### Red Heat

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### Red Heat

**by** [sciencefictioness](http://archiveofourown.org/users/sciencefictioness)

**Summary**

Eren is one of the few Alphas who go into rut without the presence of an Omega in heat nearby, and after suppressing it for nearly two years, the drugs are no longer working. As a last resort he heads to an Omega refuge, hoping to find a suitable, but temporary, mate. When he finds one lost in a fatal 'red heat', he'll do whatever it takes to ease his suffering.

*When Levi's fist sounded out against the wood, the Alpha did not open it right away. Leaned into it, pressing his forehead against the smooth surface. Felt the pull of the Omega on the other side, just as he had that first day in the shelter. A whole new kind of gravity that tugged him not down to the earth but straight towards Levi. The laws of the universe shifting to bring them closer together, and Eren could not resist their inevitability.*
Refuge

Eren was stalking around his house, pulling his clothes on with vicious jerks and slamming every door he touched when his phone rang. It took everything in him not to throw it across the room as he picked it up, eying the name that lit the surface with a growl. Mikasa. Even just looking at it pissed him off, but she would not relent until he answered, so he swiped his finger across the screen.

"What. Do. You. Want." She had the balls to laugh, and not just because they were on the phone and not face to face. Mikasa would've laughed just as hard standing right in front of him.

"I see they're not working." He rolled his eyes, hitting the wall nearby with his fist hard enough that it would've broken, if it was a normal wall anyway. Instead the wood just shuddered under his fist, and that made him even more furious.

"No, Mikasa, they're not. Is that all you called for?"

"Did you take an extra dose?" Eren growled again, voice vibrating with the clear tones of a threat. If there had been another Alpha present in the room, it would have been an unmistakable challenge, one that could very well end in bloodshed. Even he could smell his scent rising up, sharp and full of unspoken threats.

"I took six extra fucking doses. Any more and I'll start seizing. Now, anything else I can help you with?"

"What are you going to do? They won't let you go into work at the dojo like this. I told you, you should just go to an Omega bar and be done with it." Eren's lip curled in snarl, and he knew if he had been looking in a mirror that his green eyes would be glowing gold, bright with emotion.

"No self respecting Omega goes to a bar like that. They all smell like chemical hormones and heat replicators, along with a dozen other Alphas. I feel nauseated just thinking about it."

"It's your own fault for suppressing yourself for so many ruts in a row. Never even mating once." Mikasa laughed out loud again. "An Alpha virgin, how goddamned ridiculous. Only you could pull some stupid shit like that off, Eren. You had plenty of time to go find a willing Omega for one of your ruts. They may be submissive by nature, but they're not all mindless and mewling, you fucking self righteous ass. You don't have to bond with them, you know." Most Alphas could not go into rut unless there was an Omega in heat nearby, but Eren was one of the ten percent or so who did. Lucky him, he had to deal with his rut every month, which was unheard of. Even the other Alphas he knew that went into rut independently only had to endure it every three or four months. They took suppressants, just like an Omega suppressing a heat, albeit with different hormones. The pills were not designed to be used as often as Eren was forced to use them, however, and after taking them for the last two years in a row it had finally taken its toll. They had grown less and less effective and this time, they were not working at all. Not only that, but even in an unsuppressed rut, the urges were usually possible to resist. If you stayed home away from any trace of an Omega, locked yourself away until it passed, it was bearable. Right now?

Eren would be lucky to get to the Omega refuge without taking one off the street in a lust filled daze. He didn't want to mate, didn't want to bond, didn't want to be responsible for an Omega under his care. Eren just wanted to live his life in peace. That was apparently asking too much. He remembered that Mikasa had been talking to him, telling him he could mate with an Omega without forging the bond. Yeah fucking right.
"Yes, but they all want to. Every fucking one. An Alpha with no trace of an Omega's scent on him, they can't wait to mate and try and seal the bond with me."

"So, your going to the shelter, then?" She sounded condescending, like the very idea was absurd.

"At least there might be an Omega there who's in the same shape as me. Can't suppress anymore, doesn't want some whore of an Alpha that stinks like fake Omega mating pheromones, can't go much longer without a mating. I have a chance of actually getting away with a one time mating there, instead of having someone trailing after me for weeks on end, conveniently coming to find me when their next heat is on them." She tisked at him. Fucking tisked.

"Well, whatever. I just wanted to make sure you hadn't killed anyone, and that you knew better than to try to go to work that way. I'll see you in a week. If you're not in jail for murder, anyway."

She hung up before he could reply, and that was just as well, because nothing that he could say would properly reflect the vicious fury rolling through him. He stood at his door, holding the knob and trying to will the roiling emotions down inside him, making a futile attempt to reign in the scents he was giving off in waves. If he couldn't get his pheromones to ease back a little, people would be scurrying away from him in the streets, and every Alpha he passed would be trying to pick a fight with him. Normally it was easy for him to resist a brawl, but right now only blood on his hands or an Omega underneath him was going to settle these instincts at all, and the former only temporarily. When he finally threw the door open to step outside, a wave of scent assaulted him, full of submission. Eren started to growl, narrowing his eyes at the tiny blonde Omega before him, barely a couple of days off from her heat.

"Historia. What the fuck are you doing." He met her wide eyes, and she was biting her lip, her body language meek and obedient, everything about her riling him up further.

"I-I'm sorry, but Armin said you were in rut and-"

"And you thought you'd come here to fuck with me, about to be in your unsuppressed heat and all? I don't have the patience for this." Eren liked Historia, got along with her as well as he got along with anyone, but he did not want to mate with her. Didn't want to mate with any female, let alone one who belonged to another Alpha, even if they had not sealed the bond. Historia was Ymir's, and everyone knew it, though no one knew why they didn't just forge the bond already. Ymir was aching to put her mark on Historia, but the little Omega was resisting for some reason, and it was them, not the Alpha, who decided when that mark graced their necks.

"No, no that's not it! I... I have work today, and some errands to run before I go home for the week. I've suppressed for six months now, I can't this time, and Ymir's mad at me! She said she won't scent mark me or mate with me unless I'm ready to let her seal the bond with me!" Eren's instincts were starting to override his good sense, and this Omega's scent was too close, too strong. Only the barely detectable remnants of Ymir's pheromones lingering in her skin kept him from wanting to throw her inside and take her against her will. Eren would not do anything to Historia that she did not want, not really. But the urges there were dark and undeniable, and he gritted his teeth in disgust with them.

"Then that's what you should do. You two love each other. You're being stubborn. You need to get away from me, Historia. I don't want to mate you, I care about you, and I respect Ymir, but I am about to fucking lose it here." Her hands were in the air in a placating gesture, and she took a couple of steps back, reaching into her purse to get a white handkerchief, which she held out to him.

"I just want you to scent mark me! I won't be able to even buy food to last through my heat if I go to the store this way, there'll be Alpha's all over me! You don't even have to touch me, just use this and I'll rub it on! I could literally smell you from the end of the driveway. It'll be strong enough!" Eren
knew she was right, could feel the oil just under his skin, ready to pour from his glands at the slightest touch.

"And the next time Ymir smells you, and comes looking for my blood?" Historia's eyes went hard, no trace of the submission that was present before.

"I have every right to decide when I bond, and who I bond with. I asked for her help, and she refused me. I told her I was coming to you, asking for this. She had her chance to stop me. All it would've taken was her wrist on my skin." Angry tears filled those eyes now, threatening to fall. "Is it so much to ask to want some time?" Eren sighed, snatching the white cloth from her hands and running it over the swollen glands in his neck, felt it grow wet with scent. He handed it over to her, and her nose wrinkled in disgust at the powerful smell. It was not a bad smell, but it was not Ymir's, and Eren knew that was the problem. An Omega that was not attached to an Alpha they were mating would have been unable to resist the scent, would rub their faces into it with a moan. This Omega instinctively recoiled from it, even as it was in her hand.

"Jesus, you asked me to, now you make that fucking face. Sorry I don't smell like your Alpha."

"No, no... It's... I'm sorry. I'll go. Thank you, Eren." She was running off, her better judgement finally taking over to get her away from the Alpha before her, standing on the edge of madness and ready to pull her down with him.

Somehow Eren made it to the Omega refuge without incident, probably due to the look on his face and the scent that had everything within a quarter mile of him running for cover. The shelter was a place for Omegas to go during their heat if they had nowhere else that was safe. Whether they lived with an Alpha that they did not seek to mate with, or if they lived alone without someone to look out for them, or even if they just stayed in a bad neighborhood, they could come there. Sometimes they came just for shelter when they could no longer suppress their heats, and other times the drugs were not working properly and they stayed long enough to find the right prescriptions and dosages. Every Omega was different, and not all the suppressants worked the same on each one. Then there were also those who had not mated for a long time. If an Omega went too long without mating, the pills would not work to fight the hormones of the heat anymore, and they would be forced to ride out the raging lust and pain of it on their own. Many of them came to a refuge to find an Alpha to mate with in a safe environment, surrounded by the many Betas who worked their to guarantee their protection. It was much less dangerous for them to come here and let any Alphas who sought an Omega to be vetted by the workers here, to ensure that they consented and were not forced into anything. Better than an Omega bar, to be sure, which was full of the worst kinds of both of them. Alpha's who preyed on Omegas, and Omegas who took illegal drugs to simulate a heat, just to lure them in. They were snake pits, and Eren would gut himself before he was desperate enough to go to one.

When he opened the door to enter the waiting area a bell sounded, alerting the employees of his presence, though it was unnecessary. Every Omega and Beta on the fucking premises could smell Eren a mile away. There was a counter, with reinforced glass stretching up to the ceiling for security, just to ensure the safety of the Omegas inside. No one would be able to go through to the living areas unless they were buzzed in by an employee, one of whom was headed up to the counter now, and Eren started in surprise. He had brown hair, face covered in freckles and a permanent grin on his face. Eren knew this Beta well.

"Marco? You work here?" Marco was looking at Eren in shock, nose wrinkling just like Historia's had at the overwhelming scent he was putting off.
"Yeah, I volunteer here sometimes. It's a nice change, and I like to help out. But Jesus, Eren. We only have heat suppressants here, none for rut. You have to get those from the pharmacy on the other side of town." Eren was shaking his head, a resigned look on his face.

"Trust me, I tried. Three different kinds, double doses of all of them. It's not happening, my friend. It's either come here and try to find an Omega, or go to the hospital and let them lock me up. Which, at this point, fuck they'd probably tranq me. I'm not really up for it." Marco's eyes were wide, partly due to the scent that was now permeating the entire building, partly because of the shock that Eren was still standing with that many drugs in his system, instead of on his knees in a stupor. "Can you help me out?" Marco shrugged. He hated this part of his job, it made him feel seedy and gross, but many of the Omegas were here for this specific reason, and he knew his friend must be desperate to even consider such a thing.

"Maybe. Depends on you, depends on them. Do I need to give you the speech?" Marco handed him some papers through a slot in the glass for him to fill out, just some basic information for the refuge's records. Neither Alphas nor Omegas could get any type of venereal disease, so it was mostly just so they knew who had come and gone, in case anything untoward happened. Eren jotted down his info quickly before handing the forms back.

"You know I'm not going to lay a hand on any unwilling Omega, Marco. Fuck, I don't want to even touch a willing one. Just don't have much choice." Marco smiled a sympathetic smile at him as he pressed the buzzer, and Eren opened to door to head into the shelter. The scent of Omega assaulted him, sharp and unmerciful, and he leaned over with his hands on his knees, breathing deep, trying to steady himself.

"Fucks sake." Deep breaths would not work to calm him here, not with the hormones so thick in the air he could taste them. Marco laughed, patting him on the shoulder.

"I know. Sorry. Here, let's head back this way to the meeting room, and you can sit down and have some coffee or something while I see if anyone wants to talk to you."

"I feel like I'm going in for a police lineup." The beta shrugged, leading them down a long hallway.

"Well, there is a one way mirror that they can go look through. Y'know, see if you're a hideous beast or not."

Eren laughed, following him down the corridor until a scent filled his nose, sweeter than anything he'd ever smelled in his life. If he thought he had been desperate before, he was wrong. It sang through his veins now, and he shot impossibly hard in his jeans. Eren froze outside the door, which was red where all the rest were white, and pressed his face into it, eyes closed.

"E-Eren?" He resisted the urge to turn the knob, knowing he was not allowed to go into any of the rooms here as he pleased, but he could not tear his nose away. His voice was a breathy whisper when he spoke.

"Who's in here, Marco?" The beta looked sad, biting his lip as he glanced at the red surface of the door.

"An Omega in their red heat." Well, fuck. If an Omega went long enough without mating, after awhile they would go into a heat that would never relent. They called it a 'red heat', because eventually the Omegas began bleeding from their eyes and mouth. After being lost in it for a month or so, the Omega would die if they did not mate. Usually it only happened for one reason.

"Their Alpha died?" If a pair had been bonded for long enough and the Alpha died, most Omegas
would not take another. They went into their last heat, and let death take them. As they got close to the end, those who had been bonded would begin to hallucinate their lost Alpha. In ancient times it was thought that the spirit of the Alpha had come back from the afterlife to claim their mate one last time. Now, it was viewed more as a neurological phenomenon, the brain giving the Omega what it wanted most in the world to ease their suffering as they passed. But Marco was shaking his head no. No? "Then why?" There was no Alpha he knew who would let an Omega die rather than mate them, no matter what they looked like or how disagreeable they were. It went against their very nature to allow one to suffer in any way. Alphas protected, and letting an Omega die was a failure at the most basic of their duties.

"Off the record? He was part of an illegal fighting ring. They had him in a harem, but when they tried to mate him he fought them so viciously that they gave him suppressants and put him the pits to fight. No one would put their money on an Omega, and he made them a lot of cash that way, beating Betas and even Alphas. When they finally set the fighters free and found an Omega among them, they didn't know what to do with him. He'd been on unapproved suppressants for so long that his insides were all fucked up. He didn't even go into a heat at all for over a year. Now none of the suppressants will work on him, and he refuses to mate any Alpha he meets, male or female. Says he'd rather die. Now, well...." Now he was in his red heat, and he would get his wish. Every protective urge rose up in Eren, rankling at the very idea of an Omega hurting when he could ease it. He found his hands stroking at the surface of the door, biting his lip between his teeth as he took in that powerful scent. He. It was a male, who would literally die without an Alpha. The very definition of someone who needed Eren.

"How old is he?" An unmated Omega would probably not last past twenty, twenty two maybe.

"He's twenty seven." **Fuck.** That was an incredibly long time for him to have lived that way, and part of it was probably those suppressants they'd had him on, tearing up his body just to keep him out of heat. Eren was rubbing his face back and forth against the door, feeling like everything there was for him lie behind it. All he needed, all he wanted, separated from him by this thin barrier. Marco was wary, looking at the Alpha as though he was ready to to call for help and restrain him if it was necessary.

"Can I meet him? Or does he refuse even that?" His hands were still sliding up and down the door, his entire body pressed against it now, seeking to get closer to that perfect being locked away inside.

"Uh... Every Omega who takes shelter here and goes into a red heat has to allow Alphas to meet them. It's one of the rules, on the off chance they find one they're willing to accept. To save their lives, if at all possible. So, eh, he can't really say no to meeting you. But he's met about two dozen in the last two weeks, and told them all to go to hell." Eren opened his eyes, temple pressed into the red wood, and even he could sense the golden light coming off them as he looked over at Marco.

"Let me in here. Can I go alone?" Marco was nodding.

"There's a camera. I'll have to watch while you are in here. If you go all savage on him, I'll have to gas the room. Okay?" Eren was nodding, feeling drugged by the intoxicating scent that drifted under the doorway. Instead of making him more ravenous, he felt soothed somehow, like his body had decided he'd found what he was searching for. Marco pulled out a set of keys, unlocking the door before crossing the hallway and entering a room full of television monitors. When the door closed behind him, Eren put his hand on the knob, turning it with deliberate slowness before he went inside.

**Oh, God....**

The Omega was on the bed, shirtless, little body twisted up in the sheets, raven black hair shaved into an undercut but ragged in his eyes. The amount of musculature he had was staggering for an
Omega, abs and chest rigidly defined, enough to easily pass as an Alpha if that was all he was being judged on. He had been trembling wildly when the door open, but now he struggled to still it, almost succeeding. His body was covered in a sheen of sweat, breath coming in pants as he fought the force of the heat. He lifted his head up at the sound of the door opening, and when those eyes locked on Eren he froze in his tracks. So beautiful. His eyes were gray, and even though they were rimmed in red and surrounded by dark shadows Eren had never seen the likes of them anywhere before. Shining from within, lit up with hunger long denied. They narrowed on the Alpha, expecting one of the Betas who worked there no doubt, and Eren could hear him breathing in, knew the Omega couldn't help but scent that he was in rut. Lust was still ruling the Alpha, acidic and hazing his eyes in red, but it was not as bad as it had been before. Like a hunger that abates slightly at the sight of food, knowing it will soon be soothed.

"Get out." His voice was shredded but sweet, and Eren wanted to hear it calling out his name in ecstasy. It was easy to tell that the heat was draining him, bones more prominent than they should be, lips thin and pale like the rest of his skin. Eren walked over to the bed, and instead of shrinking back like an unwilling mate, the Omega sat up, body tensing as though he was ready to fight. Eren had never seen an Omega show aggression this way, and it did strange and wonderful things to him inside.

"Not yet. I came to meet you. My name's Eren." Those long fingers closed into fists, ready to lash out at the Alpha at the slightest provocation. Eren worked at a dojo, trained people in hand to hand combat and various martial arts, and almost as much as he wanted to mate this Omega he wanted to fight him. Wanted to watch that lithe little body ducking and dodging, striking out at him with his hands and feet, rolling and shifting and raining down blows on him. It would be more beautiful than any work of art. More magnificent than the sunrise.

"Give it up, Alpha. Go find some little Omega female that needs mating. I don't need anything from you." Eren shook his head again, sitting down on the bed near the Omega just to get closer to that smell. He wanted to press his face into that neck, douse him in his scent, drown him in it. Cover him up so that no other Alpha would dare even lay eyes on him. Feel that feverish skin on his.

"I don't like females. You'd rather die than mate, even once?" The Omega bared his teeth at Eren, and he felt his cock twitch at the sight. There was submission filling the scents in the air, luring Eren in with everything he was, instincts screaming to be mated and still he was growling, and posturing, ready to resist. It was the most breathtaking thing Eren had ever seen, and he wanted to see more of it.

"There's no 'once' with Alphas. I've seen it. They take an Omega and even when they refuse the bond, it doesn't matter. They scent mark and bully until they get what they want. Then they expect to have a simpering little weakling, mute and compliant, who will clean their house and cook their meals and get down on their knees in submission, obeying their words like they were law. Fuck. That."

"Not all Alphas are the same." The Omega hissed out his words, muscles tensing, feet edging underneath him in readiness to pounce even as weak and shaky as he was, lost in the sway of his hormones.

"Yes you fucking are."

"Are all Omegas like you then?" Those brows furrowed, gray eyes sparkling with fire. "I've certainly never met one ready to fight me, especially when I'm in a rut this powerful. They fall all over themselves to either get away from me or try and mate me. And you want to rip out my throat. So how can you know we are all the same?" Eren reached up, rubbing his fingers into his scent gland
and snatching the Omega's wrist, seeking out the scent gland there and coating it in his Alpha pheromones. The Omega pulled back, hissing, but when the smell washed over him his entire body sagged in relief, eyes falling shut, instincts overwhelmed with bliss at the Alpha's marking on him. It would not stop the heat, or prevent the Omega from dying, but it would relieve some of the pain that was lancing through his body, at least for awhile. His jaw fell open at the calm that ran over him, so different from the ache of the heat he had been mired in for weeks. Eren could tell the Omega wanted him to let go, but he did not, massaging his wrist until Eren's scent was permeating the skin there. A groan came out of that beautiful mouth, full of need and anguish.

"Oh, you bastard." Eren said nothing, just continued to rub at the pulse point with slow movements.

"I'm sorry. You feel better, though. It hurts watching you suffer like that." Those eyes slitted open again, throwing accusations at Eren before he even spoke.

"Yes. But when you leave, it will hurt even worse now." The Alpha looked torn, clearly not having thought of that. He still did not release the Omega's wrist, or stop his ministrations.

"Then leave with me. Even if you don't want to mate, you don't have to die in this place, surrounded by the smells of all these other Omegas. It's a nightmare for you here. I can at least ease you until you pass, make it hurt less for you." The Omega's lip twisted up into a snarl, a mirror of the expression Eren had worn earlier on the phone with his sister, and for some reason it was so fucking appetizing that he had to force himself to stay still and not press his mouth to it.

"Sure. Go to your house, in your territory, alone with you. An Omega in a red heat, and an Alpha in the strongest rut I've ever smelled. I'm sure you'll be a perfect gentleman." Eren shrugged, pulling his pocket knife out of his jeans and opening it, handing it to the Omega hilt first, the four inch blade shining black in the light. It was a wonder that Marco had not gassed the room when the weapon came out, but he must be watching closely enough to tell Eren meant no harm.

"If you'd rather have a gun, I can give you one of those too. You know I won't really hurt you. I think you've seen enough of that kind of Alpha to be able to tell." The Omega looked at the knife in his hand in disbelief, staring between it and the Alpha who had just armed him, easy as breathing. It's not as though the Alpha could not just snatch it away, or get a bigger knife himself, but the trust that was inherent in handing it to him in the first place spoke volumes. "I live by myself, no one else in the house. No one will bother you. If you really don't want to mate, I'd never force it on you. You know Marco pretty well by now, right? I'll leave, you can talk to him. Ask him about me. He'd never lie to someone he was here to protect or do anything to jeopardize an Omega's safety." Eren sighed, reaching up with his free hand to fist it in his messy brown locks. The Alpha did not know why he was suddenly so desperate to get this Omega out of here, but he was. It felt like his entire existence was riding on whether or not he walked out of there alone or with that creature in his arms. "The thought of you here alone, dying, suffering this way by yourself.... I'll never be able to live with myself if I leave you here. You hate it here, they all do, everyone knows it. If you're going to let yourself die, at least do it somewhere you're not miserable."

The Omega was silent, holding the knife in one hand, letting Eren continue to run his fingers across his wrist, sending waves of pleasure through him. He gritted his teeth, the Alpha could hear it, but he could also smell the emotions in his scent. The Omega was wavering, looking around the room as though wondering how he'd ended up there, what he was doing dying in this room full of the stench of his brethren. He jerked his wrist away finally, rubbing at the oily skin there, and Eren was sure he did not realize what he was doing when he brought it up to his nose to breathe in deep, shuddering, eyes closing again. Eren could just make out four faint scars there, contrasting against the Omega's already pale skin.
"Get out of here. Send your fucking Beta in." Eren looked at him, eyes flashing gold once more before he stood up and walked to the door. His gaze lingered on the Omega in the bed, blade still in hand, instinctively rubbing Eren's scent over the glands in his neck. It took all of his willpower to tear his eyes away and walk from that room. As soon as the door closed behind him with a click, Marco left the security room and headed over. His eyes were down, hands behind his back, head tilted to the side in gestures of submission. The Beta was not sure how things had gone, and an Alpha that had been refused by an Omega he sought was a dangerous thing. He did not want to challenge him, or present a threat in any way, and especially working in a place like a refuge he knew body language was important.

"So, ah..." Eren just nodded towards the Omega's room.

"Go talk to him. Tell him about me." Marco's brows furrowed in confusion, head cocked to side even further now.

"Tell him what?" The Alpha shrugged, looking at the door like he could see through it somehow.

"Whatever he asks. The truth."

Eren moved next to the wall across from the Omega's room, leaning against it and sliding down until he reached the floor with a thud. Marco realized he was just standing there staring at the Alpha, and scurried into the Omega's room to escape that half lidded gaze. *Fuck.* The day had gotten both better and worse dramatically quickly for the Alpha. He would be lying to himself if he couldn't admit he wanted to change that Omega's mind, convince him to mate. Eren was not entirely sure he had been honest with him. Did not know for certain that he could let an Omega die in his arms, but he also could not leave him here. Not if there was any way to stop it. It seemed like an eternity before Marco reemerged, looking totally shocked, eying Eren with disbelief.

"You told the Omega you wanted to take him home on hospice care?" The Alpha nodded, standing up to his full height at the challenge in those words. The Beta had probably not meant to, but his very inflection had Eren biting back a growl. He wanted to correct him. *Not the Omega. My Omega.* He choked back the words, not knowing where exactly his reason had gone in the last half hour. Marco was withering under the stare he was getting, but though he couldn't raise his eyes he continued speaking. "You know he can hardly walk like this. He needs serious assistance, showering, moving around. This could go on for two to three more weeks. You're saying you can give him the care he needs for that long, in rut, while he is in heat, and still not mate him against his will?" *I can do whatever the fuck I want.* The words were in his head, threatening to pour out, but Eren fought them down. He wanted to hiss at this boy in front of him, push him to the ground, snatch up his Omega and take him from there that instant. Instead he took a deep breath, counting to ten, then twenty, before it was safe to speak.

"Yes. I can. You know me well enough to know I wouldn't rape some Omega, Marco. If he wants to come back, I'll bring him back."

"Eren-" Eren was moving forward, not touching the Beta but backing him up into the door. He felt his eyes flash, teeth bared in a low growl. Another employee was heading down the hall, rushing to see what the commotion was when Marco lifted his hand, stilling him with a gesture that said, 'Wait'.

"What did he say, Marco? It's not your decision. It's his. So what was it?" The Beta sighed, resigned, and Eren's blood sang through his veins in victory.

"He said he's leaving, I'm getting a damn wheelchair. He doesn't have any clothes or belongings, Eren, you'll have to-" Eren wasn't listening, was pushing past him to enter the room where the
Omega was waiting, a scowl on his face as he sat on the edge of the bed, arms crossed over his chest.

"If you fucking even look at me wrong, I'll gut you, you Alpha bastard." Eren smiled then, looking down into those gray eyes like there was nothing else on earth but them. If this little Omega wanted to stab him, he would take that blade gladly, so long as he could carry him home.

"What's your name, Omega?" He looked like he wouldn't answer at first, and the Alpha would not even have cared. Something was wrong inside him, endorphins surging like wildfire through his brain. Maybe the rut had finally made him lose it completely. Eren should not feel this happy, not when he was about to take home an Omega who wanted nothing more than death. I'll convince him. I'll make him mine. Hadn't he come here today because he didn't want an Omega of his own? Well, he had been wrong. Eren hadn't wanted any Omega, though, he'd wanted this one. He just hadn't known it. Then the Omega sighed, meeting Eren's bright stare with a frown.

"Levi. My name is Levi." Levi. It was perfect. His Omega's name was Levi.

He scooped Levi up in his arms over his loud protests, and walked out of that place like he owned the world.
Relief

Levi heard Marco's fading protests as the Alpha carried him out of the building, and though the Beta would not follow right now out of fear of Eren's reaction, they would be seeing him again soon. There was paperwork that Eren and Levi were both supposed to sign in the presence of an employee, as well as medicine that the Omega had been taking. Suppressants didn't work, but there were still anti inflammatory drugs and pain killers that, though they weren't incredibly effective, did something to dull the ache. At the moment, however, the Omega wondered if he would even need them. When Eren had rubbed at his scent gland and pressed those wet fingers into Levi's wrist, all that pain and heat had melted away and for the first time in weeks his bones did not feel like glass. His vision wasn't blurry with tears, and his jaw had relaxed from its brutal clench. Levi had not even realized how tight it had been until he heard it snap open, muscles slack and loose. He had not been prepared for his reaction to the Alpha's mating pheromones, had not ever felt them in his skin before, not even once. Even when he had been in heat before, with his hormones twisting his body in agony, Levi refused to let Erwin scent mark him. Levi's experience screamed at him that Omegas who had the scent of an Alpha on them were doomed, would be covered in bruises and bullied and broken, no trace of themselves anymore. Only an Alpha's will etched into their very being.

So no matter how much the Alpha who pulled him from those pits begged and pleaded, Levi's answer had been steadfast. No. Erwin did not push, but when he visited Levi and Hange's apartment just after one of the Omega's heats and smelled the anguish in the air, it was obvious the lingering scents made him twist inside. An Alpha protected, an Alpha eased an Omega's suffering, or the ones who were not monsters were supposed to anyway. Levi knew it made the blond feel like a failure, but he could not change his instincts after so long, even for his friend. He spent years covered in blood and bruises, fighting with fists and teeth and nails as fiercely as he could. As long as he fought, as long as he won, as long as he was staggeringly vicious while he broke his enemies underneath him, he was safe from the Alphas and their marks and mating and misery. Even though he was a pit fighter who defeated Betas and Alphas alike, he could not be housed with them safely, and his keepers knew it. So he stayed with the harem he had been intended for, and when he was carried in torn up and bleeding from a fight he watched the other Omegas brought in looking just the same. Blue and purple marks ringing their wrists, eyes black, lips busted, sometimes with broken ribs and shattered hipbones. They had not been in a fight like Levi. They had suffered under the attentions of an Alpha, those pheromones thick on their wrecked flesh. The other harem Omegas would bandage him up, care for his wounds, wrap up his sprains. He would do the same for them, wishing with everything he was that he could save them all from the nightmare they lived in.

An Alpha protects. What fucking bullshit. Alphas take, and force, and control.

Levi would gladly face their fists, so long as he could throw his back at them, but while he still had breath in his lungs, he would not submit to them. If he was going to be beaten and ragged, he would leave them leaking their own blood in the dirt of the pit in return.

An Alpha's touch meant pain, meant the sacrificing of free will, and even if he knew Erwin would not hurt him in that way it did not matter. After awhile Erwin stopped trying to convince Levi to let him ease his heats with touch, had never even suggested truly mating him, but the longer the Omega went without seeking an Alpha, the more worried the blond became. When he talked to Levi about it, how dangerous it was for him to keep going through heats unmated, the Omega's response shot fear down Erwin's spine.

'I'm going to let my red heat take me. I'd rather die free than live under the thumb of some Alpha.'
He should have known better than to tell the Alpha that. It was the only time that Levi had ever seen Erwin's eyes flash, lighting up with instinct ruling him. The Alpha had backed Levi into a wall, hissing his words through clenched teeth, staring the Omega down until he had averted his eyes, cursing himself. The suppressants they had forced down him for so long had erased any trace of his hormones, along with the submissive tendencies that came with being an Omega, and feeling his eyes dart away from his friend's glare made rage swell up inside Levi. He wished he had those poisonous chemicals running through his veins again, would have given anything not to be captive to his Omegan instincts. The blond was oblivious to his fury when he spoke.

'I won't let you die, Levi. You find a mate, or I will mate you myself. You might hate me, but you will be alive to do so.'

A wall had been erected between him and Erwin after that, a stain that could not be erased. Erwin had done something Levi could never forgive him for, had forced him into a corner, tried to impose his will on the Omega like all those Alphas he hated so much. When he realized what he had done, it was too late to take back his words. The damage had been done, and though he still came to spend time with Levi and Hange, still went out them, drank together, had fun together, it was not quite the same.

Then Levi felt his heat coming up, and he could already tell it was his last, even before it was fully on him. He talked to Hange, begged her to do something to keep Erwin away long enough for Levi to succumb to his final cycle. Shitty four eyes was no happier about the Omega's decision than Erwin would have been, but as a Beta it was easier for her to respect his wishes, to understand why. Even so, it had taken some serious convincing. She'd talked to their superiors at the special operations unit the two were employed at, working with police and SWAT to break up harems and Omega traffickers, underground brothels and fighting rings. Somehow the Beta had gotten Erwin sent away on a job, a stakeout that was meant to end in a raid, and Levi was eternally grateful. Erwin would probably hate Hange for the rest of his life for what he viewed as a betrayal, but the Beta had enough love for Levi. She would risk his endless ire so that the Omega could choose for himself what he wanted to do.

If Levi could have just loved Hange as a mate, if she could have been born an Alpha, everything would've been easier. But he did not, and she was not, and so Levi had ended up in an Omega refuge. Sweating, and crying. Aching, and dying. Until a green eyed Alpha walked into his room, covered Levi's wrist in his scent, and sent waves of ecstasy rolling through him. Begged the Omega, let me take you home. When Eren said he would not mate Levi against his will, swore to merely ease his suffering through his red heat, the Omega was not sure why he believed him. Something about those flashing eyes, that furrowed brow, those serious expressions. How, even in the face of an overwhelming rut, he did not behave like the Alphas Levi knew. Even Erwin was twitchier than that around him when he was near a heat, let alone mired in the most powerful one Levi would ever know. Yet Eren stood before him, instincts lighting his gaze up gold, and still those fingers on his wrist had been gentle. Soothing. Eren had sent Marco in to answer Levi's questions, but he had not asked any. The stench of a dozen Omegas in heat, along with the sincerity dripping from the Alpha's gaze, was enough to convince Levi.

He had not really expected Eren to pick him up in his arms like a bride and carry him home that way, but he should have. After a few vocal but half hearted protests he gave up his writhing and clawing at the Alpha's chest. There was no way Levi could walk more than a few pitiful, wobbly steps, and an Alpha in rut carrying an Omega in heat would draw fewer stares than Eren pushing him along in a wheelchair. Especially this Alpha, whose scent was so strong that the people around them were running for cover, crossing the street and darting into buildings. Anything to get away from Eren, whose eyes lit up gold as he scanned the crowd around them, daring anyone to so much as look at Levi. The Omega smirked, feeling a strange thrill run through him he'd never felt before. Power. There was power in this, one he had not experienced. The power of an Alpha who would destroy
anything in his path to keep Levi safe. Levi had seen Alphas watching over their Omegas this way, but never truly considered that it was the Omega who had the control. Even if someone had done nothing at all to him, Levi could point his finger and this Alpha would destroy any of these people without a word, just to please the Omega. It was heady, and dizzying.

It was frightening, how much Levi liked it.

When the Alpha turned up a sidewalk and headed towards a dark brick house, Levi's eyes went wide. He hadn't really thought about where Eren lived, or what he did for a living, but he must be loaded to own a home like this. The house was unlocked, and Levi did not have to wonder why, with the scent of rut so thick in the air he could taste it. No one in their right mind would come near the place without Eren's consent. Their brains would scream at them to get away, to run, to hide. To save themselves from the fury of the Alpha inside. Not an Omega in heat, though. Levi's instincts had never been more thrilled, more ecstatic than they were surrounded by Eren's scent, protected inside those walls. Still, when Eren closed the door behind them he locked it, the knob and the deadbolts, along with a useless chain that would not keep an angry child out. Levi was smirking again, fighting back a laugh at the Alpha's instincts, which sought to protect in every way, keep safe what he held.

The Omega glanced around the house, full of clean lines and wide open space, walls a pale gray blue color. There was not a lot of clutter, or decoration, just a large black couch and loveseat, and a huge recliner that seemed big enough for two people to live in, let alone sit in. A wooden coffee table sat in front of them, with a photo album sitting on the surface unopened. No pictures on the walls, the only thing adorning them being a large wall mounted flat screen tv with a couple of video game consoles on a small table underneath, shelves on the sides stacked with games and controllers. It wasn't filthy, but it wasn't exactly clean either, some dirty laundry piled in a corner and dust obvious on the surfaces here and there. An empty glass sat forgotten on the coffee table, alongside a handful of unopened letters. Eren deposited Levi on the couch, obviously reluctant to put him down even though they were in his home now, and knelt on the floor as the Omega situated himself into the lush cushions.

"This place is a fucking mess." Compared to Levi's apartment, anyway. Or... the apartment that used to be his. *It's not mine anymore, is it? Because I'll be gone soon.* It wasn't the first time he had thought about his death, or even the hundredth, but it was the only time it had stung his chest in such a way. Eren was looking around, taking in his place with new eyes, and Levi wanted to laugh again at those furrowed brows. Fuck, he was clearly horrified that the Omega thought his house was dirty. The Alpha blinked a few times, turning his gaze back to Levi.

"You want to take a shower, or a bath, or something? Even I can smell the scent of those other Omegas on you. Its gotta be driving you crazy." He was right. The very air in that place had been filled with Omegan scents, and even though he'd been given his own room, traces of them remained in his hair, his skin. Still, he couldn't resist teasing Eren.

"What, I stink, Alpha?" Those green eyes went wide, darting around Levi's face, at a loss for what to say. Wracking his brain for whatever would please the Omega the most.

"Ah, no, I didn't mean that... I just-" Then Levi couldn't hold it in anymore. He laughed right in Eren's face, causing it to twist in a scowl.

"You're too fucking easy. Normally I'd say a shower, but I don't think I can stand that long." Eren's face cleared, full of worry again.

"Hot or cold?" It was a good question, and Levi didn't really know which would be better. Cold would soothe away some of the heat that was coursing through him, but as soon as he got out it
would return. *Eren's scent will do more than any cold water to take that heat away.* Warm water would relax his tense muscles, ease the ache in his bones, maybe do some actual good.

"Hot. Hot's better." The Alpha made no move to head to the bathroom, however, just stared into Levi's face, expression torn. He had something to say, but was afraid to say it. Levi crossed his arms over his chest, glaring. "What is it? Spit it the fuck out."

"I need to mark you again. On your neck. If that's okay." The Alpha made no move to head to the bathroom, however, just stared into Levi's face, expression torn. He had something to say, but was afraid to say it, especially when Levi had come there specifically for that, to let Eren use his Alphan scent to ease the Omega's suffering.

"Wouldn't be much of a point to me being here if you didn't, would there?"

Eren nodded, biting his lip as he leaned forward, easing in close to the Omega like he expected him to bite. *Fuck, not like it hadn't happened before.* Those big hands found the sides of Levi's face, and the Omega shuddered as they turned his head to the side, exposing his scent gland to Eren's hungry eyes. The Alpha's scent shot up in the air around them, sharper, stronger as he closed the distance between them. When his face was close enough that Levi could feel hot air on his neck Eren froze, breathing coming in quick gasps. The Omega began to writhe in place, fighting against the instincts soaring up in him. Instincts that wanted Levi to rub himself against this Alpha in front of him, catch Eren's gaze and avert his own in submission, give himself up in offering. *Fuck, what was he doing?* His voice was breathier than he would like, the undercurrent of a whine arcing through it.

"What are you waiting for, kid?"

"I- I don't know. I've never marked an Omega this way." Levi couldn't breathe, couldn't move, couldn't think. His first thought was that it had to be a lie, there was no way this Alpha could have gone so long without taking an Omega to mate, but then he realized someone would say the same thing about him. Truth rang through his words, through his clean scent that held no trace of an Omega, through his house that was totally empty of any remnants of the smell of a heat.

"You're serious?" Eren still held his face to the side, but out of the corner of his eye Levi saw the Alpha nod. "It's okay. Just do it."

Then he heard a sound come from Eren, a growl that was not a growl, and Levi cried out instinctively in answer, a whimpering moan. The vibrations of the growl were different than any he'd heard before, shaking Levi down to his very core. It was an Alpha's call, a sound that reached inside the Omega, soothing his nerves, relaxing his body, making his legs go wide in unspoken invitation. Levi wanted to slam his knees together, push Eren away, but in the face of that sweet sound, he was powerless. Levi had never had an Alpha call to him that way, since he had never mated, but the Omega in him responded in kind. An Alpha called, and his Omega cried in answer. *Fuck.* Then Eren's neck was pressing into Levi's, gently at first, skin barely touching. After a few moments the pressure increased, and soon the Alpha was rubbing fiercely against him, switching from one side of his throat to the other, marking both glands in kind. Before long he was growling louder, shining his neck and face viciously into the Omega's skin, sliding it back and forth. He was no longer a man but a beast, desperate to get at his prey. Levi felt himself growing harder against his will, arousal throbbing where it was pressed between them. The Omega felt Eren's mouth open against his skin, felt the ghosting of teeth over his throat, and thought the Alpha had lost himself. Lost control. Instead of being angry, or frightened, for the barest of instances joy shot through him. Levi had always known what he thought it was to be an Omega, but with this Alpha pressed up against him, calling to him, touching him, he realized he did not have a clue. Then Eren threw himself backwards, scooting away from Levi and looking up at the Omega with a horrified expression on his face. He staggered
to his feet, taking a few steps back, panting. Levi was in no better shape, head still tilted to expose his throat, legs wide, pupils blown dark with lust. The Omega was not aware of his hands, rubbing at the skin of his neck wildly, spreading that dark scent over his collarbones, his chest. Eren was staring at him with eyes made of gold, teeth bared. Then he shook his head, swearing under his breath, and when he looked back at Levi his eyes were green again.

"I'm sorry. I'll go fill up the tub, and then I'll come back to get you." Levi couldn't answer, could just nod weakly, and only when Eren had stalked from the room did he pull his limbs back in, still his hands, calm his breathing. Oh, shit. The Omega had been on the edge of surrender, ready give in to this Alpha. Let Eren mate him, and mark him. He had not even been here fifteen minutes, and he was a wretched mess of hormones, moaning underneath an Alpha's mouth. This is going so well, Levi. It was fifteen more minutes or so before Eren came back, and instead of feeling impatient Levi was grateful. He'd needed every second to pull himself together. The Alpha had held out his arms, reaching down to cradle Levi to his chest and carry him through the bedroom and into the bathroom. When they got there he eased Levi to his feet, supporting his weight with an arm under his shoulders as they stood there side by side, uncertain.

