver, and his eyes narrowed. “You. You called me?”

“I might’a put some extra stuff out there to be sure you were listening.” The driver was still parked at the base of the hills near old Haven, engine idling and radio playing something jazzy as he leaned against the hood of his beat up cab. The old Alpha didn’t look remotely surprised when the atmosphere split apart, and he looked nothing close to impressed when he saw the mutant cyborg popping dangerous points in his direction. “Sure took you long enough to get here though. What was the hold up?”

“You could have melted my brain screaming in my head like that!”

The innocuous old Alpha simply smoothed back the shock of white hair on his head, pushed thick glasses up his nose and in a tone that brooked no argument commented, “Be that as it may, it sure isn’t fair what that Omega is going through right now, and I think you ought to do something about it.”

Cable’s jaw worked as he ground his teeth together, staring up at the hills and breathing in the too raw scent of a terrified Omega filtering down through the trees. “You brought him here?”

“He asked me to take him home.” the driver said pointedly. “I just wanted to help the kid out. Now you need to help the kid out.”

“…you know I can’t take him back.” the mutant’s good eye flickered red in open distress. “You know what time travel means for a human and I won’t do it. Not to the Omega, not to his mate.”

“Yeah, you can’t take him back.” the old man agreed. “But that’s not the only option either, is it?”

“Did the Omega recognize you?” Cable wanted to know, and the answer came matter of fact and maybe just a little bit mischievous, “Son, no one ever does. Go help that Omega. I might be an old Alpha, but still makes my stomach turn to scent someone so hurt. Go on.”

“Yes sir.” There were very few people in the world– no, there were few people in the universe that Cable would bow his head in respect to, but he bowed his head now and the other Alpha returned the gesture. “I can take it from here, Mr. Lee.”

“See that you do, Mr. Summers.”

**************

There was nothing sweeter than the smell of an Omega slipping towards heat. Their usual floral scent fell into sugar, honeyed notes popped with spice and everything about an Omega so close to the edge was lush and inviting, addicting and coaxing and wholly irresistible to the Alpha they claimed as mate.

It was the sort of arousal potent enough to taste, swollen with open adoration and clear affection,
bold with possession and greed between mates as they clung and kissed and bit mine mine mine.

There was nothing more intoxicating than the smell of an Omega slipping towards heat but as Cable scoured the forest searching for Peter, the air didn’t scent arousal sweet and the trees weren’t drenched with sugar and spice, and the emotion turning the Alpha’s eyes stark red wasn’t possession or anticipation.

No, it was the bitter edge of fear that made the mutant cough to clear his throat, it was the clogging, choking loneliness making his hair stand on end, it was the disaster of sadness that had Cable growling and muttering as he tromped through brush, kicked rocks out of the way and scoured the fields for the Omega.

There.

“Damn it, kid.” Peter was curled at the base of a tree and Cable cursed when he saw the sodden tennis shoes on the Omega’s feet and the threadbare blanket around his shoulders. It was freezing out here and Peter had gone up into the hills wearing practically nothing at all, and the Alpha cursed all over again when he got a too strong whiff of fear from the kid. “Damn it, what the hell are you doing out here?”

Peter weighed hardly anything these days and the mutant lifted him easily, opened his jacket and cuddled the Omega close to his chest for warmth, breathed through his mouth instead of his nose when confusion and terror wafted broken from Peter’s skin.

“Take me back to him.” the Omega was delirious, exhausted and emotionally spent, upcoming heat sapping what little strength he had left. “Take me back to my mate. Please. Please.”

“Can’t do that.” Cable grunted. “Gotta get you somewhere safe for your heat, Omega. What were you thinking comin’ all the way out here?”

“Wanna be home with Wade.” Peter grasped at Cable’s shirt with trembling fingers. “Please. Just take me back. I know you can do it, just hit that— that spinny button thing and send me back. S’okay if I die back then, would rather die w’my mate than away from him. Would rather die w’my mate than away...from...”

Dropping unconscious out was a mercy, passing out an actual kindness, and Cable breathed a quiet sigh of relief when Peter’s head fell back against his arm and the thin frame went limp. He hadn’t expected the Omega to still be so weak, hadn’t expected the signs of mate sickness to be so severe, and more than that the mutant hadn’t expected Peter to drop into so brutal a heat so soon after being separated.

“I’m sorry, kid.”

The mutant didn’t so much teleport as he did slide between the spaces to arrive somewhere in a blink of an eye and even though the experience could be painful for someone unused to the jolt, Peter only whimpered in his sleep when Cable took them from the Haven mountains down into the Omega’s place in the city.

The apartment was claustrophobic, shuttered and dark and Cable had to side step piles of laundry and take out containers of old food to get to Peter’s room at the end of the hall and lay the Omega out on the bed. Eyes averted from any nakedness, he made quick work of stripping Peter from the wet shoes and heavy jeans and after sorting through a stack of towels, the mutant found a dry one to smooth out beneath Peter’s hips to protect the bed from... from everything.
There were a few unopened water bottles scattered around and Cable set them up on the side table alongside half a granola bar and a bag of pretzels. Peter was only starting to wake up again as Cable moved away from the bed, and the Alpha ignored the anxious cry from the kid and shut the door firmly behind him on the way out.

It was always painful for an Omega to be alone during heat, but Cable was not the Alpha Peter wanted nor was he willing to offer the Omega even the most perfunctory relief.

Peter wasn’t aroused and needy, he was *grieving*, distraught and inconsolable, crying out for his mate from the bedroom and begging Cable to make it all stop. It wasn’t a heat born of normal cycles or biological imperatives, but one that was sheer desperation, every cell in the Omegas body screaming for his Alpha, for his soulmate and Cable put his hands over his ears and try to shut out the way Peter cried, “I don’t care if it kills me, send me back! *Send me back!*”

The mutant didn’t want to be there but there was no way he could just leave the Omega there to suffer, so Cable busied himself cleaning up the apartment and trying to bring some light to what was so clearly the depths of Peter’s depression.

The Alpha’s heart clenched as he swept empty prescription bottles into the trash, sleep aids and mood stabilizers and heavy dose suppressants that should only be taken in emergencies and had obviously been taken every day for months now. No wonder Peter’s heat had come on so strong, no wonder his heartbreak was practically tangible. So many weeks of chemically altering his body just to *cope* and finally the Omega’s biology had rebelled and purged it all from his system in an attempt to heal.

Jaw set in frustration and maybe even a little sadness, Cable threw everything but a few doses of sleep aids away. Peter would never get better if he was muting himself with blockers and stabilizers and it was going to stop *now*.

Food was next, and half a dozen boxes of barely touched take out went into the trash bag next to the pills. Mostly empty bottles of juice, cups with questionable coffee rings left inside, alcohol that hadn’t been opened but went in the trash anyway because the last thing the Omega needed was to drink away his grief.

An entire wall of the newly tidied living room was covered in book shelves, crammed in to end with books of varying lengths and genres, everything from biographies and historical texts clear to mystery fictions and what amounted to gossip magazines.

Stuffed into a big box labeled ‘Give-away’ was another several dozen books and Cable bent down to rifle through them, curious as to what Peter would be willing to give away. Most people with floor to ceiling bookshelves and stacks of novels spread around their apartment only gave away books upon threat of death and even *then* avid readers weren’t likely to give anything up easily, so what would someone like Peter want to get rid of?


Romance novels. After Wade and Haven and being brought back to his own time, Peter was getting rid of his romance novels. Poor kid couldn’t even imagine love stories at this point and *guilt* tasted sour on Cable’s tongue all over again.

Bringing the Omega back to his own timeline and saving him from a miserable death had been the right thing to do, but that didn’t mean the mutant didn’t feel awful about separating a mated pair.
It had been the right thing to do but that didn’t mean it was easy, and Cable shoved the giveaway box into the corner so he didn’t have to look at it while he kept right on cleaning.

Once the living room was picked up and the bathroom wiped down enough so Peter could have a clean, post-heat shower, Cable made his way to the kitchen to get rid of whatever was growing in the fridge and the few dishes long past soaking in the sink. Then he opened curtains and cracked windows, shoved clothes into the washer and set it to deep clean, and sat at the dining room table to try and pass the next several hours until Peter came out of his cycle.

Small mercies during times like this felt like answers to prayer, and right now Cable was grateful an Omega in physical or emotional distress only went through twenty four hours of heat. By tomorrow afternoon Peter would come out of his cycle exhausted and weak but the worst would be over and the Omega could finally begin to move on.

And if the Omega moved on, maybe Cable would be able to move on too.

It’s been the right thing to do, taking Peter away and saving him here in his own timeline.

The right thing to do.

So why did it suck so much?

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{{TW for mentions of self harm ie: “I’ve thought about hurting myself” as Peter talks with Cable}}

It was late the next afternoon before the Omega’s miserable cries settled, fully dark before the bedroom door clicked open and trudging footsteps headed towards the shower, another hour before the bathroom door opened again and the floorboards creaked as Peter came towards the kitchen.

He had nothing to say to Cable, and the Alpha watched without a word as Peter opened the newly cleaned out fridge and got a bottle of water, tore into a box of most likely stale cookies and crammed a few in his mouth. Heat had stripped the suppressants and mood stabilizers from Peter’s system and Cable clicked his tongue in quiet sympathy when the Omega took a deep breath in and flinched away from the scent of Alpha and mutant in his space.

“I didn’t know it would be this hard.” he finally said after another few minutes of Peter just standing there. “I knew it wouldn’t be easy and I asked Jean to look in on you but when I didn’t hear from her I assumed you were alright, and apparently I assumed wrong.”

“Jean.” Peter drained most of a water bottle and nodded. “My psychiatrist, the mutant. Makes sense you would know her since there wasn’t a real reason for her to be at my bedside reading my mind. Makes sense that you’d call her to make sure I wasn’t spilling your secrets to all the nurses.”

“…that’s not why I had her check on you.”

“I don’t believe you.” the Omega lifted a shoulder in an uncaring half shrug. “Figures if you weren’t going to be there to make sure I kept my mouth shut, you’d send someone who could warp my mind.”

“Peter–”

“Sort of wish she would’a warped my mind.” Peter dragged his fingers through his hair, grimacing when they caught and tugged at matted strands. “Would be easier than dealing with this.”
“Kid, listen.” Cable ran his tongue over the sharp points of his fangs and cleared his throat. “I didn’t stay in this timeline with you because it drains my energy. Moving forward in time is harder on my body than moving back, so bringing you here and staying would have compromised me. I had to leave, but I made sure Jean would come and look out for you.”

“She did a great job.” Any other time the words would have been sarcastic, the Omega’s eyes snapping playfully, but now it was just dull. “Made sure Auntie knew I wasn’t held against my will or any of the other awful things they thought happened. Read my mind enough to prescribe the right sorta meds and then left me here to deal. It was just– just great. She did a great job.”

“She did what she could without exposing herself or seriously compromising you.” The mutant blew out a slow breath. “Ideally Jean would have read you while you were asleep and set everything up before you came back around and knew she was mutant. But she had to wait cos it’s too dangerous to go poking around in people’s heads when they’re unconscious. It unlocks all sorts of messy things and we couldn’t risk–”

Peter only blinked at him, and Cable shook his head, softened his tone. “I didn’t want anything to hurt more than it already did, Omega. I’ve never separated mates before and I honestly thought since your bite hadn’t silvered that everything would dissolve like a trauma bond. Jean thought the same thing.”

“Huh.” The water bottle crumpled when Peter clenched his fist. “And how did that thought process work out for you? Cos it’s been pretty shitty for me.”

“Yep.” Cable deserved every bit of the fury building beneath the Omega’s words. “I can see that.”

“It’s like being hit by a goddamn truck except instead of waking up in the hospital, I wake up here in this apartment alone every single morning.”

“…I’m sorry.”

“It’s like someone reached into my chest and turned my entire soul inside out and then left me open so even the fucking wind bruises when it hits me.”

“Shit.”

“You told me that you watched your mate pass over and over and over.” Peter snarled in a flash of anger. “But you didn’t hesitate to take me away from Wade. You didn’t even let me say goodbye. You told me we had time and then you showed up and took me away and I didn’t even get to say goodbye.”

“Peter–”

“It’s like I’m bleeding.” the Omega’s voice went soft and empty again. “Like I’m bleeding all over the floor and all over everything that I used to love. I can’t sleep unless I’m doped up, can’t cope without medication, even showering feels impossible most days. I can’t read, I don’t want to study, I can’t look in the mirror. It’s like I’m bleeding and everything is ruined and awful and I can’t bring myself to even try.”

“…and people keep handing me band aids.” he finished dully. “They keep handing me band aids like I need a quick fix but they can’t tell my fucking throat’s been cut and I’m bleeding out right in front of them.”

It was a sentiment Cable knew well, the soul deep agony that had settled into his bones after losing Aliya, the grief that was only a breath away from rage, the temptation to open a vein and let all the
pain bleed right out.

He knew it all well and seeing familiar devastation on the Omega’s face made the mutants gut twist and heave in shared sorrow.

“I don’t want you here.” Peter tossed away the water and closed his eyes. “Get out.”

“I’m not going to leave you while you’re so compromised, Omega.”

“I’m not compromised.” Peter snapped, but there was no heat to it, no emotion at all. “I’m not compromised, I’m lonely. And I’m cold all the damn time. And I’m so angry I feel like I could kill you right here and not even blink and I know you don’t actually give a damn about any of that, so get. the. hell. out.”

“Figured so long as I’m staying I could answer your questions about Haven.” Cable hadn’t gone into this with any intention of answering questions but he was suddenly anxious to keep the Omega there and talking so Peter wouldn’t go off and do something reckless. “Or your questions about mutants. I half expected to find boxes of research in here with the way you were so nosy the first time we met. Where is everything?”

“I keep it in my room.” Peter’s shoulders hunched defensively. “Don’t want it out here where people can see, can’t seem to throw it away. It’s all under my bed.”

“Not gonna give it away with all the romance novels?” Now wasn’t really the right time for Cable to be an asshole, but he needed some sort of reaction from Peter, some spark that told him the Omega was still there beneath everything that had happened. “What’s that about?”

“What’s the point of reading romance novels?” Peter slumped into a chair opposite Cable and rubbed at his eyes. “The plots are shit, the characters are one dimensional, the sex is usually sorta physically impossible and the happily ever afters are laughably unrealistic. Had to outgrow them sometime, I guess now is as good a time as any.”

“Order some food and we’ll talk.” Cable ignored the line about happily ever afters being unrealistic. “You need to eat after going through a cycle like that. You need to eat any way, you’re starting to look like a damn shaggy stick. Omegas are supposed to be prettier than this, come on.”

“We’re supposed to be prettier than this.” Peter’s smile wasn’t remotely amused. “Don’t talk to me like I’m a fucking child, like I’m some flighty Omega placated with pretty trinkets and being told I’m beautiful, like I care at all what I look like if my Alpha isn’t here to see me. You’re trying to tease me like I’m not two seconds away from losing my mind, trying to encourage me to get better by telling me I look terrible? Why do you even give a damn, you sure didn’t care when you took me from my mate.”

“You would have died, Omega.” Cable pointed out for what might have been the hundredth time. “You would have died if I left you there.”

“Don’t you think dying would be better than existing like this?” The smile fell away and with it, any bit of life or energy or self left in the Omega’s eyes. “I’m not gonna order food, I don’t care what you’re going to tell me about Haven or mutants or meta humans or whatever the hell I’m supposed to call them. I don’t care. I don’t care about any–!”

“Right at the turn of the century, the Charles’ powers weakened temporarily and everyone who’d had their memories wiped during Eddie’s episode suddenly started remembering.” The mutant cut in, and Peter’s mouth snapped shut. “There were scouting parties coming north towards Haven
looking for the Army base, there were surveyors trying to map the area, there were family members wondering what the hell had happened to the men stationed at the fort and why they’d never come home.”

The Omega swallowed uncomfortably and folded his arms tight to his body. “And?”

“And they found the mass graves where your mate, Logan and Clint and the others had buried the dead. They uncovered the foundations of buildings that had been torched, they found the roads that had been mostly scored over and hidden and then they found Haven and all the mutants living there.”

Peter was quiet, and Cable said softly, “The women and children escaped in wagons, those with gentler mutations following behind. The warriors and the ones who wouldn’t die stayed behind to fight– Logan and Clint, Bruce and Eddie, Armando. They held off the soldiers long enough for the more vulnerable to safely escape, then burned Haven to keep the rest of the army from advancing.”

“Clint stayed?” Peter whisper. “But he isn’t immortal. He doesn’t have a healing factor like Logan and like– like my mate.”

“No, Clint didn’t have a healing factor like that and Logan begged him to go with the others but no Alpha would ever leave their mate to a fight and Clint was no different.” the mutant’s scent dimmed in sadness. “Logan buried him in the cliffs behind their cabin and then moved on with the rest of the survivors.”

Peter’s already broken heart twisted further thinking of the wild Omega having to bury his mate at home and continue on into an endless life, but he couldn’t think too much about that without breaking down so the Omega pushed the thought away and asked, “And my mate? What about my mate?”

Cable hesitated, “Wade had– well, he’d moved on from Haven by the time the soldiers came back around. He didn’t stay long after–” the Alpha made a vague gesture towards Peter. “– he wasn’t there for the fight.”

Alpha. Sadness over Logan burying Clint paled in comparison thinking of Wade alone in their cabin, finally moving on because he couldn’t stand to be there with out Peter. Oh no no my mate.

“After Haven was abandoned, the mutants scattered and set up new villages further away.” Cable tapped at his machinery set into temple and Peter’s mouth dropped open when a world map projected over the table, hovering several inches off the surface and shimmering every time the mutant blinked. “There are a thousand different Havens all over the world in this time line, Omega. I know of a dozen just in the United States.”

Red dots filled in across North America as the map re-calibrated and zoomed in to hover over the states. “There’s one here in Alaska above the Arctic circle where the sun doesn’t rise for weeks.” The map scrolled and Cable pointed to another near the Hawaiian islands. “Here at the base of an active volcano. A small community but the sort you don’t want to piss off. There’s a reason they don’t fear the lava.”

“Mutants that thrive in the dark and others that don’t fear lava.” Peter repeated, a spark of curiosity brightening his eyes despite the hostility still lingering between them. “Honestly?”

“Here at Alkali Lake in British Columbia.” Cable smiled the littlest bit. “Perhaps my favorite mutant from this time runs the one here in the dam. Hank McCoy. Beast. You people call him Sasquatch and think he’s some sort of gorilla.”
“No no, wait.” There was that spark of curiosity again. “You— Bigfoot? You know Bigfoot? He’s a mutant?”

“His name is Hank McCoy.” Cable emphasized. “And he’s one of the most brilliant men you’ll ever meet. Alkali Lake used to be a facility for holding and experimenting on mutants, but now Hank uses it to keep the most volatile of us safe and protected, able to work to control their powers without fear of being found out.”

“Keeps the most volatile ones safe.” the Omega said skeptically. “Don’t you mean keep us safe from them? Humans aren’t dangers to mutants, we don’t even have powers.”