"You... uh... you want help with your clothes?" No. Fuck, no. Levi categorically did not want help with his fucking clothes. He also could barely keep himself upright, legs quaking under his own weight. The Omega nodded, casting his eyes away again as pink danced across his cheeks. Eren's fingers slipped into the waistband of Levi's pajama pants, hooking under the boxers as well and tugging them down together. When he leaned over to pull them off of the Omega's feet Levi saw that his eyes were wrenched shut, teeth buried in his bottom lip so hard a drop of blood leaked out. Then he scooped Levi up again, walking over to the tub and easing the Omega inside like he would break. Once Levi settled against the back of the tub, Eren was backing up as fast as he could, running into the wall behind him in his haste to put some distance between them.

"Is the water okay? Too hot? Not hot enough?" Levi did not think he could deal with those jewel bright eyes, so he closed his own, rolling back and forth under the water as warmth seeped into his muscles. He sighed in bliss, keeping his neck above the surface. Levi did not want to admit it, but he did not want to wash that sharp Alpha's scent away.

"Mmmm. It's fine."

"I'll go try to find you some shorts to wear. Everything I have will be too big, but you probably don't want a shirt on anyway." An Omega's skin was extremely sensitive during a heat, and anything on it chafed and itched. "Yell when you're ready to get out, and I'll come get you. Is there anything you want?" Levi blinked his eyes open sleepily, and only then did he wonder how long it had been. How long since I fell asleep? How long since I felt like I could? Four days, at least. Fuck, he was tired. Then he thought of Hange, wondered if the Beta would try to go visit him at the refuge. Would they tell her anything? He hadn't signed a medical records release. They probably wouldn't give out any of his information to her.

"Can I use your phone?" Shit, he was in the bathtub, what a stupid fucking question. "Uh, when I get out, that is."

"Sure. I'll be here, just let me know if you need me."

The Alpha left without another word, door clicking as it closed behind him. Levi shifted around in the water, feeling the tension ease from his bones as the water relaxed him. This was the last place he had expected to end up, tucked away in an Alpha's house, the scent of rut surrounding him like an embrace. It felt better than it should, like he had been waiting all his life to be here. 'You'd rather die than mate, even once?' Yes, he would. Or so he had thought, anyway. But underneath that Alpha's
touch, suddenly mating did not seem like a weight to bear. The thought of his death looming before him frightened him, for the first time ever. Levi had been ready to die every day for all those years of his captivity, and when he'd been released and gone into heat again, the finality of his end had cemented itself immediately. The Omega had never feared death before now.

This Alpha had made him weak, and part of Levi hated him for it.

Levi was not sure when he had dozed off, but the water was barely warm when a heavy hand on his shoulder pulled him from sleep.

"Levi. Levi, hey. Let me get you out of there, dry you off, get you to bed." The Omega blinked blearily, sleep clinging to him like a shroud. When his vision cleared, he saw Eren looking down at him, concern written plainly over his face. Levi reached his hands up, still half asleep as the Alpha tugged him from the tub and into his arms. Eren sat on the floor with Levi across his lap, rubbing a towel over him with quick, efficient strokes. The Omega closed his eyes, curling into the Alpha's chest in a somnolent daze. He still felt the ache of his heat, that ever present throbbing in his shaft, hips loose in their sockets, skin itching and stretched. Right then he was so tired that it was all in the background, static playing out in his mind. Levi absently noticed the Alpha running a towel over his head, ruffling Levi's hair as he dried the dark strands as best he could. The Omega did not realize it, but a contented sigh eased out of his throat, ending on a satisfied hum. He had not ever felt that way, such total relaxation. Not just since his heat started, but even before that Levi had always felt tense, tight, on edge. Right then he was awash in calm, even his fatal cycle thrust away to some dark corner of his being. He opened his eyes when Eren lifted him up, wondering when, exactly, the Alpha had gotten a pair of boxers on him. Eren carried him into the bedroom, walking over to the bed and settling the Omega against the pillows. The Alpha had not changed his sheets, but instead of being irritated the Omega was glad. That musky smell surrounded him, pulling at his eyelids, urging him to rest. Levi sniffed the air, and realized with a start that Eren had cleaned in here while he had been in the bath. The sharp, fresh scent of disinfectant lingered in the air under the smell of Eren's rut, surfaces of the bedside tables and shelves smooth and free of dust. The laundry that Levi had noticed on the way in was nowhere to be seen, stray clothes tucked into drawers. When he glanced towards the tables on either side of the bed, his eyes went wide. There were bottles of water and juice on one side, cold and shining with condensation, along with a bucket of finely ground ice like they'd given him in the refuge to eat, to help ease the relentless warmth, along with the ache in his mouth. There was also fruit, apples and bananas, along with some granola bars and even some chocolate. A small wastebasket was on the floor nearby. The other table was piled up with books and a remote control, as well as the pocket knife Eren had given him earlier. The Alpha pulled the blankets up to his waist, backing up and looking lost in his own bedroom, as though he'd never been there before.

"Do you want anything else? I don't know when you ate, or if you're hungry, but if you want a real meal I can make you one." Levi smiled, already almost gone under. This Alpha was going to cook for him? _How fucking ridiculous._ "It's not ridiculous. If you want to eat, I need to feed you." Oh, shit. He said that out loud? The Omega laughed then, stupid with exhaustion. His words were slurred, a drunken mumble pouring out of his lips.

"Do you have black tea? I want some tea when I get up." They wouldn't let him have it at the refuge, some bullshit about hydration, and Levi would have killed someone for some tea right then.

"I'll get some." Levi nodded, sleep thick in his veins. He held his hands up, eyes closed, nuzzling his face into Eren's pillow as he breathed in.
"Mark my wrists again. It washed off." Levi felt those warm hands close around his wrists, and he sighed when Eren rubbed them both against his neck, soaking them in scent. When The Alpha released his hands, Levi pulled them up by his face, burying his nose against them and smiling. The Omega felt long fingers threading through his hair, and he pushed his head up into the touch.

"Sleep well, Levi."

"Nnnkay. G'night...." Was it night? Levi wasn't sure at the moment, but it didn't matter.

Eren's smell was in his nose, and under his face, and all around him. It was soft, and safe, and clean. Levi could sleep here.

He could stay here forever.
It was harder than anything he'd ever done to pull his hand from those raven locks. Eren stared at Levi for long moments as he slept, only leaving the room when his instincts began to surge up powerfully inside him. He wanted to crawl into his bed with the little Omega, hold him close, smell his skin, but he knew he could not. Eren did not have the restraint necessary to pull back from such a thing, not right then. So he dragged himself from the room, unable to force his feet any further that just outside the closed door no matter how hard he tried. Eren leaned against it, sinking down into the floor with the wood at his back. There was an Omega tucked into his blankets, Eren's scent on his throat, on his wrists, in his nose. The Alpha shuddered at the thought, and if it would have done him any good, Eren would've taken himself in hand to relieve some of the ache. During a rut, it was useless to even try. The only way a rutting Alpha could finish was inside an Omega, at least the first time anyway. Still he was palming himself through his jeans without thinking, pressing at the vicious heat there. His mind was reeling, and he needed a distraction, something to get his thoughts off that lithe, muscled body curled up between his sheets. Mumbling at Eren, sleepy and adorable, telling him 'Goodnight' in the middle of the day. Fuck, it shouldn't be cute, but it was and Eren wanted to pound his face into the wall. The Alpha took out his phone like it was a lifeline, tapping the screen to life and calling his job. Mike answered, thank God, because he did not have the patience to deal with Jean's bullshit right then.

"Hey Mike, it's Eren."


"Shut up, you ass. I called to tell you it's going to be more than a week before I'm back." Mike was grumbling before he even finished talking.

"I've never heard of a rut lasting longer than a week, Jaeger. I thought you were going to find an Omega, anyway, be back in a few days unless you failed miserably. I don't have an instructor for your Thursday jiu-jitsu class, and one of the Alphas in your boxing group can't stand Jean. There's gonna be blood."

"If I come down there in rut, there's gonna be even more."

"So no go on the Omega?" There was no way Eren was heading into work until this whole thing was resolved, but Mike deserved to know why, so he would leave him alone if nothing else.

"Ah... I need you to keep this between us, boss." Eren couldn't see Mike's face, but he could picture that suspicious look in his mind clear as day.

"Spill it, Jaeger." The Alpha sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"There's an Omega here at my place." His boss whistled low and long.

"And Jaeger finally scores!"

"An Omega in their red heat. Who doesn't want to mate." Mike took in a harsh breath, and Eren knew the other Alpha's instincts were rising as surely as his own at the thought.

"Well, fuck. What is she doing at your house, then, and not at the refuge? Why would you even bring her there?"

"He. And I'm using my mark to ease his heat. Trying to change his mind." There was a long silence,
and after awhile Eren wondered if he had lost the connection. Finally Mike spoke up again.

"Shit, Jaeger. That's fucked up. Also, he, not she, eh?" Eren bristled, pheromones riling in his blood, ready to fight an enemy that wasn't even there. He had never dated, never expressed an interest in doing so, and he couldn't really blame Mike for not knowing. Alphas who went into rut on their own were only ever attracted to Omegas, and since Eren had not mated, it wouldn't automatically be obvious to the man that his interests ran that way.

"You got a fucking problem with it, Zacharius? Because we can discuss it next time I come down there." Mike laughed then, knowing exactly how Jaeger wanted to discuss it.

"I don't give a shit who you want to fuck, Eren." The man's tone grew serious then, voice lower, full of concern. "You really got yourself into it now though, boy. You think you can deal with this? If your Omega doesn't change his mind, you gonna be able to take a step back and objectively observe as he bleeds to death out of his eyes and mouth? I couldn't. I don't know any Alpha that could. There's a reason they go to those shelters when their Alphas die, son." For a moment Eren couldn't respond, could only replay his boss's voice in his mind, saying your Omega. Thinking of Levi's face as he said it, nothing had ever sounded so right. Levi wasn't his, and Eren knew it, but fuck, he wanted him to be.

"He never had an Alpha." Silence again. Complete and all encompassing.

"Why the fuck not?" Eren sighed, not wanting to get into all this with Mike. It wasn't any of his damned business, anyway, nor was it Eren's place to say anymore. He'd given away too much already.

"Listen, I'm not going to go there with you, okay? I just wanted to tell you what was going on so you'd be aware. Send someone to get my keys, okay? No Alphas."

"No shit, you moron. Your buddy Armin's here picking up something for Mika-"

"No, Not Armin. No Omegas either." Levi had been drowning in the scent of Omegas for weeks, and Eren didn't want to subject him to it again. "Send..." Who? Who would he not want to rip into pieces? "Is Sasha there today?"

"Ah, yeah, but she doesn't leave until five." Five was three hours away, but Eren had a feeling that Levi would still be asleep well past then.

"That's fine. Tell her to buy me some black tea on the way here, a few different kinds, and I'll pay her back." Mike snorted, and Eren didn't have to wonder why.

"Since when do you drink tea, Jaeger?"

"I don't. My Omega does." Another loaded silence. Eren didn't know it was possible for him to want to hit someone so much for not talking.

"Fuck, son. You're done for." The Alpha smiled, rubbing rough fingers over his neck and bringing them up to his nose, breathing in the fierce Omegan scent that still lingered there.

"I know."

"I'll send Sasha for your keys."

"Don't forget about the tea!"
"Jesus. I won't forget your Omega's goddamned tea."

Mike hung up without another word, and Eren just stared at his phone for awhile, wondering if he should call Armin and specifically tell him to stay away. He knew that Eren was in rut, and that his pills weren't working, but the Alpha had been suppressing for so long that it might slip Armin's mind. Mikasa would probably remind him, but Eren decided to text him anyway.

Eren: Hey blondie, don't cry, but don't come over here until I let you know the coast is clear, alright? He responded almost immediately, as he always did. Armin's phone was like an extension of his hand, permanently attached.

Armin: Riding it out, huh? My sexy ass too tempting to resist? Little bastard.

Eren: Something like that. I'll let you know.

Armin: K. Don't die. I might need you to protect me from your sister at some point.

Eren: Duly noted.

The Alpha shoved his phone back into his pocket and closed his eyes. He could feel the Omega in his room, invisible chains pulling at Eren, instincts screaming for him to climb into that bed and just take him. Eren wrenched his eyes shut even tighter, fisting his hands as they began to shake. It would be physically impossible for him to go anywhere right then, and even if it wasn't he couldn't leave Levi alone. But neither could he sit right outside his room with that fucking delicious scent surrounding him, a sleeping Omega just a few feet away. The Alpha let out a shuddering breath, popping his jaw and glancing around. Levi said his place was dirty, and Eren had cleaned up the bedroom before he brought the Omega there, but had not had a chance to clean the rest of the house.

When Levi woke up, it would be fucking spotless.

Eren had finished cleaning long ago, and was in his kitchen with various pots and pans simmering on his stove. The Alpha did not know what Levi liked to eat, but he did remember Armin talking about being in heat, and how he couldn't have just anything. Something about his stomach being sensitive, not being able to tolerate heavy foods, too much meat, a lot of spices. So Eren made some rice, white without any seasonings as well as some flavored with tomatoes, onion, and chicken broth. He'd started preparing chicken noodle soup, only realizing halfway through that yes, chicken soup had meat in it. Fucking moron. Eren wasn't a chef, and he couldn't cook an endless number of things, but he pulled out another pot and started some french onion soup just in case. What if he doesn't like soup, or rice?

Somehow he'd ended up with a kitchen full of food, two different dishes full of rice, two covered pots with soup simmering on low heat, two different kinds of pasta. Some fairly basic spaghetti with marinara, along with alfredo. He was wracking his brain, trying to think of anything else to make that would please the Omega. Oatmeal would be easy on anyone's stomach, or maybe sandwiches, but that could be ready in a few minutes. Eren had already looked up how to prepare black tea and written down the instructions. The Alpha wasn't sure if Sasha would show up with tea leaves or tea bags, but either way he wanted to be ready. Eren was digging in his cabinets for a cups and a tea kettle, which Armin had given him an eternity ago and he had never used even once, when there was a knock on his door. He was growling before he'd even taken a step towards it, Alpha instincts rising up, wanting to keep everyone and everything away from his Omega. It was a few moments before
he could quiet his throaty sounds, reign his scent in, bring his eyes back to green. After a lot of deep breathing, rolling his head around on his neck, shaking his arms out, he finally felt in control enough to answer. Eren was expecting Sasha, so when he opened it to find Marco standing on the other side with a bag in his hand and a clipboard under one arm, he was more than a little surprised. The Beta had his eyes on the ground, head tilted, leaning forward just slightly to put himself below Eren's line of sight. A fucking pro at dealing with dumb ass Alphas, to be sure, but it didn't help much. Eren had been ready for Sasha, not the male before him who had already challenged him once today. The deep sounds of aggression bubbled out against his will, lip curling in a snarl, fists clenching on their own. Threat. Marco wasn't one, but Eren's instincts didn't know that. They wanted him gone, far away from Levi, and right fucking then. The Beta knew he was on thin ice, and while Eren tried to calm himself all over again Marco stayed still, quiet, submissive. After ages of silence, glaring, hostile body language, Eren finally felt himself easing back. Fuck. It had never been this hard for Eren to control himself before. This little Omega had him tied up in knots. Marco seemed to recognize that the Alpha was a little more himself again, and he sighed in relief.

"You're doing impressively well with that, all things considered. Ah.... There's a rather nervous girl standing at the end of your driveway? Sasha, I believe? She told me these were for you, and that if I could get your work keys and give them to her she would be eternally grateful." Eren leaned out his doorway, taking in Sasha at the end of his drive, shifting nervously. She waved, but did not budge from her spot. Eren felt himself walking forward, ready to go down the driveway, throw her to the ground and hiss in her face. Sasha may not have been moving, but staying so far away from the Alpha, scent full of fear, she was still running. The Beta had surely not meant to, but she'd made herself into prey in his eyes, and he wanted to chase down his victim and force her to submit, bare her throat, put herself at his mercy. Eren didn't want to mate her, he wanted to defeat her, wanted her cowed and helpless under his gaze. Marco reached out and put a hand on his shoulder, stilling him, and Eren was both furious and appreciative. Deep breaths. Calm down. He stepped deliberately back inside, reentering his territory and trying to relax.

"She said 'eternally grateful'?? It did not sound like her. At all.

"Actually she said she would 'dance at my wedding or have my babies or anything I wanted' if it meant she did not have to come talk to you right now." Eren laughed, snatching his keys off the metal rack by the door and handing them to Marco, who took a few steps down the drive and tossed them to Sasha. She snatched them out of the air and literally ran in the other direction without another word. He had to close his eyes as she fled, had to dig his nails into his palms so hard that they were probably bleeding to keep from running after her and tackling her into the concrete. Fuck, someone needed to talk to her about prey drives again because she obviously needed a refresher, especially working with Eren and Jean at the dojo surrounded by so many stupid Alphas. Eren felt himself growing irritated at the two Betas.

"Damn, is it that bad? I mean, clearly I'm losing my shit but you can't know that just from the smell." Marco smirked, standing up to his full height now and holding out the plastic sack for Eren to take. Eventually he did, eying the selection within for a moment, frowning until he saw one of the packages had tea bags. Oh, thank fuck.

"It took me a few minutes before I could come up here. It's fairly overpowering, and I smell Alphas in rut every day. I sort of want to piss myself." The Alpha scratched his head idly. He still wanted to growl at Marco, shove him out of the doorway, force him away from his house. This Beta wasn't doing anything wrong, wasn't aggressive or hostile, but the beast inside him didn't care.

"So why are you here, then??" Marco held up the clipboard that was under his arm, an apologetic smile on his face.
"I need you to sign these papers, fill out a few things. Disclosures, consent forms, medical releases. Levi, too. You were supposed to do it before you left, you damned savage." Eren just shrugged.

"Sorry about that." He was not sorry, but that wasn't the point.

"Yeah, well, I wasn't about to stop you right then. I kind of like my limbs, fairly attached to them. But I still need to get these signed. I filled everything out that I could, as far as your and Levi's information, but there's a few things I couldn't answer, and then I need your signatures. Plus it's policy for an employee to check on an Omega in this situation. I'll have to come by again in a week, and a week after that, until..." He trailed off, not wanting to finish the sentence. Until Levi is mated, or until he is dead.

"Okay. Come in, I guess. Let me get this tea started, and then I'll fill those out." Marco filed into the house, Eren closing the door behind him, clicking the locks back in place. Marco followed him into the kitchen without thought. Marco had been in Eren's house a few times before, drinking and hanging out with Armin and Mikasa and their friends. They usually gathered at Armin's house, since Alphas were territorial by nature, but sometimes it was more convenient to do it at Eren's. He had more space than anyone else, after all.

"I'm guessing the tea is for Levi? He kept trying to get us to let him have some, but it's against policy. Dehydrates you."

"They say that's a myth, actually. He wants tea, he can have tea. Omega in his red heat just wants a fucking caffeinated drink, and you guys won't let him have it. You're a bunch of nitpicking assholes." There was no real venom in the words.

Eren started some water boiling, and when Marco glanced around his eyes went wide.

"What the hell, Eren?" The Alpha was not sure what he meant for a moment, glancing around, but then he realized that Marco was talking about the food.

"Oh. Uh, I didn't know what he liked to eat. He fell asleep pretty fast after he got here and I didn't have a chance to ask him. I left some fruit and stuff in there, but I figure he'll need real food when he wakes up, probably? I'm stocked up pretty well right now, since I thought I might be stuck here for a week or so. I guess it worked out okay." The Beta was smiling then, an impossibly fond look on his face. He was looking at Eren like he had just hung the moon in the sky.

"I feel a lot better about this now. I've been worried all day long." Eren felt himself riling, standing taller, gaze like a blade on Marco.

"What, because I'm a savage? You should know me better than that."

"I'm sorry! But, you're an Alpha in rut. Some crazy, psychotic rut, at that. I didn't know if he would be entirely safe here. It's my job to worry." Eren was pressing in close to the Beta, flashing eyes narrowed, teeth bared.

"It's my job to keep him safe, not yours. Levi's mine." Eren hissed out the words without thought, but then he realized what he was doing and pulled back, running a hand over his face. "I'm sorry. I'm... fuck, I'm not going to hurt him, but I'm having a hard time here. Give me those papers. Let's go sit down."

They both headed into the living room wordlessly, Eren taking the couch while Marco seated himself as far away as possible. It was not due to any real fear of Eren, but out of habit after dealing with so many different Alphas for so long. There was not much for him to fill out, Marco having answered most of the questions himself. It was all very standard, agreeing to provide adequate care, notifying
the refuge of worsening condition or injury, allowing the Omega to return at any time they desired, and of course stressing the importance of an Omega's consent, as if he needed to be reminded. Too many Alphas viewed Omegas as property, as objects instead of people. Eren had said Levi was his, not five minutes ago, but it was different from the way some of his brethren looked at it. He wanted Levi to be his to care for, provide for, watch over. Not to control, or own. Eren added in the few missing details, signing his name and handing the forms back over with a sigh.

"Now I need Levi to fill these out." Eren didn't want to let Marco wake up his Omega, wanted to posture and hiss at him for trying to intrude on Levi's rest. The Alpha fought down his urges, eyes closed, head tilted to the side as though listening to a sound that was too quiet to hear. He stood up, leading the Beta into his room where Levi was, coiled in the center of the bed. The Omega was not twisted up in the bedding as he had been at the shelter, but totally still and relaxed, wrists tucked tight into his nose. Levi was smiling in his sleep, and even Marco's breath caught at the sight.

"Whoa. I haven't seen him sleep in five days. I'm surprised he can, this far into things." Then Marco felt Eren grab his arm, tugging him away from the bed.

"Shit! The tea's not ready, you can't wake him up yet." The Beta's brows furrowed in confusion.

"It'll only take a minute, he can go ba-" Eren growled at him again, and Marco felt the vibrations rumbling through his arm and into his chest. He backed up, pulling free from the Alpha's grip, putting space between them without turning his back.

"No! He said he wanted tea when he woke up, just go sit down and give me twenty minutes."

Marco fought a smirk off his face at Eren's words, and realized that even asleep this Omega had him in the palm of his hand. The Beta was glancing around, noting the bounty of food and drinks and books on the bedside table, now unable to suppress a grin. He looked over at Eren, planning to tease him, only to go quiet at the sight. The Alpha's eyes were not just gold, but throwing off light into the room in their brightness. He bit his lip, one of his hands clutching at his chest desperately. Marco felt his worries drain away into nothingness. This Omega had nothing to fear here, nor would he be succumbing to his red heat. The Alpha before him would do what he was born to do.

He would protect.
"...Levi." Someone had their hand on Levi's shoulder, shaking him gently back and forth. The voice was a blur, just an itching at the back on his consciousness, but it had to be Hange. Stupid fucking four eyes couldn't let him sleep. Levi had never been so tired in his entire life, and he'd be damned if he crawled out of bed for her. Since when was his mattress so comfortable? It always made his back ache, made his spine feel twisted up in his skin. At the moment it was like he was laying in a fucking cloud, and he didn't understand why, but he also didn't care. Though the bed itself was comfortable, Levi's body was all wrong. His skin stretched too tight over his bones, sharp edges of his frame threatening to burst through. Everything itched, and shook, desperate for touch.

"Hey, Levi. Levi, wake up." Warmth wrapped around him, and he felt... well, and safe, and happy, even through his discomfort. Something smelled wonderful, keeping him under the surface of awareness, and he did not want to break free.

"Levi." Now instead of shaking at his arm, that hand was threading through his hair, brushing it from his face. He whined in his pillow, shoving his face deeper into the fabric and covering his eyes but being careful not to pull away from those fingers in his dark locks. They felt good, and even if it was stupid Hange it didn't matter, he wanted her to keep going. That scent assaulted him again, and he felt heat roll through him, felt himself shoot unmercifully hard in his boxers. Levi's legs were kicking off the blankets that covered them, too hot now, skin too sensitive as shimmering waves of arousal shot under his flesh. *Heat.* Oh, that's right, he was in heat. That's why he felt empty and achy as he thrust mindlessly into the covers. He mumbled something unintelligible, willing himself back down into his dreams and closer to that sweet smell, though it seemed to be coming from two different places now. In his bed, but also in the room with him.

"Levi." Christ, couldn't she leave him alone? If he wasn't so annoyed he would be embarrassed at the thought of Hange, watching him grind instinctively into his mattress. Levi couldn't help it, couldn't stop himself.

"No. Fuck off, four eyes." There was a dark chuckle, and he found himself wondering if someone had come over just to fuck with him. Hange's laugh was manic and crazed, the cackling of a cartoon villain, not that sultry sound he was hearing now.

"Just for a minute, Levi." Levi threw himself up from bed, profanities pouring out of his mouth in an angry stream as he blinked his lids open.

"Mother of fuck, Hange, could you please shut the hell up and-" When the Omega's vision cleared he was looking into bright green eyes gazing at him, full of affection. He jumped back, almost falling off the bed as he thrust his legs underneath him and brought up his fists. Levi was growling, but then after the confused haze of sleep fell away he went silent, collapsing back into the sheets with a sigh.

"Fuck. You scared the shit out of me, Alpha. Was that really necessary?" His heart was beating wildly in his chest, adrenaline flowing through his veins. Everything had come back to him in a rush, his red heat, the refuge, the Alpha... Then he noticed Marco, that damn sympathetic expression on his face as always. Levi liked the Beta, but after two weeks he was ready to smack that fucking understanding look right off. Suddenly a cup was thrust in front of his face, dark brown liquid inside smelling like ambrosia. He snatched it away, looking at the Alpha almost accusingly as he glanced from the tea to Eren and back again. Finally his eyes settled on the Alpha's face, that suspicious expression burned into his brows.

"You want sugar or milk?" Locking stares with the Alpha, lust ran up his spine and he wanted a lot more than a cup of fucking tea. He shook away his errant thoughts, trying to pull himself back down
Levi noticed a tray next to his bed with a plastic pitcher full of the dark liquid, a small container of sugar and another cup like the one he held, this one filled with milk. *An Alpha with fucking teacups.* It shouldn't be funny, but Levi wanted to laugh all the same. He reached over to the tray and took a generous spoonful of sugar, stirring it into his drink before replacing it. The Omega brought the drink to his lips, and after the first drops hit his tongue he moaned, swallowing the rest down in one gulp.

"Shit, that's the best thing that's happened to me in weeks." Besides the Alpha's face sliding against his skin, spreading that perfect scent over his throat... *Fuck, shut up Levi.* Marco was snickering, looking far more amused than he should at the Omega's expense. Then Levi glanced up only to catch his breath at the Alpha looking down at him with a smile so wide it looked like his face might break.

He reached over to the tray and took a generous spoonful of sugar, stirring it into his drink before replacing it. The Omega brought the drink to his lips, and after the first drops hit his tongue he moaned, swallowing the rest down in one gulp.

"Morning, sunshine." Eren refilled Levi's cup, and the Omega glared at him in return.

"Fuck you, Alpha, I'm no one's sunshine." The Alpha just shrugged, unfazed, spooning the sugar in himself this time and mixing it with the liquid. His scent was overwhelming in the air, and Levi was not exactly sure how he was just standing there, calm and collected. As though he wasn't buried in instincts that were telling him to shove Levi down into the bed and make the Omega wretched beneath him. *Shut up. Fuck. Shut up.* He smelled like violence and lust, the two indistinguishable for the Omega. Usually the scent made him recoil when he encountered it, but right then it drew him in, made him want to shove his face into the Alpha's neck and just breathe in deep. If the Beta had not been in the room to distract him, Levi was not sure that he would've been able to stop himself. Eren eyed Marco as he took deliberately another sip of tea, trying to make sure his voice was even when he spoke next and not rough with desire. "Gimmie your fucking papers, freckles." The Beta handed the clipboard over, not surprised that the Omega already knew why he was there.

Levi watched the Alpha's gaze settle on Marco, full of venom and barely leashed aggression. The Beta averted his eyes, but did not shrink under the glare. "It's policy. Just for a sec."

Levi was about to tell Marco that it was okay, everything was fine here, but then he was curious. He did not really think the Alpha would be able to leave him alone in the room with another person, even if it was a Beta. Eren was taking deep breaths, clenching his fists, tilting his head like a dog as he wrenched his eyes shut. He opened his mouth, jaw popping before he brought it closed again and opened his lids up to reveal bright gold eyes. *Shit, those eyes are sexy.* Then the Alpha leveled that stare on Levi before he took a step forward, kneeling on the mattress and leaning over towards him. Eren's hands were back in Levi's black locks then, and the Omega fought down a moan as the Alpha began rubbing his throat over Levi's hair, covering it in his scent, spreading it through the strands with his fingers. Levi bit his lip, but it wasn't enough to stop the high pitched whimper that came out, a wanton sound that he wanted to swallow back into his mouth. Eren growled at the noise, and his movements became more frenzied, hand slipping down to grip his Omega's jaw as he slid his throat over Levi's pulse point. The Omega was panting, and their faces were so close there was no chance it was lost on the Alpha. Suddenly Levi found his hand moving on its own, burying itself in Eren's messy brown locks and clutching tight, holding the Alpha against his skin with a groan.

Levi hadn't noticed when his legs opened up, but they couldn't possibly spread any further. The Omega buried two long digits between his lips, biting back more debauched sounds. Then they heard Marco clearing his throat, and the Alpha threw himself away from Levi, breathing ragged and broken. He put his hands on his knees and leaned over, head handing loose on his shoulders as he calmed...
himself. When he finally stood up to his full height and looked at Levi, he was the one who whined, reedy and breathless. Levi saw the Alpha's gaze rake over him, clothed only in Eren's boxers with knees thrown wide, fingers of one hand in his mouth, the other tangled in his own hair. The Omega trembled beneath that lust filled gaze, feeling it under his skin and in his chest and on his lips.

"Fuck." Eren pulled himself from the room slowly, as though he was walking through deep water, and the door clicked shut behind him. Levi just stared at it for long moments, knowing the Alpha was just on the other side, body strung tight with need. Blood swelling in Eren's veins just for him. It was a fight to pull his knees together, release the grip he had on his hair, drop his hand from his mouth. The Omega wasn't sure how long he was silent when Marco's wry voice made him jump.

"So everything's okay here, I take it?" Levi glared at the Beta, snatching up the clipboard and pen and filling in the blank spaces with an impressive amount of violence. Marco had not known it was possible to write with such hostility.

"Marco, you're a nice person, but I really want to stab you with this fucking pen right now." The Beta chuckled, leaning against the wall and grinning. It was easier to distract himself from the urges of his heat when the Alpha was not in the room, but even so, Levi wanted him back in there. Wanted those feral gold eyes on his, that wild scent riling in the air.

"I don't think I need to worry about you. I think you'll be just fine." Silence reigned for a few moments as Levi finished signing and dating the forms, before throwing them down on the blankets. He buried his hands in his hair again and brought his knees up, leaning his elbows on them with a groan.

"I'm losing my shit here, Beta." Marco just laughed.

"That's exactly what Eren said." Levi glanced up at him, gray eyes shining under furrowed brows.

"He did?" The Beta nodded, walking over to the bed and picking up the clipboard to flip through the pages, making sure everything was in order. "I feel... inside out. I don't know what I'm doing." Levi wasn't sure why he was confiding in Marco, but he'd been helping to care for the Omega for weeks, and the words were coming out against his will. Something about this agreeable bastard made you want to pour your heart out, and Levi hated him for it, just a little. "I thought I knew what I wanted." Marco sat down on the bed, placing a hand over one of Levi's to get his full attention. The Omega looked up into the Beta's eyes, but snatched his hand away with an irritated noise.

"What do you want now?" That gray stare flicked to the door for the barest of instances before settling back on Marco again, but the Beta caught it, smiling. "Is that so bad? To want to live?" Who cares about living? It wouldn't matter if Levi was in his red heat or not. He wanted that Alpha, and he wanted him bad. So much that it terrified him. His desires were fighting against each other, his reasoning telling him one thing, his instincts something else.

"I don't want to be a slave to some Alpha. I'd rather be dead." Levi said it like a mantra, a prayer spoken so often that the words had lost their meaning. Marco squeezed Levi's knee this time, face full of sympathy again. God, I want to hit you so much right now, freckles.

"I've known Eren a long time, since high school. He would never do that to you. Maybe it's not my place to say, but he's never even mated before, never shown the vaguest interest in doing so. I haven't seen him act like this, not once." The Beta laughed then, rolling his eyes. "It's really damn funny, actually. When his rut is over, hopefully I'll be able to tease him about this." Levi wasn't listening anymore, had stopped hearing what the Beta was saying after 'never even mated before'.

"You've gotta be fucking kidding me." Never marked an Omega is one thing. Never mated? At all?
"He goes into rut every month, suppresses it every time." Every month? Holy shit. Levi had not thought such a thing was possible. Even Erwin only went into rut four times a year, and he was the strongest Alpha Levi had ever met, which was saying something. "Every couple of years or so he has one that the drugs won't suppress. Once he went to the hospital and had them tranquilize him for the duration, but apparently that didn't work too well for him, made him sick for weeks. Last time he handcuffed himself to his damn wall and starved for a week without telling anyone what he was doing. I have no idea where he even got cuffs strong enough to hold him, you know how Alphas in rut get. He told his sister to come check on him after it had passed, and she found him half dead on the floor. This time, I guess he couldn't take it anymore, so he came to the shelter. The last thing he's ever wanted is to mate, and here he is falling all over himself." Levi was quiet, letting everything the Beta said roll around through his mind. Marco found that he felt desperate, wanting to save this Omega by any means necessary. He always felt this way with an Omega in their red heat, but then again they'd always lost an Alpha. Now, it seemed like he could actually do some good, and he would say anything, do anything, if it would keep this one alive. The Beta stared at Levi until he caught his eyes again. "I've been here for half an hour or so, but he wouldn't let me wake you up until now. Know why?" The Omega shrugged, feeling a scowl spread across his features at Marco's words. "Because your tea wasn't ready yet, and Eren said you wanted some when you woke up." Levi's cut his gaze over towards the tray, tea and cups and sugar seeming to accuse him silently. "There's enough food in the kitchen to feed two dozen people. He cooked it all, all kinds of shit, because he didn't know what you would want to eat. I didn't even think he knew how to cook, never seen him do it before, and I've known him for over a decade. I know for a fact he's never made tea, doesn't drink anything with caffeine. Eren is, as you both put it, losing his shit. All because of you." The Omega wanted to rail against Marco, tell him how full of shit he was, but he knew the truth when he heard it. This Beta wouldn't lie to him after everything he'd been through.

"He told you to tell me all this." The Beta was shaking his head again, looking even more serious.

"No. He didn't. I'm sure he'd be furious if he knew I had mentioned any of it." Marco let out a bark of a laugh. "Especially the whole virgin thing. I may be dead if he finds out about that. Maybe don't mention it, if that's okay with you." All Levi could picture in his head now was his golden eyed Alpha running a bath, cleaning his room, making tea. Fumbling around with tea cups and sugar. Who the fuck put black tea in a plastic pitcher, anyway? Fucking savage.

"Why tell me all of this? What does it matter to you?" Marco looked at him like he was a complete idiot, and it felt wrong to be on the receiving end of such a look, rather than the one giving it.

"I want you to live, Levi. There's no reason for you to die. I know firsthand what the wrong Alphas can do, how they hurt Omegas, treat them like property, take advantage. But I also know that not all of them are like that. Eren can't help it that he was born an Alpha. He had not control over it, just like you had no control over being born Omega. It's not fair to hold him accountable for crimes he didn't commit. All he has ever done his entire life is protect others, look out for his friends. Fight what he is." Marco was smiling again, a sad smile, full of old wounds and forgotten sorrow. "I've never seen two people more alike. Resisting their instincts with everything they have, even if it literally rips them apart." Levi felt the fight draining out of him, and he wanted to kick Marco all over again. His voice was dripping with sarcasm when he spoke.

"Okay, freckled Beta wise man. What the fuck am I supposed to now?" The Beta shrugged, picking up his clipboard and backing towards the door.

"That's up to you. If things don't work out here, your always welcome back at the shelter. We'll even come pick you up, if we have to. But to be honest? I don't want to see you back there. Maybe next
time I talk to you will be at the dojo Eren works at, beating the shit out of him. Someone needs to, and from what you've told me about your history, maybe you could do it." Maybe he could do it? Levi felt indignant.

"Tch! Of course I could. Alphas all think they're stronger just because of what they are. They're quick to underestimate me." Marco's hand was on the knob, smirking at the Omega with a knowing expression.

"Can't kick his ass if you're dead." This Beta fucker.

"You think you're clever, don't you, freckles?"

"I know I'm clever. I'll see you around, Levi. Hopefully later, rather than sooner." Marco exited without another word, leaving Levi alone in a bed that felt too big. Lost in it. The Omega rubbed a hand over his hair, pulling it down to breathe in Eren's scent with a sigh. Of all the Alphas in the world that could've walked into that fucking shelter....

Why'd it have to be you?

..........................................................

Levi wanted to go back to sleep, but then he remembered stupid four eyes, feeling bad that he had not called her since he'd left the refuge. When Eren came back to his bedroom after seeing Marco out, Levi had asked to use his phone. The Alpha insisted on bringing him something to eat, so while he went into the kitchen Levi dialed Hange and waited to see if she would answer a number she didn't know. She was too curious not to, most likely. After a few rings four eyes picked up, voice shredded and low.

"Hello?" Levi had never heard her sound this way before, like her heart was breaking. He felt worry twist in his gut.

"Christ, Hange. What happened? What's wrong?"

"L-Levi? Is that you?"

"Yeah, no shit it's me. What the fuck is wrong with you? Who died?" Suddenly she was screaming into the phone, and Levi had to pull it away from his face with a wince to save his eardrums.

"YOU DID, YOU BASTARD! I called the shelter to talk to you and they said you weren't there! I asked if you left, and they wouldn't give me any information! I thought-" He heard her sniff, and when she continued Levi could tell she was crying. "I thought you had died, Levi. You fucking asshole! Where are you?" Guilt washed through him at the emotion in her voice.

"I'm sorry, Hange. I didn't mean- fuck. I'm just sorry, I guess. I left the refuge."

"Obviously, dumb ass. Where are you now? Do I need to come get you?"

"I'm..." Shit, there was no avoiding it. "I'm at some Alpha's house. An Alpha in rut." Suddenly Hange was cheering, and from the sounds in his ear he knew she was jumping around her room.

"Oh my God, Levi! I'm so happy! You're done being a fucking idiot!" After a few more loud shouts, she quieted a bit. "So, how was it? Was it good? Are you gonna get married and have a half dozen furious scowling little babies?" Though he was an Omega, Levi could not get pregnant even if he
wanted to, which he fucking didn't. Years of illegal heat suppressants ripping up his insides had made sure of that, and honestly he was grateful for it. Hange knew better than anyone, with all her studies on Omegas and Alphas and fertility. Which made it even more irritating, knowing she was fucking with him just to be an ass.

"Shut the fuck up, four eyes. I haven't done anything yet, like it's any of your business."

"Why not? You're still in your heat, in a rutting Alpha's house? I can't really believe that. He'd be down your pants in an instant, and you'd be ass up and begging for it." She was right, it did sound ridiculous when she put it that way.

"Seeing is believing, I guess. I need some clothes, my phone back, my wallet. You wanna pack a bag for me and bring it?"

"If you need a bag, that means you're gonna go for it, right? If you thought you were going to die, you wouldn't need your shit. You're not gonna try to leave after I bring you clothes, are you? Cause I fucking won't do it. I'll make you leave that Alpha's house naked if you're not gonna mate."

"Can you just shut up and do what I ask, just once?"

"Only if you plan on getting laid. Levi, I know I said I supported your decision whatever it was, but after calling the refuge, after... after thinking you were dead? I don't support your choices anymore. I want you to live, and I don't care if you don't like it. I was wrong. You were wrong." The pain was evident in her voice, lacing everything she said with sadness. Levi wasn't sure what he was going to respond with until it was already out of his mouth.

"I was wrong. You're right." A sharp intake of breath, followed by a long silence.

"Really?" She was crying again. Hange never fucking cried, and Levi felt like an asshole for being the person who brought tears to those crazy eyes.

"Really, you stupid bitch. Bring me my goddamned clothes." It was only then that he realized he was really going to do it, mate an Alpha. Stay alive. He could've waited until afterwards to call her, have her come over just to pick him up, but Levi needed to see her now. She'd thought he was dead, and he wanted to erase those dark images from her mind right then. Levi would never tell his friend just how important she was to him, but he was pretty sure she knew anyway.

"EEEEEEEEK! LEEEEEEVIIIIII!!! Oh! When I thought you were dead, I- uh.... never mind. It's not important."

"What did you do?"

"Nothing! It's fine. I'll tell you when I bring you your stuff. Text me the address from your boyfriend's phone."

"Hange!"

"Awww, c'mon, let me dream! He's gonna save you, he's officially my favorite person ever right now! Hey, is he at least hot? Surely you wouldn't let some ugly Alpha take you home, right?" Levi was smirking then, and all he could think of was shining golden eyes and messy brown hair.

"You'll see him when you get here."

"Fuck, that good, huh?"
"Goodbye, Hange."

Levi hung up on her over her protests, smiling as he did so. Stupid shitty glasses. Then the Alpha was knocking on his own damned bedroom door, waiting for Levi to tell him he could enter. Levi felt nervous, panic running through his veins. What was he supposed to say to him now? 'Oh, I don't want to die after all, so would you please fuck me?' Shit. He found himself combing through his hair with his fingers, pulling the blankets up around his waist, gnawing at his lip. Jesus, Levi. All he had to do was wait for Hange to bring him some clothes, and after she left... Levi let out a shaky breath as butterflies twitched in his guts, throat going tight. What would it feel like? Those strong hands running up his sides, spreading his thighs wide, delving inside him....

Fuck.