“You’re reading the wrong history books if that’s what you think.” Cable stated bluntly. “There’s a Haven here near Mexico—”

“Area 51?!”

“– and another in the Dakotas in the bowels of the sacred mountains. Jean Grey works here at school here in Westchester, Gambit runs one in the heart of New Orleans, and Ororo teaches the children that storm here along the cliffs at the Atlantic.”

“You’re talking about places that exist right now.” Peter reached up to touch one of the dots in Georgia. “I thought mutants were pretty much wiped out in the seventies.”

“We weren’t wiped out.” Grimly, the Alpha’s fangs making an appearance as he tried not to snarl at the thought of extermination. “We just had to learn how to hide better.”

{{TW: Mentions of the Holocaust as it would apply to mutants in this verse. Concentration camps, illegal experimentation and extermination}}

“People should know about this.” Peter looked around as if searching for a notebook and pen. “People should— this shouldn’t be hidden away! Entire communities full of mutants? Surviving? Thriving? People should know that mutants are still around and that they aren’t dangerous! You shouldn’t have to hide anymore you should be out and proud and—”

Cable was pleased he had managed life from the Omega, but he was still cautious, warning, “Out and proud, Omega? And when happens when a child that has been bullied his entire life comes into fire powers and accidentally scorches the floors? When a teenager runs from the police and uses his abilities to walk through a wall? Or what about when someone like Bruce is attacked and understandably unleashes and half of Manhattan is flattened?”

“No no–” Peter shook his head. “No, it wouldn’t be like that though. People are so much more tolerant than they used to be. It would be okay.”

“It’s never been okay, Peter.” Cable said slowly, pointedly. “We’ve done it before. Tried to be open before. Every hundred years or so we think humans change and have grown tolerable and mutants start coming out of the woodwork a few at a time. And maybe it’s alright for a while but there’s always an accident, or an incident, or some random sociopath is discovered to also be a mutant and you know what comes after that?”

The Omega bit his lip. “…no?”

“Yeah. You do.” Cable inclined his head towards the history texts on Peter’s book shelf. “You’ve read the books, you’ve been to school, you’ve no doubt watched the movies and documentaries. You know exactly what comes next.”
Peter’s brow scrunched down in confusion and the mutant started counting off on his fingers. “First we are ordered to identify ourselves in some way. The argument is always ‘why are you hiding if you aren’t dangerous’ or ‘we just want to know who we’re talking about’. Sometimes the identification is a symbol we wear on our clothes, sometimes it’s a brand inked into our skin.”

The Omega’s eyes widened in realization and then horror and Cable held up another finger. “Then we are pushed into one part of a city or even into one specific neighborhood. They say it’s to keep us safe away from people who don’t understand and might harm us, but really it’s to keep us contained so the humans feel safe. First it’s identification and then it’s forced isolation and then—then it’s the fear mongering. The paranoia until neighbor turns on neighbor and we are hauled off to somewhere black and dark and deep and everyone turns away like they don’t know it’s happening. You know the stories of the Holocaust, Pete. You know how this goes.”

“But—”

“Sometimes it’s science experiments like the super soldier programs in the 1940s.” The holograph screen flickered and changed to a scene from the front lines of World War II. “German and American scientists turned out eight soldiers they’d treated with mutant DNA. One soldier had his face melt off, his mind so compromised he went insane creating weapons and nearly blew the world apart.”

A name—Johann Schmidt—blipped across the screen, followed closely by a name Peter recognized with a sort of heart-stopping certainty that made him want to vomit.

“Steve Rogers was the second attempt, a better attempt.” Cable’s lip curled in a sneer at the cheesy propaganda on the hologram. “They dressed him up in red white and blue, let him loose to win the war and when the government realized they’d created someone they couldn’t control, they hijacked the controls on his plane and sent him into the ice above the north pole. They know exactly where Rogers is, but refuse to bring him up just in case eighty goddamn years in the ice has made him bitter and he takes it out on them.”

“Captain America was a mutant?”

“No son, he was a regular kid who volunteered for a program he thought he understood.” Another picture, this one a cyborg with an arm that looked frighteningly similar to Cable’s own limb. “Third attempt and they got the super strength and healing factor right but went a little overboard trying to control the guy. This soldier was too much of a machine to function without being fed consistent commands, but too human to live with himself after what they made him do.”

“…and the others?” Peter was pale now, shaking. “What— what about the others?”

“Five of the attempts were so mangled, the scientists just executed them. Saw the potential triggers and mistakes and killed the men in cold blood. Wrote it off in the reports as ‘failed experiments’ because once the mutant blood was pumping through those soldiers’ veins, they ceased to be human.”

The Omega blanched and Cable finished, “I’m not saying every human out there wants to hurt mutants. I’m saying it’s happened enough, and it’s happened recently enough that it’s easier to stay hidden and let you all think we’re gone.”

“In my timeline.” Peter said slowly. “What about in yours? What’s it like in your timeline?”

“Our timelines are almost identical right up until after the second world war.” Cable ripped the top off another water bottle and shove it towards the Omega. “In your timeline the mutants decided
to hide. In my timeline, the mutants decided to fight and the world fell into a war that grows more brutal every single year. The death toll is incalculable, no one knows what we are fighting for because it’s all descended into hate for anyone remotely different. Omega-level mutants reign terror on the weaker ones, humans slaughter anyone they find, governments have switched loyalties and sides so many times we don’t even know who the allies are anymore.”

“Oh.”

“Let the mutants have their Havens.” the Alpha tapped at the table emphatically. “Leave them alone. I’ll answer whatever questions you have if I can, but you have to promise me to leave the Havens alone. The path you were on before we met wouldn’t have ended well for you, there are many out there who take personal offense to questions about the mutant community and if I wouldn’t have found you, someone else would have killed you in an instant before letting you get closer to the truth.”

“You would have killed me out there in the woods?”

“Yes.” the mutant didn’t even hesitate. “If I warned you to back off and found out you were still chasing the story, I would have killed you. You’re a good kid, Pete. But I wasn’t going to sacrifice the potential safety of thousands of people for your own curiosity and endless questions.”

“But you don’t even know why I was looking into the mutants.” Peter pointed out. “You’d’ve killed me without even asking why?”

“Yes.” Again, Cable didn’t hesitate. “I don’t care why you were searching for Haven or asking about the mutants, Omega. I didn’t care then and I don’t care now. I would end you before I let you open up another piece of history like the parts we buried in the forties.”

“Huh.” Peter looked at the Alpha for a long time, then struggled to his feet and went towards his bedroom. He was steadier after water and a few bites of food, more determined after so many revelations and new information, but he still stumbled trying to find his footing, still leaned on the wall for balance and Cable made a note to send the Omega to bed soon.

Peter needed sleep, real sleep not medicated sleep or exhausted strung out sleep. He needed to rest and he needed to eat and as much as Cable hated worrying about whether or not the Omega was doing okay, he couldn’t stop himself from caring.

This was all sort of his fault anyway.

So when Peter came back holding half a picture, there was another granola bar and half a sandwich set in front of his chair, and he sent the Alpha a half amused, half annoyed look before pushing the photo in Cable’s direction.

“What is this supposed to be?” Cable waited until Peter took a begrudging bite of the food before looking down. “Who is this?”

“My whole life I’ve been looking for answers about something.” The Omega said around a mouthful of sandwich. “I was waking up and missing someone from my life, from my soul. It wasn’t my parents, it wasn’t my friends. I’ve never been attracted to an Alpha beyond a vague appreciation for their knot when I needed it during heat and I never managed to stay interested in someone long enough to get through a second date.”

“But the older I got the more I missed whatever it was, and I switched my major from physics to journalism hoping to find a story to make the searching go away. I started a genealogy project
because I thought knowing more about my past would give me some direction for my future, the research led to a few articles and theories about how male Omegas are the last strands of mutations in human DNA–”

Cable made an unimpressed noise and Peter smiled a little bit. “– and that line of thought led me to that exact picture, buried in some box along with a few scraps of information about Haven.”

“This is your ancestor.” the Alpha held up the picture and looked at it a little closer. “…this is you.”

“It’s me.” Peter confirmed. “I found that picture a few weeks before I met you up in the woods, and while I was in Haven with my mate, I created it. I walked through someone’s picture and Wade told me–” oh it hurt to even say his Alpha’s name. “– Wade told me the people would just tear me out of the picture and toss it out somewhere and that’s exactly what happened.”

“You found yourself in a picture taken some hundred and fifty years ago.”

“I had to know.” the Omega spread his hands helplessly. “I had to know how this picture came to be and every little hint and note and answer I found settled something inside me. I wasn’t searching for Haven and mutants because I wanted to find them, I was searching for Haven and mutants because I wanted to find a piece of myself.”

The Alpha forced a sigh through his nose and asked, “You found it with Wade, didn’t you?”

“Yeah, I did.” It was no surprise when Peter’s eyes filled with tears. “Everything I was searching for, a whole lot of things I wasn’t searching for, and all the answers to any question that had ever mattered. We scent matched and I swear we were bonded before we’d even kissed. Didn’t even properly mate for weeks but he was mine body and soul and for the first time in my life I wasn’t looking for anything. I had everything.”

The next words broke over a sob– “And now I have nothing.”

“I’m sorry, Omega.” Cable meant the words from the bottom of his heart and he only paused a second before switching to the chair closest to Peter and running his flesh hand into the Omega’s hair, sifting through the strands as gently as he could and pushing their foreheads together, rumbling comfortingly as Peter hiccupsed and tried to breathe through his tears. “So so sorry, Omega. I’m sorry. I know what it’s like to love someone years apart from you, I know how it tears at your soul and beats you down. I know.”

“Does it ever get better?” Peter whispered and the Alpha whispered back, “I wish I could say it does. I can lie to you if you want.”

“Don’t lie to me.” he shook his head head. “Don’t– don’t lie to me. I can’t handle that.”

“You know I was trying to save you, don’t you?”

“…yeah.” a quiet sniff. “I know. I know you had to bring me back to save me.”

“Alright then.” Carefully carefully, Cable rested his metal palm at the base of the Omega’s neck and Peter gave a quiet, grateful sigh and pressed closer. “…m’t still sorry though.”

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Cable stayed in the Omega’s apartment well into the night, watching closely as Peter took only the one sleeping pill and laid down, settling into a chair in Peter’s room and keeping an eye out for nightmares or anything else that would disturb a good nights sleep.

“Cable?” The Omega stirred sometime around three am, peering through the shadows to find the mutant’s yellow eye in the dark. “Can I ask you something?”

Cable grunted in agreement and Peter asked, “Do you believe in God?”

The mutant was quiet a moment, then shook his head. “Kid, if you’d’ve seen half the mutants I’ve seen, you’d never sleep a wink again in your life. You’d avoid the shadows, you’d stay away from the water, you’d worry every time the wind blows. I don’t want to think about someone powerful enough to create them, no way.”

And then after another moment of thought, “If I did believe in God though, I’d think he was Mr. Lee.”


“I’ve tracked sixty time lines.” The mutant said slowly. “My own, and the fifty nine others I went through looking for Aliya and Hope and there is a Mr Lee in all of them. Sometimes he’s a tailor making suits, sometimes he designs weapons. I’ve met him as a pawnbroker, seen him deliver packages, heard him yell from windows just to be an asshole or had him show up at just the right time to help a neighbor out of a situation. One time I saw him as the worlds scariest barber, watched him hold down a lightning mutant and cut his hair clean off.”

“And sometimes.” Cable smiled now, fangs glinting in the glow from the streetlights outside the window. “Sometimes he’s a cab driver who takes you exactly where you need to go exactly when you need it.”

“Seriously.”

“There isn’t a whole lot constant in this world and there’s nothing constant across the time lines. But Mr. Lee? Mr. Lee is constant. As far as I know he was there at the beginning, as far as we’re concerned he will be there at the end.”

“Huh.” Peter was strangely comforted by the thought of Mr. Lee being the one who looked out for everything, a crazy store owner who had piles of junk and somehow found perfect things, who gave out excellent advice and was intimidated by exactly nothing. “That’s– that’s not what I expected you to say.”

“Yeah well it seems like I’m full of surprises today.” Cable relaxed again. “Go the hell to sleep, Omega.”

The room was quiet for a bit, but then– “Cable?”

“What?”

“Is my Alpha alive in this time line?”

Cable shifted uncomfortably and Peter pressed, “You said he had moved on from Haven but you never said where he went. Do you know? Is he still alive? He came back from the mountain lion attack and he survived all those wars and–and I just think– do you know if he’s alive? If I could find him? Or if he’s looking for me?”
The chair creaked as the mutant stood up, and Cable muttered, “I dumped most of your pills alright? You need to stop doing that to yourself. Only reason your mate was okay with you leaving is because he knew you’d be healthy and whole in this time line. Don’t ruin that by over dosing.”

“Cable–”

“Take care, kid. If you really need some help, get a hold of Jean.”

“Cable, wait–!”

The Alpha was gone in a flash of light and the acrid scent of something charred and Peter stared around his empty bedroom, before finally hanging his head and curling back into the blankets, holding tight to his ring and trying to breathe through the crush of tears in his throat.

Was it really never going to get any better again?

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Haven

The cabin door wasn’t even all the way closed, icy winter winds whirling around through the entry and blowing snow onto the wooden floorboards, the windows frosted because the fire hadn’t been lit in days and the cold had never eased.

Cable’s footsteps were loud in the eerie silence, and he made it only past the foot of the bed before a bottle clinked to the floor and rolled noisily towards the fire and a voice torn hoarse by tears and screaming muttered barely audible–

“You take one step closer and I’m gonna put you through a fucking wall, you time sliding piece of shit.”

“Wade.” There was that guilt again, building in Cable’s chest and spilling into his words. “How are you?”

“Dunno if I can die, but I’ll sure as hell give it a shot goin’ toe to toe with you.” Cable didn’t even know how much alcohol it would take to get the all-but-immortal Alpha drunk enough to slur his words, but he could smell the liquor blurring the edges of Wade’s scent and soaking the air sour.

“Wade–”

“Gonna drag you right to hell alongside me.”

“God damn it.” Cable crouched on the floor and grabbed at the Alpha’s jaw, forced Wade’s head upright. “How long have you been drunk, Wade?”

Wade didn’t even open his eyes, head lolling back out of Cable’s grasp and thunking against the chair as he mumbled something indecipherable.

“Christ, you’re a mess.” the mutant bit back a growl and muttered, “Pull yourself together, do you want to see your mate again or not?”

There was nothing from the heartsick Alpha, so Cable layered steel into his tone to repeat, “Wade! Do you want to see your mate again or not!?”
Wade’s eyes snapped open, suddenly sober and frighteningly aware, hazel sliding into bright, furious red and his lips curling up in a snarl that made the mutant shift backwards a cautious step.

“What did you just say?”

And he was probably pushing his luck, quite possibly pissing off the universe and whichever powers held control, breaking all sorts of time travel rules and the guidelines that kept reality from splitting apart, but Cable said it again for the third time, calm and clear and staring right into that bloody gaze–

“Do you want to see your mate again, or not?”
Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Peter dives further into research, so this chapter contains the same generic TW as the last one for mentions of the Holocaust and mistreatment/torture of mutants. I had a blast writing some of the history for this verse, and I’m not saying I want to write a Stucky centric spin off based on what I’ve written in here, but like also, I sort of want to write a Stucky centric spin off.

Also, it ends with a line to make you scream, you’re welcome.

“Pete?” Harry had to put his shoulder against the apartment door and shove to get it open. “Pete? What the heck is blocking your door? Where are you?”

“I’m here.” Peter hurried towards the front door and pushed boxes out of the way to let the Alpha through. “Sorry, I got busy and all my reading sort of expanded—” he gestured to the entire living room. “—everywhere. Did you bring me the movies?”

“I brought movies and I brought food.” Harry held up a to go box and then a stack of movies. “But I think you owe me for all the weird looks I got picking out all these titles.”

“Why were people looking at you weird?” Peter was starving, and he snatched at the food before Harry had even made it to the kitchen, throwing back the lid and exclaiming in delight over the chimichanga inside. “That video store is known for having obscure movies and random documentaries, I feel like these ones aren’t half as crazy as most of the stuff on the shelves.”

“The Rise of the Squatch.” Harry read out loud. “The Girl from Lava Island. The Creature from the Mines. This one is called ‘What Lurks Within’ and I dunno what that could possibly be about. What’s with all the cheesy monster movies and faux documentaries?”

“Every crazy story as a little bit of truth somewhere along the way,” the Omega mumbled through a big bite. “The stories that get told over and over had to be true at some point, right?”

“Uh huh.” Harry said skeptically. “Which is why you had me rent ‘It Came From the Manhole’, right? Because ‘It Came in the Manhole’ was right next to this one and that’s just straight up porn, Pete. It was just porn and I’ll give you a guess which movie case I grabbed for the first time around.”

“…well was it interesting porn?”

“It had MANHOLE on the cover, Peter!”

Peter almost choked when he tried to laugh around a too big mouthful of tortilla and Harry threw his hands in the air in frustration. “I didn’t even realize I grabbed the wrong one until I got to the front and the kid behind the desk asked to see my ID! He wanted to know if I’d need the coordinating magazine!”

“There’s a manhole magazine?” the Omega asked innocently, and Harry huffed, “If I wasn’t so happy to see you smiling again I’d bite you for that. I had to stand there while some high school
senior asked if I wanted to rent a nudie mag to go with my manhole porn. It was the worst three minutes of my life.”

“But–”

“Quickly superseded by the look I got from the same kid when I handed him—I” Harry checked another title. “—Baging Your BigFoot: How to Catch the Monster of Your Dreams. Cos that doesn’t make me sound horny for Sasquatch at all.”

“It’s not my fault monster documentaries are always titled to sound vaguely pornographic.” Peter offered his friend a conciliatory piece of chimichanga and smiled when Harry grumbled through the entire bite. “And thank you for getting them all for me. I’ve been so busy lately I’ve hardly left the house at all.”

“M’just glad you called me, Pete.” Harry leaned in to wipe at the side of Peter’s mouth, and when the Omega didn’t move away, he leaned in closer and placed a very soft, very chaste kiss on Peter’s cheek. “We’ve all been real worried about you lately. I mean we’ve been worried about you anyway but after the other night—”

“I called you guys to tell you I was okay.” Peter went back to eating so the Alpha wouldn’t see him frown. “You didn’t believe me?”

“You got so sad so quick Johnny actually threw up.” Harry pointed out and Peter grimaced apologetically. “Calling us two days later to say you’re fine and busy and not to worry wasn’t very reassuring.”

“Harry–”

“You’ve said you’re fine every day since you got home from the hospital.” the Alpha continued stubbornly. “And every single time you’ve been lying, Pete. You’re my best friend, we’ve been through everything together. Heats and ruts, AP Chemistry and physics, you were there when my Dad went off his medication for a while and I had to call the cops. What makes you think I can’t tell when you’re lying?”

“…right.”