Levi was so screwed.
When Eren went back into his bedroom the Omega looked guilty somehow, blankets tugged up around him as though he was trying to hide in them. It was strange to see, knowing how much Omegas hated clothes or fabric on their skin during a heat. The Alpha stood in the doorway unable to tear his eyes away from Levi no matter how hard he tried. His heart was racing just looking at him, climbing up too high in Eren's chest as he tried to force air in his lungs. Levi's scent was still in the room but it was different somehow, and after a few deep breaths Eren felt himself throb with desire, a growl forming at the back of his throat. 

"Rearousal. Submission. Thicker in the air than anything intangible had the right to be, and Eren felt like he needed to clear it away before he could walk through it, invisible webs blocking his path. This Omega was... willing? Wanting? Eren had never smelled such a scent before, not directed at him anyway, and he couldn't be sure he wasn't misinterpreting it. No matter how much he wanted Levi, the Omega would have to tell him what he wanted. He could not just read it from his body language, or his smell, or his eyes. Eren needed to hear the words, but looking at this fierce little Omega, he doubted they'd ever pass Levi's lips.

"Are you going to stand there staring or give me some damned food?" Eren blinked a few times, looking down at the tray full of food like it had just appeared in his hands out of nowhere. You're an idiot, Jaeger.

"S-Sorry. I didn't know what you'd want to eat. I brought some spanish rice, and some pasta. If you don't want it, there's also some plain white rice, and some soup. Or I can make you a sandwich, or some oatmeal, or-" Fuck, he was rambling and even though he knew it Eren couldn't stop, so he was grateful when that harsh voice cut him off.

"It's fine, just give it here." Eren held the tray out and Levi took it without glancing up. The Omega wasn't looking at the food, either, but at the floor next to the bed, shamefaced. "Thanks, I guess." The Alpha backed up a few steps, not wanting to get too close to Levi at the moment. Marco's scent was still in the air and Eren was on edge, holding himself back by a thread. He ended up leaning against the wall, hands shoved in his pockets as though the denim would keep him from pulling the Omega into his arms.

"You're welcome. It's no trouble." Levi held out his phone, still staring at the ground.

"I need you to text your address to the number I just called, so my friend can bring me some clothes." It took a few moments for the Omega's words to process, but when they did panic ran through Eren like electricity, lighting him up inside. Levi would only need clothes if he was leaving, would never be able to wear them during a heat. Levi wanted to go, wanted his friend to come get him and take him away somewhere. He had not even been there a day, only a handful of hours, and he was sick of Eren already. The Alpha's eyes went wide and before he knew what he was doing he stood next to the bed, hands shaking.

"Don't. Please, don't. You just got here, you-" His voice held the crazed tones of insanity, desperation tinged with fear. He stank of terror, a scent he'd never caught coming from his own body before, and it made his nose wrinkle in disgust. He'd been about to say 'you can't leave.' But he could, couldn't he? Levi could walk out that door never to return, and there was nothing Eren could do to stop him. Eren dropped to his knees before the Omega, prostrating himself in a way he never had, not to anyone. He thought his instincts might make it impossible, but even that ancient part of himself seemed to realize that the very thing he sought was slipping from his grasp. He sank to the floor without difficulty, green stare locked on Levi. It was a gesture of subservience, and Levi's eyes looked like they might fall out of his head, mouth hanging open in shock. "Please don't leave. Stay
The Omega tilted his head like he didn't quite understand at first, but then realization painted his features and he scoffed.

"I'm not leaving, you idiot. I just want some clothes, my phone, my ID. Calm down." Eren sagged with relief, pressing his face into the blankets with a sigh and just leaving it buried there for awhile. His next words were muffled by the fabric of the comforter.

"Oh, thank fuck. You scared me." He stood up, taking his phone from Levi and retreating back across the room to stare at the blank screen. Eren looked between the phone and Levi, back and forth a few times before biting his lip, seeming uncertain. "Your friend. Who is it?" They both knew what he was asking without saying it directly. Is it an Alpha?

"Her name is Hange, she's my roommate. She's a Beta. She... she called the refuge earlier, and they wouldn't tell her anything, so she thought I was dead. She was pretty fucked up about it, and I need clothes and shit anyway, so I figure this way she can relax a little. If that's okay with you, anyway. I don't want you attacking her." Eren wanted to be indignant, offended, but it was a legitimate concern and not even he could say for certain that he wouldn't go after some strange Beta in his house while he was rutting, near Levi, who was in heat. She may have been his friend, his roommate, but it did not matter. An Alpha's instincts didn't know the difference.

"I can't say for sure that I won't, but I think I can keep it together. I'll probably have to take you outside to talk to her, though, having her in here will be too much for me. I don't know if I will be able to leave you there with her or not. Probably not, to be honest, and if she touches you I'll growl at her I'm sure. Is that okay?" He knew it wasn't really okay, but it was the best he could do. Even the thought of carrying Levi outside brought a snarl to his face, the idea of him leaving the protection of those walls making him want to hiss.

The Omega poked at his food with a fork, stirring it around but not actually eating.

"We have a friend who is an Alpha, and he's pretty bad sometimes. She knows how to deal with you bastards. But I... I should probably apologize in advance, give you a fair warning. Hange is... fucking crazy, to put it mildly. She will say ridiculous shit and jump around like a little kid. Before she leaves, I guarantee you will have at least one stupid nickname that you hate. And that's best case scenario. She's extra happy with you right now, I can't promise she won't try to kiss you." Eren was beginning to get nervous, wondering how exactly he would deal with an exuberant Beta flitting around him while Levi was in his arms. He didn't want to do any harm to the Omega's friends, especially his roommate who he obviously cared about.

"Why is she extra happy with me?" Levi took a hesitant bite of the rice, chewing experimentally before swallowing.

"You got me to leave the shelter, in her mind you saved my life. She's the new best friend you never wanted." The Omega ate in earnest then, trying not to shovel the food into his mouth like a starving man. Eren fought back a smile, much happier than he should be about Levi eating food he had prepared. The Alpha had cooked it, but it wasn't really enough. He wanted to kill something himself, skin it, butcher it. Roast it in a fire he started with his hands, make Levi eat pieces of it from his fingertips. Eren trembled at the thought, phone jittery in his grip as he tried to take deep breaths.

"Okay. I'll text her my address. Maybe warn her to try and... stay calm, or something?" Levi had to swallow a mound of pasta before he could speak. Eren could watch him eat for days, satisfied by the mere idea of filling his stomach.

"Sure. But it won't do any good." Eren found the number and saved it to his contacts under 'Hange' before texting his address, along with a brief message.
Eren: Eren doesn't want to eat you, so try to be calm. Almost faster than it should be possible to type a response, his phone was vibrating.

Hange: Ooooh, Levi would've managed at least two shits and a fuck in there, so this must be the Alpha. Eren, I presume? I look forward to meeting you, beast man. You can't eat me, though, you need to eat Levi. Eren smirked, liking the Beta already despite Levi's warnings.

Eren: I want to. Trust me. He doesn't want to be eaten yet.

Hange: Ahhh, but he does! I think we'll get along just fine. Are you hideous, beast man? Send me a picture and I'll send you some of Levi. His smirk spread out into a full blown smile, and he heard Levi cursing at the sight.

"Goddamnit, I should've known this was a shit idea. Don't talk to stupid four eyes like she's a human being or something. She's a fucking monster." Eren was already scrolling through his pictures, finding a suitable one of himself and sending it to Hange. He needed pictures of his Omega, and hell would freeze over before Levi let him take one.

"She's a monster. Duly noted." Levi glared at him for a moment before he continued eating, food vanishing off his plate impressively fast. When it was all gone, the Omega looked down at it in disbelief.

"Fuck, I can't believe I ate that much." Levi was rubbing absently at his stomach, less bothered by his state of undress than he should be.

"Do you need more? I can get you more. Or something else, if you want." Eren took the tray, now holding only an empty plate and a fork, no trace of food on it.

"No. I already feel like I'm going to explode."

"Okay. I'm going to put this up, I'll be right back."

Eren went to the kitchen and put the utensils in the sink before thinking better of it and washing them. As he was putting them away in the cabinet his phone went off again, and when he opened the messages he smiled. There were four pictures of Levi, each one better than the one before. He was scowling into the camera in the first, brows furrowed in irritation. Instead of looking angry, he just looked adorable to the Alpha, and Eren knew he was fucked. Another two were candid shots, the Omega not even aware the photo was being taken. Levi was reading a book in one, and holding a cup of tea in the other, staring off into space. The last one made Eren's chest swell with affection, and if the Beta that was coming over wanted to hug him, he would let her. Or try to, anyway. She had earned it by sending him these, especially the final shot. Levi was asleep, hair falling into his eyes, face slack and relaxed. His hands were curled up under his chin, the rest of him vanishing underneath a dark blanket. Eren's Omega was fucking beautiful, and he wanted Levi to be his, wanted to be able to pull out his phone and say 'this is my mate'. The Alpha saved the pictures onto his memory card, and when he replied to the Beta he noticed she had texted him a number as well.

Hange: That's Levi's number. I put yours in his phone under 'Sexy Beast Man'. I also sent your picture to him, it's saved as his background now. God, Eren needed to hug this person, and right then.


Hange: Understandable. I am great, it's a scientific fact. I'm on my way, I'll see you soon, beast
Eren: Okay, oh great and powerful Hange.

Eren tried to wipe the smile off his face before he went back to his room, but it was futile. Levi glared at him with a suspicious expression on his face, but the Alpha just ignored it, sitting down on the foot of the bed and getting comfortable. Hange would be here soon, and talking to her had made him realize he knew next to nothing about this Omega.

It was time to remedy that.

Eren could tell the Omega was eager for a knock at the door signaling his friend's arrival. It meant he would escape Eren's unrelenting questions, at least for a minute or two, but the Alpha could not help himself. He wanted to know everything about Levi, every little detail, every useless fact. He'd tried asking about his favorite color, or what kind of music he liked, only to be met with scoffs and silence. None of his inquiries merited a response, apparently, until he asked about how he made his living. His Omega worked with others like him who were rescued from harems and forced prostitution. When Eren asked if he was a counselor, Levi laughed in his face. The Omega helped the victims in other ways, training them in basic self defense against Alphas, or in Levi's words, 'how to fight dirty'. He became animated as he spoke, gesturing with his hands and talking fast, coming alive under Eren's stare. It was obvious how passionate he was about his job, and the Alpha couldn't help but smile.

"It's mostly about helping them realize that they can say no, that they aren't underneath someone's thumb anymore. For however long they've been imprisoned, any sort of defiance meant pain, abuse. Now, they are free, but it doesn't really help with their instincts. Even if they're just at a bar, or at the park, or a party, when an Alpha propositions them they usually agree even if they want no part of it. They don't want to be hurt, and after being forced for so long it's automatic. So I teach them how to fight their instincts, how to push down that part of them that wants to submit just to escape confrontation. Train their body language, make them stand taller, make eye contact without looking away, raise their voice. Let them know that it's okay if they're terrified inside, or if they can't control the fear in their scent. As long as they can assert themselves, say 'no', push someone away, it's usually enough. Most Alphas they are going to encounter in the kinds of places a victimized Omega would go aren't going to get too forceful. Then, after they've gotten the hang of all that, we do basic Omegan self defense. It's just what it sounds like. Escaping holds, groin shots, eye gouging. Misdirection, if necessary. Get a little grabby if you can't get away, then knee them in the nuts or whatever and run. Anything to get away. Most Omegas are not physically strong, unless they specifically make an effort to strengthen themselves, which they'd have to do at home. Not a lot of Omega gyms, and most of those are just treadmills and yoga and bullshit. It's not that dojos and more serious places ban Omegas, but they usually don't feel comfortable around so many Alphas. Plus, even when I've tried going somewhere, no one will fight me seriously. The Alphas all think it's an excuse to try and fuck them, then get all offended when they take a punch to the face, or just want to make me visually submit and think that means they've won. Submission does not mean victory, not the way I see it, but I usually have to teach that lesson with my fists and then no one wants a second round. The Betas all end up going easy on me, which just pisses me off."

"I would fight you. Fuck, I have to be honest, I really want to fight you." Levi looked at him, and his face was screaming 'bullshit'. "No, I'm serious. I work at a dojo, I'm an instructor. A lot of the classes I teach are Betas, because not many of the other Alphas can manage it without forcing all of them to
submit with their body language, and that's no way to show someone how to fight. I am used to suppressing my instincts, including the ones that would be telling me to protect you. It might take a little bit for me to get going, to get used to fighting an Omega, but I could do it without pulling my punches." His eyes lit up gold for a moment before fading. "I'd like to see how you move, Levi. I mean, I don't think we're in the same weight class or anything, but I could make an exception..." He trailed off with a smirk, the jab at Levi's height not going unnoticed by the Omega.

"Oh, you fucker. When all this is over with, I am going to beat that smile off your face." Levi cringed as he realized what he said, willing himself to vanish into the comforter. Eren's pleased expression disappeared at Levi's words, brows furrowing as he considered them. When all this was over, wouldn't the Omega be dead? If he was planning on being able to fight Eren, then that could only mean one thing, right? Coupled with the scent of submission in the air, subtle hints of arousal filtering into Eren's nose, and hope swelled up wildly in his chest.

" 'When all this is over'? Levi... what-" The knock Levi had been waiting for sounded, and he looked incredibly relieved that Eren had been interrupted. He tugged the blankets off himself, moving towards the edge of the bed to make it easier for Eren to pick him up, but the Alpha did not move to do so. When the Omega looked up at him, he was staring into bright gold eyes. "We are going to discuss this again when your friend is gone. Me and you fighting, when 'all this is over'." Levi swallowed so hard that it was audible, fighting the urge to look away from that stare in submission. The Omega held his gaze through sheer force of will, and Eren could smell his own lust rising in the air. It was turning him on, making his cock swell and throb, watching Levi resist his nature to challenge him. Most Alphas hated it when someone wouldn't avert their eyes. Eren never wanted Levi to look away, wanted to keep that gaze even as he slid inside him.... *Fuck.*

"We can discuss it all you want." Now it was Eren's lids falling closed as he shuddered, hearing promises laced in between those words unsaid. When he opened them up he pulled the sheet off his bed, wrapping it around Levi's shoulders. The Omega grimaced at the touch of the fabric on his skin. It was a miracle he could even lay on the bed without scratching his flesh off, let alone feel bedding all around him this way.

"I know it itches. I'm sorry, but I can't take you out there like this. You need to... be covered. Christ, I sound like a psychopath." Eren felt stupid but Levi nodded, not saying anything as Eren scooped him up into his arms for the second time that day, holding him tight to his chest. He didn't move at first, just pressed his face into the Omega's hair and breathed in, his own scent thick in the strands. *Mine.* Eren bit his tongue to keep the word back, tasting blood on it, but was unable to fight the moan that came out. Everything in him wanted to throw Levi back on the bed, bury his lips against the Omega's, tear off those boxers and spread his thighs wide-
feet, eyes crinkling under the strain of the huge smile she wore.

"I really want to hug you right now, Levi. I thought you were dead!" The Alpha's growl increased in volume, gaze narrowing on the Beta against his will. "Don't worry, beast man, I won't. Can I pet his furious little head or something, though? Please, angry Alpha, sir?" Eren's jaw popped again, sore from being tensed and strained and flexed all day. He bit words out through it somehow, rough and full of gravel.

"Sure. Go for it. Fast, though." Hange jumped in a little circle, hands flying around her face before she reached out and ruffled Levi's hair affectionately. Then Eren snapped at her, and she jerked her hand back. The Alpha was cringing even as he bared his teeth in a hiss. "Fuck, I'm sorry about that. Can't really help it right now." Hange just cackled, delighted that there was an Alpha this protective over Levi.

"It's fine! I expected it. I would've been disappointed with anything less!" She picked up a backpack that was on the porch behind her, holding it out to Alpha and letting it dangle from one finger. "Here's this. Don't let him have any of his stuff until after he gives it up, okay Eren?" Levi made an irritated sound through his teeth, and Hange deposited the bag beside their feet.

"Oh, we're on a first name basis are we, shitty glasses?" Hange clasped her hands in front of her chest, rocking back and forth with glee.

"Why yes! We're texting buddies!" Levi ran a hand over his face, sighing heavily into it.

"Oh my fuck, God help me." Hange backed away, sensing the aggression that was rising in the Alpha. He was keeping it together admirably, considering she was an unknown Beta in his territory along with everything else, but even Hange knew when to retreat. Then Levi remembered what Hange had said on the phone. "You did something stupid, you were going to tell me when you came. Spit it out, you maniac."

"Oh, well... I thought you dead, and I called Erwin and told him, asked him to come home." Levi's jaw dropped, eyes going wide in horror. Eren felt the Omega tense in his arms, and curiosity rolled through him. Who was Erwin, and why did Levi's muscles freeze up at the mention of his name? Was he afraid of him, somehow? Levi did not seem the type to fear someone, no matter who is was, and Eren hated this man on principle. Anyone who made his Omega so nervous was worthy of Eren's wrath, as far as he was concerned.

"You fucking what?" She held up her hands in a gesture of surrender, taking another step backwards, the faintest trace of fear tainting the air.

"I'm sorry! I was upset, you were dead, I needed a fucking Erwin hug, alright? I called him back after I talked to you and let him know it was a false alarm, told him what happened, but he was already back in town. Damn, is he pissed at me now. He thinks I sent him away so you could die, which shit, I guess that's exactly what I did? I made a mistake. Too late now! Your phone is on silent, but I bet he's blowing it up right now."

"You told him I was at an Alpha's house." Hange cringed, having the decency to look at least a little ashamed.

"I had to! He would've headed to the shelter, and when you weren't there he would've gone ape shit! At least this way he knows your safe!"

"Erwin will not see this as safe, four eyes. The house of an Alpha he doesn't know, with me in a red heat? Fuck, Hange, you're a goddamned idiot!" Levi was shouting the last part, and Eren had to
force his feet to stay where they were. His Omega was upset at this woman, and his instincts were telling him to tear her apart for making him mad. Then Hange yelled right back, and Eren shook with fury, teeth grinding together under the strain.

"YOU'RE THE IDIOT, LEVI! You were going to kill yourself just because your too fucking stubborn! Terrified to mate and so you were gonna let yourself die! There's nothing to be afraid of!"

"I AM NOT AFRAID!" Hange blinked, but then she smiled again, watching as Levi's hands clutched absentely at Eren's clothes, head curled against his chest. She opened her mouth to reply, but she didn't get a chance. The Alpha spoke then, words laced with poison and rage. His low voice gave a false sense of calm to them, but those bright gold eyes and trembling hands belied his anger. Each syllable came out meticulously and sharp, forced through teeth that wanted to sink into flesh.

"Hange. It's been nice to meet you, but I need you to leave now. Slowly, without turning around."

"Sorry, Levi. I wasn't trying to upset you. Ah, I'll see you later, beast man. Maybe when you don't want to kill me, eh? No hard feelings, just get my boy between those sheets, okay?" Levi groaned out loud, part of him wishing that the Alpha had taken a few of her damn fingers before. Hange walked backwards down the stone path, and when she got to where her car was parked she felt around blindly until she located the door handle. If she had turned her back on Eren he would've put Levi down and pounced on her, held her to the ground by her throat until she submitted. Hange waved one last time as she opened her door, sliding into the car before starting the engine and pulling away. Eren stared at the road she had disappeared down for a long time before his instincts finally calmed enough to allow him to pick up Levi's bag and head back inside. After locking the door, he carried the Omega back to his bed and lay him down over the blankets. He looked at Levi's backpack suspiciously, like it was full of snakes ready to erupt at any moment. Eren offered it to the Omega, who took one look at Eren's face and shook his head.

"I'm sorry. I'll text your friend, apologize to her. I didn't mean to be... " Levi found himself snickering in spite of everything.

"An Alpha?" Eren shrugged, sitting down on the bed and tossing the backpack to the floor when it became clear Levi was not going to take it. His emotions were swirling around wildly inside him, pulling him ten different directions at once.

"I guess."

"Hange's a little hard to deal with on the best of days. 'Beast man'." Levi snorted, and Eren found it more attractive than should be possible. "Christ, I feel like I should be the one apologizing." Eren ran his hand through his hair, messing up already wild locks even further. Levi's scent had grown stronger, so powerful now that Eren could taste it in his mouth. Willing. Wanting. The Alpha in him was screaming to be let out, demanding that he take and ravage and devour. Eren could feel his eyes glowing bright, as they had been since he came back inside with Levi. He had to get away from this Omega for a few minutes, right them, or he was going to do something he couldn't take back.

"I'm going to go take a shower." He looked up at Levi, eyes pleading. What they were asking for, the Omega didn't know. "When I get out, I want to come talk to you. About our fight." Eren didn't want to talk about fighting, and Levi knew it, but that was okay. The Omega was ready to do more than talk.

"Okay." Eren tried to reign himself in, bring his stare back to green, still his shaking hands, but it was no use. He stood up, gathering some clothes from his dresser before moving towards the bathroom.
As he lingered in the doorway he looked back at Levi, hesitating. Eren strode purposefully back towards the bed, leaning over the Omega with an unfathomable expression. He looked at Levi like he had all the answers, like he held the world in the palm of his hands. The Alpha moved in slow, pressing his face into Levi's hair, breathing in as he kissed those dark strands. Levi went totally still, fisting his hands in the bedsheets to keep them from pulling Eren down onto the mattress. He rocked in place, letting out a ragged gasp and closing his eyes tight. When Eren finally pulled back they were both shaking, and his legs were made of lead as they carried him away.

Something inside Levi shifted. A whisper in his mind said, 'soon'.
When Eren finally left the room Levi felt his scent rise, trying to call the Alpha back instinctively with the smell of the heat. As the sound of running water filtered under the door to the bathroom the Omega picked up the backpack Hange had brought, almost afraid to open the damned thing. There was no telling what she had put in there, really. It could be full of sex toys for all he knew. When he unzipped it and saw clothing with his cell phone and charger piled on top, he breathed a sigh of relief. *Thank fuck.* Levi picked up his phone with a grimace, dreading what he knew he would find there. As he tapped the screen he saw he was right. Fourteen texts, a dozen missed calls, and he didn't need to unlock it to know they were all from Erwin. He swiped across the screen anyway, and when his home screen came up he felt his teeth grind together. There was picture of Eren saved as his background image, smiling into the camera, sharp white teeth and bright green eyes. *Damn it, Hange.* This was her doing, had to be, and he wanted to strangle her all over again even as he stared at the photo of Eren with hungry eyes. *Fuck,* he was beautiful, even Levi could admit that to himself. That emerald stare, tanned skin, messy fucking hair that Levi wanted to comb with his fingers.... *Christ.* He didn't even change it back before opening his messages. Levi could always blame Hange, and there were worse things to look at than Eren's face.

The messages from Erwin were predictable, and somehow not as irritating as expected. *Where are you, are you okay, I'm headed back to town, I'm worried about you, Hange is a fucking idiot, please call me back...* Well, he was right about Hange, if nothing else. Erwin was just concerned about him, wanted what was best for the Levi, but considering what he had told the Omega about his red heat Levi was still angry enough to not reply. The last thing he wanted was Erwin trying to track him down, especially right now. He didn't have the energy to deal with the bastard on top of everything else. After his heat had passed, which if all went well should be in the next twelve hours or so, the Omega would call Erwin and tell him that he was going to be okay. Levi was surprised when one of the texts was not from his stupid Alpha friend, but Petra instead. He opened it with a frown, feeling guilt wash over him as he read the Omega's message.

**Petra:** They told me you went to the shelter for your red heat, and that you're refusing Alphas. Tell me it's not true, Levi.

The text was dated over a week and a half ago, a few days after he had gone to the refuge. They would have been forced to cancel the sessions he had scheduled with his Omegas until they found a new instructor, which would be no easy task. Now all he could see was Petra's face, eyes perpetually on the ground, wide and always full of fear. He'd been trying to show her how to be strong. Instead, he had been the one who was weak, running from his problems instead of facing them, hiding in a shelter instead of finding someone to mate. Levi was not worthy of helping these Omegas, not if he couldn't even help himself. The Omega texted Petra back, fingers sluggish over the keys.

**Levi:** It's not true anymore. I'm out.

Levi hit send, feeling every bit the asshole that he was while he waited for her reply. He'd betrayed his clients, too wrapped up in his own problems to realize the kind of message he would be sending them with his actions. Levi was the strongest Omega they knew, physically and emotionally, and many of them worshipped the ground he walked on. He was an Omega just like they were, and yet he was fierce and brave and powerful. Many of them had told Levi that he made them want to keep on going when they would have just disappeared into themselves, closed off from the world. If he would rather succumb to his red heat than mate an Alpha, what could they ever hope to do? Many of them were terrified at the prospect of mating for the first time after their release from captivity, and part of Levi's job was help them realize that not all Alphas were the monsters they'd known. Now he
was making a liar out of himself, destroying the progress they had made in one fell swoop. They deserved more than that from him, and it was time to put his money where his mouth was. To practice what he preached. For himself, but also for them. The Omega's phone vibrated, pulling him out of his introspection.

**Petra:** Oh Levi, I'm so happy to hear from you. I thought you were gone. If you're out, that means you mated an Alpha right? Your first one? Anyone besides one of his Omegas and he would have torn them open for asking, but he owed this girl an answer.

**Levi:** Not yet, but soon. I'm at an Alpha's house. He's nice, I'm safe. If he did not assure her of his safety Petra would surely have asked, been worried. She was too nice of a person and Levi did not deserve her friendship, but here she was fretting over him. After a moment she responded, and when he read it he was not surprised, but it cemented in his mind what he had to do.

**Petra:** Afterwards, do you think... I'm sorry for asking, but could we talk about it? It's been awhile since I was freed, and I've been suppressing. I know I'll have to mate soon, but I'm afraid to. None of the Omegas I know really understand, besides you.

**Levi:** I would be happy to talk to you about it, Petra. I'm sorry for worrying you guys, I was being stupid. Levi realized he needed to call his employer, have them inform his clients that all was indeed well and he would be resuming their normal schedules.

**Petra:** Everyone is afraid sometimes, even you I guess. It's okay. I'm just glad you're okay. Oh hey, is he cute? There was that word again, afraid. Levi had screamed at Hange that he was not, but coming from Petra, unassuming and quiet and kind, he realized it was true. He had been afraid. Thinking of the Alpha in the next room, those eyes flashing gold, restraining himself even under the weight of his rut.... Levi realized he wasn't afraid anymore. He was ready.

**Levi:** He's not bad. When everything is settled, I'll call you.

**Petra:** Thank you, Levi. Good luck. ;)

Levi was rolling his eyes at the fucking winky face she had sent, and if it was anyone else they would have heard what he thought of it, but Petra was safe from his wrath. All the Omegas were, and they damn well knew it, had learned how to push his buttons as surely as Hange. Levi let them, and reveled in it. They were reclaiming power in some small way, and if he could give them that, they were more than welcome to fuck with him. Levi could take it.

When the door to the bathroom opened he jumped, setting his silenced phone on the beside table and glancing over at Eren with wide eyes. Holy shit. All the Alpha was wearing were black pajama pants, loose and hanging low on his hips. He had towel dried his hair poorly, and it dripped onto his shoulders, water sliding in rivulets down the chiseled muscles of his chest. Levi followed the droplets with his eyes, down the valleys of his abs, in the v that disappeared into those pants, and realized he was staring only when Eren cleared his throat. He jerked his gaze up to the Alpha's guiltily, only to see a smile on Eren's face that said, 'Like what you see?' Levi did. Fuck, he really liked it. Wanted to lick up those drops with his tongue. Good thing, since he's going to mate you. Pheromones from the Omega filled the air, potent in a way they'd never been before. Levi knew when Eren caught the scent, because his eyes flashed gold and he caught his breath.

"L-Levi?" It wasn't even really a question, but the Omega needed to answer it all the same. What could he say? He felt himself blushing fiercely as his eyes locked on the blankets. Levi picked at his fingernails, chewed his bottom lip, shifted under the bedding. Now that he'd made his choice his body seemed to know it, and the symptoms of the heat were riling. Levi itched, flesh stretching over
sharp bones, shaft throbbing mercilessly in his borrowed boxers. Everything would get worse until he felt Eren's skin against his own. He could smell his own arousal surging up, knew that the Alpha could as well. The Omega's breaths were coming faster, making him pant and gasp for air. "Levi." He couldn't keep his gaze averted when Eren said his name that way, full of lust and want. Levi met his eyes, forced them to stay on the Alpha for what he was about to say.

"I-I... I w-won't let you seal the bond with me, even if you try. Not r-right now." Not right now? Fuck, that made it sound like he was going to mate this Alpha more than once. But you are. Levi shook his head without breaking away from Eren's stare. It wasn't the time for uncertainty. He'd meant to say something much more decisive than that, somehow. The Alpha was looking at him, feral and hungry, a predator starved laying eyes on his next meal. Levi shivered under that gaze, mouth going dry.

"I can't bond with you without mating, Levi. I won't mate you against your will. No matter how much I want you." Even as he said the words Eren was moving forward, fists opening and closing on empty air. Those golden orbs would illuminate the night with their brightness. Instead of being harder to say, the words came easier with the weight of his presence pressing down on Levi. An Alpha with an Omega in his sights. Levi could feel Eren looking at him.

"I know. I... I don't want to die, Eren." Eren took a deep breath, teeth bared as he fought down his instincts. Why he was still resisting them when he did not have to, Levi was not sure.

"If you want me to mate you, if you will let me... I need to hear the words, Levi." He'd just fucking said them, hadn't he? The Omega hated Eren and respected him all at the same time. Hated the Alpha for making him say it. Respected him for needing to hear it. Levi's insides lurched violently, body seeking to throw itself at the Alpha. Legs wanting to shoot wide, hands craving flesh underneath them. But he would have no relief, not if he couldn't get the words out. Not from this Alpha who was too honorable for his own good.

"I w-want you to mate me, Eren." Levi had been braced for Eren to pounce, shove him down into the mattress, rip his boxers off and take him. Instead the Alpha stood his ground, growls pouring out of his throat, eyes strobing from gold to green and back again, over and over as he tried to remain in some semblance of control.

"You're sure? I... I don't think I can be gentle. Won't be able to stop myself from biting you." Fuck, it was supposed to be a warning, but it sounded like a promise to Levi's ears. Instead of replying, when he first tried to answer all that came out was a needy whine. Levi tried again, hands running across his own skin, over his chest, down his stomach, catching the Alpha's gaze as they did so.

"It's fine, I'm sure. What kind of fucking Alpha are you anyway? You can bite me just don't..." The Omega looked at Eren's lips, wanted them on his own so badly it terrified him. Knew that if that mouth kissed his, he'd be lost to this Alpha for good. "Don't kiss me." Pain flashed through those shining eyes, sharper and more acute than any Levi ever remembered seeing. His chest ached at the sight, heart twisting inside it that he had caused such sorrow to pass over that perfect face.

"Not anywhere?" An image of that mouth sucking his length in flashed through his mind, and Levi whined again, fighting the urge to take himself in hand then and there.

"N-not.. just not on my lips." Levi felt traitorous just saying it, instincts flaring inside, telling him that he was wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong. The Omega within begging for the kiss he'd just refused.

"I'll take that mouth one day. It's mine." Levi's brow furrowed, and the he realized that Eren was waiting for an answer. Fuck, just touch me already, I'm dying here... Levi was about to start begging, pleading, could feel tears stinging his eyes. The Omega would say anything to get those
hands on him, but Eren would be able to sense the truth in his words.

"O-okay. One day."

Then the Alpha jumped at him, jerking the blankets off and shoving Levi roughly into the bed with his body. Eren's skin was hotter than it should be, even warmer than Levi's heat ravaged flesh, and when it slid against his own the Omega moaned. He waited to feel harsh fingers pulling his boxers off, wanted them, but they didn't come. Instead Eren was leaning in close to Levi, golden eyes darting around his face, hands coming to rest on the Omega's cheeks. The Alpha thumbed over his lips, and as he looked at them he growled, wanting to taste them. That savage expression was enough to make the Omega beg, but he couldn't get anything out, mouth frozen and useless. Levi was writhing underneath Eren, desperate for more, legs going around the Alpha's waist to dig into his back, trying to pull him closer. He needed all of him. Eren's touch and Eren's teeth and Eren's skin. The whole world, nothing but him. Then the Alpha pressed his lips next to Levi's mouth on either side, as close to those lips as he could get without touching them. After that he was kissing the Omega's chin, his cheeks, his forehead, his eyes. Every inch of Levi's face, covered with Eren's hungry mouth as he eased his legs in between the Omega's, slotting them against each other. Two pieces made to fit together. Levi realized how small he was beneath Eren, and instead of feeling anger it just felt right. As the Alpha's lips painted his desire across Levi's skin, the Omega felt emotion swelling within him, breaking out of his heart to sail through his veins. His mind tried to put a name to it, and he fought it down, afraid of whatever it was rushing in his blood, twisting up his spine, pooling in his stomach. More than desire, more than need, more than the lust that was shading his vision in red. Too much more. More than Levi could stand to feel. Instead he focused of the ache climbing up his shaft.

The Omega thought he'd known what it was to want when he entered his heats. He had never been more wrong. Levi's hands moved on their own, burying themselves in that messy fucking hair as his hips rutted up into Eren's, seeking friction. The Alpha growled, locking eyes with Levi as he leaned into his mouth and took the Omega's bottom lip in between his teeth. That stare was defiant, and even though he didn't speak Levi knew what Eren was saying. You said not to kiss your lips, but this is not a kiss. Those bright eyes dared him to complain as Eren ran his tongue over it, groaning at the taste. Levi wondered at the restraint required for an Alpha in rut to claim his mate without claiming his lips. It made him dizzy, desire sharpening to a painful degree. A reedy sound came out of Levi's throat, and part of him wanted to swallow it back down, but another part wanted Eren to hear how much he needed him. Needed him now.

The Alpha finally released Levi's lip from his teeth, looking at it with dark promises of things to come before he started rubbing their throats together. Marking them both, drowning them in each others very essence. It was a potent thing, something that would linger for weeks no matter how much they showered. Something that would warn those around them to stay away, speak directly to that ancient part of the brain that processed fear. Twin scents rose up as the Alpha slid their pulse points against one another, one of his hands sliding down Levi's neck, over his shoulder, down to his chest. When Eren ran a thumb over the Omega's nipple, Levi slammed his hips up into the Alpha with a growl of his own. His fingers were just as bruising on Eren's skin as the Alpha's were on his own, clutching at his shoulders, his arms, his back. Pressed against each other, skin to skin, and still Levi wanted him closer. Wanted him inside.

"Fuck, please, Eren."

His voice was not his own, but something high and full of need that Levi did not recognize. Eren just growled in response, sinking his teeth into Levi's throat as he gripped the Omega's hips with vicious fingers and ground their lengths together, clothes keeping that sweet skin apart. Levi felt the bite break the skin, felt blood trickling down his neck, and he moaned louder than he thought possible.
Such a bite would be incredibly painful for a Beta, or even an Omega who was not in heat. For Levi, full of hormones and lust, it felt like he’d come home after a lifetime lost in foreign lands. The Alpha tightened his jaw, tongue laving up the blood as it seeped from the wound, beastly sounds pouring from somewhere deep in his chest. The Omega had never felt anything so right in his entire life as this Alpha's teeth buried in him. He wanted to be covered in those marks, wanted them tattooed into his flesh for the rest of his life. When Eren pulled back Levi whimpered, only to grunt in pleasure as the Alpha switched from right to left, biting down on the other side of his throat in turn.

"Oh, fuck... Nnnngghh...."

Levi was clawing and shaking, legs sliding up and down uselessly on Eren's back. Hips thrusting up into the Alpha's stomach, mouth making sounds that he'd never heard before. He was close to finishing without even being touched, the sting of those teeth and the feel of that cock pressing into his own making his back arch. An Alpha in rut couldn't climax until he was inside an Omega, but the same did not hold true for Omegas. Levi was about to come in his clothes, and he could not manage even the slightest bit of regret. Please, please, please... It ran through his head like a prayer, his entire being begging and shameless and wanting.

"Shhhhh, little Omega, okay, I have you...." He has me. Fuck. Levi had spoken out loud without realizing it, and he could not regret that, either. Not when Eren was pulling back, tugging those miserable fucking boxers he was wearing off and throwing them to the floor. The Alpha discarded his own clothes as well, and Levi didn't have the chance to appreciate the sight of Eren naked before him. Mostly because the Alpha was settling between Levi's thighs and taking the Omega's cock in his fist. He locked eyes with Levi, and for a moment the Omega thought he was going to shoot with just the feel of that emerald gaze on him, that hot breath caressing his length. He waited for Eren to take him into his mouth, hands reaching out to clutch those brown locks again. The Alpha ran his tongue over the inside of Levi's thigh instead, teasing up bruises there before burying his teeth in it.

"Haaaahhh..."

He did not break the skin there as he had on Levi's throat, sucking and licking at it with a patience he should not be able to possess. Not lost in a rut, Omega spread wide and willing in front of him. Eren just kept his eyes on Levi, switching to the other thigh as he tightened his grip on the Omega's shaft, not stroking, not squeezing. Levi felt like he would break inside, explode from the fire swimming within him. The Alpha bit down yet again, making the Omega keen and rut up into his grasp, fists brutal in his hair. Eren's free hand was sliding down Levi's knee, over the bruises on his thigh, down between his legs to rest over his entrance where he found it warm and wet. He released his teeth from the Omega's flesh, moaning as his eyes rolled back into his head. Fuuuuuck....

"God, Levi..."

Levi was making slick, body readying itself for Eren instinctively. Only a very willing mate produced slick, a way the Omega told the Alpha without words that they truly wanted them. Eren looked up at his little Omega, and his breath caught at the sight. Levi was flushed and panting, pupils blown wide with lust. Sweat shining on his skin, neck covered in a sheen of scent, fingers tightening mercilessly in their desperate clutching at Eren's hair.

"Eren.... mmmmpffff...."

The Alpha slid two of his fingers inside the Omega, watching the emotions play over that perfect face. Watched as those eyes fell closed, head flying back into the pillows. Listened to Levi whimper and mewl and gasp, moaning his name, hips slamming down into Eren's fingers as he made sounds that the Alpha wanted to hear over and over. A song sung just for Eren. One he would learn by heart.
"Fuck, Levi." He curled his digits inside of Levi, seeking, searching. "You're so fucking beautiful." The Omega was shaking his head, teeth biting his own lip with troubling ferocity. Forcing words out through the lust. 

"N-no. 'mnnnn not. D-don't say that." The Alpha pulled his fingers back, sliding them back in deeper and bending them. He knew he'd found what he was looking for when Levi whined, cock throbbing in Eren's hand, body grinding down into his touch. 

"But you are. So damn pretty. You are anyway, but like this?" He scissored his fingers open, twisted them, dug them into the Omega's prostate to pull more of those perfect sounds out. "I've never seen anything like it. Beautiful." Eren pressed harder, finally starting to stroke Levi's cock as the Omega became mindless beneath him. "Breathtaking." The Alpha ran his tongue over Levi's crown, tasting the pearlescent fluid leaking from it before taking him down into his mouth with a growl. 

"E-Eren.. Nnnn... " Levi wrapped his legs around Eren's shoulders, fucking his mouth as he tried to breathe through the ecstasy shooting through him, filling him, overwhelming. Taking over everything he was, leaving only this Alpha behind. His scent and his skin and his stare. That hot, wet tongue sliding around his shaft as Eren's fingers worked him, turned him inside out... Levi was wrecked under the Alpha. It was too much, too fast, too good. "Gonna c-come, Eren...." The Alpha took Levi's cock into his throat, which opened wide to take him down, nose buried in the Omega's skin. Levi's vision shot white as his body went tense, strung tight, wanton noises falling from his mouth. He called his Alpha's name as he erupted, feeling Eren's tongue work around him, swallowing every drop. Levi felt overwhelmed as the high of his climax lingered, ears ringing, spots swimming out of his eyes slowly when his vision started to clear. Rutting Alphas did not finish Omegas this way, did not take them into their mouths when the Omega was slicking and ready to be mated. 

Did not look at them the way Eren was, green orbs shining with emotion as he prowled up Levi's body to put his lips by the Omega's ear. 

"So fucking pretty. So perfect. You taste so good, Levi." Levi couldn't argue, couldn't speak, couldn't move. He was boneless, raven hair ragged in his face, thighs spreading instinctively for the Alpha as Eren fist ed himself and ran the head of his cock up and down against Levi's slick hole. "Can I, Levi?" The Omega answered with a whine, pulling Eren's mouth down to his throat. Levi wanted to kiss him, wanted to bury his mouth against Eren's, let the Alpha claim every piece of him, inside and out. It terrified him, so he thrust his neck into those lips, seeking that sweet bite instead. Eren started to slide inside of Levi, agonizingly slowly, licking and sucking at the Omega's skin instead of sinking his teeth in. Levi had his legs thrown wide, hips loose in their sockets. Eren's hands were desperate on Levi, running hungrily over his stomach, his chest, his arms. They trailed down to his hands and Eren interlocked their fingers, pressing them on either side of the Omega's head as he sank into his mate. When he was buried to the hilt they both shuddered, Levi's arousal shooting hard again, fingers clutched together, holding tight. All the world was a memory, fading in the wake of their mating. Disappearing under its weight, and the Alpha did not mourn its loss. Eren rubbed their throats against one another, spreading scent and blood and sweat between them. 

"Levi...." I love you. The words were in his throat, on his tongue, behind his teeth. They soared up, along with urge to bond the Omega. He fought them down savagely, could taste them in his mouth trying to force their way out, could feel his instincts rising to put his mark on Levi's throat, on Levi's wrists, on Levi's thighs. Eren barely knew this Omega, could tell you almost nothing about him. Had not even laid eyes on him a day before. It did not matter. His instincts were screaming inside, demanding release. Demanding he say the words. Demanding he seal the bond. The Alpha bit down on his lip, silencing them through sheer force of will. 