“And what makes you think I can’t handle you telling me what’s going on?” Harry pressed. “I know Mary Jane is an Omega so you guys do that crazy intimate Omega bonding thing. And Gwen believes in forced cuddles and being there whether you want it or not, and I’m glad you and Johnny figured out what’s going on but Pete– this is me.”

The Alpha put a hand to his chest and held the other out to Peter. “This is me and you don’t gotta lie to me anymore. Tell me what happened or– or tell me why you can’t tell me what happened. Where did you go the other day? What’s with all these monster hunting books and movies? Talk to me, I’m here for you honey. I am.”

Peter tried to smile and Harry cajoled, “At least tell me why I had to go to the super creepy video store and convince an eighteen year old I grabbed the porn by accident. At least tell me that, I think I deserve to know.”

“You do deserve to know.” Tears pinpricked behind the Omega’s eyes, and Harry rumbled at him comfortably. “And I’m sorry I’ve been lying to you lately. And keeping you out of things. I’m sorry.”

“No one’s mad about it.” Harry pulled him in for a hug, holding Peter steady with a hand at the
base of his neck and another low on the Omega’s hips. “We aren’t mad, Pete. But we’re worried. And May is worried. And I dunno what to do about it, but I think I’d figure a few things out if you’d just talk to me.”

Peter was quiet and Harry added, “At least about the Bigfoot thing. Minimum.”

“Oh okay.” he nodded into Harry’s shoulder. “Okay I’ll - I’ll tell you.”

“I’m listening.”

“...what do you know about mutants?”

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The boxes had arrived the morning after Peter’s heat, appearing in his living room with the same abruptness that Cable used to bump in and out of his life. The Omega had tripped right over the first one on his way out of his bedroom, banged his knee on a second one and by the time the third caught him in the shins, Peter forced himself to stop walking, wake up all the way, and actually look to see what the hell was happening.

Boxes. Everywhere. Stuffed full to the brim and straining their seams with stacks and stack of paperwork, folders worth of redacted information, books about mythology and epic beasts and folk tales about shape shifters and early gods.

On top of an ancient German book of fairy tales was a note:

Find your answers but keep them to yourself. – C

And then scribbled along the bottom: This should free me from having to answer any questions. I don’t give a damn about your curiosity, don’t bother me anymore.

Peter laughed softly and carried the book with him to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. Of course the cranky Alpha didn’t want to stick around and answer questions, and while it was thoughtful to the point of being caring that Cable had taken the time to gather this information and apparently drop it through a wormhole into Peter’s apartment, the Omega was more excited by the prospect of reading through files that had so obviously been taken from somewhere secret.

The amount of redaction in the few papers he’d glimpsed in a box on his kitchen table was exhilarating, and the publication dates on some of the books meant the stories and legends inside had been accepted as truth for hundreds of years, perhaps even told as fact for thousands of years before that. Cable would have had to snatch the files from secure storage facilities, maybe the mutant had even gone back in time to find the correct information before it had been incinerated like most sensitive documents were.

The idea of boxes and boxes of dated and perhaps even classified information just piling up in his living room waiting to be read through— well there was a reason Peter had become a journalist, and it had less to do with working to better humanity and more to do with everything he absolutely had to know.

And he absolutely had to know all of this, so Peter had brewed another pot of coffee and went right to work.

It was some point near the end of the first day when the Omega dragged himself away from a file
about the LA riots and into a shower. He’d gone to push his hair out of his face and *ew* his fingers had snagged and pulled hard enough to hurt, the sudden pain made Peter jerk and then *oh no* he’d gotten a whiff of himself and immediately went to wash.

The perfunctory post heat shower hadn’t been enough to wash away months of depression, so Peter stayed beneath the water until it ran cold, soaping and resoaping his hair, scrubbing the lather down his body until his skin was pink from the loofah. Then it was his fingernails that needed clipped and filed down a little bit since anxiety had led the Omega to bite them too raged and pick his cuticles to bleeding and if he was going to do *that*, he supposed he should maybe comb his hair extra well and maybe shave the little bit of scruff he’d managed to grow in the last few months.

Showered and scenting clean again, Peter went right back to the couch to cross reference some of the information with what he could find online but then *fuck* he was suddenly starving, when was the last time he’d eaten at all?

Food was ordered and inhaled while the Omega kept one eye on the computer screen and the other flipping through page after page in the file and jotting down every note that came to mind–

–and somewhere along the way, clean and comfortable in his favorite pajamas and stuffed full on delicious food, his mind running a thousand miles a minute on something other than heartbreak–

–Peter fell right the hell asleep, no medication needed, and didn’t wake up again until morning.

And maybe he wasn’t *better* but for the first time since waking up in Haven Mercy Hospital, Peter felt like himself. He felt real and he felt normal so he got a cup of coffee and settled back in with a new notebook and pen, opened up a new file and got right back to work.

That had been five whole days ago, and the Omega had escalated from just reading files and comparing them to online articles to requesting books from the Central library and having them delivered, downloading full texts and printing out hundreds of pages so he could light up the words with neon highlighters so he wouldn’t lose a single bit of information.

It was hard to sleep with so much to process, but most nights Peter dropped off from sheer exhaustion and slept dreamless for eight *merciful* hours. His mind came back online razor sharp in the morning, his energy levels rising after a few days of solid sleep and consistent food and even though Peter wouldn’t let himself obsess about the mentions of time travel, he found relief for all his other *questions* in the hours and hours and hours worth of tracking mutant activity across the last century and a half.

The Omega was almost positive he’d found evidence of Logan in both World Wars and then shockingly, again in Vietnam. There just couldn’t be too many people with that signature *fuck off scowl* and the unnerving habit of coming back from seemingly any injury no matter how ruinous. The oldest records were sparse and hard to follow but Peter put the stories together as best he could until he could write the profile of a man– of a hero– who seemed to sign up for every fight only to disappear the moment it was over, usually after turning the tide of the battle with some feat that couldn’t possibly be anything other than supernatural.

There were a few instances that could have been Eddie, could have been the *black* that existed beneath the mutants skin and dug deep down into his soul. Stories of man eating shadows, of villages terrorized by something that came from the darkest nights, of blood curdling roars and the click clack of too many teeth, of hiss and the sound of liquid as something unknown slinked by filled more than a few books and Peter *devoured* every word.

He couldn’t stop himself from looking for signs of Wade, reading and rereading the texts he
thought could be about Logan hoping for a peek at a story about someone else immortal, someone scarred, someone they would have thought was a monster with the way his eyes went red and his fangs ran long.

Not that Wade was a monster, no no no, Peter screwed his eyes shut tight and whimpered into his palm even thinking about people calling his mate a monster but he would read thousands of reports like that if only it meant Wade was still around.

Five days of intense research had uncovered more information than Peter could have hoped to find in an entire lifetime of searching, but he’d still only barely broke into half the boxes Cable had inexplicably gifted him. The movies were a way to ease the strain on his eyes, to give his brain a break while still staying immersed in the subject of mutants. There were too many parallels between the horrors film makers insisted could be lurking just out of view, and the lists of confirmed mutant powers Peter had either seen firsthand in Haven or found records of in the books and files from the war and the riots. The movies would all be outlandish but they would have a bit of truth somewhere in the hours and minutes of terrible graphics and B-list actors and maybe—maybe even if there hadn’t been sign of Wade in the files, maybe someone like him would show up in the older films.

It was worth a try and it was worth the time and when Harry asked Peter to just *talk* to him, everything Peter had learned in the past several days leapt to the tip of his tongue and damn near spilled out.

But the information was Peter’s to have, the answers his alone to hoard, so the Omega couldn’t tell Harry everything, he could hardly tell him anything at all, so instead of blurting it all out and waving his hands wildly while spilling his guts, Peter took a deep breath and backed up a step and smiled, “Okay, but this is going to get a little crazy, okay?”

“I’ve known you forever, Pete.” The Alpha said confidently. “I can handle your crazy.”

“If you think you’re up for it.” Peter teased gently. “Try and keep up, okay?”

He couldn’t tell Harry everything, but he told the Alpha enough to explain the piles of books, the reams of paper downloaded and printed off of archives both national and conspiracy theorist-owned, the still growing collection of movies ranging from Men in Black and the Shape of Water clear through to low budget horror films and documentaries lacking any shred of scientific basis.

Peter showed Harry the wall-size map of the contiguous states he’d pieced together and pointed out the red stars as ‘credible, repeated sites of monsters’ instead of naming them as Havens for the mutant community. He held up vintage comic books about Captain America and the Red Skull and compared it to the very few files he’d managed to dig up on Project Rebirth, showed Harry highly redacted pages and pages of coordinates where Captain Rogers’ plane might have gone down.

The Omega flipped through no less than a dozen texts that all insisted Van Helsing had been a real life priest turned monster hunter, and another dozen that collectively agreed Big Foot wasn’t actually brown but was somehow bright blue and had definitely been seen wearing glasses on more than one occasion, and one beautifully inscribed religious text that spoke of an African goddess that controlled the weather.

Peter talked and talked and *talked*, put in different DVD’s and paused them at specific moments to show Harry where the film makers had seemed to draw their inspiration from these specific stories, and *look* this one goes back to before white men even came to the continent and don’t you think it could be true if the stories are older than we can document?
“You’re talking about dragons, Pete.” Harry stared down at a brilliantly colored photo and ran his fingers along the delicate script. “This is– I mean, no way I speak Chinese but–”

“It’s Cantonese.” the Omega corrected, hurrying over with another book to show off. “Saying every language that looks like that is Chinese is like saying all the indigenous people are from the same tribe. Different languages, different um– you know, there’s different tones to the way it’s spoken? And I’m pretty sure I read that they use a different style of characters. More traditional versus a simpler style.”