Nothing would chase his Omega away faster than those words. Eren would never see this perfect
Instead he said Levi's name like a mantra, over and over as he began to thrust into the Omega. The Alpha pressed their foreheads together as he moved, and he tried to go slow, tried to be easy.... tried and failed. Soon he was growling, hips pistoning savagely into the Omega as their fingers tightened, grip harsh and unforgiving and perfect. Everything in Eren's whole life had been leading him to this moment, and he welcomed each painful misstep, each bloody memory, each wound, each scar. Would take his suffering a thousandfold if it brought him together with this Omega. Levi was making those beautiful sounds again, whimpering and quaking, instincts singing out the rightness of it all. This was home, this Alpha spreading him open, his scent on Levi's skin, his bite on Levi's throat. This was where Levi belonged, lost and ravenous and wretched underneath Eren. His heart stuttered in his chest, and the Omega knew that no matter what he did, he would never be the same. This Alpha had come into that shelter, carried him away, rewritten his very existence. Without Eren, Levi would be dead.

Filled up with the Alpha, he'd never been more alive.

Now Eren's thrusts were growing erratic, and he reached up to close his palm over Levi’s cock with a groan. That impossible heat wrapped around the Alpha, holding him tight as he slid in and out.... Eren was losing his mind. There was nothing but Levi in it.


"Eren... A-Again..." The Alpha hissed before replying.

"Me too. F-fuck, Levi!"

Eren bit into Levi with a growl when he came, thrusting himself in deep, feeling the Omega's seed shooting over his hand as he milked out the last shivers of Levi's climax. He felt himself swelling, throbbing, and it took a few dazed moments and a strange tugging sensation before he realized what had happened. *Knotted.* Eren had knotted his Omega, the base of his shaft swelling to hold him in place, keep the Alpha's seed inside of his mate. He was quaking at the thought, and when he released his bite to look at Levi, he knew the Omega could feel it, too.

"I-I'm sorry. I didn't mean to." It was only half true. Eren had truly not meant to do it, not that it was within his control. It wasn't something that happened every time an Alpha and Omega mated, and it usually only occurred with bonded pairs. But here they were, locked together, and Eren could not find it in himself to feel sorry. He wanted this Omega to be his, more than he'd ever wanted anything. More than he wanted air to breathe.

"S'okay."

Levi was still breathless and shaky, and now he could feel the Alpha within him, engorged and sealing him up tight. He wanted to moan at the feeling. His heat was not over, nor was Eren's rut. It would take several matings over the course of twelve hours or so before their hormones would ease back, releasing them from their sway. Right now, the Alpha was clutching Levi tight, pulling him flush against his chest and pressing chaste kisses to the Omega's hair, his cheeks, his throat. Eren's arms snaked around the Omega's back and squeezed. He spoke between the gentle brushes of his lips on the Levi’s skin.

"Did I hurt you? Are you okay? I'm sorry about the... bites. I couldn't stop myself." Levi's hands were running up and down Eren's back, and it was the most precious thing the Alpha had ever felt. It felt sacred, somehow. Ritual. Something pure and incorruptible. He leaned into the touch, eyes falling closed in bliss when one set of those long fingers starting threading through his hair.
"'mmm fine. S'okay."

The Omega's words came out as mumbles, voice already rough from moaning so loudly. It was slurred, and tired, and fucking adorable. If Eren hadn't been so stupid in his post orgasm daze, he would've tried to keep Levi talking, just to listen to his incoherent babbles. The Alpha laid on his side, careful to keep Levi tucked in close so he did not hurt the Omega where they were knotted together.

"You're perfect, Levi. I want you to be mine. Even before we mated I wanted you. Now... Fuck." Now he felt like he would be unable to keep himself away from the Omega. Would follow him to the ends of the earth. Levi didn't say anything, just laid his head into Eren's chest with a sigh. The Alpha closed his eyes, and Levi followed suit. They could sleep until the knot released, and then their pheromones would wake them with lust and desperation. Levi had just begun to drift off in a haze of satisfied bliss, Eren's hands holding him tight, when he was jolted from his rest by a loud sound.

Someone was knocking on Eren's front door.

They were not knocking quietly.
Eren heard Levi whine over his own snarling, an Omega's cry coming from that throat with traces of fear in it, and it took him a few moments to figure out why. The Alpha forgot about whoever was at the door, pushing his aggression back to focus on his Omega, who was trembling now. He was calling out in answer, growling, rubbing his face against Levi's as he soothed him with those deep vibrations. It was not impossible to pull out of an Omega you had knotted, but it was extremely painful for them, while an Alpha felt little to no discomfort. Usually only a bonded pair would knot, so it wasn't really a concern for most Omegas. If they were close enough with an Alpha that they knotted, they did not need to worry about their mate carelessly hurting them. But Levi thought Eren was going to force them apart, pull out of his Omega to face what his instincts were interpreting as a threat. The Alpha's hands were on Levi's face, thumbs brushing over his cheekbones as he made soft shushing noises, pushing his hips up flush against the Omega to draw them closer together.

"Shhh, no, Levi, I'm not going anywhere. I wouldn't hurt you like that." Levi looked confused, and when his eyes went wide Eren knew that the Omega hadn't even realized he was making any noise. The sound cut off abruptly, and Levi bit his lip, brow furrowing. The cry had come out automatically, seeking to protect himself from the agony of a forced unknotting. He looked embarrassed, gaze dropping down and a flush painting his cheeks. There was another round of loud knocking, door rattling under the impact of an angry fist. The Omega looked up to Eren with a question in his eyes, and the Alpha was easing those dark strands out of his face, expression soft and affectionate. "They can bang on that fucking thing all they want. I'm not answering it until the knot releases." Levi buried his face in the Alpha's chest, arms curling into himself as relief flowed through him. He hadn't even known he was afraid, yet this Alpha was soothing him.

"How long d'they last?" Those hazy, slurred words made Eren smile. Levi had no personal experience with knots, nor did any of the Omegas he knew. It was impossible to knot an unwilling Omega, and those he dealt with were all unbonded. Mating was not something that Alphas or Omegas tended to discuss openly with people they were not close with, and Levi had no interest in it anyway. Now he wished that he'd paid a little more attention. The Alpha was still stroking Levi's dark locks, his other hand rubbing slow circles on the Omega's back. When he spoke Levi could feel the words, hot and breathy where Eren had his face pressed in close to the Omega's hair.

"It's different for everyone, I hear. Never dealt with it myself, obviously. Anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour. Supposedly if an Alpha senses a threat when he is knotted, it will release faster. Maybe this qualifies. Either way, they can knock until their knuckles bleed. Or they can break down the door, and I'll take that knife on the table and cut them open."

Eren said it calmly, without any venom or rage, and somehow that made it more threatening. Levi did not doubt for a second that he would turn that blade on anyone who tried to separate them. More pounding on wood, louder now. The Alpha felt his face freeze into a scowl as he tried to figure out who would be stupid enough to come knocking at his door. Mikasa was aware he was in rut, would know better than to come here unless she specifically wanted to fight him. Not that such a thing was impossible, but he had not pissed her off lately. If she felt like throwing punches, she would wait for him to return to the dojo and they could bash each other's faces in then. Armin might stop by if it was an emergency, but he would call first, would not be trying to smash his way through the door like whoever was outside right now. Jean always knocked like that, everywhere he went, as though you had personally wronged him and his ancestors and he needed to defend their honor, but there was no reason for horse face to show up. Mike would've had to tell him about Eren being in rut so Jean could take over some of his classes until he returned. Eren could only think of two people it could be, and he found himself growling again at the thought until Levi began to tense in his arms, scent going
sharp with nervousness. The Alpha resumed his easy motions, combing his fingers through the Omega's hair, tracing them gently up his back, silencing the vicious sounds that wanted to escape.

"Sorry. Just... Pissed the fuck off right now, at whoever thinks it's a good idea to come fuck with me while I'm knotted in my Omega." Levi snorted, nuzzling in closer to Eren's skin. Not correcting the Alpha when he said my Omega, and Eren wanted to shout in triumph even though it meant next to nothing.

"S'not like they know we're tied up." His voice was still a little mumbly, and God, Eren wanted to listen to him talk all day. They. They could only be one of two people. Ymir, there to fight Eren for scent marking Historia.

Or Erwin, the Alpha that was friends with Levi. The one whose very name made Eren's Omega tighten with stress, smell faintly of fear. Eren was wrenching his eyes shut, head tilting to the side, teeth cutting into his lip as he bit back a growl. Ymir, he could handle without violence, most likely. The other Alpha? There could very well be bloodshed, and Eren couldn't find it in himself to care. The Alpha wasn't sure how Erwin would find this place unless Hange told him the location, which didn't seem very likely considering how excited she had been for Levi to be with Eren. Suddenly the knocking ceased, and Eren could make out two separate voices shouting. He cocked his head to listen, trying to pick out the individual sounds when suddenly he felt a shudder between his legs as the knot released, faster than he had expected even with an Alpha's rage flowing inside. Levi was sighing, easing off of Eren and pulling his hips back, feeling empty where he was previously too full. Something inside him mourned the loss, and Levi brushed the feeling aside with a frown. The Alpha laid him down on the blankets, snatching up his discarded boxers to clean the Omega a bit before he tucked the covers around Levi like he was putting a child to bed, wrapping him up tight. Eren sat down next to him, staring, unmoving. Wanted to throw his arms around the Omega and just lay on top of him, feel his small form underneath. Levi smirked up at him, wry expression on his face.

"Are you going to stare at me or go see who's outside?" Eren smiled back, listening as the voices outside increased in volume. One of them was louder than the other, definitely female, but it did not sound like Ymir.

"Stare at you." He pressed a chaste kiss to the Omega's forehead, bringing a blush to those cheeks again before he grabbed the other pair of boxers from the floor and tugged them on. Eren strode across the room, only to hesitate before opening the door and turn back to look at Levi where he lay in the Alpha's bed. It didn't seem safe, somehow, leaving his Omega in bed with just blankets to cover him. Only walls around him, instead of Eren's embrace. He had the absurd urge to go scent mark Levi again, even after Eren had just come inside of the Omega, his smell so thick that he could taste it in the air. Was worried he would leave and come back to an empty bed, this Omega just a phantom, a figment of his imagination. Punishment for all the things he had done wrong in his life. His brow was furrowing tight, lip back between those teeth. A screeching sounded out from his front yard, and he tried to pull his eyes away from Levi to no avail.

"What?" The Omega was twisting under his stare.

"Don't... Don't disappear on me." Levi looked at Eren like he was a fucking moron, then laughed.

"What am I going to do? Crawl out the fucking window? I can't even walk." The Alpha did not have an answer, could not tell Levi that he thought he was a creation of his mind, some wondrous lucid dream.

Eren sighed, shaking his head at himself and closing the bedroom door as he padded towards the front of the house. Now that he was not in the presence of his Omega, who had been stressing in the face of Eren's aggression, he felt it rising again. Felt his eyes flashing gold, teeth bared in a growl
before he even went outside, fury swelling and shifting. He might not have wanted to frighten his Omega, but he certainly planned on striking some fear into whoever would dare to come between them. The Alpha threw the door open, slamming it shut behind him before he even looked to see who was on his porch.

No one. His porch was empty.

His yard however was not. There was a tall blonde Alpha standing in it, looking furious as he clawed at a woman who was clinging to his back, legs wrapped around him like he was giving her a piggy back ride. *Hange*. It was Hange, smacking the Alpha in the side of his head with her open palm and tugging viciously at those blonde strands. She was shrieking at him, right in his ear, and it took Eren a minute before he could understand anything she was saying.

"God damn it, Erwin, you are literally being a murderous cockblock right now! Do you want Levi dead? Just go the fuck home! He'll call you when he's ready you nosy shit! Who the fuck activates GPS on someone else's phone, anyway? You're a fucking stalker, is what you are!" He was prying her fingers out of his hair, pawing uselessly at her face. It was clear he really didn't want to hurt her, but his patience seemed to be waning. Such a large Alpha could have the Beta on the ground and weeping in a few seconds. The blonde was exercising an impressive amount of restraint, really. Or it would've been impressive, if he was not in Eren's yard, too close to his house, too close to Levi.

Cauing a fucking scene that he was sure to hear about from his neighbors, though that was the least of Eren's concerns. Right now he was trying not to rush at the pair, take both to the ground and paint them red beneath his fists.

"Christ, Hange, get off! I have it in your phone too, you know! Everyone who works with us has it! It's a safety precaution!" Erwin was trying to shake her off, reaching around to pull at her arms, attempting to dislodge her legs. Failing, miserably. Hange snaked one arm over his eyes, the other under his neck to try and choke him.

"It's not for creeping on your friends because you want to follow them around! Stupid fucking eyebrows! Get back in the car you blonde bastard!" The Alpha opened up his mouth, angling it down to bite her. Hange did not move, did not scream, did not even react. Just started kicking her legs wildly into Erwin's gut, making him let our a sharp breath before he snatched her ankles and held them out from his body.

"I don't want to hurt you, you crazy Beta fuck, but I will roll around in the fucking dirt until you let go, and then I swear I will bash those damn glasses in, if you do not GET THE FUCK OFF OF ME RIGHT NOW HANGE!" It would have been comical, under normal circumstances. Eren would probably laugh about this later with Levi once he had calmed down. If he did not kill them both, that is. Right now, with the rut bearing down on him, his Omega alone in his bed in heat... He wanted to rip them both into pieces and leave their corpses in his yard as a warning to anyone who even thought about walking up his goddamned driveway. His growling had been slowly increasing in volume as they grappled closer and closer to his house, and they both seemed to hear it at once, heads snapping up to look at him. Eren knew he must have been a fucking sight, dressed only in a pair of boxers, hair as just-fucked as he was, sticking in every direction from Levi's clutching and tugging. Face and neck smeared with the Omega's blood from the bites Eren had given him, still sweaty and wet with scent. Hange would not have a keen enough nose to sense it, but the Alpha would be able to smell things that could not be seen. The scent of Eren's rut in the air, his seed drying on his skin, Levi's slick mixed with it. Any Alpha who had encountered it from an Omega before would catch it. It was be unmistakable. Eren knew that the sweet smell was burned into his nose forever. The scent was both dangerous and appetizing for an Alpha, depending on the situation. Erwin's nostrils were flaring, and Eren could tell the other Alpha caught everything coming off of him, mingling together, making the blonde's eyes flash bright for the barest of instances. Eren's were
already glowing steadily, had been since before he even opened the door, but watching Erwin's light up had him baring his teeth. Their heads were cocked to the side in opposite directions, jaws tense, body's strung tight with instinct. Then Erwin was relaxing his posture, trying to ease off without averting his gaze. Hange climbed down from his back, putting herself between him and Eren with her hands raised briefly in a placating gesture. Her voice was high and manic when she spoke, reaching back to tug on Erwin's arm, trying to pull him towards the car they'd come in.

"Eren! So good to see you again, my friend! It seems you and Levi have been busy, I'm glad! Now, me and Erwin over here were just leaving, so-" The blonde interrupted her, shaking off her arm and taking a step towards Eren.

"No, we weren't." Eren's growl shot louder, everything in him wanting to jump at this Alpha infringing on his territory, tear him open, leave him bruised and broken. *His Omega* was inside in heat, waiting for him. Still suffering under the strain of his hormones. Needed Eren there to give him relief from it, yet here was this Alpha he did not know. Keeping him from Levi. Looking at Eren like he owed him something. *I owe you nothing, Alpha. Everything here is mine.* He tried to tell him that, tried to get words out over the animal noises he was making, but found he could not. That was okay. Those bestial sounds said all Eren needed to say. "I'm not here to fuck with you, Alpha. My friend is in there. Once I make sure all this is okay with him, I will leave. But not until then." Hange spoke before Eren could make another attempt to, her words laced with irritation.

"Erwin I fucking told you already-" The blonde's voice was dark, cutting her off with cold finality

"I need to hear it myself! You lied to me, Hange, put Levi's life in danger. Your words are worth absolutely nothing." Hange was cringing, eyes full of shame. Part of Eren wanted to beat this Alpha just for putting that look on her face, and he didn't even know why, barely knew her. The defeat in that gaze just seemed *wrong*. Erwin was walking up towards the porch, and Eren moved down to the bottom step to meet him. The blonde met his eyes, and Eren felt his instincts surge up bright and hot, clouding his eyes in red. The words came then, low, laced with his rage.

"Get the fuck out of here, Alpha. Levi can call you himself, if he wants to talk to you."

"I want to see him. I need to be sure he's okay. He's my friend." Eren took a step forward, and the blonde did not retreat from him. They were only a few feet away from each other, the air between them tense and electric.

"He may be your friend, but he smells like fear when he hears your name. Until he is out of his heat, you will stay the hell away from him. I will make sure of it. Now you need to go, while your legs will still carry you." A shadow crossed over Erwin's face at those words, but still he faced Eren down, mouth a grim line.

"I'm not trying to mate him. I just want to know that he wasn't forced into this. I don't know you, Alpha. Move aside, or I will move you myself." Eren was hissing, nails cutting into his palms as his fists clenched tight. His breaths were coming fast, eyes promising violence.

"Just you fucking try it."

Something snapped in both of them at once, walls of control crumbling into dust as they lunged at each other. Erwin moved to throw a punch, but Eren was already ducking down under it, grabbing him around the back of his thighs and shoving his shoulder into the blonde's stomach. He lifted the larger man up just slightly to get him off his feet before taking him down to the ground, back slamming into the dirt with an audible thud. Hange was shouting at them, words incoherent in the background. Neither one was paying her any attention, all of their thoughts focused on the fight before them. Eren was alight with righteous fury. This Alpha wanted to get to *his Omega*. Wanted to
go into his house, lay eyes on his Levi. Wanted to look at his Omega wrapped up in his sheets, covered in his scent, filled up with his seed. Still sweaty and slicked and aching for Eren. That sight was not for Erwin, was for Eren alone, and if he had to pluck this Alpha's eyes from his skull to ensure that he would do so with a smile on his face.

Erwin was moving, pushing against the earth with his feet to try and turn them over as his hands tried to find purchase on the smaller Alpha's arms. Eren shifted his knees up, wrapping those long legs around the blonde's waist to hold himself in place as he started raining down punches. He felt his anger like a tangible thing, climbing up the back of his throat, spilling from him like fire. The blonde was blocking most of the blows, a few hitting home and making his head spin. He was caught off guard by the sheer ferocity of the Alpha on top of him. Eren was smaller than him, by a significant degree, and he had not expected to be brought down so quickly, let alone be struggling under the weight of the fists flying at him one after another. In the back of his mind he was thinking that this was no normal Alpha, that he was unlike anything Erwin had seen before. He was primal. Savage. They were both growling and snarling, a sound that would cause anyone who heard it to shrink back in fear, two beasts out for blood. Hange had gone silent now, not that either of the Alpha's noticed. Erwin shook off his surprise, trying to pull his head together. He couldn't just play defense against this rut crazed Alpha. The blonde dodged one of the strikes instead of blocking, throwing himself to the side and knocking Eren off balance enough to turn over beneath him. He shoved his feet underneath himself, standing and trying to shake the Alpha off, only to feel one of Eren's arms snake under his neck.

He held it tight to the blonde's throat, closing the elbow of his other arm over his wrist and tightening his grip until Erwin could not breathe under the pressure of the chokehold. As black spots started to swim into the blonde's eyes he clutched at the arms on his neck, the brunette a deadweight on his back, sealing off his lungs. Erwin tossed himself backwards onto the ground as he had threatened to do to Hange before. The larger Alpha landed on top of Eren, his weight and the strain of the impact knocking the air out of the brunette's lungs and causing his arms to go slack for a fraction of a second. It was long enough for Erwin to pull out of his grasp, and then he was turning over to straddle Eren, trying to pin his arms at his sides. He would hold this fucking boy down and make him submit, watch those eyes drop from his in defeat. Would bare his teeth in triumph before walking into his house, make sure Levi-

Erwin's world flashed black as a fist struck his face, right on the temple, followed by another that landed on his jaw. Suddenly his mouth wouldn't close right, and then he was listing to the side, Eren pouncing on him, knees on his shoulders to hold him still as those fists fell like rain. The blonde tasted copper in his mouth, and he began to wonder if his teeth were still all there when he heard a familiar voice cut through the air.

"Eren! Stop, it's enough! You fucking won, alright!??"

Everything stopped at once, a switch flipped, and Eren was flying off of the blonde in an instant. **Levi.** Hange was there on the porch, a wobbling Levi wrapped in a sheet, supporting himself with an arm over her shoulders while she had one wrapped around his waist. Eren was growling louder now, racing across his yard and up the stairs to snatch the Omega from Hange's grasp. He picked him up like a bride, clutching Levi tight to his chest as he shoved Hange viciously down into the yard with a hiss. Eren wasn't thinking straight. All he could think was *she's touching my Levi.* The Beta stumbled, keeping her feet somehow as she moved over to where the blonde was sitting up, weaving back and forth, hands pawing at his face. Eren rubbed his throat on the Omega everywhere he could reach, over Levi's face, his hair. The Alpha grabbed his Omega's wrists and shoved them into his glands, pulling the sheet tighter around Levi, teeth bared at the pair sitting in the dirt. Levi made a sound, his Omega's cry, and Eren found himself calming as it washed over him, his growl transforming. No longer vicious and aggressive, now it was directed at the Omega, soothing, comforting. Not the Omega. **His Omega.** Those small hands were threading through his hair,
stroking his cheeks, thumbing over his lips.

"Shhhhhh, Eren, it's okay, it's okay. They're leaving, I'm staying, it's fine." Eren's eyes were closing, breathing still ragged from fighting, muscles tight. They began to relax under the Levi's touch, the tension draining out of him bit by bit. Hange was helping Erwin to his feet, and when the blonde was upright he spat gore from his mouth, clutching at his head with a curse. His voice was rough when he spoke, raw and not his own.

"Levi. Tell me you're here of your own free will. I just need to hear it, from you, in person. Then I'll leave." You'll leave either way. The smaller Alpha didn't say it, didn't have to. Eren had finally fallen silent, and it took every ounce of his self control to remain that way. Watching the blonde sway with blood dripping from his nose did not hurt matters. Those fumbling steps, face swelling before their eyes, hand clutching at his wounded temple... It sang out Eren's victory in a way that words could not, and some savage part of him was howling at the rightness of it. His enemy, his rival, a threat to his Omega. Bleeding, and bruised, and broken. Defeated underneath him, helpless and beaten. Levi made an irritated sound, glaring at the blonde with eyes made of steel.

"Damn it, Erwin, will you please just go? I know you're worried, but now isn't the time for this bullshit. I will call you, when I go home."

"I'll come see you, when your heat is over. I need to talk to you. There are some things I've been meaning to tell you." That was the exact wrong thing to say, and Eren was growling again, vicious and hostile. Only Levi's fingers reaching up to run over the glands on his throat kept Eren from putting the Omega down and attacking the blonde again.

"I said I'll call you, Erwin. Get him out of here, Hange." She was wordless for once as she drug the sluggish Alpha to the car, shoving him into the passenger side before climbing behind the wheel. The car disappeared into the distance, and Eren finally pulled him eyes away to run over the glands on his throat kept Eren from putting the Omega down and attacking the blonde again.

"I said I'll call you, Erwin. Get him out of here, Hange." She was wordless for once as she drug the sluggish Alpha to the car, shoving him into the passenger side before climbing behind the wheel. The car disappeared into the distance, and Eren finally pulled him eyes away to take his Omega back inside, locking the door behind them and carrying Levi to bed. He unwrapped the sheet that was coiled around him, discarding it on the floor along with his boxers, leaving them both naked again. After the Omega was settled in the center of the mattress Eren moved over him, pressing their foreheads together with a sigh, eyes closed tight.

"I'm sorry. I lost it." He could feel Levi's head shaking, those perfect fucking hands in his hair again, threading through it, stroking, calming. Eren felt his rut rising up, ready to stake his claim on Levi again. Ready to mark and take and own. Ready to dominate and control. He fought down his instincts, not wanting what was blossoming between them to be brought on by rage and jealousy. It was something precious, something sacred. Eren would not have it tainted by this dark emotion. He needed a few moments to relax, to breathe in Levi's scent, to feel that skin on his. He reveled in that warmth, that touch, those soft breaths.

"Hange said it was Erwin's fault, I know how he can be sometimes. He thinks he knows what's best for everyone, but he means well. I should've just called him back, maybe he wouldn't've come here." The Omega put his arms around Eren, tugging him down to the bed, laying his head on the Alpha's chest.

"It's not your fault." Levi was shifting next to him, heat coming back to the fore now that the adrenaline had faded. The Omega was aching, needy, arousal shooting hard, scent filling the air around him. He rutted up against Eren, a whine coming out of his throat as waves of lust assailed him. The heat seemed even stronger now that he had mated once, his body seeking to claim what it wanted by any means necessary.

"Eren, I... I need you." The Alpha was smiling then, and he coiled his arms around Levi and pulled the Omega on top of him. Eren gripped his hips, grinding his cock up against Levi ass, pulling a
wanton sound from him. He looked up into that gray stare with eyes that were on fire.

"I'm yours, little Omega. Take what you need."
Rehash

Erwin, Then

Erwin was standing just outside the entrance to the fighting pit, gun held in a two-handed grip, pointed at the ground. There were voices coming through his earpiece, the strike teams outside getting into position at the exits. The Omega Survey Corps had already secured the adjoining building where the Alpha who controlled the illegal fighting ring kept his harem. If they had not been ready to rip this bastard to pieces before, they certainly were after seeing all his Omegas bruised and bloody, flinching and cowering at the mere sight of the Alphas on Erwin's team. He'd never seen a harem in such a state before, had not believed it was possible for an Alpha to brutalize so many Omegas so thoroughly. Now he was waiting for everyone to give him their signal, letting Erwin know when they were ready so they could kick in the doors on a fight in progress. It was the only way to ensure that the Alpha responsible went down for good and did not manage to get off on some technicality. Some of these men who were being fought did so willingly, but many did not. His people had already cleared the guards from the holding cells, dozens of Alphas being kept against their will in squalid conditions, the stench of filth and blood in the air. They were still in those cells for the moment, as evacuating so many Alphas who had been starved, beaten, tortured, forced to fight each other, sometimes even kill each other.... It would take time, and finesse, as well as more manpower and probably some tranquilizers. When everything was settled they would be processed and taken to a medical facility for treatment and evaluation. Right now, they would have to wait.

There was a squawk in Erwin's ear as the teams began to signal their readiness. He reached up to turn his mouthpiece on.

"Monarch?"

"Monarch's a go."

"Timber?"

"We're a go, sir."

"Nightshade?"

"Nightshade's green, commander."

One by one, his people responded, letting him know they were all in place.

"On my mark. Three, two, one-"

Everything erupted into shouting and chaos as the OSC kicked in the doors, guns in the air and voices loud, ordering everyone to the ground. There were dozens of spectators, a mixture of Alphas and Betas, most of which surrendered without incident. Watching illegal fights was a crime, and they would be arrested, but it was not something serious enough to risk their lives for. The guards there were a different matter, several of which were drawing on Erwin's men. Gunshots rang out through the air, but it was only a few moments before they fell silent, teams dressed in body armor subduing them quickly with tazers and rubber bullets. Erwin had been in position outside of the ring itself, a circular dirt pit in the center of the room with only one door leading in and out. When he ran in with his gun in the air, shouting for the Alphas fighting to stop and get on the ground, his eyes went wide at the sight.
There was an Alpha in the dirt, and it was immediately clear to Erwin that he was dead, neck twisted at an unnatural angle and dark fluid leaking from his throat. The man standing over the corpse was the smallest Alpha Erwin had ever seen, shirtless and barefoot, fists dangling loose at his sides with knuckles painted red. He was covered in blood and gore, on his arms and his chest, splattering his face, oozing from his mouth, matting in his raven hair. Those eyes were gray, on fire with barely leashed aggression as he turned his stare onto Erwin, brows furrowing.

"On the ground, Alpha! Fight's over! Hands on your head!" The little Alpha smiled, teeth crimson and feral, and he started to laugh. Maniacal laughter. The kind you heard from the shadowed corners of an asylum, dark and illicit. "I said get on the ground, Alpha!" He laughed even harder, dropping to his knees and threading his hands together behind his head. "You're about five minutes too late." Erwin was confused for a moment as he approached before the blonde realized the little Alpha was referring to the dead man in front of him.

"Better late than never. I'm cuffing you for now, all right?" Erwin wasn't asking permission, but trying to decide if he was going to have to use force to get the Alpha restrained. "We'll get you with the other Alphas and figure out what we're going to do with you guys." The man was laughing again, and only when Erwin reached out and grabbed his arm to cuff it did he realize why, freezing in place. Omega. The faintest trace of scent came from the gland on his wrist when Erwin touched it. "You're a fucking Omega." The Omega looked up at Erwin with that bloody grin, lunatic and crazed, and a chill ran up the blonde's spine at the sight. Monster. The word ran through his head like a prayer. Erwin didn't want to cuff this Omega, didn't know if he could. It ran against his instincts, something he wasn't used to fighting in his line of work. They usually steered him well, and restraining an Omega was not something they wanted to allow him to do. Then the Omega's face transformed, that psychotic expression twisting into stark terror.

"The harem! Your people, they freed the harem first. Tell me they fucking did!" Erwin looked at the Omega strangely.

"The harem is fine, the guards have all been secured and the Omegas are safe. We're waiting for an outside team to come in and-

"Take me back! Take me back there now!" The blonde shook his head.

"Listen, I need to-" The Omega was on his feet, flying towards the door faster than Erwin could blink. "Stop! Right now!" Erwin was after him, drawing his gun, yet unable to fire. They were nonlethal rounds, his finger on the trigger, yet he could not pull it. The dark haired Omega was out the exit, Erwin running for him with everything he had, still far too slow to stop him. As he emerged into the tunnel he heard his men shouting, drawing on the Omega, ordering him to stop. "Don't shoot! He's an Omega!" It was absurd, it didn't matter that he was an Omega, he was still one of the pit fighters and needed to be contained, and all they had in their primary weapons were rubber bullets and electric rounds. Yet every member of Erwin's team was an Alpha and at those words from their commander they were pointing their weapons at the ground, instincts telling them to protect. The Omega was at the end of the tunnel in an instant, flinging the door open and moving into the house as though he'd been there a thousand times, feet unerring. The commander was yelling at his people as he followed, telling them not to fire, to let him pass, even though he did not know why.

When the dark haired Omega burst through doors of the room where all the members of the harem were being kept Erwin had almost caught up to him. The Omegas were cowering in a corner, a mixture of about a dozen men and women, eying the OSC team on the other side of the room with blatant fear painting their features. The Alphas had their weapons put away and were sitting on the floor, not making eye contact, trying not to appear like a threat. Yet the Omegas were shivering, the
stench of fright thick in the air. Then the little Omega ran in and they caught sight of him. He was covered in gore, eyes flashing with aggression, a growl coming out of his throat. The Omega looked more terrifying than any of the Alphas on Erwin's team.

"LEVI!"

They surged towards him as one, throwing their arms around him, clinging to him like a lifeline. He positioned himself between them and the Alphas, and then he was reaching out and touching their hair, clasping their hands, shushing them with a soft voice. Erwin watched with wide eyes as they sought refuge behind this monster of a man. Dripping with the blood of a dead Alpha, looking at Erwin's men with eyes full of violence.

"Everything's okay, I'm right here." Levi cut his eyes at Erwin, holding the blonde's gaze with a challenge in his own as he spoke to the Omegas. "No one's gonna hurt you now."

Erwin/Hange

Hange was hissing her words at Erwin, tugging on his arm as he pounded on Eren's door. The blonde had come straight to Hange's house once he'd arrived in town and railed at her, screaming and shouting at the Beta until his throat was raw from it. She had lied to him, manipulated their employer into sending him out on a mission to keep him from finding out that Levi was going into his final heat. So that their friend could die.

Erwin knew why she had lied, and not a day went by that the Alpha did not regret what he had said to his friend, but no matter what he did there was still distance between them. Levi was like a brother to him, more than anyone who had his blood would ever be, but he could not imagine letting the Omega die. When Hange had called him with tears in her voice telling him Levi was dead, next to the ache of loss a terrifying rage lit his veins. She had contacted him seeking comfort, torn apart over what she had done, but Erwin had not been coming to their place to ease her suffering. He realized now that he probably would have killed her in his fury, unable to control his anger, and hated himself for the rest of his life. If he could even manage to allow himself to live afterwards and not put a bullet in his own head. Still, his fists ached to strike out at her, aggression seeking to find an outlet.

Now she watched as he banged on another Alpha's door as though he was trying to break through it.

"Erwin, he's not answering, come on! Levi's okay, I swear!"

"Shut up, Hange. I told you not to come."

"I told you not to come! He's fine, Erwin. If you fuck this up too much he could really die!" She pulled harder on his arm, fingers digging into the flesh there. His eyes flashed white as he glared at her, teeth bared in a hiss.

"What do you care if he dies? Don't fucking touch me." Now Hange felt anger roll through her, and she leapt onto Erwin's back and threw her weight towards the yard, forcing him to stumble down the porch steps and into the grass.

"I care more than you right now! I promise you that if we just go home, Levi will mate that Alpha in there and everything will be fine! He's not being forced into anything, stupid!" She was slapping at Erwin, feet clasped together over his stomach to hold her steady. Hange had never been shy when it came to Erwin and Levi, or anyone else for that matter. She was not afraid of this dumb ass Alpha,
even if she should be. Hange did not process fear like normal people did. It was an afterthought, something that occurred to her long after the situation was over. *Oh, that should have been scary, I guess.* Now she was pulling the blonde's hair, shouting in his ear, screeching at him.

"Get back in the fucking car, Erwin!"

"Get off me, you crazy bitch!" He was clawing at her, trying to dislodge her without really hurting the Beta. Erwin had done enough to hurt his friends for a thousand lifetimes.

"God damn it, Erwin, you are literally being a murderous cockblock right now! Do you want Levi dead? Just go the fuck home! He'll call you when he's ready you nosy shit! Who the fuck activates GPS on someone else's phone, anyway? You're a fucking stalker, is what you are!" Hange delivered another vicious smack, this one aimed at his face. It was like a child was trying to hit him, more annoying that injurious.

"Christ, Hange, get off! I have it in your phone too, you know! Everyone who works with us has it! It's a safety precaution!" *A safety precaution. God, I want to choke him.* She reached under his throat, absently trying to do just that.

"It's not for creeping on your friends because you want to follow them around! Stupid fucking eyebrows! Get back in the car you blonde bastard!" Erwin bit her arm and her eyes went wide in shock as she threw kicks into his gut. *Stupid blonde Alpha bastard...*

"I don't want to hurt you, you crazy Beta fuck, but I will roll around in the fucking dirt until you let go, and then I swear I will bash those damn glasses in, if you do not GET THE FUCK OFF OF ME RIGHT NOW HANGE!"

Suddenly a growl cut through the air, and Hange looked over to see Eren on his porch, terrifying and furious, streaks of blood on his face and neck. That fear that Hange never felt filled her now as she climbed down from Erwin's back and tried to drag him away. The blonde was staring at the Alpha, and when he caught his scent he felt his instincts surge up. *Monster.* The word flitted through his head in a way that had only happened once before, when he'd first laid eyes on Levi. Now he was staring at this half naked Alpha, covered in a half dozen different scents, every one of them screaming at Erwin. *Get away. Run. Run?* Erwin felt himself rankling at his own instincts. He did not fucking run, not from anyone, not from anything. Certainly not when he needed to get to Levi, make sure he wanted to be here. The Omega had suffered enough under the viciousness of Alphas, and Erwin would be dead and in the ground before he allowed it to happen again. He also needed to see with his own eyes that the Omega was warm, alive, breathing. Not in a morgue drawer somewhere waiting to be buried.

Erwin kept his feet on the ground through sheer force of will when everything inside him wanted to flee. He'd never felt this dread before, yet he forced his gaze up to meet this Alpha's, forced his instincts down inside. It was fight or flight, and Erwin never chose anything but the former.

"Eren! So good to see you again, my friend! It seems you and Levi have been busy, I'm glad! Now, me and Erwin over here were just leaving, so-" Erwin was having none of it, shaking her off dismissively. The Alpha in him was rising up to the challenge now, hands curling into fists, back straightening, body shooting full of adrenaline.

"No, we weren't. I'm not here to fuck with you, Alpha. My friend is in there. Once I make sure all this is okay with him, I will leave. But not until then."

"Erwin I fucking told you already-"
"I need to hear it myself! You lied to me, Hange, put Levi's life in danger. Your words are worth absolutely nothing." Hange wanted to smack him again, but she knew he was right. She had deceived him, blatantly, and it would be a long time before he listened to anything she said.

The two Alphas were talking then, but Hange was not really paying attention to them. It was already too late for words. They were going to fight, she could tell from their body language, and nothing would stop them until one of these Alphas was bleeding in the dirt. When they jumped at each other she was not surprised, but still tried to yell at them, get them to stop. She had been worried for Levi's Alpha but as she watched Eren rain down blows on her friend she realized her worry was misplaced. Now fear for her own friend shot through her as she watched the brunette split Erwin's lips, blood spraying out under his fists. She'd never seen anyone get the better of Erwin in a fight before, even when he was against two or three different opponents. Fuck, he was going to kill him at this rate.

Levi. Hange had to get to Levi.

She ran into Eren's house even as the scents in the air had terror climbing up her spine, only to find Levi crawling towards the door on his hands and knees with a sheet wrapped around him. The Omega looked up at her and relief swam through his eyes.

"What the fuck are you looking at, shitty glasses, get me out there before they kill each other."

Hange dragged the Omega outside and at the sound of his voice Eren came running, leaving Erwin in the dirt without a second thought. The Beta shoved her friend into the car, sighing as she drove away. When she looked at the blonde next to her, bleeding and bruised, she felt a familiar sentiment spilling through her.

"God, I fucking hate Alphas."

.............................................................

Levi, Now

"I'm yours, little Omega. Take what you need."

Levi stilled atop Eren, everything in him freezing at the Alpha's voice. Take what you need? Levi could not even find the words to protest Eren calling him 'little'. Omegas did not take, especially when mating. Alphas did not give over control to their Omegas that way, were aggressive and dominant. Now Eren was looking up at him, eyes golden and shining as he rocked into Levi, length hard and sliding against the Omegas smooth skin. When Levi did not move, just sat there staring at Eren with wide eyes, the Alpha's smile shot bigger.

"No?" Eren reached down between them to grasp himself, lifting the Omega up and easing into Levi with a soft growl. He was still slicking, everything in him aching to be mated, and Eren sank between his thighs until he was buried inside Levi to the hilt. The Omega whimpered, leaning on Eren's chest as the Alpha's hands tightened on his hips. But the Alpha did not thrust, did not move, did not do anything. Just bit his lip, a mischievous look on his face. "Ride me, Levi. Take what you need from me."

Levi closed his eyes, felt his breaths come faster as the Alpha filled him up, all the pain of the heat vanishing, replaced with an ache of a different kind. God, Levi did need it, needed to feel that length moving. Needed to be split wide. Eren's hands were on his skin then, drifting up and down Levi's chest, thumbing over his nipples. The Omega moaned at the touch, raising himself up a few inches
before sinking back down. Ecstasy.

"Nnnn..." Sensation ran through Levi in a rush, not only between his legs but up his spine, in his gut, across his skin. Something about towering over this Alpha with lust written over his features made Levi feel powerful in a way he'd never expected. For an Omega, mating was about giving up power, about surrender.

Or so Levi had thought.

Now he was moving, slowly, lifting off of Eren's arousal before easing down to fill himself again. Fuck. The movements were awkward at first, muscles protesting, but when he heard Eren let out a groan they came easier, faster. Soon he was bouncing on the Alpha, supporting himself with his hands on Eren's chest, and when he got the courage to meet that stare again it was eating him alive. Eren choked words out, jaw clenched, one hand clutching the Omega's hipbone viciously as the other reached up to close around Levi's length.

"I... nnn... thought you couldn't... haaah, look any better than you did underneath me. Ffffffuck.... I was wrong. This might... hnnng.. might be better..."

The Omega moaned loudly, increasing his speed, slamming himself down on Eren as vicious sounds began to pour from the Alpha's throat. Eren was fighting his instincts, pushing back against the urge he had to thrust up into the Omega. He wanted Levi to be in control, needed him to. It felt important for some reason he could not quite decipher. Eren stroked his hand up and down the Omega's shaft, thumb circling over the crown as he squeezed and jerked. The whole world spun, nothing but Levi, Levi, Levi. Levi in his nose, before his eyes, under his hands. The little sounds he made singing in Eren's ears. Those sounds would haunt his dreams.

"Fuck, nnnghh.... Eren..."

"L-Levi... So fucking good..."

Levi was snapping his hips back a forth, faster than he thought possible considering how wrecked his body had been from the heat. All that soreness was nothing but a memory as he impaled himself brutally on Eren's cock. Taking, instead of being taken, and all that was Omega in Levi swelled with newfound strength. The very foundations of his beliefs were shuddering, shifting in the face of this Alpha underneath him, this Alpha who said, 'Take from me.' Who watched Levi with lust in his gaze and smiled, too many teeth, all of them sharp. Eren released Levi's hip, snatching his wrist and pulling it to his mouth to lick at the scent gland there as the Omega worked himself around Eren's arousal. He scraped his teeth over the skin, looking at Levi with a question in his eyes. Can I? The Omega couldn't believe he was asking, but he found himself nodding fiercely, yearning for those teeth in his skin again. Eren sucked the flesh in his mouth, tongue swirling around it as he pulled up a bruise before biting down hard.