“…why would you know that?” the Alpha only blinked at him. “Pete, why do you know that?”

“Because I need to know.” Peter said quietly, as if that answered any questions at all. “I’ve got to know, Harry. I have so many questions and there’s so much information out there and I have to know.”


“Because it’s older than Mandarin by a couple thousand years, which means this is an older story and I want the oldest ones I can find.” Peter found the page he was looking for and tapped at it triumphantly. “And because it says in your book and again right here, that these– these monks. Or religious… people. I’m not actually sure if monk is the right word. But right here. A legend about one of them that turned to a dragon to protect the temple and his village. A dragon, Harry. Do you know what that means?”

“It’s an old story, Pete–”

“It means that at some point someone saw this guy breathe fire.” Peter stated. “Or call fire. Summon it. Whatever you want to call it. This story is thousands of years old and it’s talking about a mutant.”

“Okay but–”

“Right here.” The Omega got another book. “Skinwalkers. Yes, it’s probably some beautiful spiritual bond that we could never hope to understand or whatever, maybe you think it’s hallucinations or whatever. But what if it’s a shapeshifter, Harry? What if they are a mutant and there’s been a record of their existence for centuries?”

“What if they are?” Harry didn’t know if he was intrigued by all the data the Omega was throwing his way, or worried that Peter was so clearly obsessing about something that couldn’t end well.

People’s careers had been ruined chasing after mutant-related things, professors barred from universities, law enforcement imprisoned for less-than-responsible actions, chapters about riots and ethnic cleansing pulled from history books. Chasing stories about mutants couldn’t end well, and Harry didn’t know if the trouble it would bring was worth the way Peter’s eyes were lit for the first time months and the way his softly sweet honeysuckle and lavender scent had started to fill the air between them.

“What if they are mutants, and that kind of–of person has been around for thousands of years?” he asked again. “What does that matter Pete? Why are you so hooked on it right now?”

“Look at this.” Peter dragged a chart out from beneath an encyclopedia. “Look at this. Back in the forties there was this Project Rebirth and it’s rumoured to have created Captain America. Captain America, Harry. And the way they did it was mapping of mutant genes. Tracking people through generations. Hundreds of thousands of hours of work put into this project and after the war ended they just scrapped it, pushed it all away and piled it somewhere in the dark.”
“Wait so the guy with the shield and the tights from the comic books? He was a real person?”

The Omega held up a copy the Captain America vs The Red Skull excitedly. “They both were! Captain Rogers and this guy here? The Red Skull? Real people, and they weren’t mutants, they were the product of experimentation with mutants!”

“The American government doesn’t experiment on people, Pete.”

“Oh.” Peter’s smile dimmed around the edges. “Of course you still think that.”

“What?!”

But Peter was off again, shifting from talking about Project Rebirth to rambling about the riots in the seventies and a lab explosion that hadn’t been an explosion at all and the way storms increased in frequency along the Eastern Seaboard in a schedule that fit oddly in with a traditional school semester and sure, that could be coincidence but what if it was young mutants coming into their weather control powers and they were practicing during school hours and oh Harry! What if–

“Pete. Hey hey hey.” Harry grabbed at Peter when the Omega darted past again, framed Peter’s face with both his hands and looked deep into his eyes. “M’not gonna lecture you about how dangerous it can be to look too deep into what happened to the mutants, and m’not gonna tell you how damn crazy you sound talking about schedules and patterns and conspiracy theories about comic book heroes, alright?”

“You said you wanted me to tell you–”

“I did.” the Alpha interrupted. “And I’m glad you’re talking with me Pete, I am. But you gotta tell me, does this have anything to do with what happened to you? Or are you just hyper fixating to keep your mind off everything else, like you did switching from physics to journalism after Ben passed away. Is that what this is? Distraction?”

“Would that be okay?” Peter squeezed at Harry’s wrist and tried not to let the utter dejection show on his face. “Is it okay if I’m obsessing because I need to focus on something besides what happened to me?”

“It’s totally fine.” Harry left another one of those sweet, chaste kisses on the Omega’s cheek. “However you need to cope, honey. I’ll sit here and watch bad sci-fi films and listen to you draw wild conclusions all day. It’s fine. I’m here for you, I’m willing to listen.”

“You’re a good Alpha.” Peter swallowed back the immediate protests and the always present threat of tears and smiled up at his friend. “Thank you. Sorry I’m all crazy right now, but this is helping me cope. And it’s better than pills and sleeping all the time, right?”

“So much better than pills.” Harry agreed instantly. “I’ll turn on some music and order in some more food for later and we can spend a few more hours working this out and then I’ll stay over, make sure you sleep instead of writing books full of theories. I know how you get when you’re like this, you’ll go crazy just trying to get all your thoughts out on paper.”

“You know how I am.” Another smile, and Peter turned around before Harry saw it fall. “This is definitely not– not anything real. Don’t worry.”

Don’t worry.

It wasn’t Harry’s fault he couldn’t grasp the enormity of Peter’s project. The Alpha had been subjected to the same history classes they’d all sat through– ones that talked about uprisings and
violence as if a minority demanding rights was something worth deploying the army to crush. Ones that conveniently dialed down the Holocaust to a few paragraphs talking about the religious groups persecuted but not the mutants, never the mutants. Ones that presented Manifest Destiny and ‘made in God’s image’ as a valid reason to exterminate anyone who didn’t fit the mold or stood in your way.

It wasn’t Harry’s fault he didn’t understand why Peter was so passionate about it all. The Omega was only telling him half truths after all, changing the names of the Havens to make them just be paranormal sightings, downplaying the significance of Project Rebirth and skipping over the experiments and concentration camps and torture the mutants were subjected to just for a few vials of super soldier serum.

And of course, the Alpha had no way of knowing Peter cared so much because of Wade, because of Haven, because of Cable and time travel and the ring that never left his finger.

Harry had no idea, no way of knowing and Peter couldn’t possibly hold that over him, couldn’t possibly be irritated his friend assumed this was all coping-by-obsessing and didn’t mean anything solid and real.

It wasn’t Harry’s fault, so Peter tucked away his disappointment and decided to just try to have a decent night in with the Alpha. He felt better after heat, after talking with Cable and putting some truth to the emotions building painful behind his heart so maybe he could make it through an evening without breaking down or running away and maybe everyone would believe him when he said he was fine.

*It’s fine, I’m fine, everything’s fine.*

And tomorrow after Harry left, Peter would gather up some of his notes and go ask for answers from a man whose family name had been all over the Project Rebirth files, scribbled in margins next to blacked out test results, signed on the bottom of medical release forms and typed at the top as letterhead for some of the most horrifying information.

*Stark.*

Cable had made him swear to only use his answers for himself and not to cause a fuss but Tony Stark had to know something about all of this. The richest man in the city and one of the most influential men in the world had to have some answers and Peter could only hope his previous interactions with the powerful Omega would make Tony more receptive to answering a few questions.

How involved had Howard been with the soldiers and was Captain Rogers really buried above the arctic circle somewhere?

…and why were there blacked out test results and bloodwork from May of 1970 stuck between the pages of Howard Stark’s notes?

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“Peter Parker.” Tony Stark was the sort of Omega that commanded the attention of every person in any every he entered. It might have his perfectly styled hair and shockingly expensive suits, it might have been the mega watt smile and boisterous laugh, it might have been the weight of money and power around his shoulders or the intrigue of mystery and *addiction* that scented
stronger at the hollow of his throat and curve of his neck.

Either way, Tony Stark walked into a room and every head turned and Peter was no exception, scrambling to his feet and awkwardly smoothing his clothes down when the intimidating Omega came towards him.

“Peter, how are you? Heard these last few months have been rough.” Tony clasped both his hands over Peter’s and squeezed lightly. “I’m glad to see you up and around again, ready to write another world changing article? I have all sorts of dirt on Justin Hammer just waiting to be printed.”

“All sorts of dirt, huh?” Tony had the unnerving habit of wearing sunglasses everywhere, even inside, even in more intimate settings and one on one meetings and today was no exception. Peter blinked a few times trying to see past the blue tinted glass to the other Omega’s eyes but was given only the sight of raised eyebrows and a half expectant smile. “Oh uh, well maybe we can print scandalous exposes later. I’m actually here to ask a favor.”

“Well, I’m still going to hold you to the scandalous exposes.” Tony motioned Peter towards a chair and sat down opposite him. “What else can I do for—” his voice trailed off when he caught sight of Peter’s notebook and the hastily scribbled questions, and when the other Omega leaned in closer to scent Peter, the mood in the room shifted abruptly.

“What can I do for you, Mr. Parker?” Tony asked again, cooler this time. “And why don’t you tell me why you’ve had a recent run in with Mr. Summers?”

“Mr. Summers?” Peter ducked his head to discreetly sniff at his shirt. “It’s been most of a week, I didn’t realize I still smell burnt. Is it really obvious?”

“It is more obvious to people who don’t realize what they are smelling.” The other Omega pulled off his sunglasses and tilted his head, looking Peter over closely. “You aren’t surprised I knew about Mr. Summers.”

“No I’m– I’m surprised.” Peter admitted self consciously, “I was more worried about smelling gross in front of Tony Stark. Um. Sorry about that. How– how do you know Mr. Summers?”

“You could say we run in a few of the same circles.” the air seemed to ripple, and Peter’s gaze darted to the left when a stainless steel tumbler rattled at the bar. “You don’t become one of the most influential men in the country without knowing a few key players in the game. Why are you here?”

“I was hoping to ask you a few questions.” Peter settled a notebook and pen on his lap and hesitated, “About Project Rebirth and the role your father played in the experiments. But now I’d also really like to ask you just how much you know about Mr. Summers.”

“Project Rebirth.”The metal sculpture on the nearby end table slid a few inches forward and Peter took a deep breath in when the other Omega’s vanilla and clove scent flattened towards disapproving “Why are you asking questions about defunct science attempts from the forties?”

“Because I know it wasn’t just an attempt?” he said carefully. “I know Captain Rogers wasn’t just a good ol’ boy who joined the army and bulked up and went off to fight before selflessly sacrificing himself to save the world. I know there was a – a process and that it’s been scrubbed from history books because it’s considered a failure. But your father—”

“–was a bastard and a bully, but even he drew the line at the sort of shit they were doing back
then.” The pendulum inside the grandfather clock at the wall snapped forward and cracked the
glass casing when Tony gripped at the arms of his chair and Peter had the distinct, sudden notion
that he could be in danger.

“Um, Mr. Stark–”

“Enough.” The Alpha Pepper Potts was every bit as beautiful as her Omega mate and somehow
infinitely terrifying despite her sweet smile and slender frame. Her voice was soft but razor sharp
all at the same time, and when she put a hand on Tony’s shoulder the noise in the room stopped
immediately, the clock settling and silverware stilling and sculpture returning to its original place.
“Darling, that’s quite enough.”

“Ms. Potts.” Tony tipped his head back and trilled at his mate, and Pepper gave him an indulgent
smile in return. “I was only going to scare him a little. Just to be funny.”

“Well no one other than you thinks that little display is funny.”

Peter stared between them with wide eyes then gaped over at the broken clock and score marks at
the table. “What– what–? Sorry, was that supposed to be funny?”

“Tony thinks it’s hilarious to mess with people who are aware of his mutation but haven’t quite
figured out where his talents lie.” the Alpha said blandly. “Though judging from your expression, I
think you haven’t figured out that Tony has abilities and he’s being ridiculous for no reason at
all?”

“Oh my god, that’s why you know Cable.” It all made sense in a matter of seconds, and Peter
swung from feeling foolish and maybe even a little afraid to suddenly intrigued, and then slightly
hysterical at the thought of Tony Stark being a mutant. Tony Stark of all people. Mutant. “You run
in the same circles because you both are mutant.”

“You can’t see any other reason to spend time with the guy.” Tony grunted. “You still aren’t are
surprised as I’d thought you’d be.”

“No, my brain is–” Peter made a gesture around his temples. “But I’ve read so many things in the
last few days this is just another insane truth I’ll have to come to terms with later. So um, it’s metal
then? Your ability?”

“Metal and then some. You don’t think I build all those computers and tech by hand, do you?” Tony
slipped an arm around Pepper’s tiny waist and tugged the Alpha down onto the edge of his
chair, turning his head to push his nose into her shoulder for a moment. Pepper kissed his hair
immediately, then his cheek and when Tony looked up, his nose as well. It was sweet to see such
open affection between a mated pair, and Peter’s hand went to his scarred bonding spot
unconsciously when Pepper nuzzled into Tony’s ear and murmured something adoring at her
mate.

I miss you, Alpha my Alpha.

“How are you then, little love?” Pepper asked softly, and Peter jumped, snatching his hand back to
his lap when he realized the Alpha was watching him again. “You don’t just scent like Cable, you
scent mate sick. Are you alright?”

“I um–”

“Not real often a mutant mates a human.” Tony interrupted, his dark eyes flickering electric blue
for a split second. “I can scent that on you too. Where’s your mate, Peter?”

Miserable? Peter tried to smooth down his hair again, sitting up straighter in the chair. He thought he’d been doing better with everything lately, so being told he stank like Cable and still smelled mate sick and miserable stung a little.

“I don’t want to talk about my mate,” he said softly. “Could we– could we not do that, please?”

“Very well, Mr. Parker.” Pepper kept running light fingers through Tony’s hair, but her green gaze never left Peter as she said, “But you know, there are only a handful of reasons why you would be researching Project Rebirth, and within those reasons there is only the slimmest chance you’d come across Howard Stark’s name. You need to tell us immediately what sort of questions you are here to ask, and what sort of answers you are trying to find.”

“I’m not asking questions with the intention of hurting anyone.” the Omega reached up to press at his bonding spot again. “And the answers are only for myself. I swear it. I just want to know. Just want to understand.”

“Because of your mate.” Tony prompted, and Peter nodded slowly. “What does your mate have to do with Project Rebirth?”

“Nothing, I don’t think, but I don’t want to talk about it.” the Omega couldn’t seem to stop staring between the pair, taking in Tony’s startlingly blue eyes and the way every bit of metal in the room seemed to tilt to face him. Pepper didn’t seem perturbed by the show at all, and Peter put his questions about Rebirth aside to ask, “Mutants don’t usually mate humans?”

“Hardly ever.” Tony confirmed with a slight smile. “In fact, I don’t know a mixed mated pair at all, do you, my love?”

“Not at all.” Pepper’s skin shimmered and shifted across her face and down her neck, along her arms to her fingertips. Scaled pieces clicked together lightly, shining iridescent in the warm lights before melding back to perfectly smooth, there and gone before Peter even had the time to properly gauge. “Peter, you might be the first human I’ve ever met with a mutant Alpha.”

Peter couldn’t have formed a proper response if his life depended on it, struck silent by the display from the formidable pair, stunned speechless by the way Pepper’s gaze swirled fiery orange before settling back to green.

“See there, now he’s broken.” Tony scolded his mate teasingly. “All I did was rattle a few silverware, you’ve got him worrying you’ll get scaly and burn him to a crisp!”

“Hush you.” Pepper warned playfully just as Peter managed a squeaky, “You’re a dragon!?!?”

“Most people assume I’m a snake.” the Alpha’s eyes flickered orange again. “Thank you for choosing something much more beautiful to compare me to.”

“That– that wasn’t a yes?”

“Well it wasn’t a no either.” Tony waved his hand as if dismissing the topic entirely– as if the topic of dragon mutants could be dismissed– and leaned forward in his chair to pin Peter with a measuring look. “Now listen, kid. I’m going to be upfront and honest with you, only because you scent like Cable and have an entire notebook full of questions which means you probably know most of the answers I’m going to give you, and simply want confirmation.”

“Uh, yes sir?”
“Smart Omega.” Pepper said approvingly, and bent to give her mate one last kiss. “Be nice to him, Tony. He might be brilliant but he is still mate sick, do you understand? Gentle with your words.”

“You say that as if I am ever anything but thoroughly patient and whole heartedly kind.” The Omega made an affronted sort of noise and Pepper only laughed at him, waved at Peter over her shoulder, and closed the door to the living room as she went.

“Alright then.” the moment his Alpha had gone Tony straightened in his chair and squared his shoulders, commanding the room again with barely any effort. “Project Rebirth. You know about our frosty friend lost somewhere beneath the ice?’

“Yes.” Peter checked his notes. “Yes, Captain Rogers. His plane was put down over the Arctic circle.”

“Mmm-hmm.” Tony pursed his lips in thought and Peter waited only somewhat impatiently for the other Omega to choose his words. “Alright listen. Project Rebirth wasn’t the patriotic endeavor they tried to make it out to be, do you understand? They took in poor kids from the street, mostly mutants but some just human and turned them into lab rats. Took what they needed from one boy, pumped it into another and more often than not, killed both when nothing worked the way it was supposed to. Mixing DNA isn’t a real thing we can do now, there was no way a bunch of hack-job scientists working out of a basement could do it without mass casualties.”

“…Captain Rogers?”

“He was the first attempt that worked.” A glimmer of regret sliced through Tony’s vanilla clove scent. “My Dad used to say Steve never would’a signed up for that project if he’d known what was really in the so called super soldier serum. But he didn’t know because no one would ever say and he went from a sickly kid who could barely climb stairs to someone who could lift cars over his head within an hour. An hour. Even by today’s standards those sort of results are amazing, back then it was a goddamn miracle. Steve Rogers was a walking miracle, bought and paid for with the blood of a hundred different innocents and when they realized they’d created a literal god among men—”

“–they put him in the ice.”

“Dad stormed off the project when they realized they planned to crash the Valkyrie.” Tony said quietly. “Then he spent the next forty odd years searching for the crash site to try and rescue Rogers. Didn’t ever find him, so he spent any extra time he had searching for the cyborg they’d created after losing Rogers. Not as much is known about that one, but rumours are it was another kid from Steve’s neighborhood. Bright eyed and gung ho about serving and got himself turned into a monster.”

Peter grimaced as he circled the word ‘cyborg’ in his notes and Tony clicked his tongue sympathetically. “They tried it all over again in the seventies, even came to my Dad to help with it but he had his hands full with me so he turned them down. Some bloodthirsty bastard named Striker kidnapped and tortured and killed dozens of mutants trying to find the right amount of powers that could co exist in a body without self destructing. He wanted another Captain America but less along the lines of national hero and more along the lines of personal assassin. He was shut down after a few years, but by that time the damage had been done and all the mutants pretty much went underground. It was easier to hide than it was to stay public and go through all that in another twenty or thirty years.”

“I found mostly redacted paperwork from May of 1970.” Peter held up a copy of the page. “Is that—is this you?”
“It’s probably me.” Tony started forward like he wanted to take the page, but then shook his head and sat back again. “My Dad had my blood tested when I was kid to try and confirm a theory.”

“What was the theory?”

The other Omega watched Peter for a long minute before finally saying, “That it skips a generation in males, but the Omegas are always carriers whether the family has a history of mutation or not.”