"Mmmmmpff..."

When the Alpha broke skin and began licking up the Omega's blood, Levi felt his eyes roll back into his head. Heat. Everywhere heat and need, filling Levi up, spilling out of his lips in a moan. His pace became frantic, muscles going tight as his climax loomed. It pooled in his stomach, climed up his shaft, lingered inside, growing. Levi began to feel desperate, keening as he tried to move faster, drive Eren deeper. The Alpha released his wrist, pulling Levi into his chest as he finally began to move, meeting Levi thrust for thrust to pull him to the edge. The Omega opened his eyes, not sure when he had closed them, to see the smooth skin of Eren's throat in front of him. He didn't think, acting on instinct as he sank his teeth into the Alpha's neck with a growl.
"Levi!"

The Omega moaned into his flesh while they both came, jaw going vicious on Eren's skin, the coppery tinge of blood in his mouth as the Alpha filled him with seed. Levi's own was slick between them as he writhed, riding out his orgasm, little whining sounds pouring from his throat. When they both stilled Levi released his bite, and as he felt that swelling inside him he did not have to wonder what it was this time, nor was he surprised. Eren rolled them onto their sides, tucking his hips in close to the Omega's and pulling a blanket up around them. The Alpha's arms clung tight to Levi, who curled his own into his chest, head tucked underneath Eren's chin. Then the Alpha was kissing his hair, over and over, rubbing his face against it while he whispered to Levi, voice soft and low, as though if he spoke too loud the Omega would vanish.

"You're so perfect, Levi. You taste so sweet, and you smell so good, and you're strong and fierce and... volatile. Let me keep you. Please."

Levi didn't answer, and Eren was not concerned, was prepared for the silence. Sleep crept up on the pair, and they did not fight it as it washed over them. They would sleep until the knot released, and then Eren would take him again and again, over and over until his heat passed like a storm. The Alpha held Levi tight as they drifted off, feeling those hot breaths on his chest, relishing that feeling of being tied to this Omega, knotted inside. He wanted to be tied to Levi in any way he could. When everything was over and done with, this Omega was going to run from him.

That was okay.

Eren would chase him.
Levi had been destroyed many times before, bruised and broken under the fists of countless Alphas. He'd felt the snap of his bones inside his flesh, blood in his mouth as his organs ruptured. More than once he'd lain in the dirt of the pit as they announced his opponent's defeat, looking at the ceiling with eyes that wouldn't focus, wondering if he was going to die. The Omega remembered thinking, 'Is this really victory? Does it taste like pain?' Levi knew more than anyone what it was like to have muscles that screamed in agony, joints that protested the slightest movement, skin torn and ragged. Never had the Omega's body been as beautifully wrecked as it was right now. Eren had tried to stop himself from biting Levi each time they came together, but when he felt the sting of the Omega's teeth in his own flesh he realized there was no way he could fight something that felt so good, even if they would feel the pain later on. Now they were both littered in bite marks and bruises, painting the skin of their throats in shades of purple and blue. Levi had a handful scattered across his wrists and the insides of his thighs as well, and when he moved he felt each and every one. Their skin was tinged pink, the blood that oozed from those bites spreading across it, mixed with scent and sweat and Levi's seed. They were filthy and wretched, Eren panting, shaking from exertion as he collapsed next to the Omega with a groan. He was still buried inside Levi, knotted together, but they'd both felt the heat pass, clearing from the air like smoke. Eren and Levi had mated over and over, knotting together again and again, and each time the Alpha was tied up inside him something dark swam through the Omega's chest. Something that craved the closeness, wanted it savagely, and that desperate need made Levi afraid.

Being afraid just made the Omega angry, fury at himself swirling inside. A heat was supposed to last around twelve hours, a few more if the Omega had suppressed or gone unmated for a long time.

It had been over twenty four by the time Levi's had abated. They mated, and when Eren swelled inside of him, locking them to each other, they slept, only to be woken by the surge of pheromones again when they separated. The Omega's entire being hurt in the best way, down to his very bones, sore and shivering where it had endured this relentless Alpha's attentions.

 Everywhere but his mouth, an oasis of smooth, untouched skin the desert of savaged flesh that was Levi's body. His lips were not red, not swollen, not throbbing from unending kisses, not dry and cracked after merciless affection. Levi mourned the loss of these things in a way he had not known was possible. The Omega did not know you could miss an ache you had not felt before.

Eren's rut had passed too, the scent of Alpha and Omega still present as they always were, but muted now that the hormones were not raging inside them. The Alphas hands were tracing wearily across Levi's skin, seeking out the Omega even as he fought to stay awake, fingers clinging and grasping. Levi heard him mumbling incoherently as he had been doing periodically while their mating wore on. He wasn't even sure the Alpha realized he was talking. At first the Omega had struggled to listen, understand what Eren was saying, but then he realized there was no point. Each time he focused on the words they were things Levi didn't want to hear. 'So fucking pretty, so perfect, taste so good. So sweet, so tight, so strong. Please, fuck, yes, more. Need you, want you, make you mine. Levi, Levi, Levi...' Then the Omega realized that wasn't quite right. They were not things Levi didn't want to hear.

They were things he wanted to hear so badly it terrified him, fear again, when he had not felt it in ages. Not even when he had planned to die. Weak.

This Alpha made him weak.
When Levi felt that now familiar shuddering feeling, Eren's knot releasing from inside, there was no rush of lust that crept up in its wake. Still the Alpha was rutting up against him, not trying to mate but seeking closeness, rubbing his face against Levi's skin as he growled softly at the Omega. Levi turned away from Eren, pawing blindly at the table beside the bed for his phone while the Alpha clutched at his back, nuzzling into the Omega's spine. Away. He had to get away from this Alpha, away from his skin and his teeth and his touch.

Had to get away before he was swallowed whole, nothing left of him but Eren.

When he knocked the phone to the floor in his struggles the Alpha lifted his head in a daze.

"You want water? Here, hold on." It was a couple of moments before an open bottle was thrust in front of Levi, but the Omega didn't take it, just stared at the water in a stupor. Then he leaned over and snatched his phone from the floor, trying to tap the screen on and find Hange's number through blurred vision. Why was his vision blurry? "Levi? What are you doing?" His voice was shredded when he spoke, full of gravel and sand.

"Heat's over. Gonna call Hange. Let her come get me." It was only as he felt something on his face and wiped at it that he realized he was crying. Eren must have heard it in his words because he was sitting up, putting the water down and trying to pull the Omega into his lap.

"Levi, come here." Levi had known this was coming, though he thought he'd have a little more time to get out of Eren's house before it started. When an Omega mated for the first time, their body was not used to the surging of endorphins. Serotonin and dopamine flooding their systems, hormones that had never been produced before rising and falling in the blood. After it was over everything drained out of the Omega at once, leaving the brain reeling at the lack of chemicals and stimulants. The first thing that happened was the soreness catching up to them, all the strain on their body hitting them at once. Then the tears came. It was strictly hormonal. Biological. Unavoidable.

That knowledge didn't make it feel any less shitty to weep like a child in front of this beast of an Alpha.

Levi dropped the phone on the bed to cover his face with his hands as he began sobbing in earnest. For no goddamned reason. The Omega had never hated himself more than he did in that moment. Not even as he stood over the corpses of Alphas, many of them prisoners just like him.

"It's just hormones. The heat, it-" Eren cut him off, and Levi stopped fighting as the Alpha eased his arms around him and lay them down together.

"Shhhh. I don't need a biology lesson. I know all about it, okay? You can't help it." Levi curled up into a ball, trying to keep himself quiet, failing. Kept his face hidden behind his palms. Wished he could disappear.

"Fucking stupid Omega bullshit. God, I hate it." Eren turned him over, tucking Levi's face into his chest and wrapping him up tight, pulling a blanket off the floor and spreading it over them.

If Levi could move, he would have been running. Fast, and far, until his legs gave out beneath him.

"I know. I'm sorry. But don't leave yet. I know you have to go eventually, get back to your life, but let me clean you. Feed you. It's past seven at night. Sleep with me until morning, then let me take you home. Don't just... don't just leave filthy and hungry and hurting and exhausted. Please, Levi. For me, if not for you." The Omega sniffed, willing himself to vanish into nothingness. When he did not, he forced words passed unwilling lips.
"I'm going to be hurting for days. You fucking mauled me." Eren let out a bark of laughter, tracing over the bites on Levi's neck with gentle fingers.

"I know I did. I'm sorry about that. But hey, you mauled me a little yourself. Didn't think Omegas did that." Levi felt irritation rise in him, sharp and vicious, and he welcomed the emotion. It was familiar, and he clung to it with all that he was.

"Forgive me, oh great Alpha, for not fitting into your fucking Omegan ideals." The Alpha kissed his dark locks, breathing in his scent. Levi fought down a shudder.

"I liked it. I liked it a lot. Never think that something is wrong with you because you aren't like other Omegas. It's better. You're better. You're perfect, Levi." All Levi could see in his mind were dead Alphas under his hands. Bleeding to death where'd he'd torn out their throats with his teeth. Choking on crimson spray, going limp as Levi gouged out their eyes.

"I'm not perfect." The Alpha behind him was playing with his hair, rubbing his hands over Levi's back, throwing his leg over the Omega to tug him in closer. His crying had eased back, tears now coursing silently down his cheeks.

"Me either, so close enough. Stay with me until morning." Then you can run away. Eren didn't say it, didn't have to. It filled the space between them like a fog, and Levi had a hard time breathing through it.

"I need a fucking shower if I'm staying here." Eren leaned down to kiss Levi's cheek, and the Omega flinched, remaining silent even as he screamed inside.

"Thank you. Gimmie a sec."

The Alpha rushed into the bathroom, and Levi heard him turning on the shower and adjusting the spray. His heat had ended, but there was no way he could walk yet, not after what Eren just put him through over the course of the last day. So Levi waited for the Alpha to return, cursing himself as he sat up and retrieved his phone to text Hange.


She didn't respond right away, so he sent a message to Marco, telling the Beta he was alive and well. Then he pulled up his contacts and texted the three Omegas he normally met with on Thursdays, Petra among them. It was Wednesday, and Levi probably wouldn't feel up to going out to meet them at the office tomorrow or any of the places they sometimes went, but they'd been to his house before. He gritted his teeth as he sent them a message inviting the group to his place the following night. Levi wanted to hide, wanted to stay in his home alone until these bites on his skin faded, until the scent of this Alpha was nothing but a memory.

But it was something the Omegas needed to witness. They were all so terrified of mating, like Levi had been, though for different reasons. His Omegas were scared of injury, of abuse. Levi was not afraid of pain. He knew it too well, all its nuances and forms, all the ways it could break someone. He just did not want to give up control, to submit to an Alpha. Now that he had gone through a mated heat, Petra and his other Omegas deserved a chance to look, to listen, to ask questions. To see Levi, covered in bites and bruises and the scent of an Alpha, and know that he was just fine. That he had wanted it. Was still well, and whole, and himself.

To help them understand that being with an Alpha could be something good. An ache that you welcomed. Something you chose instead of something you endured.
Levi needed to teach them something that he still had not truly learned, and he wondered if they would see right through him.

The Omega was grateful for the interruption of his thoughts when Eren came back into the room, brows furrowed as he looked at Levi's worried expression. He sat his phone back on the table and moved towards the side of the bed that the Alpha stood on, suddenly very aware of his nudity. It was ridiculous, Eren had just had sex with him over and over, had buried himself between Levi's thighs, tasted his skin, sank his teeth into the Omega's flesh. Now he wanted to cover himself, and he fought pink from his cheeks with all that he had. Tears still wet on a face that wanted to blush, and Levi wanted to yell out in frustration. Scream until his throat was raw. Eren did not seem phased by it, just picked Levi up in his arms and carried him into the bathroom, steam rising in the air from the hot water. Instead of trying to put the Omega on his feet, he disconnected the shower head from its cradle and let it dangle while he sat down in the tub, pulling Levi into his lap. Levi felt awkward, body going tense as Eren took the shower attachment in his hand and ran the spray over the Omega's skin, rinsing away blood and scent and everything else with gentle fingers. Then the Alpha tilted Levi's head back, putting a hand over his forehead to keep the water out of his eyes as he soaked those dark locks, scrubbing at them lightly.

"I can wash myself, you know. I'm not helpless." Eren ignored him, working shampoo into Levi's strands before rinsing it away.

"Shhhhh, just let me." The Alpha moved on, conditioning Levi's hair with more care than was necessary. The Omega was cringing under his touch. Not because he did not like it, but because he wanted to arch into it, relax into Eren's warm embrace. Rub his face against his neck. He wasn't in a heat anymore, he shouldn't want to writhe against this Alpha, shouldn't be craving those hands on his skin.

"Fucking Alphas."

"I know you can do it yourself, but I want to do it for you. I... fuck, I'm so sorry Levi." Eren's fingers traced over the bites on Levi's neck again, managing to make even a touch seem apologetic. "I was really rough on you, it looks like you were attacked by a fucking animal. I should have been able to control myself better than that, rut or no rut. Please, just let me take care of you. I need to."

Levi was silent, not sure what to say in the face of this Alpha's words. The Omega had bitten into Eren's skin too, over and over, couldn't have stopped himself if he'd tried. The Alpha would be wearing those marks around for a week, at least. Yet here he was saying he was sorry to Levi, full of concern, hands ghosting over the Omega's flesh like he would break. There were so many different things spinning through Levi's head that he could not pick out a single one, like colors all swirling together until there was nothing but black.

Once Eren had washed his own hair and rinsed both of their stands clean, he poured body wash over a bath sponge and began to rub it over Levi, his chest, his stomach. Used his hand to soap Levi's face with care. He lifted the Omega's arms and ran it over the undersides, slid it across Levi's throat, leaned forward to lather his legs. Passed the sponge gently between Levi's thighs, careful of his bite marks but scrubbing away what was left of his seed. Eren cleaned himself with much less hesitance, scouring roughly at his skin, quick and uncaring. After he was done he washed the suds away from them both, turning off the water and standing up. Then he tugged Levi to his feet and sat him down on the closed lid of the toilet. The Alpha handed him a towel, and Levi was grateful he didn't try to dry him. If Eren made him feel any more helpless than he already did, Levi might punch him in the fucking nose. Eren was dried off much faster than the Omega, Levi's muscles protesting every move he made as he ran the towel over his skin. The Alpha was back moments later with Levi's bag, which he deposited at the Omega's feet before pulling on boxers and pajama pants of his own.
"You need help dressing?" Levi scowled, shaking his head.

"No, mother, I think I have it covered." Eren laughed, running his hand through the Omega's hair absently before heading towards the door.

"I'll give you a minute."

When the Alpha shut the door behind him, Levi felt relief surge through his body. He leaned forward so far that he almost fell to the floor, head between his knees as he fist ed his hands in his hair.

"Fuck."

Levi didn't bother getting dressed yet, just maneuvered himself as best he could to empty his bladder. He'd allow it to burst in his stomach before he let Eren hold him up while he pissed. When he was finished closed the lid again and sat back down, sifting through his clothes until he found some boxers and pajama pants. Hange could've packed any number of fucked up things, and he half-expected to find a woman's nightgown instead of his own sleepwear. He would have to thank her later for repressing her inner urges. Unlike Eren, he pulled on a shirt, eager to cover up every inch of skin that he could. Levi had just finished pulling it down when the door opened again, and he knew the Alpha would be carrying him back to bed. Fuck, Levi was so tired of being in bed, useless, unable to do anything for himself. He would be so fucking happy when his body started going back to normal.

When Eren picked him up and took him to the living room instead, unreasonable joy shot through him. He deposited him on the couch, and Levi found himself looking around suspiciously. It was insanely clean in here compared to when he'd been on this couch the day before. Everything was shining, free of dust, no dishes or laundry anywhere. He could smell the fading scent of disinfectant underneath the overwhelming smells of heat and rut and mating. Eren had cleaned in here while Levi slept, and something twisted inside the Omega at the thought.

"I'm guessing your tired of being stuck in a bed all day. Let me go get us some food, and we can eat in here instead. What do you want?" Levi wanted to say not to worry about it, that he wasn't hungry, but his stomach was now audibly protesting the thought. Other than the meal Eren had given him yesterday, Levi had not eaten anything substantial in over a week, and he was starving.

"Anything. Everything. The food you brought yesterday was fine."

Eren disappeared into the kitchen, clanking sounds filtering into the living room as he heated up their food. He brought back a ridiculous amount of pasta and rice, piled so high on their plates that Levi thought it would topple off into the floor. They began to inhale their food, and when both of the dishes were completely empty, not a speck of anything left of them, he conceded that perhaps he'd been even hungrier than he'd thought. Eren took the empty plates back into the kitchen, and Levi listened to the water run as he washed them. When the Alpha returned he was looking at Levi with an expression so fond, the Omega wanted to strike out at him, wipe it from his face. Replace it with pain instead. Something familiar instead of something strange.

"You want to sleep now, or stay up for awhile?" Eren looked just as exhausted as Levi felt, and as much as the Omega was tired of being cooped up in a bed, he would be asleep where he sat in a few moments.

"No, I'm fucking done. I need to rest."

The Alpha just nodded, but instead of carrying Levi he put an arm under his shoulders and helped the Omega stagger to the bedroom. His feet were a little steadier than he'd expected, and Levi
thought he might be able to walk on his own when he woke up. When he collapsed into the bedding, he realized that Eren had changed the sheets, saw the dirty ones balled up on the floor nearby. Lying down on blankets that were clean, and dry, no oppressing heat running through him, no lust swimming in his veins.... Levi was more grateful than he'd thought possible. Couldn't stop the words from his mouth, even if they tasted bitter.

"Thank you, Eren." The Alpha was turning the light off and climbing next to him, and when he eased his arms around the Omega from behind, Levi wanted to push him away. Didn't. Fought the urge to push himself back into the embrace instead.

"I should be thanking you. I know you didn't ask for any of this, didn't want it, so it's probably wrong for me to be so grateful, but I am. I'm glad you were in that shelter. It feels like you were waiting for me. Like I was waiting for you. Telling you this is probably the last thing I should do, but not saying it seems deceitful. I feel like my whole life has changed, Levi. Because of you." Eren was right. It was the wrong thing to say, and Levi wanted to be miles away under the weight of those words.

"You don't even know me, Alpha." Levi felt Eren's arms tighten around him, fingers clutching at his skin.

"I want to know you. Give me a chance to. Please."

Levi did not say anything, and the silence felt like defeat to the Omega. One of Eren's hands moved up to Levi's hair, and they threaded through those dark locks slowly. He resisted it as hard as he could, but Levi was so exhausted, and he was tired of fighting. Those gentle touches eased him into sleep.

..................................

Sunlight was creeping through the windows when the buzzing of his phone pulled Levi into wakefulness, groggy and aching in a way he'd never felt before. He'd thought his hips had been hurting during the heat, but this was a whole knew kind of pain. Levi felt like he'd just spent hours in the pit fighting instead of in bed mating. The bites he wore announced their presence loudly with each small movement, as if to remind Levi of what he had done. The Alpha behind him had his face thrust into Levi's neck, hot breaths panting across the Omega's skin. One of his hands was still buried in Levi's hair, the other curled around the Omega's chest, a leg thrown over him possessively. Levi reached out and snagged his phone from the table, blinking the sleep from his eyes as he read the display. 5:32 AM. Hange was just now texting him back, and with the strange hours she kept, Levi was not surprised.

Hange: VICTORY! You are officially laid! How was it? Are you alive?

Levi glared at the phone, Eren shifting behind him but not waking. The thought of facing the Alpha in the light of day made the Omega feel breathless in the worst way. He could not imagine rolling over, looking into those bright green eyes, seeing that fucking smile he knew was coming. Brighter than the goddamned sunrise, and just as inevitable. Levi couldn't take it, he had to get out of there.

Levi: I'm fine. Come get me, right now if you could.

Hange: Are you trying to sneak away without Eren noticing? I don't think that's going to go very well for you.
Levi: Just get your ass over here.

Hange: Ok, I'm coming, but I'm going on record to state that this is very shitty, even for you.


Hange: Be there in fifteen. You're an asshole, and I'm telling Eren I argued against this course of action when I talk to him next.

Levi: Okay, bitch.

He set his phone down on the table, extricating himself carefully from Eren's embrace and shoving a pillow in his place. The Alpha clung to it, making a disapproving noise in his sleep, but his eyes remained closed. Levi threw his legs over the side of the bed, wondering if they would hold him up. He stood carefully, tentatively, and though his muscles were not happy about it they did not betray him just yet. Levi took wobbly steps to the bathroom to retrieve his bag, snagging his phone off the nightstand and heading towards the door. He paused in the doorway, eyes pulled back to the bed against his will. Eren was now troublingly restless, breathing going uneven, eyes darting behind his lids. Those chocolate locks were a mess, falling over his face, and Levi's hands itched to brush them back. His lips were parted, brows furrowing, and the Omega had never seen someone manage to look worried like that when they weren't even awake.

He lingered there, watching the Alpha sleep, and it was only when his phone buzzed announcing Hange's arrival that he realized he'd been staring for fifteen minutes.

Levi unlocked the knobs as quietly as possible, shutting the door behind him but unable to lock it again. No one would break into this house anyway, not with the scents that were filtering under the door, heat, rut, the smells of mating. He made the trek down the driveway, which seemed much longer than it actually was as he headed to Hange's car, instincts shouting at him to go back into Eren's house, climb into his bed. Let the Alpha bring him food, and water, fetch and carry for him until the soreness of the mating had passed. He fought them down viciously as he climbed into the passenger seat, Hange looking at him with a disapproving glare.

"You're being a fucking coward, Levi. Running off at the ass crack of dawn when you can barely walk. I know that Alpha in there would give his left nut to take care of you today."

"Fuck off, four eyes. Take me home. I can listen to your bitching there."

Levi looked back towards the doorway as Hange put the car in gear only to see Eren standing there, a hand clutching at his chest. Even from so far away, those eyes ripped Levi open. Then he glanced down to see his own hand right where Eren's was, clawing at his heart, trying to reach the ache inside.

When they drove away, Levi left pieces of himself behind. He did not know what they were, but he knew that it hurt.
Eren was sitting in the middle of a cement floor, a bare bulb flickering above him, bathing the room in weak, sickly light. He’d thrown up blood a few times, none of it his own, and there was more of the crimson liquid spreading out underneath him, painting the concrete black. Corpses littered the ground around him, sprawled in the sort of awkward positions that only dead people can manage, limbs twisted, necks bent. Some of them were missing arms, legs, the flesh of their throats torn out. He hadn’t meant to swallow so much blood, but biting out their jugulars had sprayed quite a bit into his mouth. After downsizing enough of the liquid it had come back up, ejected viciously from his stomach. One of the bodies was still twitching, residual electrical impulses firing through his nerves, and the Alpha in him wanted to stop it, wanted it still and dead and defeated. But he couldn’t get up now. They were sleeping in his arms, his lap, and if he stirred he would wake them. Voices filtered over to him as though through static, people coming into the room from somewhere behind Eren, but he recognized them. His men. They weren’t a threat, so he just ran his gore stained hands through tangled blonde hair, rocking the little forms he held reverently.

"......oh, fuck. God." Someone was retching, and Eren wondered absently if they’d swallowed too much blood, too.

"....eed to put him down....-n’t come back from this. He's done f..."

"....ver my fucking dead body, you piece of shit, Eren is o...."

"....those girls away from him, he's dange...."

"....at kind of a fucking monster is he, thi..."

"....go get Captain Zacharius. Tell him we found Jaeger. Bring him he....."

Eren felt a stinging in his neck, reaching up to paw at it and finding a tranquilizer round buried in his throat. He pulled it out, looking at the empty syringe in confusion before turning towards the men behind him.

"I got them all, didn't I? Tell me no one got away. They're all dead right?" His words were slurring, the word spinning under him now, darkness swimming into his eyes.

"Yeah, Jaeger. They're all dead. Jesus fucking Christ....."

Everything went black while Eren fell to the ground, face splashing into a puddle of red as his eyes slammed shut.

Eren sat up panting, clawing at the ghost of a needle in his neck, looking around his room for blood and bodies that were not there. Were far away, years in the past, across oceans, buried underground. Fuck. The Alpha should have known better than to try to go back to sleep after Levi left, sneaking away as soon as the sun rose. Eren expected the Omega to run, but he hadn’t thought it would be so soon. He’d awakened in a panic, grasping for Levi but finding his bed empty instead. Eren ran to the door, only to grope at the pain in his chest and watch as Levi was driven away, taking part of Eren with him. He’d never felt so lost in his own home, everything around him familiar yet somehow unwelcoming. The Alpha had eventually wandered back inside and just stared at his room, wondering how it was possible for it to feel so big without his tiny Omega filling it up. Levi. It
had been less than two days since he'd met him, and Eren was broken without the Omega here. He'd tried to go back to sleep, clutching the pillow that Levi had slept on tight and breathing in his scent, only to be woken by a nightmare from his past.

Levi hadn't done anything wrong, was free to come and go as he pleased. Just because they had mated did not mean the Omega belonged to Eren, no matter how badly the Alpha wanted that to be true. Even if Levi had allowed Eren to bond with him, the Alpha would not have tried to control where he went, what he did. He just wanted to have his Omega close, protect him, watch over him. Bring him his meals while his muscles were still aching from Eren's abuse, make sure he was fed and warm and cared for until his body healed. He should have known better. Levi was unlike any Omega Eren had ever met, and even though the Alpha loved those volatile parts of him, it was that very independence and ferocity that made him flee.

The things he treasured about Levi pulled the Omega away from him, and the Alpha was left reeling in his wake. He fought the urge to text Levi, ask him how he was, ask if he could see him. The Omega had only just left, and if Eren tried to force himself on Levi now he would just put more distance between them. It took all of his willpower not to snatch up his phone and beg the Omega shamelessly to go out with him. Eren ate breakfast, and it took about five minutes of standing in his kitchen staring at the walls absently before he realized he would not be able to sit around today. It was Thursday, and he had a jiu-jitsu class that afternoon, which Jean would fuck up ten different ways. When he thought of the other Alpha at the dojo, a predatory smile crossed his face. Jean was forever wanting to fight, everyone, everything.

Today, Eren would be happy to oblige him.

Eren walked into the entryway to the dojo, where Sasha sat behind the desk. There were two parts to it, a gym that was open twenty four hours a day that had all the normal equipment, weights, treadmills, mats for stretching, benches. The other section was the actual dojo, a roped off ring in one corner, mats covering most of the floor, wide open spaces for sparring and training. There was some equipment as well, the bare minimum necessary for the various classes that were taught here. Boxing, jiu-jitsu, aikido, general mixed martial arts, among others. It was the dojo he headed for now, Sasha glancing up absently to greet him.

"Hello, welcome to Titan Dojo, how may I- Holy shit, Eren." Her nose was wrinkling, and suddenly the ground was very interesting and she couldn't meet his eyes. "I thought you were going to be gone for a week, at least. You're in rut, you can't be here." She'd answered automatically, despite the obvious signs that Eren wasn't rutting. No Alpha in rut was allowed at the dojo, even if it was just to use the gym equipment. It was too dangerous, like having a ticking time bomb walking around the facility.

"My rut is over. It passed last night." He didn't specify why, didn't have to. The only way a rut passed that quickly was if an Alpha mated, and even if someone didn't know that, one look at Eren's throat or hint of his scent and it would be obvious. Levi had left his teeth marks all over the Alpha, his scent in his skin, and even if the Omega had left he could not take those with him. Eren felt the soreness in his neck, his chest, and relished every twinge, every ache. Every hint of that delicious Omegan smell that would not wash away completely for weeks to come. They were proof that Levi had existed, wasn't some figment of his imagination. The Alpha hoped with everything in him that by the time they had faded, his Omega would be there to put them back. Sasha was looking at him with a shocked expression, eyes darting over the marks on him, mouth hanging open.

"Uh... okay. Eh, c-congratulations? Or something?" Eren had to laugh at her, couldn't stop himself.
"Sure. Thanks. But I need to talk to you, Sasha." Her brows furrowed, and she looked like she wanted to disappear under the desk.

"A-about what?"

"About running from an Alpha in rut. You know better than that shit. If you didn't work around them it would be different, wouldn't matter, but you work at a fucking dojo! Over half of our clients are Alphas! What the fuck were you thinking?" Eren's voice stayed calm and he kept his eyes averted, but he was gesturing with his hands, and she was shrinking more with every word.

"I was thinking that I was gonna die! I couldn't make it up to your door, and your stupid rut scent was so strong that I wanted to piss my fucking pants! It's not my fault! No one smells like that! I've never been so terrified! Jesus, Eren, I'm never doing you any favors when you're in rut ever again. You're a fucking monster." The Alpha's smile faltered, words from his dreams snaking through his mind. "What kind of a fucking monster is he..." He shook the dark threads of memory away, heading towards the door to the dojo.

"I'm sorry, you're right. But still, don't turn your back on an aggressive Alpha, and definitely don't run from one in rut, okay?"

Sasha just nodded, clearly not wanting to be anywhere near this Alpha who smelled of lingering rut and some unknown Omega. Eren sighed, making his way into the main room of the dojo and heading towards the locker room before anyone noticed him. The dojo was fairly empty so early in the day, only some of the trainers doing one on one sessions with their clients. All the actual classes would be held in the afternoon or evening, Eren's jiu-jitsu group included. The Alpha saw Jean out of the corner of his eye on his way to change, and he felt himself smiling in anticipation. He put on some shorts, leaving his feet bare, along with his chest. Shirts just got in the way, kept fighters from grappling well against each other, got caught on their hands or their face, besides being hot and uncomfortable. He snagged some gloves and a mouthpiece from his locker, but did not put them on yet, just set them aside. The Alpha stretched his legs, his arms, rolling his shoulders, loosening himself up. He knew as soon as he went into the main area that Jean would be harassing him, but he needed to warm up his muscles a little before he tried to do anything else. No amount of stretching was going to clear the faint twinge of strain from his body after an entire day of mating, but it would help some.

When he exited the locker room, Jean and the others were sniffing around, and Eren knew what they were scenting. Omega. The traces of it that lingered on Eren were enough to have them tilting their heads, searching out the source instinctively. Their eyes fell on the Alpha and shot wide at the sight, bruises and bite marks on his throat and chest, the scent of an Omega thick on his skin. Jean was walking towards Eren with with a smirk on his face, and for once the Alpha was glad to see it. Eren wanted to wipe it from his face today.

"Holy fuck, Jaeger. An Omega did that to you?" Eren smiled, couldn't help it. Yes, an Omega did this to me, and fuck, it was wonderful. "I'm surprised an Omega wanted anything to do with you. She must have been pretty fucking desperate if-" Jean was on the ground faster than anyone could blink, Eren's hand wrapped around his throat as he straddled his stomach, a vicious growl coming from his chest.

"You don't talk about my Omega. He's not your fucking concern." Eren seemed to come to himself and backed off, letting Jean climb to his feet and rub at his neck with a scowl on his face. The other Alpha did not bat an eye at Eren's words. 'He' not 'she'. Did not mention Eren saying the Omega was 'his' when the Alpha did not have the bonding marks on his neck or wrists. Knew better, with the feel of Eren's hands still heavy on his throat.
"You're an asshole. If you want to fight, you just need to say so. Don't jump me like that. We're at work, and it's unprofessional, you fuck." Eren smiled, wide and feral, and everyone besides Jean was taking a few steps back instinctively. It was not a happy smile, but a hungry one, and no one wanted it pointed at them.

"Let's fight, Jean. I need to break something. Might as well be you." The others nearby were shuddering, eyes darting away, not wanting to be mistaken for this Alpha's prey. Jean smiled right back, just as predatory, light dancing in his gaze.

"We'll fucking see about that."

A few minutes later they were on the mats, both wearing gloves and mouth guards, and everything in the dojo had ground to a halt as the people training there gathered around to watch. Eren almost never legitimately fought anyone, as he was always teaching, training, demonstrating. It was impossible to teach someone if you just canceled out their every strike, overcame every block, escaped every hold. He would fight Mike from time to time, or Jean, but usually not when anyone was around to watch. Eren didn't like being the center of attention, but he would make an exception today. He needed to lash out at someone, and Jean would do just fine, even if it wasn't this Alpha he was truly upset with. Eren was mad at himself for failing at some of his most basic duties. Failing to keep his Omega happy. Failing to make Levi feel like he belonged. Failing to care for him as he recovered from their mating. A failure as an Alpha. A failure as a lover. Just a failure.

Eren would not truly be able to forget, but he could be distracted for awhile. For this Alpha, fists and pain were better than anything else.

"You fighting for a set time?" Connie was nearby, the Beta eager to see these two Alphas go at it. Eren shook his head, no, and smiled that dark smile, letting his mouth guard show. There were sharp teeth printed on it, still baring them at Jean even if they were hidden behind soft plastic. He pulled it out briefly to answer.

"We'll fight to submission." Everyone's breath caught, shocked at Eren's words, and Jean was growling. When two Alphas fought, they did not use the word 'submission' to refer to a fighter giving up, whether it was due to a choke hold, or a joint lock, or just being unable to defend themselves adequately. They called it yielding, or tapping out. Not 'submission'. It was taboo among Alphas who fought recreationally, and by telling Jean he would submit Eren was challenging him in new ways. A few of the spectators moved back, giving the Alphas more space without thinking. Connie stuttered over his words for a moment before gathering himself and raising his hands.

"You guys both ready?" There was no spoken answer, just Jean's growl increasing in volume and a nod of Eren's head, accompanied by a smirk he managed to pull off, even around his mouth piece. "Okay guys. Ready? Fight!" He clapped his hands on the last word before backing away. In a formal match there would be bells or a referee on the mats with them, but this was anything but formal.

The Alphas began circling, watching each other's footwork carefully. Eren taught jiu-jitsu, and he normally relied on it fairly heavily in his fights. It was an art of control, and fighters could practice at full strength and still usually be able to do the same thing again day after day. The Alpha could defeat his opponents without causing any real harm once he got them in a chokehold or other submission technique. Winning without hurting someone appealed to Eren, which was one of the reasons he liked the sport so much, and as such he would usually try to take his opponent down to
the ground as early as possible in a fight. From there he could manipulate his enemy's position until he could get his arms around their throat, or pull their arms or legs into a lock. Then it was either pass out from lack of air, allow your joints to be dislocated, or submit, and in the dojo there was no shame in tapping out.

Winning without hurting someone was not what Eren needed today.

Even Jean was surprised when Eren's fist shot out, and he was barely able to dodge it before another was flying up from the other side. It glanced the side of his face, not really impacting but knocking his head back nonetheless. Jean struck with a fist of his own, trying to land it in the other Alpha's gut while his arms were still extended, only to catch a knee in his own. Air shot out of him in a rush, and then the fight was a blur of punches and kicks, each Alpha ducking and dodging and evading. Jean was careful of his feet, not wanting Eren to snatch one up and toss him on his back. The two-toned Alpha had caught a few of those strikes to his face, and there was a trickle of blood leaking from a cut on his cheek. Eren realized that they could both beat each other ragged and still not finish this fight, and Mike would have his ass if he let Jean bleed all over the mats. He'd worked off enough of his restless rage.

The Alpha waited for Jean to throw his next punch and he ducked underneath the strike, jumping at the other Alpha and wrapping his legs around Jean's waist. Once he hooked his feet together behind the two-toned Alpha's hips, he pulled them both to the ground, laying on the mat on his back. Jean was struggling to escape Eren's legs, trying to pull out of them, but it was too late. The Alpha had his arm under Jean's neck, tilting his head forward, pressing into his trachea and cutting off his air. Eren arched his spine, putting more pressure into the choke, pulling with his legs while Jean struggled to slip out of it to no avail. He was done, the fight was done, but he still had to tap out. To submit, and it rankled after Eren had taunted him earlier. Eren whispered to him, too low for anyone else to hear.

"Submit, Jean." Jean growled in answer, renewing his struggles, but it was useless. "C'mon, horseface. Submit." Eren knew he was an asshole, knew he was taking his anger at himself out on Jean, and even as he did it he couldn't stop. Felt guilty. Couldn't pull back. Needed to hear the words, feel the tap, accept the yield.

Needed victory in this, after suffering defeat at the hands of the most perfect Omega that had ever existed.

It was only as those thoughts went through his mind that he realized he had not wanted to fight Jean to take out his anger on someone. He'd needed to triumph over something, to regain his confidence in some small way. But this was meaningless. Empty.

Forcing Jean to submit to him would not bring his Omega back to him. All it was doing was alienating one of his friends, even if they spent most of their time arguing. He was just about to release the hold when he felt Jean's hand tapping on his bicep, and he let the Alpha go with shame washing over him. Connie sounded out his victory to those watching, who cheered for the Alpha.

"Win for Jaeger, submission due to a guillotine choke from full guard by a bottom fighter. Take notes, my friends." Everyone started to disperse as Eren climbed to his feet, and he called out to Jean.

"Hey, Kirstein." Jean turned around as he was pulling out his mouth piece, taking off his gloves. He glared at Eren, no one but him aware of why he was so furious. They probably thought Jean was angry to have lost, but he'd lost time and time again to Eren. Had never won. Not once. But hearing another Alpha whisper in your ear, submit, in front of a crowd of your peers no less, had Jean riled and hostile. It was disrespect at its most basic level for Alphas, and if did not know he would just lose
again, Jean would be striking out at Eren with his fists even now.

"What do you want? You get laid and you turn into a fucking asshole. Fuck off, Jaeger." He was right, and Eren hated him for it, but he still wanted to apologize.

"Listen man, I'm sorry. That was my bad. I shouldn't-" Jean cut him off, voice full of rancor.

"Fuck you, Eren."

The Alpha walked away and all Eren could do was watch. Yet another person leaving him behind with words unsaid in his mouth.

...................................................................

Eren's class had been a disaster, all the students unable to get anywhere near the Alpha with the smell of an Omega so heavy on him, instincts telling them to run. Finally Mike had stepped in and sent Eren home, telling the Alpha to stay there until his scent didn't make everyone want to flee the fucking dojo. The Alpha knew his boss would want to talk to him about his Omega at some point, could see the curiosity in his eyes at all those bites, yet no bonding marks, but Mike wisely stayed silent about it. When Eren walked into his empty house, he wanted to scream, lash out at something, break everything within those walls.

All because Levi wasn't there.

After standing in the entryway fuming at himself, he tore off his shirt and went into his guest room, which had training equipment in it instead of a bed. Weights, a treadmill, a mat for stretching. He turned on the treadmill and started running.

Eren ran until his breathing was ragged and sharp. Until his lungs were full of acid. Until he could hear the blood rushing in his ears.

He ran until sweat soaked through his clothes. Until his thighs were trembling under the strain. Until the soles of his feet were hot and aching. Running, running, running, and going nowhere. It was the story of Eren's entire life, and yet there was nothing else to do. The Alpha was useless, and helpless, a failure all around.

So Eren ran some more.
The pit boss stood in the dirt of the fighting ring, watching with cold eyes as they piled up the bodies of dead Alphas. It stank, probably, but he was immune to the smell at this point. They couldn't afford to have too many death matches, but it brought a crowd like nothing else. Now everyone was gone besides his own men, cleaning up corpses, taking fighters back to their cells. He was looking at his ledger, frowning at the numbers there, willing them to say something other than the obvious. They were barely afloat, let alone profitable enough to expand like he wanted. His subordinate walked up to him, tisking at the blood around them. The boss agreed with him about the filth, if nothing else. He hated to be dirty.

"What is it, boss man?" The boss frowned at his book.

"It's been over two years since we started back up. Profits should be higher than this. We're barely at half of what we were before the raid four years ago."

"People are nervous. Lotta guys went down at the last raid for spectating illegal fights. Three spectating charges and you go down for a good, long while." The boss was shaking his head dismissively.

"That ain't it. Kind of people who watch, they're bloodthirsty, they don't think that far ahead."
Silence stretched between them, thick and dangerous.

"Little Omega we had before made us a lot of money." Now the boss was nodding, eyes narrowing.

"Speaking of Omegas, that vicious female we found, the blonde, she ready to fight?"

"We got her on suppressants, they still haven't taken yet. 'Nother week or two, she'll be good to go."
The pit boss was still frowning, closing up his book, leveling his gaze on his friend.

"The one we lost at the raid, OSC took him in. We have people in there right now?"

"Nah. They keep ferreting out our informants, charging them, locking them up. We can't keep people in there, their failsafes are too good. We can hack into some of their records. Doesn't do us any good as far as letting us know when their raids are, though. They don't keep that shit online."

"I don't care about that. I want to find that vicious little bastard. I want him back in my fucking pit, tearing these Alphas open, filling my damn pockets. Get someone into those computers. Track that little fucker down for me. What was his name?"

"Levi, sir."

"Levi. Bring that Omega back here. Do whatever it takes. Make it happen."

"Okay, boss man."

"I hate it when you fucking call me that." The man sighed, rolling his eyes.

"Sorry, Kenny."
Hange bitched at Levi the entire way home, telling him just how shitty it was for him to creep out of Eren’s house without saying a word. Her voice was grating on his nerves, would have even if the words weren't specifically tearing him open. The Omega didn't need to hear it, already knew how much of a coward he was without stupid four eyes telling him. He’d fled the Alpha's house to escape that affectionate stare, only to have Eren’s hurt expression burned into his mind. It was worse, those bright green eyes full of pain. Worse than the Alpha looking at him with love in his gaze, even if it frightened the Omega. Too much emotion, too fast, planting itself too deep inside of Levi. He felt guilty about leaving before Eren's house had even faded in the distance, but there was no way for him to go back, not with all the shadows dancing through his head. It was a foreign thing to him, trying to evade a problem instead of solve it. Levi wasn't used to running from anything, anyone. Faced everything in his life head on, no hesitation, no second thoughts. No regrets.

Until now.

He regretted running away from Eren, leaving him standing in his own doorway yet looking so lost. Afraid of nothing, yet looking terrified. This Alpha who could destroy anything that got in his way underneath those vicious fists, and the sight of the Omega leaving had broken him into pieces. Broken him when he seemed so fucking unbreakable. But Levi didn't know how to do this, how to let someone close to him. How to give up control. How to trust that this Alpha would not just cause him pain. Pain was all he'd known for so long that he came to expect it behind every smile, within every palm, underneath every foot. Wrapped around every word. Laced inside every intention. For years and years, all anyone wanted to do was break him, hurt him, and now...

All Levi could do was break things. Hurt others.

He had become the very force in life he hated so much, nothing but hostility and devastation.

The only redeeming things in his life were his Omegas and the confidence he helped instill in them. The courage he pulled out from deep inside, letting them know that they were no longer victims, that they could be brave. Strong. Showed them that they could face anything. Levi wondered where that bravery and strength inside him was that morning when he had climbed out of Eren's bed to escape his kindness, simply because it was something unknown to him. He had failed in his only duty in life, the only thing he held himself accountable for. Failed his Omegas. Levi tasted bile in his throat at the thought of how pathetic he really was. Tonight Petra and the other two in her group would come to his house, and Levi would have to apologize. Tell them he was the worst kind of hypocrite, someone who said one thing and did another. Now he had to let them look at his bites and his bruises and try to tell those girls the truth that he did not want to admit to himself.

That the Omega had loved every moment of it, and even now he wished he was wrapped up in those arms. That there was truly nothing to be afraid of as long as you chose the right Alpha. Levi had chosen well, and Eren would have bent over backwards to please the Omega, to feed him, to clean him, to care for him.

Would have dragged the moon down from the heavens and presented it to Levi if he had asked.

Fate had decided to smile on him, and then Levi had spat it its face. Become his own worst enemy, sabotaging his happiness at every turn. Because you don't deserve it. Even Levi could not decipher all the things that rushed through him, so many whispers in his head it all just sounded like the wind.

A lack of control.

The foreignness of such blatant affection directed at him.
His own unworthiness, undeserving of this Alpha that was too fucking perfect for words, strong and sweet and savage, in all the best ways. And here Levi was, full of nothing but failure.

As a teacher. As a friend. As an Omega.

Failing to do his duty, time and time again.

Now his muscles were aching, legs unsteady as he stood in the kitchen spooning eggs and bacon onto a plate. Hange made breakfast and came into the living room with it, Levi eying her in confusion. She always helped him recover from his heats, since suppressants did not work on the Omega. Brought him food, helped him shower, supported him when he needed to move around. Today when Levi asked if she would bring him something to eat, she laughed in his face, talking around a mouthful of food like the animal she was.

"If you wanted someone to take care of you, then you should've stayed with your green-eyed Alpha. I'm sure he would've made you whatever you wanted, and brought it to you, and begged to feed you. I love you Levi, but you're stubborn as fuck, so you're on your own this time."

Levi knew what she was doing. Fucking knew exactly what shitty glasses was doing. Make the Omega stumble around, weak and useless, and realize how much easier it would have been to stay where he had been. Warm, and curled up in an Alpha's embrace, one who was aching to please him any way he could. Begged Levi to be his, over and over with a voice full of lust and want. The Omega could hear it even now, a whisper in his ear, 'Let me keep you. Please.' So all day long Levi dragged himself around the house, body screaming in protest with every movement, telling him just how wrong it was to want to walk, to stand, to dress. Hange's phone had been buzzing intermittently, and every time it went off she shot a conspiratorial glance at Levi and smirked. She was texting Eren. Had to be, but the Omega refused to give into her goading and ask what they were talking about. That's what she wanted him to do, so he would stab himself through both eyes and cut out his tongue before he questioned her.

About an hour before his Omegas were to arrive he managed to convince her to go to the store and buy some fruit, cheese, juice. Something for them to eat while they talked. While they talk about you. While they ask you questions about Eren. While they accuse you with their eyes but are too nervous to say what they're thinking. If anyone else had asked the Omega about his mating, he would've told them to fuck off, but Petra and the others were different. All this time Levi had been telling them that mating was nothing to be afraid of, and then he had gone into a shelter in his red heat. Planned to die. If that did not break their trust in him, he did not know what would. The Omega owed them answers, reasons, explanations. Had to try and make this up to them, somehow. Levi cared more about the Omegas he worked with than anyone else on the planet.

Or he had, before some stupid fucking Alpha showed up to turn his whole world inside out.

Hange had returned and deposited the piled of fruit and assorted snacks on the counter before disappearing into her room, leaving Levi to cut and prepare everything himself. He stood as long as he could, slicing strawberries and apples, peeling and separating orange slices, but eventually he ended up in the floor with a knife and a scowl to finish his work. It took much longer than it should have, even his hands not wanting to cooperate, but eventually he had a tray full of fruit and cheese ready. After cleaning up his mess and carefully carrying the tray to his coffee table, he collapsed onto the couch with a groan. Not five minutes later there was a knock at his door.

"Come in!" It had to be Petra, Nanaba, and Lynne, early as they always were, subconsciously afraid of drawing someone's wrath. Victimized Omegas did it all the time, and if you called them out on their extreme punctuality, they were always genuinely surprised. Hadn't even noticed they were doing it. The door swung open, and only when the person spoke did Levi realize it was not his
"Hello, Levi." His eyes shot up, finding Erwin standing before him, looking less ragged than Levi expected after the beating he had taken. The Alpha had a black eye and a busted lip, face still swollen, but not as severely as it could have been. He still managed to look dignified, and that pissed the Omega off for some reason. Erwin sat down in a chair across the room from Levi, snifffing the air just as the Omega was doing. When he caught Erwin's Alpha scent Levi had the urge to tell him to leave, growl at him. Just being close to the blonde so soon after mating with Eren had his instincts riled. Everything in Levi was shouting that he was too close to this Alpha, that he needed to get away from him, and all Erwin had done was say hello. The Alpha was smirking, reading Levi's body language like a book. "Can't even stand to be near me right now, eh?" Levi just shrugged, feeling his anger rise. Erwin had turned GPS on in Levi's phone so he could keep track of him, had come to another Alpha's house and tried to force his way inside, all so he could talk to the Omega. All because he didn't trust anyone's judgement but his own, even if it had nothing to do with him.

"Why are you here, Erwin? I have three Omegas coming here to meet. It's Nanaba's group, and you know how she is. I can't have you making her all nervous." Nanaba was his most withdrawn Omega, could barely stand to be in the same room as an Alpha, especially one as dominant as Erwin.

"Why are you here, Levi? I thought you'd be at that Alpha's house today. Surely he didn't tell you to leave?" Levi was shaking his head, wanting to smack Erwin for asking such a thing. Levi's Alpha was none of Erwin's fucking business. Your Alpha? His fury fell away, replaced by shock at the possessiveness he was feeling, like he wanted to come to Eren's defense in the face of Erwin's words.

"No. I had Hange come get me this morning." Erwin cocked his head, brows furrowing in confusion.

"And he just let you go without a word?" Levi cringed, rubbing his hands up and down over his face.

"He might have been asleep." Now Erwin was cringing, looking truly sympathetic.

"Fucking ouch, Levi. That's cold, even for you." Hange's words came back to him, pairing with Erwin's, stabbing into him. That's shitty, even for you. That's cold, even for you. 'Because Levi was shitty and cold, but was now sinking to new levels of cruelty. Levi tisked at the Alpha, shooting a vicious glare his way.

"Oh, now you're on my ass too, even though he beat the fuck out of you yesterday? I can't catch a break." The blonde sighed, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, eyes on the ground. Erwin's eyes were never on the ground, and Levi found his breath catching in surprise.

"He didn't do anything wrong, he was just defending his territory and his Omega. It didn't take long for me to realize that I was to blame here. I interrupted a rutting Alpha in the middle of a mating, it was my fault. I let my emotions get the best of me, something I pride myself on never doing. I came here to apologize." Levi was amazed, but his words coming out fast and venomous.

"It's him you should be apologizing to, not me. He's the one who's house you tried to go in against his wishes. While he was in rut, and me inside in heat. You fucking stupid Alpha bastard, you know better." Erwin was rubbing his hands over his face now, head dropping closer to the ground in submission. Levi almost wanted to take a picture.

"I know, and I will make things right with him, as well. But that's not all I had to apologize to you for." The blonde lifted his gaze, meeting Levi's eyes but without a trace of challenge in his own. "I
wanted to tell you I was sorry... for before. For what I said to you about your final heat. I was wrong, Levi. I've never been so wrong. I think you were wrong too, that your decision was not the right call to make, but it still wasn't my place to... to threaten you that way. I know I've told you this a dozen times but it still doesn't feel like enough. What do I need to do to make you believe me? So we can go back to how we were? It's never been the same between us. We used to be friends. I'm not sure what we are now." Levi blinked a few times, unsure what to say, feeling that stare on him. Erwin was waiting, begging him silently to answer, holding his breath. The Omega sighed, throwing his hands up in the air in frustration.

"I don't know what you want me to say, Erwin. I can't just flip a switch and forget what happened. You... you threatened to rape me. Made me drop my eyes, forced me into a corner. I still get pissed off just thinking about it. I know you just want what's best for me, but that's the thing, you always think you know better than everyone else. About everything. And sometimes you do. But sometimes you don't, and you don't know when to back down. It's barely been six months since it happened, maybe eventually I'll be able to get over it. I'm still your friend, Erwin, always will be. Just give me some more time." A wry smile came to Erwin's lips.

"Maybe once you bond with that Alpha, you'll be able to forgive me." Levi felt himself bristling.

"Who says I'm going to bond with him?"

"I do. It's written all over your face. The way you're barely holding back from ordering me out of here. Your instincts don't want you around another Alpha right now. Because you've chosen yours, now."

"You don't know anything, eyebrows." Erwin laughed.

"I know I'm about to piss you off, before I go. I did a background check on a Mr. Eren Jaeger." Levi narrowed his gaze on the blonde, found himself rising to his feet, no trace of the unsteadiness he'd been dealing with all day. Levi felt anger like never before filling him. Could taste it like acid in his mouth.

"You fucking what? You're a goddamned psychopath. You can't do a background check on someone without their permission."

"I can if they're involved with a victimized Omega on the payroll of the OSC. I can quote articles and section numbers of protocol, if you want." Levi took a step forward, teeth bared at Erwin viciously.

"Is that what I am to you, Erwin? A 'victimized Omega'? Get the fuck out of here. Whatever you found out invading Eren's privacy, I don't want to fucking hear it."

"He's an Alpha with a staggering amount of self-control who got the better of me in hand-to-hand combat. Why do you think I did it, Levi?" The Omega blinked, some of his anger easing back, though he remained standing.


"It's not like we go on raids and stakeouts every day, he could keep his job. I think he'd be an asset to our team."

"Your team. Being on your team is dangerous, Erwin. How many men have you lost in the last year? A dozen? Your interest in someone is bad for their fucking lifespan." Those bright eyes glinted, head
tilting, canine and amused.

"Protective, are we?" Levi was baring his teeth again without realizing it, and Erwin had the balls to laugh. "I am interested, but I found something troubling in his files. When he was serv-" Levi cut him off.

"Shut it. Right now. I don't want to know, it is not my business, and it's definitely not your place to make it my business. If Eren wants me know, he'll tell me himself."

"Levi-

"GET OUT! Goddamnit, Erwin. Why are you like this? I thought you wanted to tell him you were sorry." Levi collapsed back into the floor with a grunt. "Get out here, my Omegas will be here any second." Erwin stood, walking to the door with a frown on his face.

"I'm not trying to tell you stay away from him, or keep you two apart. I think he's good for you, probably. But you need to be careful, Levi. He's... been through some things. Some things I'd like to talk to him about. I want you to give him my phone number, see if he'll meet with me. That's all."

"I'll tell him you want to apologize and give him your number. It's up to him if he wants to talk to you. Go away, Erwin. All your fucking plotting and bullshit is too exhausting for me to deal with today."

"I was right about one thing." Levi glanced up, brows furrowed. "I pissed you off before I left." Stupid Alpha smiled, like he was enjoying all this.

Erwin opened the door, almost running over Petra as he did so. He nodded at the three Omegas in greeting before he headed down the driveway, and Nanaba and Lynne were visibly relieved he was leaving. They filed in, shutting the door behind them as they sat down in the floor around Levi's coffee table, greeting Levi without really looking at him as they settled in. Get a bunch of ex-harem Omegas together, and they will inevitably sit on the ground if given the opportunity. There's no hierarchy on the floor, no one above anyone else, no posturing, no dominance. Everyone was equal, and even if it was uncomfortable physically there was something soothing about it, a sense of unity. At first he'd tried to fight the instinct, but after awhile he realized it was not negative, or harmful, so he gave up. Now his meeting rooms had pillows on the floor instead of chairs, and his Omegas relaxed that much faster. Levi knew when the girls looked up and caught sight of him, caught his scent thick with that of an Alpha, because they gasped in unison.

"Levi, oh my God. I don't think I've ever seen an Omega look like that after a consensual mating." Petra didn't say anything about the smell, didn't have to. Their noses were wrinkling, shoulders going tense as they took in Eren's scent. Levi just smiled, could feel their eyes taking in all the bite marks on his throat. "Fuck's sake. Are you okay?" Nanaba and Lynne were silent as always. It would be a few minutes before they found their voices, and Petra was mouthy enough for all three of them anyway.

"I'm fine. Listen, before we get into all this..." He looked up, meeting all their gazes in turn. Waited for them to drop their eyes, waited until they looked up again. Only when each girl held his stare for long moments did he move to the next. "I need to apologize to you. I'm so sorry. I went into a red heat, knew it was coming, and instead of finding an Alpha I went to a shelter. Not to mate, but to die. I've spent all this time preaching at you, telling you that mating was not so bad, that you guys are capable of anything, and I was incapable of facing it myself. I'm a hypocrite, and I know how much it must have upset you guys when they told you I wasn't going to be working with you anymore and you figured out why. I don't know how you found out, because the OSC wouldn't have told you
anything, but-

"I TOLD THEM!" Hange was there, bursting into the room and sitting on the floor between Nanaba and Lynne, grabbing a handful of grapes. She always crashed his Omega meetings, and even if it annoyed Levi, it was good for them. The Beta was loud, and outgoing, and totally harmless. For them, anyway.

"Of course you did. Anyway, what I did was wrong. I was..." Fuck, the words didn't want to come out, and they needed to hear them. Needed to hear the truth ringing through them, realize that everyone was scared sometimes. If there was anything in life he was bound to, it was these Omegas, their recovery, their independence. Levi took a deep breath, gritted his teeth, dragged his gaze up. "I was afraid. I didn't want to give up control to some Alpha. But after everything was said and done, there was nothing to be afraid of." He went quiet, unable to force anything else past his lips. Knew Petra had a million goddamned questions, anyway, all of them invasive and awkward and cringe-worthy.

"It's okay, Levi. We know you wouldn't have really let yourself succumb. You had a moment of weakness. We understand." Nanaba. Nanaba was talking, telling him it was okay, telling him she understood, as the other girls nodded in agreement. They looked so fucking sincere, it made Levi's chest ache. Those feelings of unworthiness crashed back down around him, and it was harder to breathe than it should be. Levi's eyes were stinging, and he would tear them from his head before he let these Omegas see him cry. He blinked a few times, about to say thank you, when Petra cut off his words.

"So the Alpha you mated came to the shelter, saw you there, took you to his house." Levi nodded in response. "What is he like? Is he cute? He has to be, if YOU agreed to mate with him. I just can't picture it in my head, an Alpha that you would mate with." These were not the mating questions he had expected from her. His brows furrowed, but before he could answer Hange was pulling out her phone with a squeal.

"I have pictures!" Levi rolled his eyes as she brought up an image of Eren, probably the same one she had sent to his phone, and flashed the screen at the Omegas. "Isn't he adorable?" Nanaba blushed, Lynne smiling at Levi after she saw the photo, but Petra's jaw dropped. "Oh dear God Levi, he's beautiful. Why are you even here and not at his house? Your mating just finished late last night, I know you're still sore and weak and miserable. Don't most Omegas stay with their Alphas for a couple of days until they recover?" Her vision clouded, and she looked at the bites on Levi's throat again, expression going serious. Petra looked... protective. Angry. He'd never seen her like that before. "Did he ask you to leave? Is he an asshole, or something?"

"Oh, Levi snuck out this morning at dawn while he was sleeping." Fucking. Hange. Levi was cringing, rubbing a hand over his eyes, staring at the floor. Embarrassed. Ashamed all over again. The three Omegas gasped at once again, Petra speaking in a voice that was louder than necessary.

"YOU DIDN'T!" Levi just nodded, pulling his gaze up to face those horrified faces. "That's so mean. I bet he was devastated." He was. Levi didn't say anything, just bathed in those appalled looks that he knew he deserved. "Has he called you? Tried to check on you?" The Omega was shaking his head, only to have Hange correct him.

"He's been texting me all day! 'How's Levi? Is he eating? Do you guys have enough food, I can bring him something and leave it on your porch if he doesn't want to see me. Do you have anti-inflammatories, he's probably sore. If you need medicine let me know. Is he moving around okay? I was too rough on him, I feel so guilty. It's no wonder he ran from me.' " Fresh guilt washed over the Omega as the girls gathered around Hange's phone, reading the messages as she scrolled through
them. Levi wanted to tell her to stop, but as torn up as he looked it was probably good for them to see that the Alpha was worried. He couldn't even manage to be angry about it. After long moments Petra was looking up, biting her lip before speaking.

"Levi, you broke him! That's so sad! I want to give him a hug, I feel so bad for him." The girls were looking at Levi in shock, gaping, and it took a few moments to realize that he was growling. A few more to realize why. Petra said she wanted to hug Eren, and the sounds poured from his throat without Levi even being aware of it. The growl cut off abruptly, and he felt a blush painting his cheeks.

"Sorry. Didn't mean to do that." Petra and Hange were giggling at the display of possessiveness, the Omega calling Levi out on his bullshit just as he would anyone else.

"You've got it just as bad. Why did you leave?" He shrugged, couldn't answer. Couldn't tell them he was incapable of letting Eren be kind to him. Levi thought his Omegas would want to know how long the mating lasted, about the aftereffects, if it hurt, what to expect. He should have known better. Then Nanaba's quiet voice broke the quiet, soft and unsure.

"Can we meet him?" Levi's eyes shot up and she withered under his stare. He had to gentle his expression, take a few deep breaths, process what she had said.

"Wh-why?" If it had been Petra, the Omega would have said no immediately, knowing that she just wanted to ogle the Alpha, make Levi face what he had run from. But Nanaba never asked for anything, would not have dared to do so unless she had a serious reason. The blonde shifted, biting her lip, toying with her nails.

"I-it's just... I mean... you look rough, Levi. Worse than a lot of the Omegas in my harem looked when they came back from a forced mating. I know you're trying to reassure us, but if anything it makes me more nervous. My neck hurts just looking at you, and even reading those messages I can't picture some gentle, caring Alpha tearing you up that way. I-if we could meet him, could see for ourselves that he's nice, it would make me feel better. B-but, it's fine, we don't have to, I don't want to make you uncomfortable... just forget I asked." Levi couldn't. Couldn't forget she'd asked. Nanaba hardly spoke, let alone requested something like this. Then Lynne looked up, hopeful, pleading with those wide eyes of hers. Petra remained silent, knowing that she would only make Levi more likely to say no if she said anything. Levi ran his hands over his face, sighing, knew they had him right where they wanted him.

"He has a job, he might be working today for all I know. I can't ask him to drop everything and come over here."

"Oh, but he's not working! They sent him home! Something about how his scent is still too overpowering for the clients at the dojo where he works." Levi glared at Hange, furious with her for more reasons that he could name. Part of him was jealous that she knew more about the Alpha than he did. Four sets of eyes were locked on the Omega. Hopeful. Anticipating his answer. Levi had lost, and he knew it.

"He's not some normal Alpha. He ruts twelve times a year. He's... overwhelming." Hange's eyes lit up, and that's when Levi realized his mistake.

"He ruts twelve times a year? Oh my God, Levi, I need a blood sample! I need to run tests on that for my fertility studies! Get him over here!"

"Hange-"
"IT'S FOR SCIENCE! If you don't call him, I will. Why wouldn't you tell me about the rutting thing, you're so selfish!" Hange would call him, and if he did not want to come she would go to his house to take his blood. The thought of the Beta seeing Eren in his home alone made Levi want to growl all over again. At Hange. Fuck, he was pathetic.

"Fucking goddamnit."

Levi pulled out his phone, scrolling through his contacts until he found the one Hange had put Eren under. 'Sexy Beast Man.' He rolled his eyes, fingers itching to change the name but then four eyes would be winning, somehow. Levi stared at it for long moments, unable to press the call button with all those eyes on him. He staggered to his feet with a curse, stumbling into his room and shutting the door behind him before he collapsed onto his bed. Hange had put Eren's photo in as the contact photo as well, and those bright green eyes stared at him, wide and knowing. Saw through him, even just from the screen of his phone. Levi could picture them staring down at him from above, looking at him like he was everything there was in life. The whole world. Could hear Eren panting out his name. Feel the ghost of those hands on his skin. The Omega closed his eyes as he tapped the screen, pulling it to his ear, holding his breath as he listened to it ring. Once, twice....

"Hello?" Levi shuddered at that dark voice in his ear, questioning, uncertain. Not believing that Levi would actually call him. It had been less than a day since he'd heard it, but it did strange things to him inside. Made him feel warm, and breathless. There were people talking in the background, and the Omega wondered where he was, who they were, what he was doing. Bit back the questions with sharp, unmerciful teeth.

"Eren. It's Levi." He heard a rough exhale, those background noises fading away into nothingness as though the Alpha was walking away from them. When Eren spoke again, his voice was full of some strong, strange emotion.

"Levi."

Levi knew what it was.

It made him afraid.
Eren ran himself half dead before finally collapsing into a panting, sweating mess on the floor behind his treadmill. He didn't even want to look and see how many miles he'd run trying to escape the feelings of failure spinning around his head. After running so hard for so long, he didn't have the ability to think or worry or dwell. All he could do was gasp for breath, and that was just what he'd wanted. The Alpha was about to take a shower when his phone went off in his pocket.

**Armin:** They said you were at the dojo today. Mikasa says we're coming over there to celebrate your mating. I told her to ask you first and she laughed and said 'yeah ok'. Sooo... I guess I'm just warning you that Mikasa and me are going to be at your place in less than an hour.

Eren wasn't surprised that his sister was coming over without asking. She always did, it wasn't anything new, and Mikasa would want to tease him about his first mating. Always mocked him for being a virgin. Wanted to mock him for scaring his Omega away, probably. She was anything but sensitive about that kind of thing. No amount of yelling, or pleading, or bargaining would keep her away, so he gritted his teeth and responded.

**Eren:** Jean's shift should be finished by now. Get him over here too. I need to tell him I'm sorry.

**Armin:** They said you fought him today and it was not a fun time for our favorite ponyboy. I don't think he's gonna want to come to your place, man. Eren smirked. Armin was easy to manipulate if you knew him well enough.

**Eren:** Use your masculine Omega wiles on him. You can do it. I believe in you. The blonde would not back down from such a challenge, shameless Omega that he was. He could bat those eyelashes at an Alpha and talk in that sad little voice of his, and they would be jumping through fiery hoops just to make him smile. Walk barefooted through broken glass if he asked. Eren had seen it happen, time and time again. Armin loved to bend powerful Alphas to his will with a few words and a pitiful expression, and it was an amazing thing to watch, honestly. It didn't work on Eren, but it did on his sister to a certain extent, and that was even funnier.

**Armin:** ...challenge accepted. Target acquired. He'll be there.

**Eren:** That's my boy. See you guys soon.

Eren shook his head with a grin, and as he did so he realized that even if he didn't want to text Levi and irritate him, his friend Hange would not be similarly annoyed. Would be overjoyed to hear from him, most likely. After firing off a half dozen texts to the Beta asking about Levi, Eren aired out his house a bit. He closed his bedroom door, wanting to keep Levi's sweet, perfect scent in there, but he opened all his outside doors and windows and turned on his fans. If he didn't get some of the overpowering scent of mating and heat and rut out of there, everyone would be tense and miserable the entire time they were in his house. Three Alphas in close quarters with such smells all around was a recipe for violence. Eren left everything open as he showered, not worried about someone stealing from him. No one would come in there. Fuck, he only locked his doors if he wasn't home, and that was just out of habit. Even if someone managed to go into his house with his scent everywhere telling their instincts that they were about to die, there was nothing they could take that couldn't be easily replaced. A TV, computer, video game consoles. Eren was ambivalent about his personal belongings, the only thing of value a necklace with a key hanging from it that his mother
used to wear. A thief wasn't going to steal something that looked worthless, a trinket that was buried in a cigar box in his damned underwear drawer.

The only thing Eren wanted to keep safe was an Omega miles away, behind a door that was not his own, who wanted nothing to do with him. Had run away in the light of dawn and left Eren sleeping.

He showered, and then discarded all the food he'd prepared, washed the dishes, cleaned his kitchen. The rest of the house was still better off than it usually was, but he sprayed some disinfectant over the surfaces just for the scent, trying to cut through the lingering smells of mating with the sharp tang of citrus. Between all these meaningless tasks he was talking back and forth with Hange, but it did not make him feel any better. The Beta was disturbingly honest about everything, and that honesty was full of things that made Eren cringe. He'd asked a million questions about Levi, and none of the answers were what he wanted to hear. The Omega could barely walk, didn't want to eat much, refused to take medicine, was in a foul mood. They had plenty of food, any medicine he would need if he actually decided to use it, leaving no excuse for the Alpha to come over. Finally he sighed, telling Hange to let him know if there was anything he could do. She sent back a mischievous looking emoticon, along with a message that said, 'Give me some time. The Omegas are coming.' Eren did not know if he should be relieved or apprehensive. Settled for some mixture of the two, vague nervousness dwelling inside.

The Alpha had just sat down on his couch, scowling, when there was a knock on his open door. Armin stood there, nose still wrinkled despite all the Alpha's effort, before he came inside with bags full of food. Knowing the Omega, there was probably booze of some sort, which they would try to get Eren to drink to no avail. The Alpha wasn't sure why they still tried after all this time. Armin tossed the bags on the table before he even looked up at Eren, but the Alpha was waiting for his reaction. Knew there would be one, considering how he looked.

"Mikasa and Jean are getting the rest of the stuff out of the- Jesus fuck Eren!" He stood and the blonde walked over to him, tugging the neck of Eren's shirt down to look at his chest and shoulders, eyes going wide at all the bite marks there. "You sure you didn't get an Alpha by mistake? Sure looks like someone tried to fight you off." Eren shook his head, trying to force a smile for his friend and failing. Armin saw the dark look on his face and frowned. "Awww, I'm sorry. I knew if you were at work it meant your Omega split, for whatever reason. Marco told me you found one at the shelter." Found one. Armin was an Omega himself, and yet still used those sorts of proprietary expressions, meaning nothing by it, not even consciously aware of the implication. Found instead of met. Treating an Omega like an object and not a person. Eren thought back, trying to remember if he did the same thing, used the same kind of subtly insulting language. He'd never thought of it before he had an Omega he wanted for his own. Eren was about to say something to Armin to correct him when the blonde leaned in to give Eren a hug, but the Alpha took an instinctive step back. This was an Omega that was not his, and even if Armin was his best friend who he'd hugged thousands of times before, the Alpha in him did not want that scent on his clothes. Then a hurt expression crossed Armin's face and he looked like he wanted to cry. No, no, not that fucking face. Not even Eren was immune to a legitimately sad Armin.

"Armin, I'm sorry. Come here." He hugged the blonde tight, ruffling his hair as Armin squeezed him back, burying his face in Eren's clothes. "It's just instinct. I'm all fucked up right now." The Omega nodded into his chest before pulling back and glaring at him.

"You weren't gonna hug me. Jean's right, you are an asshole."

"What am I right about? I mean, I'm right about everything, but I'm not sure what you're referring to, specifically."
Jean was standing in the doorway, not entering Eren's house as he looked at the Alpha with a fiery gaze. Feet spread wide, arms crossed, chin up, hostility rolling off him. Eren gave Armin's head one more pat before he walked over to the other Alpha with a grimace. He stopped in front of him, holding his gaze for a long time. It took over a minute of meeting Jean's eyes before he managed it, but Eren dropped his own to the floor. In submission. In his own house. The scent of his Omega still thick in his nose, and yet he pulled his stare down. He heard Jean's sharp intake of breath, kept his eyes on the ground through sheer force of will, everything in him wanting to shove the other Alpha down and defeat him. But doing that was easy for Eren. This was harder for so many reasons, but it needed to be done.

"I'm sorry, Jean. I was a jerk earlier. I shouldn't have done that." He brought his eyes back up to see a confused look on the other's face, disbelieving that Eren of all people had just submitted to him. "I took out my personal shit on you. It was my bad." Jean wiped the surprise off his face and shrugged, shoving past him into the house, and that was as much of an acceptance of his apology as Eren would ever get. If the Alpha waited for Jean to say he forgave him, he would be waiting until the end of the world, until the stars exploded in the heavens, because it was never going to happen.

"It's all right, I know you're an asshole, it's nothing new. I'd be disappointed with anything else, really." His wry voice did not entirely make up for the victory shining in his gaze. Mikasa followed him in, having watched the exchange in shock, but she wisely kept silent about it. They all sat down on Eren's couch as he fell into his recliner with an audible thud. Then his sister really looked at him, noticing what Armin had Jean had already seen that day.

"Damn, Eren. That Omega has some fucking teeth, eh? Feisty little bastard. Seems like fun." Eren was growling, teeth bared as he sat up in his chair, barely holding himself back from attacking his sister with his fists. She could rile him up faster than anyone, was one of the most dominant Alphas he knew, male or female. Mikasa did not shy away from a fight, reveled in them in fact, but this time she was smirking, letting her eyes drop, leaning back in the couch. "Down, boy. I'm just fucking with you. But seriously, what did you do? I've never heard of an Omega taking off after a mating like that. Usually they milk it for all it's worth. Armin makes his Alphas into slaves for days and days." The blonde took offense, as Eren knew he would.

"Hey! You don't know what its like! An Omega is sore as fuck after a heat! You don't have to deal with it, you Alpha bitch!" Mikasa was smirking, knowing from personal experience just how much of a princess the blonde was after a mated heat. Armin had been with a couple of asshole Alphas before, and Mikasa was always there to take care of him. Jean knew too, but that was because he was weak to the blonde's advances. When Armin decided he wanted an Alpha for one of his heats, they didn't have much of a chance against him. Eren was glad they were best friends and that neither one had ever had any sort of physical attraction to the other, because the little Omega was merciless. His sister couldn't let Armin's words slide without protest.

"I have to deal with it when I'm the one carrying your food to you. And if you're so damn sore afterwards, why don't you suppress?" Armin shrugged, smiling a predator's smile.

"If having mind blowing sex for twelve hours straight once a month is wrong, I don't want to be right. Then I get to make an Alpha bring me food and drinks and bathe me and take care of me? Fuck, why would I suppress? It's wonderful." Eren was shaking his head in amusement, waving away a beer that Jean was trying to force on him. "Anyway, what she said. What did you do? Why's your Omega gone?" The Alpha covered his face with his hands, rubbing them up and down, sighing. If he knew how to answer that question he would not be sitting with his friends, watching them drink, thinking about Levi. Would be trying to get him back instead.

"I don't know. I don't know what I did wrong. I mean, he looks just as bad as I do, as far as the bites
are concerned. Worse, actually, but fuck, he seemed to like it at the time." Armin giggled, biting his lip as his eyes shone in delight. Thinking about an Alpha's bite, most likely.

"I'm sure he did." Eren shot a look at the Omega before continuing.

"It took twenty-four hours before his heat passed, but afterwards... We got cleaned up, and we ate, and he went to sleep with me. I thought everything was fine, thought he would be here for a couple of days before he left. Then this morning I woke up and he was gone, driving away with his Beta friend. I fucked up somehow. Maybe I hurt him. I was pretty rough." Jean was laughing at that, taking a generous swig of his beer before speaking.

"It was your first mating, and you're in your twenties, of course you were. You been fighting a rut every month since you were fourteen, and you're a fucking monster, anyway." Eren went tense, and Jean realized what he had said and went wide eyed. "Oh, shit. Sorry. Anyway, you're a little much for an Omega who was at a shelter. I'm surprised he went with you at all."

"He was in a red heat." Total silence. Crickets chirping. Wide eyes. Armin's shocked voice breaking the quiet.

"No way." Eren nodded, tempted for the first time in God knows how long to actually take them up on that beer. Eren didn't drink alcohol, or caffeine, or anything but water or maybe a sports drink. Right now the idea of drinking himself stupid was strangely appealing, but the thought of losing his self-control held him back. He'd lost control with his Omega, and now Levi was gone. Only blood and pain ever came from Eren not keeping himself on a tight leash. His sister set her drink down with a hiss as the implications of his words sank in.

"Jesus, Eren. His Alpha died and he went with you, of all people?" Eren didn't know if he should be offended or not. Answered automatically before he even processed his response, and then realized it wasn't any of their business.

"He never had an Alpha. I don't want to get into all this, it's not my place to talk about it." Eren's phone rang, and as he reached into his pocket to answer his friends were talking in low voices, expressing their rampant disbelief that there would be an Omega in a red heat whose Alpha had not died. When Eren saw the name on the screen, he suddenly couldn't breathe. Levi. Levi was calling him. Part of him couldn't really believe it. Maybe it was Hange using his phone for some reason. Armin, Mikasa, and Jean were still talking but eying him warily, wondering who it was that had him looking like he'd just seen a ghost. Eren swiped across the screen, putting it to his ear.

"Hello?"

"Eren. It's Levi." All the oxygen inside him came out at once, until Eren felt like he would fall into himself, crumble into nothingness. Hearing that voice in his ear made him shiver, eyes going shut, lungs pulling in a ragged gasp of air. He shot up from his chair, walking away from the living room until his friends fell silent. Tried to make his voice sound normal when he answered. Failed, miserably. Ended up sounding so desperate and relieved that he groaned inwardly.

"Levi." Eren felt like an idiot. There was so much he wanted to say, and yet nothing would come out of his mouth. It was suddenly dry, aching. Full of so many words that he didn't know if he could even open it. Everything would come spilling out, a floodgate opened to reveal oceans of emotion. Eren would drown the Omega, even from so far away. He finally managed to stutter out a few awkward phrases. "A- Are you okay? If I hurt you, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to." There was such a long silence that Eren pulled the phone from his ear, waiting for the screen to light up and show him the call had not disconnected. Saw Levi's face on the screen set as the contact icon, and felt his heart stutter in chest.
"Listen, I'm sorry to bother you-" Eren cut him off, then winced when he realized how fucking rude he was.

"You're not bothering me." Another long pause. The most uncomfortable silence on earth. Eren swore he could hear his blood pumping through his veins.

"Ah, okay. Uh... are you busy right now?" Was he busy? His house could be on fire, and there would still only be one answer to that question when it came from this Omega's lips.

"No! No, I'm not busy." Eren could not manage to give a single shit at how ridiculously eager he sounded. Was totally unashamed. He heard Levi taking a deep breath, heard a rough exhale.

"Some of my Omegas are meeting at my house right now. They ah.... shit, they want to meet you. I'm sorry. This is really sudden, I understand if you can't come by-"

"I'd love to meet them. Where do you live? Should I come right now? Do you need anything?" He could feel Levi cringing on the other end, could picture those furrowed brows, that lip worried between his teeth. Wanted to run his finger across it, tug it from that sharp hold.

"I'll text you the address. I don't need anything. I'm sure my Omegas will wait, so you don't have to rush." He paused for a beat, seeming to think of something. "They want to ogle you, ask you embarrassing questions. Hange wants a sample of your blood since you rut so often, and Erwin's not here right now but he wants me to give you his phone number so he can apologize to you. He has ulterior motives. My friends are bad for you, Alpha. I thought I should warn you." Erwin. Eren had wanted to apologize to the Alpha for not being able to keep his shit together, but the thought of him being so close to Levi so soon after their mating had him baring his teeth at empty air. He took a deep breath, had to make sure his voice wouldn't come out a growl.

"It's fine. I have to stop somewhere, but I should be there in thirty minutes or so. Tell your friends I said to do their worst." Levi laughed, and Eren's eyes closed tight, body going slack at the sound. God, I'm so fucked.

"I'll see you soon, Alpha."

"See you soon, Levi."

Eren hung up, and he wanted to roar in victory. Instead he ran to his bedroom, ignoring the questions of his friends and shutting the door behind him before changing his clothes faster than should've been possible. He tugged on a dark green button up and some dark blue jeans, had his shoes on in seconds flat. Ran his hands through his hair, knowing there was nothing else he could hope to do for it short of magic and miracles. Just before he left the room he opened his drawer and pulled out his mother's necklace. If he ever needed something to reassure him, it was now. The Alpha tied the cord behind his neck before flying towards the front door, turning back towards his friends briefly as he snatched his keys from the hook.

"I gotta go. Ah, I dunno when I'll be back. Armin, don't take a nap in my bed. I'm serious." Armin glared at him, but Mikasa and Jean were throwing their hands up in protest.

"What the fuck, Jaeger, we just got here, where are you going?" Eren just smiled.

"I gotta go see my Omega." He was out the door before anyone could get a word in. When his car pulled out of the driveway, Mikasa was shaking her head.

"The boy's fucked." Jean smirked, nodding in agreement, downing his beer.
'Totally fucked.'

A half hour later Eren was walking up to Levi's door, more nervous than he'd ever been in his entire life, with a box in one hand. There was no way he was showing up to see Levi empty handed, but he didn't think the Omega would appreciate a gift bag with fucking tissue paper or a brightly wrapped package. So instead he had a plain cardboard box taped shut.

Eren had drawn a bow on it with a black marker he'd found in his car, just in case.

The Alpha had wondered if he would be able to knock through his anxiousness, but found the problem was actually how to stop knocking and not pound the door off its hinges to get to Levi. He could smell him now, along with hints of other Omegan scents and the fading trace of another Alpha. Erwin, had to be, but he fought down the aggression that wanted to rise in him. The blonde was not here now, and getting riled up would only distract him from what he was doing.

What that was, he wasn't totally sure, but he got to see Levi and that was all that mattered.

It took awhile for the door to swing open, but when it did Levi was standing there, looking up at him and fuck, he was blushing. His eyes were red with dark circles under them, and those bites were worse than they had been the night before, bruising settling around them in earnest. The Omega was still the most beautiful thing he had ever seen, and the Alpha inside him was overjoyed that Levi was before him, close, real. Right fucking there, where Eren could keep him safe. He started to move forward, pull the Omega into his arms and squeeze him tight, but he held himself back at the last moment. Bit his lip, clenched his fists. Wrenched his eyes shut for the briefest of moments before opening them up again. Took a deep breath. Felt the words spill out of his mouth before he could stop them.

"Can I hug you?"

Levi was still holding onto his door, brows furrowing at Eren's words. Then he shrugged, awkwardly holding his arms out from his sides a few inches and dropping his eyes to the ground. That was all the invitation Eren needed, and he snatched Levi forward into his embrace, squeezing so tight that the Omega tapped on his back a few times in quick succession and Eren had to ease back. The Alpha buried his face in Levi's hair, feeling his instincts surge up as he detected his own scent there mingling with the Omega's own. Needed to mark him all over again, make that fading trace of him fresh and potent and new. He knew Levi probably wanted him to let go, but the Omega felt so fucking good in his arms that he couldn't pull back. Then he heard someone clear their throat, and his eyes darted over into the living room where Hange and three Omegas sat on the floor staring at them, smiling wide. Looking far too pleased. Hange called out a loud greeting, some sort of medical kit in her hands.

"HI EREN!"

One of the Omegas, a brunette, was waving at him. Oh, shit. He was probably embarrassing Levi in front of these people he worked with. Fuck. Finally he released him, and Levi met his eyes for brief seconds before letting them dart away, moving aside so Eren could enter. He greeted the Beta, feeling his cheeks flush as he did so.

"Hi, Hange. Thanks for having me." The Omega walked around the coffee table, sitting with his back leaned against the couch. Eren followed him like a lost puppy, standing nervously beside him,
scratching his head. "Ah, is it okay if I sit here?" Levi looked up at him, eyes dancing away, and Eren didn't like it. Wanted that gaze challenging him like it had before. Then the Omega shrugged again, seemed totally indifferent.

"Sit wherever you want." Eren sat cross-legged on the floor next to Levi, setting the box he held down in his lap. He glanced between Levi and the Omegas spread out around him, feeling even more nervous, if that was possible. They were all wide smiles and shining eyes, looking at Eren's throat and not saying a word. Finally Levi broke the silence to introduce them. "This is Petra, Nanaba, and Lynne." Each one lifted their hand in greeting as Levi said their name. "They're Omegas I work with. They're nosy as fuck, and so they wanted to meet you. Guys, this is Eren. Don't make me regret this, Petra." Eren met their eyes, glancing away before they could, not wanting to appear like he was challenging them in any way. He didn't notice the surprise on their faces.