“Wait. What?”

“The mutant gene.” The corner of Tony’s mouth lifted in a half smile when Peter started scribbling notes just as fast as he could. “When present in a bloodline, it skips generations between presenting in males, but not females. Pepper’s mom was a mutant along the same talents, so was her grandma and so was Great Granny Potts. My dad wasn’t a mutant, and as far as we know, neither was Grandapa Stark. But male Omegas carry the gene no matter what so—”

He lifted his hand and snapped his fingers and Peter jumped when the metal sculpture closest to him abruptly melted, liquefying into a shiny puddle of silver right there in the center of the table.

Oh holy shit.

“So I carry the gene.” Peter pointed at himself, swallowing around a little burble of hysteria. “I carry the gene?”

“Whether you have anyone in your family mutant or not.” Tony confirmed. “You’re not mutant but you’ll still pass it on to any kids you have.”

Oh ho ho holy shit.

“My mate and I won’t ever have kids.” Tony said then, and he sounded sad about it. “We always want to think the world has changed and attitudes towards mutants has changed but the fact is, it will never be safe to be us. Pepper and I are on the cover of every magazine, on television for interviews and always at one social event or another. Our kids would be so widely watched that they’d never have a chance to be normal anyway, and when you add in the absolute guarantee of mutant abilities—” he shrugged. “–it’s not an option. We won’t do it to them.”

Peter tapped his pen on the paper a few times then asked quietly, “Could I ask you what happened when you— when you came into your powers? Is that alright?”

“I was fourteen.” Tony launched right into the story, visibly relieved to be talking about something other than all the horrors his kind had been subject to for decades. “I had just gotten accepted to MIT and met my roommate, James Rhodes. The first night I had a nightmare about being trapped and overwhelmed and nervous about starting college and my powers surged while I was asleep. I ended up warping the bunk beds, twisting the metal into pretzels and trapping myself and Rhodey inside the mess.”

“I woke up screaming.” The Omega’s scent swelled with fondness. “And Rhodey talked me right out of the panic, right through undoing it all, then climbed up into my bed and hugged me tight. I could have killed him when my abilities spiked like that, and by all accounts he should have ran for his life, but he took the time to comfort me instead. He’s an actual saint. A literal angel for putting up with my shit all these years.”

“James Rhodes.” Peter thought back to the ceremony several months ago when he’d received the grant money from Stark Industries, to the Alpha in full military dress that had been standing next to Tony. “Colonel James Rhodes?”
“One and the same.”

“Is he—!”

“No.” Tony shook his head, adoration coloring his scent warm. “James is wholly human, which is why I’m sure he’s a saint. No one else could possibly put up with me.”

Peter was quiet, thoughtful as he wrote down a few more things, careful to leave names out of his notes in case anyone came across them later.

“Your mate is mutant and you smell like Cable.” Tony broke the silence again. “Is there a reason for that?”

“Yes.” Peter said shortly. “But uh— it’s not the one you’re thinking.”

“You have no idea what I’m thinking.”

“Okay but I promise?” he laughed a little. “I promise that whatever you are thinking about me and Cable, the truth is even stranger. He is not my mate, no way.”

“Well thank god for small mercies.” Tony nodded. “Be careful down this path, Peter. Not everyone will be willing to talk like I am and most will be angry you’re asking questions at all.”

“I just want the answers for myself.” Peter repeated softly. “I just need to know, I have to know. I can’t explain it but—”

“–Do you believe in soulmates, Pete?”

“Yes.”

“Well, since you’re the first person I’ve ever known who was human and had a mutant mate.” The Omega shrugged, but his eyes were kind. “Maybe soulmates is the only explanation you need for why you need to know everything about your Alpha’s people. Hm?”

Peter left a few minutes later, stepping out the door with a firm handshake and a smile and the reassurance that he could come back any time, and so long as he was keeping the answers for himself Tony would be happy to talk with him some more.

“He’s so sad.” Pepper curled close into Tony’s arms and kissed her mate on the cheek. “It breaks my heart to see anyone sad from mate sickness, but it’s worse when they are so young. Mid twenties is too early to know that sort of grief.”

“Mmm.” Tony hummed in agreement and soaked in his Alpha’s scent for a minute. “I know someone who might know what happened to Peter, or at least why he’s been around Cable of all people.”

“Who’s that?”

“Well.” The Omega pulled out his phone and scrolled through contacts until he found a number he only called on the rarest occasions. “There’s only one person Cable trusts with his business in this particular timeline, even though I’ll never figure out why. The guy is a literal quack.”

Pepper chuckled under her breath when Tony dialed the number labelled “Neighborhood Quack” and then laughed louder when the phone answered on the first ring and the initial outburst from the other line was all swearing and various threats about what would happen the next time a Stark
called his phone.

“Always good to hear from you, pal.” Tony said blandly, and on the other line Hank Pym screeched, “Don’t you call me pal, kid. I was teaching doctorate level university classes while you were still shittin’ in your diapers. What in the hell do you want?”

“Been spending much time with Cable lately?” It took a considerable amount of self control for Tony to not insist he could have taught Hank’s doctorate level classes while in diapers, and his moment of maturity was rewarded by a sweet kiss from his Alpha.

“I hardly think that’s any of your business!”

“No?” Tony challenged. “Cos I’ve got an Omega in here stinking like Cable and mate sickness while asking me about mutants and Project Rebirth. You’re the only one that grouch talks to in these parts, so I figured you’d know something!”

“Well if I knew something I wouldn’t tell a Stark. You’d sell the secrets for petty cash!”

“Old man, your secrets aren’t even worth the pettiest of cash—”

“Alright.” Pepper snatched the phone away. “Doctor Pym, this is Pepper Potts.”

“…oh hell.”

“Yes, that’s right. I understand you and my mate have some history, but I’d very much appreciate it if you helped me, do you understand?”

“…yes Ms. Potts.”

“Thank you very much, Doctor Pym. I’m looking forward to talking with you again later this evening.”

“…yes Ms. Potts.”

Pepper hung up and her mate whistled appreciatively. “How on earth did you manage that, my love?”

“I’m fairly certain my mother breathed fire on him at one point or another.” the pretty redhead said demurely, far too innocent for the way her eyes were sparkling. “Turns out you only have to do that once to put the fear of God into a man.”

“I love you.” Tony said seriously and the Alpha patted at his cheek and crooned, “I know you do, darling. I know.”

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“Harry says you’ve got a thousand books in your apartment.” Gwen shoved a spoonful of ice cream into her mouth, then offered Peter a bite as well. “Oh, and he was bitching about you making him rent porn? What’s that about?”

“For the last time.” Peter took a tiny bite of the heart attack Gwen called dessert and shook his head. “It’s not my fault the video store rents sketchy documentaries right next to the porn. Also not my fault that Harry grabbed the wrong one.”
“I’m just saying, if there was an Alpha you wanted to pick out porn with, I’m definitely the better option.”

“GWEN!”

“I’M JUST SAYING!” The Alpha darted close for a kiss and then held up another bite for Peter. “Eat, pretty Omega. You’re practically skin and bones these days and I miss your butt. Fatten them cheeks up again, kiddo.”

“You’re being terrible tonight.” Peter informed her. “Honestly just terrible. What’s going on?”

“Seriously. I’m just happy you called me for ice cream.” Gwen admitted. “Just glad you’re out and around and being yourself again. Sorry if I’m being terrible but I’ve got three months worth of shenanigans to get up to with you, you ready for all this?”

“Yeah Gwen.” Peter squeezed at the blonds hand affectionately. “I am ready for some shenanigans with–”

–he stopped mid step, froze halfway between one stair and the next, skin crawling with goosebumps and hair standing on end, breath constricting in his chest and throat closing up until he was seeing spots in front of his eyes.

“Oh woof.” Gwen inhaled and made a face. “What smells like over ripe Alpha? One of your neighbors in rut, Pete? Or newly mated? No one stays off suppressants long enough to scent that strong unless they are honeymooning. Don’t they know there’s hotels for that? Wow.”

The Omega didn’t answer, and Gwen snapped her fingers in front of Peter’s face to try and get him to blink. “Pete? Hey, what’s wrong? Alpha scent bugging you? You okay?”

“I–I–” Peter peeled his tongue off the roof of his mouth and tried again. “I um– Gwen, you need to go.”

“I need to go?” she asked in confusion. “You aren’t gonna invite me in? We’re like three feet from your apartment and–”

“You need to go.” Nothing more than a whisper, but Peter’s dark eyes flashed in determination even as he shoved the Alpha away. “Leave me alone. Please. I’ll call you but you need to go now.”

“Pete–”

“I’m fine.” he pushed harder, forcing her down the hall. “Gwen, I’m fine I promise but I need you to leave right now. I’ll call you, I promise. I’ll call you but you have to leave. Leave!”

Gwen grumbled all the way back down the stairs but Peter tuned it all out. His fingers were shaking as he tried to get the door unlocked, his keys failing once and then twice before sticking into the slot and turning the knob to open.

His apartment was dark, every light off and every curtain drawn and that wasn’t how he had left it, but Peter didn’t care about that right now, he didn’t care about anything right now.

He shut the door behind him and then leaned back against the wood, shut his eyes tight and opened his mouth to inhale a scent so potent he could nearly taste it on his tongue, feel it rushing in his veins and settling low into his soul.
My mate.

“….Al– Alpha?”

And a hoarse voice from across the room, deep and smooth and so so beautiful the Omega’s knees nearly gave out right there–

“I’m here, Pete.”

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(Thank you for all the great comments last chapter! They were all so good and I loved them!)

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