"Ah, hello ladies. It's nice to meet you." The Omega with long brown hair spoke up, gazing at Eren fairly unabashedly, at least for an Omega.

"It's nice to meet you too. I would say Levi has told us all about you, but he hasn't, because getting him to talk about anything is like pulling teeth. Whatcha got there, Eren?" The Alpha glanced down at the box, had forgotten it was even there as he struggled not to stare at Levi, struggled not to drag him back into his arms and breathe that sweet smell in.

"Oh. Uh, this is for you Levi." He handed it to him, and the Omega looked at it as though it was a bomb that needed to be diffused instead of a gift. When the Omega started to tear open the tape Eren felt his cheeks flush again, put his hand over it frantically. "You can't open it while I'm sitting here. That's embarrassing. Wait until I leave or something." Levi furrowed his brows again, laying it on the couch behind him. Petra looked like her face would break, her smile was so wide.

"Awwww, that's cute. You're all shy and blushing, bringing presents for Levi. See, Nanaba. He's not scary." Nanaba was looking at her lap, but she still seemed faintly amused. Eren glanced over at his Omega to catch him staring, only to have Levi look away again. The Alpha wanted to grab his face, hold it in his arms, force those steel bright eyes to his. Make Levi keep his gaze. He was distracted when Hange scooted closer to him, wrapping a large rubber band around his bicep and tying it in a loose knot.

"Hange, damn it, you can't just stick a needle in him without asking!" She looked genuinely confused by Levi's words, glancing up at Eren innocently.

"I want to take a sample of your blood for a fertility study I'm doing. Levi says you rut twelve times a year. Is that true?" The Beta was cleaning off an area of skin near his elbow with an alcohol swab, prodding at the veins there with a gloved hand.

"Yeah, I do. It's fine, you can take my blood." Hange smiled a crazed smile at Levi, tilting her head to the side.

"See? It's fine, Levi. He understands. So Eren, besides this when was your last mating? I need to adjust my testing for hormone levels." Eren heard Levi sigh heavily. She was pulling out a syringe, and the Alpha was staring at his lap, mumbling. "What?"

"I said never. Just... just this time." Eren could see the Omegas gaping at him without even looking at the girls. The brunette let out a laugh, taking a swig of juice before speaking.

"Oh my God, Levi. What is wrong with you? Even I would've sealed the bond with this one. He's precious. Never mated, fucking gorgeous, falls all over himself the moment he sees you. This one is a keeper." The Alpha glanced over at Levi, only to freeze at the sight of the Omega baring his teeth
at Petra, growling low in his throat. He didn't seem to realize he was doing it, and the other Omega was just smiling, but Eren was distracted from it by a sharp stab in his arm as Hange plunged a needle in. His gaze shot over, and she looked up with an unapologetic grin.

"Oh, oops. Big stick. Sorry." By the time Eren looked back at Levi, he was no longer growling and hissing at the other Omega. It didn't matter, Eren had seen those fierce eyes he'd been longing for, that vicious glare, that barely leashed aggression. The overwhelming force of this Omega's personality spilling out. *My Omega.* The Beta untied the band on Eren's arm and snapped a vial into the end of the syringe, and Eren watching with golden eyes as his blood slowly filled it. She replaced it with another, taking three vials full of the crimson liquid before withdrawing the needle and cleaning the injection site with another alcohol swab. When she was finished, Hange put a band-aid on the drop of blood that remained, and Eren couldn't help but grin.

"Hello Kitty, eh?" Hange was tucking the vials into some sort of plastic container, writing on the label with a black pen.

"Would you rather have one with little trucks on it?" Eren shrugged.

"Nah. Hello Kitty's fine. She's sassy."

The Omegas laughed, but Eren still couldn't manage to pull his eyes away from Levi. The Omega shifted under Eren's gaze, but the Alpha didn't look away. Just waited, willing those gray eyes to glance his way. Willing this Omega to look at him, notice him, talk to him. Begging Levi to be his without words, just pure, desperate determination pouring out of him in waves. It felt like an eternity, holding his breath, needing that stare to meet his own. Not moments but years, decades, millennia spent aching for this Omega.

That was okay.

Eren would wait.
Levi's instincts had been raging ever since Eren arrived at his house, rising up swift and vicious until it felt like they were about to pour out of him in a wash of growls and violence. Earlier when Erwin had come by, the Omega had wanted to chase him out, force him to leave so Levi would be nowhere near some unwanted Alpha. Now they were even more overwhelming for an entirely different reason. Levi loved his Omegas, would die to protect them, would do anything he could to help these girls in any way.

Right now he wanted to shove them to the ground and hiss at them before dragging Eren away. Levi might not want to accept that Eren was his, but the Omega in him had laid its claim on this green eyed Alpha whether he liked it or not, and it did not appreciate all these other Omegas so close to Eren. These girls with their shy smiles and submissive eyes who were fawning over the Alpha, even if two of them were barely saying a word. Petra had straight up told Levi that she would have bonded with him, and he had not been able to bite back the growl that came out of his throat, the baring of his teeth, the narrowing of his gaze. She had just smiled at him, her face saying more than any words could, and Levi realized she was exactly like Hange. Forcing him to look more closely at his feelings through her actions. He hated them both for their fucking cleverness.

Levi could feel Eren's gaze on him almost constantly, a physical sensation on his skin that had him shifting in place. He was afraid to meet those eyes for more than a moment or two, afraid of all the things the Alpha could read in his own. Petra and even Lynne were peppering Eren with questions, most of which were relatively noninvasive, where do you work, how long have you lived here, polite getting to know you bullshit. They babbled incessantly for at least twenty minutes, getting on the Omegas nerves and he wasn't even the one being interrogated. Eren just smiled and told them about himself, about the dojo he worked at and the classes he taught.

With every answer that Levi could not have supplied, all these trivial things that he couldn't have told you about this Alpha, he felt more and more furious at himself. He would have had plenty of time to ask Eren all these things, if he had not been a coward. If he had not run away from him, tail between his legs, hiding from his affection. As he sat next to the Alpha, fighting the urge to get him as far away from these girls as possible, he felt something itching at his nose. Breathed in deep, caught the faintest trace of an unfamiliar scent. Found himself leaning towards Eren, brows furrowed as he sought out the source. The conversation he'd been absently listening to stopped as Levi picked up the Alpha's arms, pressing his face in and inhaling that foreign smell on his skin. Omega. He smelled like an Omega. An Omega that wasn't Levi, or any of the girls present here. One that had touched this Alpha, been close enough to Eren that Levi could detect his scent. If Levi could have stopped himself from speaking he would have. He looked up to meet those bright eyes staring down at him, head titled in confusion, but not saying a word. Levi narrowed his own eyes yet again, feeling predatory, hostile.

"You smell like an Omega." Eren smiled, looking even more perplexed, reaching out and stroking Levi's hair briefly like he couldn't help himself before pulling his hand back guiltily.

"Ah, yeah. You." The Omega shook his head, thrusting Eren's arm up by his face where that fading intrusive smell was at. He breathed in, then his eyes went wide in recognition. "Oh, that's Armin. He's my best friend. He and my sister and one of my Alpha friends came by today. They're still at my house, actually. It'd be nice if you could meet them sometime." Eren looked totally nonplussed, clearly not realizing the razors edge of self control that Levi was balancing on. Levi felt like of all the people he'd ever met, this Alpha should be able to recognize someone struggling to keep themselves in check, yet he was oblivious to Levi's inner turmoil. The Omega had not released Eren's wrist, and the Alpha was looking at him with a worried expression, like he didn't understand why Levi looked so furious. Then Lynne spoke up, causing Eren to glance her way.
"You left an Alpha in your house? With an Omega?" Alphas generally did not like other Alphas in their territory alone, especially with Omegas, even if they were not their mates. It was instinct on a basic level, to protect any Omegas that were in their homes, but Eren just shrugged.

"Two Alphas, actually, my sister is one as well. They come to my house a lot, I don't mind them being there. Armin is emphatically not my Omega, and he certainly doesn't need me to protect him from any Alpha. If anything those Alphas need protection from him." The Alpha seemed to suddenly realize that Levi was jealous, probably because the tension eased out of the Omega just slightly at those words, not my Omega. Eren let out a harsh breath, and a small smile played at the edges of his lips. Levi looked down at his hand, and his eyes went wide when he saw he was still clinging to Eren's arm, fingers digging into the flesh possessively. He jerked his hand away, pulling them into his lap and fighting a blush from his cheeks.

"Someone's jealoussssss..." Hange spoke in a singsong voice, raising her eyebrows suggestively. Levi opened his mouth to tell her shut the fuck up, when Eren cut him off, reaching over to interlock his fingers with the Omegas.

"Leave him alone guys, you're making this harder for me." Levi stared down at where their hands were joined together, as though he wasn't sure how it had happened. Like it was some grand mystery of the universe. Black holes, dark matter, foreign galaxies full of unknown stars. This Alpha's fingers tangled with his. He wanted to pull his own hand away, wanted to run from even this small intimacy in any way he could, but then he saw those gemstone eyes looking at him as though just holding Levi's hand was the greatest gift he'd ever been given. That unsure smile on his face, like he was holding his breath, waiting on Levi to reject him. Expecting it. Ready for it. The Omega couldn't do it, couldn't take that victorious expression off his face. Could not leave him looking broken yet again. Levi let out an irritated sigh, glaring at Hange and his Omegas as he leaned back into the couch.

"You're all fucking exhausting to be around. I don't know why I put up with you." Petra just laughed.

"Technically they pay you for it." They grinned as one, Nanaba blushing for no apparent reason. They knew how important they were to Levi, knew exactly how far they could push the grouchy little Omega before he got legitimately angry. Then Petra set her glass down, bit her lip, looked between Eren and Levi before speaking again. "Ah, I have to get out of here soon, Levi. I have to pick up my roommate from work....." She trailed off, eyes darting to the couch and then back to Levi with a meaningful glance. Levi rolled his eyes as he glanced up at Eren. Fought the urge to shudder at the total contentment that was obvious on his face.

"What she means is she needs to leave, but she's going to fucking explode if she doesn't find out what's in that damned box you brought before she goes." Eren looked at Petra, then at the gift he'd brought for Levi that was sitting behind them, before he realized what they meant.

"Oh shit, I'm sorry, I've been here like a half hour and you need to finish your meeting or whatever. It was nice to meet all of you." Petra answered him with a smirk.

"It was nice to meet you too, Eren." He glanced over at Hange, who was still grinning like a maniac. Had not stopped the entire time he'd been there.

"Don't do anything weird with my blood. You still can't clone people, right?" The Beta laughed but did not answer, and Eren looked like he might be a little disturbed. "Well anyway, thanks for inviting me everyone. I'll get out of here so you can do your thing."

Then he was standing up, but he did not release Levi's hand, and the Omega was forced to stand with him, giving him a moment to steady himself. The Alpha bit his lip, blushing a little as he tugged
Levi with him towards the door. The Omega let himself be brought along, not unaware of all the eyes on him, and when he reached the doorway he opened the knob and took a step outside, shutting it behind them. He wasn't about to have an awkward see-you-later moment with Eren in front of those watchful gazes. The Alpha was running his thumb over Levi's knuckles, sending sparks of electricity shooting through him, a fire inside being stoked with that small touch. His eyes were still on the ground and he needed to bring them up, needed to meet that bright gaze that he could feel on his skin. Was afraid to. Knew there was more in it than he wanted to see.

When he caught that stare, those eyes were gold bright, and Levi thought he would melt under their heat. Eren saved him from the silence, from having to find words where there was only warmth and uncertainty.

"Thank you for letting me come meet your Omegas Levi. It's obvious you guys care a lot about each other." The Omega didn't know what to say to that. Wanted to demean them half-heartedly, or dismiss his words somehow. Reached for some sort of sarcastic remark, or subtle insult. Came up empty. Remained silent. The Alpha was running his thumb over Levi's hand, a fire inside being stoked with that small touch. His eyes were still on the ground and he needed to bring them up, needed to meet that bright gaze that he could feel on his skin. Was afraid to. Knew there was more in it than he wanted to see.

He looked so fucking hopeful, it made Levi ache inside. Still the Omega was going to say no, was going to refuse him as gently as he could. Then he caught that faint trace on Eren's skin, remnants of another Omega lingering there. One that was not Levi. Marking did not go one way, and if Eren put his scent on Levi's skin, his own would be imbedded in the Alpha's just the same. Fresh. Potent. When he thought of Eren going home, thought of his little Omega friend there waiting on him, familiar enough to reach out and hug this Alpha without a thought.... Savage possessiveness rose up in him, shading his vision in red. He couldn't manage to get the words out, but he was nodding his assent. Yes. Put my scent on you, let your friend smell it and know you're not his. That you're mine. Levi did not have time to balk at his own thoughts, to cringe at the ownership he was feeling towards this Alpha, because then Eren was touching him, so close he could feel his breath.

There was none of that uncertain hesitancy that was present the first time Eren had marked him, no slow edging in towards Levi. The Alpha's hands were on either side of Levi's jaw, tilting his head to the right as he brought their throats together, the smell of Alpha and Omega surging up between them. Skin sliding against skin, the laying of a claim that anyone could understand. This Alpha is mine. This Omega is mine. We are not for you.' Eren was growling low as he switched to the other side, leaning his head to the left to expose the gland there to his needy touch. Levi did not notice when his hands had come up, but they were tangled in Eren's hair, clinging to it, holding this Alpha against him as he spread his perfect scent on the Omega's skin. Took Levi's scent into his own, clinging to it, holding this Alpha against him as he spread his perfect scent on the Omega's skin. Took Levi's scent into his own. Eren made a whimpering noise when he finally pulled back, releasing the Omega's hands dropped from his messy locks. The Alpha opened his mouth to speak, only to be cut off when Levi held out his wrists, a question in his eyes. Eren groaned at the sight, closing his eyes as he snapped up those hands and shoved them viciously into his throat, starting at the wrist and dragging the entire length of Levi's forearms against his skin. The Alpha just held them there for long moments, looking at the Omega with want in his gaze, those golden eyes lighting Levi up inside in places that he hadn't know existed before Eren came along. Places that this Alpha had brought to life, places he had stoked and stirred, filled with himself. Places that ached now when Levi was alone, a fresh pain inside where there had once been only emptiness.

Eren made Levi hurt in ways that only he could ease. An illness for which he was the only cure. The Omega wanted to hate him for it.

Instead he was taking Eren's hands in his and pulling them towards his throat. The Alpha was not blinking, was not moving. Was not even breathing as Levi closed his eyes, brought Eren's wrists
against his skin, sliding the glands their against his own. The Omega felt him shudder, heard him growling again. Waited until he released Eren's arms to open his lids up and face that gaze. When he did, his breath caught in his lungs, full of hot coals instead of air.

Eren looked feral. Hungry. Like he would tear off Levi's clothes right there and take him for all the world to see. Part of the Omega wanted him to.

Then Eren sucked in a ragged breath, wrenched his eyes shut, tilted his head to the side. Opened and closed his fists. Clenched his jaw. Brought himself back together in ways that Levi could not seem to manage. This beast of an Alpha had better control than he did, and there was something so right about it that Levi clenched inside all over again. When those beautiful eyes opened again they were green, and the Omega mourned the loss of that golden stare.

"Thank you, Levi." Levi shrugged, and Eren snatched him up in a hug, rubbing his throat briefly over the Omega's raven strands. He squeezed Levi tight, but too soon he was letting the Omega go, taking a step back, sighing heavily. As though releasing Levi was the hardest thing he'd ever had to do. Eren just stared at the Omega, and it was obvious there was something he wanted to say. Words that wanted to pour out of those perfect lips. They did not come. "I'll see you later. Let me know if you need anything. I'll text you, okay?" He was waiting for an answer, for permission even to do something as insignificant as send Levi a text message. Somewhere deep inside the Omega realized that if he did not respond, Eren would not dare to contact him. It was ridiculous.

It made his heart beat strangely in his chest.

"Okay. That's fine." He smiled, and Levi felt enslaved to it. As though he would do anything to see it again. Move mountains. Cross oceans. Then Eren was walking away, taking backwards steps down Levi's porch before he paused in front of it.

"Bye, Levi. I'm glad I got to see you today." *Me too.* Levi didn't say it. Couldn't. Would not. Was terrified this Alpha could read it on his face, as clearly as any words in a book.

"Goodbye, Eren." The Alpha nodded several times but did not move for long moments. Eren seemed to realize he was standing there staring like an idiot and finally turned on his heel to make his way to his car. With one last look at Levi he drove away, and the Omega watched him go. After gazing at his empty driveway for a minute, at least, he sighed and turned around only to see the blinds on his windows flutter back into place, as though someone had been pulling the slats down to look through them. Levi went back inside and his Omegas looked at him guiltily. Hange just seemed amused. He made an irritated noise at them through his teeth.

"I know you fuckers were watching through the window. How old are you? Twelve? Jesus fucking Christ, I am dealing with actual children." Petra ignored him, instead saying what was on all of their minds.

"Open that box right now, or I'm gonna do it for you." Levi made his way back around the coffee table, sitting back on the floor as he scowled at the Omega across from him. He grabbed the cardboard box from where it sat on the couch behind him, rolling his eyes as he looked at the black drawn-on bow. Though about Eren sitting in his car, monster of an Alpha that he was, and tracing out the lines of it. Imagined him biting that lip of his as he focused on getting it just right. Wanted every detail to be perfect, just like everything he did for Levi. It made the Omega feel strange, like there was too much air inside him, or maybe not enough. Petra made an impatient sound, and Levi glared at her again.

"I should make you leave before I open it. Refuse to tell you what's inside." Hange laughed at him.
"I'd just tell them as soon as you opened it. C'mon, we're dying here. What's in the fucking box?"

Levi sighed again before using his fingernail to pull up the edge of the tape, tugging it off slowly. Hange and the Omegas looked on with wide smiles, more excited about what was inside than they would be about any gift of their own. Levi folded the flaps back and looked at what was there with a frown.

"Damn it, Levi, what is it?"

There was a pair of black padded fingerless gloves, next to a black mouthpiece printed with sharp teeth. They were nestled on top of a pair of shorts, black like everything else but with distressed gray markings along the sides. A card was there also, black and red lettering on the front with a barcode on the back. *Titan Dojo, VIP c/o Eren Jaeger*. Along with a small note, written in the worst handwriting Levi had ever seen in his entire life. It looked like someone who had just learned to read. Toddlers wrote better than this. It said *'Come visit me when you're back in fighting shape so I can see the rest of your moves. -Eren.'* Levi found himself smiling, and he kept the note but passed the rest of it to Hange, who dumped it unceremoniously on the table for the Omegas to see.

"He gave you clothes?" Petra was missing the point, even after talking to Eren about his job for so long. Lynne put it together for her.

"He gave Levi gear to fight in. He wants to fight you, Levi? You still fight? I thought Alphas didn't want to spar with you." Levi just shrugged, staring at Eren's shitty writing, rubbing his thumb over those childlike letters.

"This Alpha's different."

And he *was*. Was making Levi different, too. Was changing him in ways that the Omega could not see, but could feel. Shifting him around, breaking him apart. Putting him back together with pieces that weren't there before.

Maybe when Eren was finished, Levi would be whole.
Eren sat in his car for awhile before going back into his house, eyes closed, wrists pressed to his nose as he breathed in Levi's scent. *My Omega*. If he was ever going to claim an Omega as his own, it would be this one, or none at all. No one else would ever be able to hold a candle to Levi, not in a thousand years, not in a thousand lifetimes. Eren would spend the rest of his life hollow and empty if he could not be with him. He sighed, steeling himself and heading up to the door. His friends and sister were still inside, and now he would have to deal with their teasing before chasing them out. He did not want to sit around and banter with his buddies right now. All he wanted to do was to go in his room and bury himself in those sheets that smelled like Levi, bathe in that perfect scent, revel in it. Let it surround him until it was all there was. Eren was not even ashamed.

The Alpha entered his house, and no matter how hard he tried he could not wipe the ridiculous smile off his face. That grin was not lost on the trio of smart asses who were currently sitting on his couch, nor was the fresh smell of his Omega that was roiling around him like an invisible fog. Mikasa was smirking as Eren collapsed into his chair.

"That went well, I take it?" He smiled impossibly wider, rubbing his hands up and down his face as though he could reign it in. He could not, let out a bark of laughter instead.

"I'm in love, guys. I'm so fucked." Eren was not ashamed to admit what he was feeling. It was obvious from his face, anyway. Armin was grinning right along with him, happier for Eren than both of the others combined.

"We know. What's this guy like, anyway? You've never wanted to mate, always said you didn't want an Omega, and now you're fawning all over some guy like a puppy. It's cute." The Alpha sighed, looking at the ceiling as though he had to read the answers there.

"He's grouchy and aggressive and difficult and a fucking smart ass." Jean laughed then, still drinking steadily, and Eren made a mental note to be sure that Mikasa was driving when they left.

"Sounds wonderful, dude. He's perfect for you. A real catch." The brunette just shrugged, bringing his gaze down to his lap as he fought the urge to bring his wrist up to his nose again. As though Levi's scent wasn't surging around him in a drugging wave.

"He's... perfect. He's tiny and gorgeous, and when I first saw him in the shelter instead of trying to get away from me or mate me, he acted like he wanted to fight me. Even wrecked from his heat and barely able to move, he was clenching his fists and getting ready to swing. It was beautiful." The others were silent as Eren went on, watching the way his eyes lit up as he spoke. "I mean, we were at a refuge, all he had to do was press a button and someone would have come running, but no. He was going to go after me himself, staggering and shaking and raining down blows. And the fact that he was there in the first place is amazing in itself. He's never mated, and was so determined not to submit to an Alpha that he literally was going to die rather than let one touch him. The sheer force of will it would take to do that.... He's wonderful. Vicious and volatile and more than I could even think to ask for. I've never seen an Omega like Levi." Eren went quiet, and he did not fight the impulse anymore. Brought his arm up again, let that scent fill his nose, eyes closed, an image of Levi running through his head.

"Whoa. His name's Levi, huh? Well, it's worse than I thought. You're totally done for." Eren just smiled, dropping his hand and sighing again.

"I know. It's great." They all laughed, but it was Mikasa that spoke.
"I don't know if great is the word I would use. I'd be fucking embarrassed if I were you. You're pretty pathetic right now." Eren shrugged, totally unabashed.

"I don't even care. I'll do anything I have to to make Levi mine." He sat up, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees. "I gave him some shorts and gloves and shit. Invited him to come down to the dojo to fight." Jean was scoffing, looking at Eren like he was stupid.

"Omegas don't fight. You're an idiot, Jaeger." Even Armin was looking a little hesitant, like he agreed with the Alpha, but Eren was shaking his head.

"This one does. He's muscled like an Alpha. I bet he could kick your ass without even trying, Jean, even if he's not in your weight class. He'd fucking destroy you. God, if I didn't want to tear your skin off at just the thought of you touching him, I'd want to watch." Jean rolled his eyes, clearly not believing a word of it.

"Yeah, well, if your Omega ever shows up at Titan, we'll see about that." Eren was torn. The Alpha did not want Jean's hands anywhere near Levi, even just to grapple and strike in a fight. On the other hand, there would be almost nothing quite as satisfying as watching his Omega break this cocky Alpha into pieces. See the shock on everyone's face as Levi stood victorious over his defeated form. Eren felt pride swelling within him even now.

"You're right. We'll see. I can't fucking wait."

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Eventually his friends had left, proclaiming that Eren was 'no fun' and all he did was sit around sighing with a stupid smile on his face. He couldn't really argue their point, and was relieved when they finally were out the door. When his phone buzzed he picked it up, freezing when he saw Levi's name on the screen.

Levi actually texted him? He swiped his finger across the screen to read the message, only to feel disappointment run through him.

Levi: Erwin says he wants to apologize. He also says he wants to 'discuss something with you'. He's not dangerous but he can be an asshole, so watch out for him.

Of course the Omega only wanted to relay a message to him. He texted him back anyway, unable to resist.

Eren: Okay. I want to talk to him anyway. Also, thank you again for inviting me to meet your friends today. It means a lot.

Levi: It meant a lot to them too. You made them feel more comfortable with the idea of mating, especially considering the way I look right now. I appreciate you coming by on such short notice.

Eren: It was nothing. At the risk of sounding pathetic, I will do anything you need me to, whenever you need it. Just ask.

Ten minutes passed, and Eren decided that Levi wasn't going to answer in the face of such eagerness. He was just about to set down his phone when Levi replied.

Levi: Thanks for the shit. Maybe I'll see you at the dojo in a few days.

Eren smiled. So eloquent, Levi.
Eren: I hope so, just let me know when. You're welcome. Goodnight, Levi.

This time he did not get an answer, and he was not really surprised, did not really think his hostile little Omega would tell him 'goodnight'. He put the Alpha's number in his phone, resisting the urge to title it 'stupid blonde cockblock' or 'Alpha asshole', and entering the man's name instead. Eren fired off a text to him as well, stating that Levi had given him the number and told him Erwin wanted to talk to him. He got a response back immediately, and was a little disconcerted.

Erwin: Are you free anytime tomorrow? I'd like to meet up with you, if possible. Express my apologies in person, and discuss an important matter with you.

Eren: I'm available anytime. Let me know when and where.

Erwin: There's a cafe on 9th, Rosewall. Can you be there at nine? Would later be better for you?

Eren: No, it's fine. I'll see you then.

Erwin: Much obliged, Mr. Jaeger.

Mr. Jaeger? He had never had anyone speak to him so formally in a text message, and to be honest it was creeping him out a little. Still, he needed to meet with this Alpha and apologize for losing control, let him know that so long as he was not bothering Levi in any way that there were no hard feelings.

Eren eventually went to sleep with his face buried in the pillow Levi had slept in, and the dreams he had were full of dark raven hair and gray eyes that burned with a fire that he wanted to be consumed by.

Eren entered the Rosewall cafe fifteen minutes early, only to realize he was not early enough to beat the blonde Alpha there. Erwin sat in a corner, as all Alphas tended to do, dressed in a dress shirt and slacks with some sort of files spread out in front of him. He seemed to sense Eren as soon as he walked in the door, eyes darting over to him immediately. The brunette felt a pang of regret as he took in the other Alpha's face, bruised and swollen, though not as badly as it could have been. He still looked sort of... royal, somehow, and it puzzled Eren as he approached. The blonde stood as Eren drew close, nose twitching as he took in the brunette's scent. He could smell Levi on him, fresh and potent, and Eren had to fight down a smile at the thought. Erwin extended his hand, looking at Eren as though he wasn't sure he would take it. He did, shaking it briefly before they both sat down.

"Good morning, Mr. Jaeger."

"Ah, Eren's fine." Erwin nodded, stacking the files in front of him together into a neat pile. They looked familiar, somehow, but Eren couldn't place why.

"I'm Erwin Smith, but you can call me Erwin. We met under some... less than favorable circumstances. I wanted to apologize to you. I overstepped by boundaries, I should not have interfered with you and Levi at such a... sensitive time. I don't hold anything against you, and I'm truly sorry for my behavior. It's not something I am proud of." Erwin kept his eyes focused somewhere just underneath the brunette's, not challenging but also not submitting. A neutral stare. Eren knew that the man had wanted to apologize, but hearing it was an entirely different matter. It took him a moment to gather himself and reply.
"No, I actually wanted to apologize to you. I usually have better self control than that. Even if it came to blows, I should have subdued you without violence. Instead I let my instincts take over, and I'm sorry for that. As long as Levi has no complaints about you, there are no hard feelings." Erwin's brows furrowed, a wry expression crossing his face.

"You seem fairly confident that you could have 'subdued me without violence'. I want to be offended, but with the way things went I guess you're probably right." Eren shrugged, not wanting to incite anymore discord between them.

"I teach jiu-jitsu, and a big part of that is being able to physically control your opponent without necessarily hurting them. If I couldn't win without injuring someone, I wouldn't be very good at what I do." They sat in silence for a moment, and when it began to stretch out a little awkwardly he spoke up. "Levi said you wanted to discuss something with me, but he didn't say what it was." Erwin clasped his hands together on top of his stack of files, little red lettering along the edges, and suddenly Eren knew why they looked familiar. They were Recon Corps files, the branch of the military he had served in, and his eyes began to narrow on the blonde. He viciously forced down the hostility that wanted to rise in him, trying to allow the Alpha to say his piece.

"I'm sure Levi told you he works with victimized Omegas for a living for the Omega Survey Corps. I work for the OSC too, though for a different branch. I'm in charge of different investigations into illegal fighting rings, harems, Omega slave trading and the like. I also lead strike teams on various raids we perform, and I'm always looking for strong Alphas with above average self control. You certainly fit the bill, and after our little.... interaction the other day, I looked into your past a bit. Did a background check on you, see if there was any reason I might not want to try and bring you on with us." Eren felt himself bristling, struggled to keep his eyes from flashing gold. Clenched his jaw, had to force it to relax so he could open his mouth.

"And what did you find, Mr. Smith?" Not Erwin, and the blonde was not surprised. He smiled, in fact, and Eren wanted to leap across the table and wipe it from his face with his fists. So much for his self control.

"Oh, at first it was all the normal stuff. You were born nearby to Carla and Grisha Jaeger, both Betas. Mother deceased, father vanished when you were very young." The brunette bit back a hiss.

"I prefer to think of him as dead." Erwin steepled his fingers, looking at Eren with knowing eyes.

"Why is that?"

"It makes me feel better to picture him rotting in a hole in the ground after he ran out on us. It's just more satisfying." Erwin shrugged, restacking the files in front of him so a red one with black letters was on top.

"Before your father left, your parents adopted a young girl, Mikasa. You grew up with her in foster care after your mother died, lived here in Shiganshina. Presented as Alpha at thirteen, incredibly early. Not surprising, looking at you now. Graduated early, joined the military at sixteen under the Alpha's Clause. Were drafted into the Recon Corps almost immediately, where you served under Commander Pixis and Captain Zacharius for the next several years. Then you were sent overseas to help quell the Trostian Genocide. Now, here's where things get a little sticky for me. See, I have the highest level access for military records you can get. There is nothing that is off limits for me, as I work for the OSC and have to screen my employees very carefully. No such thing as above my pay grade, so to speak. So when I ordered your service records and they came in looking like this..." Erwin opened the red file to expose the papers in there, all the lettering blacked out, not a single word other than Eren's name and the names of his superiors revealed. Page after page after page, nothing but black lines and white spaces. "You can imagine my surprise. I called the records bureau,
gave them my rank codes, and they said they couldn't help me. Said I wasn't authorized for this level of clearance. I told them who I worked for, but they said this was 'eyes only'. I asked, whose eyes? The president? God?’ Eren knew his eyes were bright gold now, had his fists clenched tight on the table. He was glad they'd gotten their apologies out of the way, because the only thing that would have passed his lips right then would be growls and threats and profanities. This fucking bastard. Dredging up things best left in the past, trying to pull them out into the open. "I served in the Recon Corps, I know Pixis and Zacharius, though it's been years since we spoke. So I went to visit Mike down at the dojo you work at, tried to shed a little light on all this. When I asked about you, you want to know what he told me?" Eren found himself smiling, all teeth and hostility.

"He told you to go fuck yourself." Erwin smiled right back.

"Close. He told me to shove these records up my ass and jump off a fucking cliff. Then he told me to go fuck myself. Asked if it was you who did this to my face, and when I didn't answer he just started laughing. Kicked me out of his dojo and told me to eat shit and die. He's just as creative with his words as Levi." Just the mention of the Omega's name had Eren growling for no reason. He wanted to rip out the blonde's tongue just for speaking it. Erwin seemed to sense this, gave Eren a moment to gather himself. "Now, Mike and I, we used to be friends. Pretty close, if I'm being honest. And just the mention of your name and a few questions, and he's ready to tear me into pieces to protect you. You, of all people, who are the last person on this planet that needs anyone's protection. I haven't had a chance to talk to Pixis, but it seemed better to ask you first. Now I'm still very interested in having you on my team, but I can't do that with just all these blank pages. I need answers. So I just have one question for you, Eren Jaeger." Erwin shoved the files across the table at the brunette, pages fluttering up before settling.

"What would that be, Mr.Smith?"

"What the fuck happened to you in Trost?"

The answer to that question didn't come to Eren in words or phrases but in flashes of red and the echoes of screams long fallen silent. He could taste blood in his mouth, and for a moment he was not in a coffee shop but a basement. Surrounded by corpses still dripping crimson under weak light, tiny children held tight in his lap. Blonde hair streaked with gore, breathing steady and even in sleep. Eren blinked a few times. Dragged himself back through the years, back across oceans, through miles and miles until he was back in the here and now. In a cafe across from an Alpha who thought it was necessary to know everything, to answer every question.

Some things were better left unknown. Some questions better left unanswered.

But Eren took a deep breath, willing his eyes back to green, relaxing his fists. Cocked his head to the side as he closed his eyes and counted. One, two, three, four... He got to thirty six this time before he could speak. Looked Erwin right in the eyes, and felt triumphant when they darted away almost instantly. The blonde seemed to realize how quickly he had submitted, had not meant to do so, and he brought those eyes back through sheer force of will. Those blue orbs gazed at Eren, waiting for a response.

"You say you know Pixis. Well, if you know him well enough, he'll tell you what you need to know. Tell him you talked to me, and that I said to ask him about Trost and the Breakers' Dens. If he thinks you deserve an answer, then you'll get one. But you won't get it from me. Now if you'll excuse me, I have better places to be than here." He stood up and started to walk towards the door, only to have the blonde call after him.

"Eren. You might not feel like telling me this, but there's probably someone else who needs to know." The brunette froze as the Omega's image flashed through his mind. Levi. Levi did need to
know, deserved to know. Should be aware of just how much of a fucking monster Eren was.

But as Eren walked out of the cafe, he knew he would not tell him.

At least, not yet.
Levi did not hear from Eren all day Friday, which troubled the Omega more than he wanted to admit. With everything Eren had done, and said, after the Alpha made it clear that he wanted Levi for his own, he had expected something. A call, a text. After meeting with another group of Omegas Friday night he went to sleep with a scowl on his face, wondering in some corner of his mind why he didn't just message the Alpha himself if it bothered him this way. When he woke up the next day, he wrote it off as insignificant. Eren was busy, he had a job, and family, and friends. A whole life outside of Levi that he needed to be a part of, just as the Omega did. Then Saturday passed the same way, and each time his phone buzzed he snatched it up almost violently, only to hiss at the screen when it was inevitably shitty four eyes texting him. Levi was moving around better, able to walk without wobbling or soreness, muscles no longer protesting each time he stood.

But the Omega felt broken in new ways when he crawled in between his sheets that night without hearing Eren's voice or reading words he'd typed out just for Levi.

He cursed himself, feeling stupid and pathetic for allowing himself to fixate on something this way, but the Omega in him was howling with the need for its Alpha. To talk to him, communicate in some small way, however meaningless. Hange was home all day Sunday, and she kept asking Levi what had crawled up his ass. 'You're more dickish than usual. I feel like you might bite me.' Stupid fucking glasses. When nightfall rolled around Levi was sitting on his bed, staring at his phone like a moron.

Levi: Are you alive, Alpha?

He'd known that Eren would answer sooner or later, and though the response was immediate, it was not what he'd expected. Levi figured the Alpha would have a smart ass remark, or something unabashedly flirtatious. He was not shy about telling the Omega how he felt, after all. So when his phone went off and he read the message there, he felt his brows furrowing with worry.

Eren: I can't decide.

What the hell did that even mean? *Fuck it.* Levi pressed the Alpha's contact icon and tapped the call button, listening to it ring so many times that for a moment he thought Eren wasn't going to answer. The Omega felt shadows twisting inside him at the mere idea. Then he heard the call connect, the Alpha breathing on the other end for the briefest of moments before he spoke, voice sounding strange to the Omega. Desolate, somehow.

"Hello, Levi." Even with his voice low and ragged, hearing Eren say his name made him shiver.

"Eren. You sound alive to me. Kind of shitty, but alive. You okay?" He heard the Alpha sigh, and found himself curling into himself, knees bent, arms wrapped around them. Clutching the phone to his ear like a lifeline.

"Fuck, it's nice to hear your voice. I talked to your Alpha buddy on Friday. He's a little passive-aggressive, that one." Levi wanted to laugh, but it came out strangled.

"Yeah, you could say that. Did he do something stupid? Is he dead? I don't think I'd be that upset." Eren laughed then, and it sounded better than the Omega's had, low but vibrant. It loosened some of
the anxiety from Levi's muscles, instincts telling the Omega that if his Alpha was happy, all was right with the world.

"I'll keep that in mind. He apologized to me, then he told me about his job, said he was always looking for Alphas like me. Acted like he wants me to work for the OSC." Levi had known Erwin was going to ask, but the way Eren said it made the Omega think there was more to it than that.

"You can always say no. If you're not up for it. I know you like your job now, and even if you could keep it while working for the OSC, that doesn't mean you have to go be Erwin's right hand Alpha Destructor." The silence that followed was loaded, and Levi felt himself shrinking into it. Vanishing slowly into the quiet like he never existed at all.

"No, I.... I've always kind of wanted to work for them, but I didn't think I could get in. They do some pretty rigorous pre-employment screening, and I wasn't sure if I'd make it past all that. Erwin though, he did a background check on me without asking. I'd be pretty fucking pissed if I wasn't actually so interested in working for them." Levi was rolling his eyes, cursing the blonde internally. Erwin did not know when to quit and just let things go. Relentless in all the worst ways, and in that moment the Omega hated him for it.

"So, other than Captain Eyebrows being a shitty presumptuous asshole, is that a bad thing? They do your background check, make sure you're all good, and then you can decide what you want to do, right?" There was that silence again, swallowing Levi up, suffocating him with nothingness. The Alpha's voice was even rougher than before, something unknown weighing his words down, and the Omega thought they might drown him.

"They may not want anything to do with me once they finish talking to my superiors from my time in Recon. There's something I need to tell you, Levi. I care about you a lot, and you know how much I want to be with you. I want to mark you, I want you to be my mate. But I can't ask you to do that if I can't be totally honest with you. Can I come talk to you?" Levi's heart was pounding in his chest, and he found himself pressing his fist against it. If the things Eren needed to tell him would tear them apart, Levi did not want to know what they were. Wanted to revel in blissful ignorance, wrapped up in this Alpha's arms, even if he did not want to admit it. Still, he was answering, and he wished he could shove the words back into his mouth.

"Right now?"

"No, not right now. Ah... tomorrow. Do you work?"

"I have to go to the office, then do a home visit on an Omega who applied to be a foster. Someone who lets victimized Omegas live with them until they can find a job and get back on their feet. She's already been approved, but I have to go check out her place, just for our records. I should be done sometime after three. Will you be home then?"

"Nowhere else to be. I don't go back to work until Tuesday or Wednesday."

"I'll come by your place after work, then. Eren..." Fuck, but Levi was worried. "Are you really okay?" The Alpha let out a harsh breath.

"I don't know. I'll decide tomorrow after we talk. Or, you'll decide, I guess. I could talk to you all night, but I need to let you go, Levi. I'll see you tomorrow?" The Omega wanted to go get in Hange's car and drive over to Eren's house right then. Lay eyes on his Alpha and try to read the dark thoughts from those gemstone orbs. But Eren had said 'not right now', and with all the self control the Alpha had, Levi would not be worthy of him if he could not wait one day.
"I'll see you tomorrow. Bye, Eren." It felt final in a way that no goodbye should, least of all when he would see Eren the next day.

"Bye, Levi."

The Omega hung up with a frown etched into his features. Even as he fell asleep he was sure it lingered there, twisting up his face and darkening his dreams. Most of them were blurry and lost to the morning, but he remembered a gold eyed Alpha covered in blood, backing away endlessly even as he said, 'I want you, Levi.'

Office work was easy for Levi, mindless but boring as fuck, and he found himself eternally grateful for the thousandth time that he only had to spend a couple of days a week at a desk. Hange had been interrupting his paperwork all day with excited messages about Eren's blood, and how fascinating it was. Something about hormone levels and chemical interactions, but Levi didn't even bother trying to understand. She was already asking if he thought the Alpha would donate more for her testing, but he ignored her in favor of the endless pile of forms in front of him. Even paperwork was better than dealing with Hange. It was his own fault he was so behind, really, almost two weeks of work stacking up to form this monstrosity of bullshit he was wading through. Normally he hated doing home visits for prospective fosters, but Levi looked forward to this one just so he could get out of this room. If the person who was applying as a foster was a Beta, anyone could go do the check, but this was an Omega so Levi had to go himself. If a victimized Omega was going to stay with one of their own, the foster needed to have enough of a backbone to get basic things done. Sending Levi out to talk to them, all snark and attitude, was a perfect way to make sure they could handle it. He didn't harass them, exactly, but he didn't go out of his way to be nice either. The well being of another Omega was at stake, and he wouldn't put them at risk just to be polite.

It might have been easier for him to stay focused if he could think of anything besides Eren, but that was too much to ask for. Over and over again his mind went back to the Alpha, his voice that sounded ragged and broken.

'Are you alive?'

'I can't decide.'

FUCK. Levi was terrified of whatever it was he would learn today. Eren knew some of his history, knew he'd been forced to go up against Alphas in an illegal fighting pit. He was not stupid, had to know what that truly meant. That Levi had killed men with his bare hands. Again and again. So many that the Omega had stopped counting. Once you reached the dozens, did the specific number really matter? But he could still see their faces at night, when he woke up with his heart flying in his chest, still unsure what the darkness around him held as sleep clung to him like shroud. Was he in the harem, ankles shackled together, trying to rest without moving his legs too far apart and jolting himself from his dreams? Was he in the dirt of the pit, blood in his mouth as he swam up towards consciousness, wondering if he was dead or alive? The relief that sang through him each time he realized he was in his own bed was short lived.

He was free, but those Alphas were still just as dead. Levi could scrub his skin until it was raw and aching but it would not wash that blood away. Not from the inside.

Levi was stained.

If this Alpha who looked at him with eyes that were on fire knew all this, and still hesitated to tell Levi what had happened to him? He could not even imagine what it was. Did not want to, even as
his mind ran wild with the dark possibilities. His phone's alarm started beeping, pulling him from his thoughts and letting him know it was time to pack it in and head to the home of the foster he was signing off on today. Levi closed all the applications on his computer, stacking all the files in front of him into a neat pile on the corner of his desk and heading towards his car with a sigh of relief. The Omega had looked up the address earlier, and he drove out towards the west side of town, distracted and in a foul mood. Hopefully this Omega was not difficult or uncooperative, because Levi did not have the patience for it today. He found the house without a problem, heading up towards the door with a clipboard and a scowl. The woman should be expecting him, and if all went well he could be done with this in a few minutes. As he knocked on the door, Levi couldn't decide if that was a good thing or not. He certainly didn't want to linger in some stranger's home, but he wasn't sure he was ready to head to his Alpha's place, either. The Omega was staring down at his clipboard when the door swung open, double checking the name on his paperwork as a bright female voice greeted him.

"Oh hello! You must be Levi!" He finally found what he was looking for, only to cut himself off mid sentence and glance up as a familiar scent assailed him.

"Hello, Historia Reiss? I'm here to-" Eren. This fucking Omega smelled like Eren, and he found himself growling and baring his teeth. It was not a strong smell, fading and overpowered by that of another Alpha on her skin, and she had the bonding marks at her throat and wrists, proclaiming her a taken Omega. Still, underneath the scent of her Alpha he could smell his own and he was making bestial sounds now, hair falling into his eyes as he took an aggressive step forward. Her own gaze shot wide, and she took a few deep breaths before realization painted across her features. He was biting out hostile words, unable to get his shit together, even in the face of her obvious terror. "You smell like Eren." The Omega was throwing her hands up in a submissive gesture, eyes on the ground, taking a slow, fearful step backwards. She did not want to flee, instinctively treating Levi as an Alpha, not wanting to incite a chase.

"Not as much as you do! Holy shit. H-he never even touched me, I swear! He rubbed his scent on a handkerchief so I could use it to mark myself to keep other Alphas away when I was almost in heat, before I decided to let my Alpha seal the bond with me! E-Eren's my friend, but that's all!" Levi's eyes narrowed on the red streaks across her throat and wrists, just over her scent glands, and tried to reason with the Omega inside him. Eren had none of those marks, and his own scent was fading, almost undetectable. He tried to drill these facts into his mind, tried to take a step back from this frightened girl. That ancient part of himself was having none of it. Levi was moving forward, backing her into the wall next to her door, growl growing viciously loud.

"You smell like Eren." His words were a hiss, and he was so close he could feel her panicked breaths on his face.

"Back off, Omega. I don't want your Alpha, I have my own." She was still afraid, he could smell it in her scent, and her eyes were on the ground, but those words were fierce and unyielding. It was not enough to quell his Omegas internal fury. Eren's scent on her throat. Eren's scent on her wrists. She smells like my Alpha. Mine. Mine. Suddenly she jerked her knee up, trying to land it in Levi's gut. He blocked it without even trying, and then his arm was up by his face to keep her right hand from impacting into his jaw. All at once he came back to himself, like a cloud clearing from his vision. An Omega was trying to fight him, because he was a threat. Suddenly he was dropping his clipboard and flying out of her house, standing in her yard, leaning over with his hands on his knees as he tried to calm his breathing.

"Fuck, I'm so sorry! Shit. Fuck!" Levi felt nauseated. He'd backed an Omega into a corner, growling and hissing like a fucking animal, because she had smelled like Eren. Ready to force her to submit, ready to shove her to the ground and listen to her beg for his mercy.
If that did not tell Levi exactly how he felt about his Alpha, nothing ever would.

Historia made her way outside, looking at Levi with curiosity in her gaze, voice soft and sympathetic.

"So, ah... they said Eren had found himself an Omega that he was chasing after like a lovesick idiot. I didn't really believe them, but I'm going to go out on a limb here and guess that's you?" Levi stood up, running his hands through his hair and popping his jaw, trying to get himself fully in control before he brought his eyes up to meet hers. Finally he looked up at the blonde and nodded, not sure what else to say. Sorry I tried to eat you, let's be friends? Levi was such an asshole. "Hey, it's okay, no harm done. But they made it sound like you weren't all that interested in our boy. Like he didn't have a chance in hell, said you ran off like a one night stand. Seems they were wrong. You appear to be fairly... attached, if I could say that."

"Fuck. Your friends talk a lot." She just smirked, glancing at Levi in her yard, hair sticking up a dozen directions where he'd tugged at it, looking wild and ragged.

"They certainly do. Come inside, you're obligated to sign off on me now that you tried to tear my throat out, right?" Levi sighed, defeated, and followed Historia into her house, picking up his paperwork where he'd flung it down as he made his way to her couch. If he thought that was the end of his embarrassment, the Omega was sorely mistaken. "You smell so much like Jaeger I keep expecting him to walk around the corner or something. You and Eren, huh?" Levi ran his hands through his hair, trying to smooth it down as he shrugged.

"Yeah, I guess so." The blonde looked at Levi like he was an idiot before she burst out laughing.

"You guess so? You were about to attack me, even with my Alpha's marks on my throat, just because you could smell the tiniest little bit of his scent on me. No one else but my Alpha and Eren's Omega would be able to smell it at all. 'You guess so'. Pffft. You've got it bad, my friend." She was right, and he knew it. Levi sat back into her couch and just laughed. He liked this Omega.

"Shit, I do. I'm not good with all this. I feel like an idiot right now." The blonde eyed him with that knowing grin, eyes dancing with mischief.

"So, did you really walk-of-shame it and leave the morning after your heat was over while he was still sleeping?" Levi sighed, rubbing his hands up and down over his face as he nodded again.

"Yes, in fact, I did. Word travels fast I suppose."

"Normally, not so much. But this is Eren. We were all pretty sure he would go to his grave unmated, and then all of a sudden all anyone hears from him is 'Levi, Levi, Levi'. When they told me who was coming to sign off on my foster application today, I thought there was no way it could be the same Omega. Guess I was wrong." She giggled before continuing. "Can't believe you snuck out on him, though, that's cold. Eren's like a fucking teddy bear, I didn't know an Omega could be so cruel."

"Fuck, I know, Jesus. I fucked up, shoot me already. Between you and my friends I can't catch a break." Historia just shrugged.

"Maybe you don't need a break. Maybe you need some good old fashioned harassment. I don't know you, and I don't know anything about you, but I know Eren, and you'd be stupid to run away from him. I've got my own Alpha, and I like the ladies anyway, but you won't find another one like Eren."

Levi frowned before turning to his paperwork and filling out all the necessary information. He handed it over to the blonde, pointing to the place she needed to sign.
"I'm starting to figure that out. Sign here, and the OSC will contact you when they have an Omega that needs temporary housing in the area. Your Alpha doesn't live here, correct?" Historia shook her head as she signed and initialed all the appropriate boxes.

"Nah. It'll still be some time before we do that. I'm... I guess I'm difficult? That's what everyone tells me." She grinned at Levi, a conspiratorial look. "But shit, who am I talking to? You understand."

He did. Fuck, he really did. Levi left soon after that and headed for Eren's, even more of a mess than he was before. Despite all his uncertainty, just the thought of seeing the Alpha had the Omega inside him relaxing. He would get to smell that scent firsthand, instead of lingering on some foreign Omega's skin. See those bright green eyes. Touch that smooth, tanned flesh. Eren's presence soothed him, even from miles away. And Levi was beginning to realize that it did not matter what Eren had to tell him.

Whatever it was, he could take it. Levi of all people could handle a little darkness, and he could be honest now, at least with himself. He wanted that Alpha for his own.
Warning. Things get seriously dark here. There are mentions of underage non-con and the violent sexual victimization of children. There is nothing graphic or descriptive as far as those things go, it is all brief and only mentioned in passing, but it is there. This chapter is also fairly brutal, as far as gore and violence are concerned.

Bloody, and dark, and pretty fucked up. Just giving you guys a heads up. I'm sorry if it upsets any of you guys, I don't want to trigger anyone.

Anytime Hange found something truly interesting, it started out with a shortness of breath as excitement began to swell inside. Then her heart started beating faster, fluttering in her chest like a teenager with a crush.

To Hange, revelation felt a lot like love.

As pieces fell into place, mind ten steps ahead of itself, she felt giddiness shoot through her. Thoughts not even fully forming before they were developing, mutating, evolving into answers for questions she had not even asked.

Hange was staring at her computer in awe, alternating between a page full of numbers and a real time feed coming from her microscope displayed in the corner of the screen. There were things in Eren's blood she had never seen before, hormones and chemicals that were inactive, dormant. Waiting for the right catalyst. Hange was sure if she could get a sample from the Alpha's glands, she would find it there, ready to erupt and set off a chain reaction in his blood. Ready to awaken the beast inside, not just his inner Alpha, but something more. The Beta had examined the chemical structures for hours, days, pouring over data, and the more she learned, the more sure she was about her theory. Legends and folklore crawling out of the pages of history to spin across her mind. In every myth, there is a grain of truth.

The Bloodlust was real, and it was laying in wait inside of Eren Jaeger.

Erwin sat in what he had decided must be a deliberately uncomfortable chair outside of Dot Pixis' office, waiting for the commander to finish meeting with another of his coworkers. Pixis spent his days behind a desk instead of in the field these days, but that made the Alpha no less fearsome. It had been many years since he'd seen his former officer, and Erwin was honestly surprised the man was still in uniform.

The blonde may have been physically in the room, but his mind was a hundred miles away. Someone was hacking OSC files, and that was troublesome enough by itself, but the information being targeted was not what he would have expected it to be. Normally the endangered files were for past raids, attempting to figure out their operating procedures, or guess where they were going to hit next. Tech savvy underground leaders trying to stay a step ahead of their strike teams. This time, it
was nothing so typical. Someone was digging into personnel information, and not just for anyone, but the Omegas specifically. When their systems were invaded, it left a footprint in the code. Even when they could not determine who it was, if you were smart enough you could figure out what they'd been looking at.

Someone had accessed Levi's file. Where he worked, where he lived, all his data. Erwin was on his way home in the passenger seat of Hange's car after fighting Eren when his phone rang, one of the network security people who worked for him calling to tell him about the breach. Once he'd been briefed on what happened, dark suspicion began to scratch around his mind. The main investigation the blonde was working on at the moment were the very people responsible for the fighting ring that Levi had been held prisoner by. Those few Alphas who'd managed to slip through their fingers all those years ago starting back up from scratch. All their intel pointed to one of the pit bosses who had not been present at the raid that freed his Omega friend, but they could not manage to pin down a location for their current activities. They'd been burned before, and had learned caution from their mistakes.

It was like a venomous snake slithering around in Erwin's house, and every time he tried to snatch it up it disappeared into the woodwork.

The same people who had kept Levi captive were lurking in the shadows again. Someone was breaking into the Omega's files in the OSC's network. An unknown Alpha had appeared at the Omega refuge to snatch Levi up, taking him home to mate. Erwin was not lying when he said he wanted Eren Jaeger for the OSC's team, because if the Alpha checked out, he would be incredibly valuable. Then the blonde had gotten those Recon files, black lines and blank pages, telling him nothing. Raising questions instead of answering them.

Erwin did not like it.

He wanted to station agents outside of the Omega's house, but he needed to talk to Levi about it first. When he suggested this to Levi, the Omega would rip him to shreds, but Erwin would rather he be free to do so and not chained in a cage underground. Forced to take lives in order to live himself. Treated worse than an animal.

The door to Pixis' office swung open, snapping Erwin out of his reverie as the man said his farewells to a colleague. When the commander's eyes fell on the blonde, instead of a smile in greeting, for the first time ever all he got was a scowl as Pixis motioned him inside. Erwin had not told the Dot the reason he wanted to meet him today, but he'd clearly found out somehow and was not pleased. The blonde sat down in the chair in front of his desk, brows furrowed as his former superior also took a seat, steelping his fingers and eying Erwin with barely veiled hostility.

"It's been awhile, Erwin. You've been well, I hear. Succeeding quite admirably in the OSC. Kicking in doors and putting away pit bosses and Omega slavers." Erwin just shrugged. "I do what I can." Pixis shot him a glare before continuing.

"Except now you're stirring up shit that's best left alone. I got a call from Eren, telling me I'd be hearing from you. Saying you were digging into his service record." Erwin felt himself withering under this old Alpha's stare.

"I'm just trying to vet an employee, double check everything. When I ordered his records and instead of an email with all his information I get a file delivered to my door, all blacked out, it raises a few questions. None of which he or his former captain seemed too keen on answering. He told me to ask you. Said that you might be able to enlighten me." The older man just sighed heavily, leaning back in his chair.
"Didn't you think maybe there was a reason it was taken off record? You've always been like this, needing to know everything, no matter the consequence. The fact that those paper files exist at all is a clerical error. Should've been incinerated when the rest of his electronic records were deleted. Now, if that boy hadn't called me and told me he was interested in working with you guys, I would be telling you to go fuck yourself right now." Erwin couldn't bite back a smile.

"You and Zacharius are strangely in tune. When I talked to him, he told me the same thing. Albeit in a more colorful, creative manner." Pixis did not smile, did not laugh. Just stared at the blonde until he wanted to disappear. The stare of an Alpha who had looked at Erwin before and demanded his perfect obedience. One he had yielded to time and time again, and he was fighting the urge to tilt his head, expose his neck in submission.

"I bet he did. Eren saved his life, more than once. Saved all their lives. Four of those Alphas who work at the dojo served in the same unit as Jaeger, and they owe him every breath. Each day they wake up in the morning is because of him. But that's not what's blacked out in those pages. I was not there when all this happened, but Zacharius was, and he and Eren's squad told me everything. Jaeger had been serving in Recon since he was sixteen, in active combat since eighteen, and when they sent him in with the troops to help put down the genocide, he was twenty. He rotated home a couple of times, but other than that he was there for two years before.... before his unit was discharged." Erwin interrupted, and it earned him a sharp glare.

"You mean before he was discharged." Pixis shook his head.

"There were two teams serving under Zacharius present at the time of the incident. Eren's team and one other. Jaeger's entire squad was discharged, down to a man. Five soldiers. Wouldn't fight without him even after he recovered, put down their weapons and dug in. The genocide had already been pretty much quelled, only a few straggling cells of guerillas here and there hanging on. After what happened.... they were done. Mike, too." The old Alpha sighed again. "Enough bullshitting. I'd like to be done with this. Life in Trost is a lot different from here, they're a third world country, incredibly unstable with a large percentage of their people living in squalor and poverty, even before the genocide." He paused, and it was clear he did not want to continue, but he pulled the words from his mouth anyway. Spat them out as though they tasted foul. Like just saying them had somehow gotten him dirty.

"Do you know what a Breakers' Den is, Erwin?"

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Eren spent the better part of Monday running himself ragged on his treadmill. Lifting weights until his arms felt like they would fall off. Punching his heavy bag until his fists were sore. Mikasa always scolded him for doing that, working out until he was falling apart anytime his emotions started to get the better of him. She told him he didn't always need to be in control of what he felt, as long as he could control what he did. The line between those two things was thin inside of him, blurry and dangerous. The first time Eren had given in fully to his instincts and emotions had ended in screams and bloodshed.

The second time his Omega had fled from him, covered in bruises and bite marks. Barely able to walk, but he managed to run from Eren all the same.

When he was near collapse he finally stopped and sat down, but it was only five minutes before he accepted that it was not going to work. The Alpha could not sit still, mind twisting through shadows of his past, terrified that today was the last time he would ever see his Omega. He had spent the last
week thinking of nothing but Levi. His voice and his skin and his face. That fierce scowl, raven hair falling in his eyes.

The way that glower vanished so entirely when Eren's mouth was on him, dissipating into something achy and needful. *Oh, God....*

He could not fucking sit here getting hard thinking of Levi. The Omega would be able to smell it in the air if he kept this up, and Eren was going to have a hard enough time forming words as it was. So he started cleaning his house top to bottom, despite the fact that it was already pretty much spotless. The Alpha left his bedroom alone, not wanted to overpower Levi's fading scent with the smell of chemicals and disinfectant, but nothing else was safe. Eren sprayed down his kitchen counters and stove, wiping the nonexistent dirt from them. Swept and mopped his floors. Dusted every surface. Worked like a maniac for an hour before he realized that Levi would be there soon and jumped in the shower to wash the sweat and filth from his skin. When he was dressed and dry with nothing else to do but wait for the Omega, his nerves began to act up in earnest.

Was he really going to do this? Tell Levi what he had done? Just the thought of looking his Omega in the eyes and pouring those dark words out made his stomach turn. If the Alpha had managed to eat anything all day, he would have been losing it right then as rampant nausea rolled through him. He could not back out now, though, not without Levi knowing he was hiding something from him. But Eren had never told anyone this story, rarely even talked about it with his friends who had been there. Fuck knows Jean, Mikasa, and Mike didn't want to discuss it if there was any way to avoid the topic. His friends could only tell Eren he had done nothing wrong so many times before it all turned into so much static in his ears. After they had returned to Shiganshina and settled back into life, they'd probably brought it up less than a dozen times between the lot of them over the past four years. Reiner had gotten drunk once and told Eren he could still hear them screaming in his dreams.

They didn't spend a lot of time together outside of work after that. Neither one could look the other in the eye.

The Alpha's mind was in a dark place when he heard a car pull up in his driveway, and he leaned over and put his head between his knees, trying to calm his breathing. *It's now or never, Jaeger. Tell him or let him go.* The thought alone was enough to have him growling at himself. As if he could let this Omega go without a fight.

Eren got up and stood at the door with his hand on the knob, waiting like a psychopath for Levi to knock. When the Omega's fist sounded out against the wood, the Alpha did not open it right away. Leaned into it, pressing his forehead against the smooth surface. Felt the pull of the Omega on the other side, just as he had that first day in the shelter. A whole new kind of gravity that tugged him not down to the earth but straight towards Levi. The laws of the universe shifting to bring them closer together, and Eren could not resist their inevitability. He turned the knob and opened the door to take in the scent and sight of his Omega. Levi smelled so fucking good, for a moment all the Alpha could do was breathe as he looked the Omega up and down. Dark hair, dark eyes, so much aggression packed into his lithe little frame. That molten gaze sparked at the Alpha, and he knew he was staring, but he made no move to stop. Eren wanted to pull Levi into his chest, but he wasn't sure how the Omega would react. There was tension in the air between them so thick he could feel it in his lungs. Levi muttered a curse, low and barely intelligible.

"Fuck it."

Then the Omega took a step forward and threw his arms around the Alpha, burying his face in Eren's throat and breathing his scent in deep. The Alpha whined with need, and for long moments he was frozen in disbelief, unable to accept that Levi had willingly sought out his touch. He snapped out of
his daze very quickly, and then he was hugging the Omega tight, rubbing his cheek back and forth in those raven strands, fingers clinging to the back of Levi's shirt. Eren groaned involuntarily now, because there was nothing so perfect as having this perfect Omega pressed against him. Never in a million years did the Alpha think he would open his door and have Levi throwing himself into his arms.

"Shit. I missed you, Levi." The understatement of the millennia. Eren had ached for this, a physical pain when he lay down to sleep at night without Levi next to him. The Alpha within him did not understand why his Omega was not there, howled with fury and loneliness anytime he got still and quiet. The Omega kept his face tucked into Eren's neck, breath hot on the brunette's skin as he spoke.

"You're stupid. I'm the one who called you. If you missed me so much you have a shitty way of showing it." Eren laughed, and he felt Levi relax into him at the sound. Wanted the Omega to melt even further, to go pliable and soft under his touch. Boneless and willing and open.

"I guess I do." The Omega finally eased back from their embrace, cheeks with the faintest hint of a blush as he moved to sit down on Eren's couch. The Alpha closed to door and sat down beside him, close enough to feel Levi's heat but not quite touching him. "After talking to Erwin, I kind of got lost in my head. Knew I needed to talk to you but didn't know what to say." Eren went quiet, and he didn't meet Levi's gaze. The Omega furrowed his brows, waiting for the Alpha to speak. When he stayed silent for long minutes, the Omega finally prodded him.

"You know what you want to say now?" Eren shook his head, burying it in his head and tugging at those messy locks.

"Not what I want to say, but what I need to tell you, I guess. If I want you to be my mate, if I'm going to ask you to, then you should know. Something I did four years ago in Trost when I was serving in the Recon Corps during the genocide. Something I should regret."

"But you don't regret it?" Those eyes shot up to meet Levi's now, bright gold as he shook his head.

"No. I don't." He was begging the Omega without words, but Levi did not know what for. Eren wasn't sure he knew, either.

"Then it can't be that bad, right?" Eren laughed, a crazed sound, and this time the Omega inside Levi did not relax. It trembled.

"I was a squad leader underneath Captain Zacharius. He's retired now, owns Titan Dojo, where I work. We had two four-man teams underneath Mike's supervision, mine and one other. Me, my adopted sister Mikasa, and two others. Jean and Reiner. We were chasing down a hand full of guerillas responsible for burning down an orphanage full of ethnic Trostian children. They managed to get the kids out in time, but the Alphas who'd set it on fire escaped. They didn't know we were following them, and we trailed them through the woods, hoping they would lead us to their stronghold. Our superiors had intelligence that it was somewhere in the area, and it was our mission to track it down and infiltrate it. Strictly information gathering, we were ordered not to engage. But when we finally caught up to them, it wasn't any guerilla stronghold. They'd gone straight to a Breakers' Den to shelter for the night."

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Then
Eren’s squad was about fifty yards away from the warehouse, hidden downwind in a stand of trees, watching as the three Alphas they’d been tracking disappeared inside the building. Eren crouched just behind some brush, Jean next to him, Reiner on the other side as Mikasa kept an eye on their surroundings, making sure they were not ambushed. There was no way this sprawling warehouse was the guerillas headquarters, it was far too large to be housing for thirty or so ragtag enemy soldiers. A squawk sounded out in Eren’s ear before Mike’s voice poured out of the earpiece. The squad listened to their Captain as a van pulled up to the building before them and a couple of Alphas jumped out.

"Osmia to Hunter, do you copy?" There were no names used over combat channels, only call signs. Mike was ‘Osmia’. Eren was ‘Hunter’. Jean was ‘Pony’. To say he was less than pleased with his call sign was an understatement. Eren pulled his mouthpiece over towards his lips, tapping on it before he spoke.

"Hunter here, I read you loud and clear. What do we have? This isn't any guerilla outpost."

"Intel says that isn't our target. Supposedly their HQ is around 2 kilometers somewhere southeast of your current location."

"What the fuck are we looking at? This is the middle of nowhere." Down below where the vehicle had arrived, the Alphas were opening the back doors of the van and tugging out small, writhing figures. Eren narrowed his eyes as he looked at them. They were children, had to be, no older than twelve or so. The Alphas were not gentle with them, throwing them on the ground roughly, one after another. Then Eren caught a scent that had him freezing in place, chest going tight. These children were Omegas in their first heat, far too young to incite any lust in an Alpha but old enough for their bodies to start preparing them for what was to come in the future. Nature was not so cruel as to make a child experience the rampant waves of raw need when they were not physically or emotionally ready for such a thing. The Omegas would not produce pheromones for many years, but they still went into the cycle, got a fever. Sore muscles, headaches, the shakes. The first few years it would only last a couple of days, increasing in duration and strength until they went into their first full fledged heat at sixteen or so. Why would these Alphas be at a warehouse miles away from anything, tossing young Omegas who were in their first heat around like chattel?

"Our Trost contact says it's an Omega brothel, a Breakers' Den. Check your perimeter and move out, we need to reach that outpost in the next hour before they change guards." Eren was not listening, was watching the scene play out in front of him instead, mind processing what the Captain had said.

_A Breaker's Den._

If an Omega was mated during their first heat, and mated brutally enough, they would almost always be rendered infertile. Their bodies were not meant to be subjected to such a thing, and it destroyed them inside in more ways than one. In a place like Trost where birth control for Omegas was almost nonexistent, slavers were desperate to keep their prisoners from becoming pregnant. Not many Alphas wanted to pay to fuck a pregnant whore, nor were they eager to feed and care for their children. So in Trost, when slavers found an Omega that had not gone into a heat yet, they took them to places like this.

Sold off these children to the highest bidder so they could be mated during their first heat. Break them, so they would never be able to create life, as Omegas were born to do. Take away an innate part of their being. It took a special kind of monster to do what these Alphas and Betas did, reject their protective instincts and hurt Omega children in such a way. Eren's vision was already shaded in crimson, fists clenching, jaw going so tight his teeth began to groan.
Then one of the Alphas pulled a little blonde boy out of the van, and all the air inside of Eren was pulled out at once, leaving him empty and hollow.

"Armin." The Omega that was being tossed to the ground and kicked looked just like Armin. Bright gold hair mushrooming around his head, small and frail, it could have been the Omega himself as a child. Eren had touched that hair, heard that laugh. Now he listened to an anguished cry as they rained down blows on the boy. The Alpha's voice was a whisper, barely audible, but Jean picked it up.

"Eren, that's not him. Armin's back home. Let's get to their HQ and get this done so we can regroup and get ready kick in their doors. It's time to move out. This isn't our objective."

"Armin." Jean grabbed Eren's arm, trying to get his attention, but the Alpha pulled free.

"Squad Leader. Let's move out."

Something snapped inside of Eren, reason and logic fleeing his mind in a wave. All that he was shoved underneath the bright red hatred that was flowing through him. He was dropping his weapon, all of his gear, moving forward out of hiding with a vicious growl pouring from his throat. Just before he stepped clear of the trees Jean managed to snag his arm again, and when Eren turned his head to snarl the other Alpha went deathly still. It was not green eyes that met him, or even bright gold. Eren's irises were blood red, glowing with ethereal light, and when he bared his teeth at his squad there was nothing any of them could do but submit. They fell to their knees at once, throats exposed, gazes locked on the ground. Trembling in the face of his fury. The soldiers were already used to obeying their superiors order, but this was not Eren anymore. This was something primitive and ancient, not a man but a beast. A monster. Once they had offered themselves up, Eren was flying towards the warehouse, and those Alphas barely had a chance to look up when he was on them.

Their throats were torn out before they could even blink, and the Alphas stood there in shock as their lifeblood poured out. After that they were falling to the ground with a thud. Then Eren was moving, red eyes shining in the darkness, and he was vengeance made flesh. He came upon Alpha after Alpha and left them behind in pieces. Limbs scattered across hallways. Blood pooling underneath severed heads. Gore spreading out from torn stomachs.

Broken and savaged and eviscerated. Bled and severed and destroyed.

Those Alphas who he caught in the act of brutalizing an Omega suffered even more. Eren wrenched their jawbones from their skulls. Buried his thumbs in their eye sockets. Felt them go still under his hands and roared out in victory before moving on. A few of them tried to speak, tried to reason with him, but Eren was not listening.

When they attempted to talk their way out of it, the Alpha cut out their tongues with fingers that were now more like claws. Their screams were wet and full of terror, and Eren felt himself swelling with primal joy. Each pair of eyes that went glazed and unseeing, each heartbeat that stuttered and went out, each final breath that was gasped from desperate lungs was a masterpiece. The finest art. The most beautiful music.

Perfect and right and destined. Fate wrung out from his hands and painted onto this miserable world in a thousand shades of red.

Eren finally found himself in a filthy basement, and he knew somehow that they were all dead. His duty complete, his mission accomplished. He had not been counting, but there were dozens upon
dozens of dead in his wake. After vomiting up a good deal of blood, the Alpha collapsed into the floor, panting and exhausted. Something was still not right, though. The Alpha was not really in control, was still watching himself from some corner of his mind. Ruled by instinct and not reason, and he wondered if he would ever go back home.

Then little blonde Omega children crept out from the corner they were hiding in, looking at Eren like a savior. They approached warily, but their steps were unceasing, and when they drew close enough they crawled into his arms. He reached out to stroke their shining hair, streaking it with filth, and when they spoke to him in soft, small voices that sounded like wind chimes, Eren was broken inside all over again.

"Avanik na Alta." Eren did not speak Trostian, but he understood those words. Thank you, Alpha.

The Omegas were asleep when his men finally found him there, rocking them and mumbling incoherently.

His eyes had still been glowing red, and when they shot him with a tranquilizer the children he'd been holding wailed for hours, thinking their savior was dead.
Pixis stopped talking for a moment, lost in his own thoughts and memories of what had come next. Both Jaeger's own squad and the other men serving under Zacharius had found him. Those not in Eren's unit had wanted to put him down then and there, thinking he'd totally lost it. His squad had darted him and when the others still tried to put a bullet in the Alpha, they'd fought them into submission until Mike could arrive. Eren did not stay under the influence of the tranquilizer for as long as he should have, shrugging off its effect quickly and waking up in a rage, searching for the Omegas he'd saved. They were long gone, moved to protective custody while he had been put in a Recon hospital for observation. His eyes were still glowing blood red, and any Alpha who was not a member of his squad or Captain Zacharius was met with growls and aggression. Finally when it could not be determined what was wrong, and restraining him became problematic, they'd moved him to the Omega hospital in Shiganshina for more advanced testing. He would not eat, would not speak, and dropped in and out of a coma-like sleep state. The only sounds he made were snarls and growling, the occasional hiss. There were strange hormones in his blood that no one had ever seen before, but all their tests and lab work came up empty as far as a cure was concerned. Pixis could remember that first day he'd gone to visit like it was yesterday. When he'd told them who he was visiting, they asked three different times how well he knew Eren, and told him he could visit 'at his own risk'. Made him sign a waiver releasing the hospital from any liability.

He'd entered Eren's room only to stop short at the sight of a dozen Omegas packed inside it with him, all wearing pajamas or hospital gowns, each one of them a patient. Some of them were trailing IV hookups. There were three of them curled up on the bed with the unconscious Alpha, one on each side, another at his feet like a cat. The two chairs in the room were both occupied, a pair of Omegas pressed together in each one sleeping. The rest were piled in the floor, as close to Eren's bed as they could get, pillows shoved under their heads, thin blankets covering them. When he walked in they all roused in unison, and as Eren started to growl at his presence they began eying him with blatant hostility. Bared their teeth at him, standing up and looking as though they would pounce. Ready to attack him. Then he'd muttered some kind of greeting to the sick, comatose Alpha, and when Eren's growls eased back, so did the Omegas. Returning to their positions as though they hadn't just been about to dogpile one of the most dominant Alphas around to protect Eren. An Alpha they did not even know, with bright red eyes and claws for nails.

One of the nurses came to take his temperature and blood pressure, and did not even react to the mass of Omegas in the room. Shuffled around them as though it was the most natural thing in the world. When Pixis asked what they were doing, she just shrugged.

"We can't keep them out no matter what we do. They come in here first chance they get. When we locked the door, one of them picked it. If we try to make them leave they get incredibly upset. One of them had a panic attack, another got violent, and so now we just make them take turns. There wouldn't be anyplace to walk if we let them all in at once. They were piled out into the hallway at first, every Omega on the entire floor trying to cram themselves into his room. When they're near that Alpha, it's like they don't recognize anyone else. Ask them why, and they say, 'He needs us, and we need him.' God help us all if they try to send over an Alpha doctor to look at him. That poor bastard barely got out alive. I've never seen Omegas act aggressively like that towards an Alpha. Some weird stuff going on with this one. I'll be glad when they discharge him, if we can ever figure out what's wrong."

Each time Pixis had come to see the kid, it had been the same. Omegas everywhere, sleeping in his bed, changing his sheets, combing his hair. Putting lip balm on his chapped mouth, ever careful with his IV and feeding tubes. Looking at every Beta or Alpha who visited as though they were a threat.
It was eerie as fuck, a room full of what were normally passive, submissive creatures ready to turn on someone at the drop of a hat. He'd never seen anything like it in his entire life, before or since. The situation was made even stranger when he finally went back to normal and it all stopped, none of the Omegas thinking there was anything unusual about their behavior, as though they'd been in a trance the whole time. Erwin shook him out of his reverie with a question.

"What happened after that? After you tranquilized him?"

"When he woke up he was still red-eyed, aggressive. Nails sharp like claws, teeth too long. Fuck, it was bizarre. Couldn't be kept around Alphas he didn't know without being physically restrained, which was no easy feat. Eventually he was transferred to Shiganshina Omega hospital. Being around Omegas seemed to calm him. They did every test you could think of, found all sorts of strangeness in his blood, hormones, chemicals, substances that were like adrenaline and endorphins, but none anyone had ever seen before. No one could figure out how to fix it. Then one day he just snapped out of it." Erwin frowned, brows furrowed.

"Snapped out of it? Out of nowhere?" Pixis shrugged.

"Mike said he was pushing him down the hall in a specialized wheelchair to let him get some sun, wouldn't have him 'rotting away in a hospital bed' even if he was comatose. He was passing by some random Omega who was coming out of surgery and he reached out and grabbed his wrist, mumbled something, snapped his eyes open. Sliced that Omegas arm up pretty good with those nails of his. We caught a bunch of shit for it, an Alpha hurting a post-op Omega in their hospital. His eyes went back to normal and he passed out again. Woke up a day or so later, totally normal. Remembered everything that happened in Trost, but didn't know how he'd gotten to Shiganshina. They released him a week later when it was clear he was out of the woods. Discharged him from the Recon Corps, and he wasn't exactly happy about it, but he didn't complain. I don't think he trusted himself in a combat situation anymore, worried he'd lose control like he did then. Mike and the rest of his squad requested discharge too, were granted it on psychological grounds, although none of that was put in their paperwork. Zacharius had a brother who'd been running their family's dojo, and Mike took over as soon as he was out of uniform. Eren and his crew have been working there ever since. The Recon Corps kept this quiet, and you can understand why. Nine dead guerillas along with forty-six dead civilians brutally executed, many of whom were 'upstanding members of their community'." Pixis scoffed, making a disgusted face. "Their communities are better off without them. Anyway, we ended clearing out the entire squad's files, plus Mike's, all five of them. Made sure there was no evidence to put any of them at the scene, and silenced any unhappy Trostians whose piece of shit family members were gone with a mixture of money and the threat of violence. I'm not saying it was the right thing to do, but it was better than the alternatives. And in the four years that has passed since then, I haven't heard a fucking word about it, not since we finished cleaning up the mess. Until now, since you can't seem to keep your nose out of other people's business."

"I can understand why the Corps wanted to keep this under wraps, but why would Jaeger be so defensive about it? He didn't do anything wrong. He didn't deserve to be discharged and blacklisted, he deserves a fucking medal. All the damned medals. Even if he isn't authorized to discuss it, non-disclosure or what have you, he got downright aggressive with me. He could have just told me to call you." Pixis shrugged, leaning back in his seat and looking at Erwin like he was stupid.

"I'm glad you can understand that our boy wasn't out of line in Trost, but from what Eren tells me, you two had a bit of incident before you met in that coffee shop. When the Alpha who, in your eyes, challenged you for your Omega during a heat, shows up a few days later with confidential files and a lot of questions about things that no one is supposed to know about? About fifty-five people you
savagely executed? Might put you on edge just a bit." Erwin rolled his eyes.

"I wasn't challenging him for his Omega." Pixis laughed, finally relaxing a little bit in the face of Erwin's utter lack of a reaction to his story.

"You tried to go into a rutting Alpha's house with an Omega in a red heat inside. One you had a personal relationship with. Not even you are that stupid, Smith."

"Levi is my friend. Nothing more."

"Eren doesn't know you. Didn't know him, really, at the time. You couldn't actually expect him to take it well, but you knew that. Didn't care how he took it at all, is my guess. Bet you thought you'd just steamroll the kid, push past him without breaking a sweat, do what you like and he wouldn't be able to stop you." Pixis laughed again, eyes dancing with mischief. "That's a nice shiner you have there by the way. My boy still has a pretty impressive right hook, I'd gather. Erwin glowered at the old Alpha, the expression losing some of its bite as it came out through the bruises still on his face. Pixis grew serious again, almost sad looking. "I can understand why you might not want Jaeger on your team, but try not to be an asshole when you tell him, if you would. For me, if nothing else." Now Erwin was confused, tilting his head, eyes questioning.

"Why wouldn't I want him on my team?"

"He disobeyed a superior officers direct order, left his squad in the middle of a mission. Abandoned his objective, endangered his team members. Went into some kind of rage state, the nature of which we do not really understand. You can't tell me none of this makes you think twice."

"He did it to save Omegas." Pixis smiled at him like a father proud of his child.

"Yes. He did. And he would do it again." There was something unspoken in the air between them, an agreement that did not require words.

"That's what I'm counting on." Erwin paused, mind working at a thousand miles a minute. "Those medical files, all the testing they did on him, do you still have that data? I have someone who would find it... very interesting." Pixis opened a drawer in his desk and pulled out a huge folder and tossing it on the desk between them.

"I thought you might ask. His name is not in there anywhere, nor is there a summary of the events that took place overseas. Only brief descriptions of the generalized state he was in before he was brought to Shiganshina Omega hospital, and then the testing they performed. All his vitals and such, including some rather bizarre things that happened while he was there four years ago." Four years ago. At Shiganshina Omega hospital. Erwin felt his world spinning, shrinking down, not a vast place anymore but something small and stifling.

"Four years ago. You said he woke up after scratching an Omega? When was this? Do you know the date?" Pixis frowned at Erwin, not really understanding why it mattered.

"I only remember because it was Christmas."

Pixis might have kept talking, but Erwin wasn't listening. Was picturing Levi instead, sleeping in a hospital bed at Shiganshina Omega after having emergency surgery four years ago.

Wrist wrapped in bandages where an Alpha had slashed open his skin. On his birthday, no less.

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Eren finished his story when he woke up in the hospital four years ago, no memory of how he got there or what happened after Trost. The Alpha was staring at Levi, willing him to say something, anything. The Omega was silent, though, brows furrowed as he stared at his hands. Eren had lost sleep over this, it was obvious. Bags under eyes that were rimmed in red, face drawn and exhausted. Levi sighed as he glanced at the Alpha's worn expression.

"So. You didn't want to tell me all of this?" Eren shook his head, looking at his feet now, shoulders drawn up with nerves. "Because you thought I would think less of you?" The Alpha nodded, still not meeting Levi's eyes.

The Omega reached out and slapped him in the side of the head, hard. Eren jerked under the impact, hand coming up to rub at his hair, looking at Levi in confusion.

"If you think I am going to be upset that you killed a few dozen pedophiles who brutally assaulted Omega children, then it makes me wonder what kind of person you think I am. If anything I'm upset that I couldn't watch." The Alpha's eyes went hazy, and he bit his lip before speaking.

"I totally lost control. Couldn't have stopped if I wanted to. Murdered dozens of people, brutally." Levi just shrugged.

"I killed dozens and dozens of Alphas and Betas, and it was not for anything so noble as the defense of children. I just wanted to live, and wanted the others in the harem I was housed in to be safe. Even if I had not been trying to protect fellow Omegas, I would have done it anyway, just to survive. Was it wrong of me to take lives to save my own? Even if they were prisoners just as I was?" Eren was shaking his head, taking Levi's hand as desperate words poured out of his mouth.

"No, Levi, that's not wrong. There's nothing wrong with fighting to survive, with-" Levi cut him off.

"So how. The fuck. Is it wrong of you to take the lives of Alphas who were the literal scum of the fucking earth? Who assaulted children. Rendered little Omegas infertile so they could be assaulted for the rest of their lives without the assholes who kept them enslaved having to worry about dealing with their offspring?" Eren's mouth opened and closed as he struggled to find words.

"I-I.. I don't know, I-" Levi slapped him in the head again, harder than the first time, and Eren cringed under the blow. "Hey-"

"You are a fucking idiot. You should have told me this story to begin with. Romanced me a little."

"It's been four years! I haven't ever told anyone before, I didn't know how! This wasn't easy, Levi."

The Omega just huffed and stood up, walking towards Eren's bedroom and entering without a word. He crawled into the Alpha's bed, and as that heavy scent surrounded him, he sighed in bliss. Eren's smell filled his nose, and his body relaxed into the blankets, melting into the imprint left by his Alpha's sleeping form. The Omega inside of Levi was relaxing too, telling him that this was where they belonged. Where they should stay. Eren's voice cut through the silence, and he cracked his eyes open to see the Alpha standing next to the bed, looking down at Levi with so much affection it made his chest ache.

"What are you doing, Levi?" Levi eyed him wryly.

"Taking a nap. What are you doing?" Eren didn't answer, and Levi rolled his eyes. "Oh my fuck, do I have to write you an invitation? Get in here."
The Omega closed his lids then, but he felt the Alpha crawling into bed behind him, easing under the covers and snuggling in close. Those strong arms wrapped around Levi, and he bit back the satisfied groan that wanted to come out. **Home.** It felt like home, and the Omega waited for fear to creep in at the thought. Waited, and waited, but nothing came. Eren's breath was hot on his neck as he nuzzled into Levi, squeezing so tight that the Omega could not have moved even if he wanted to. The Alpha threw a leg over him, caging him in further. Swallowing him whole. His voice was rough, and it sent shivers down Levi's spine.

"Thank you, Levi."

"Shut up, Eren. Go to sleep."

The Alpha pressed a soft kiss to Levi's neck, and if the Omega whined at the touch, neither of them acknowledged it. Just let sleep take them, truly resting for the first time since they were last wrapped up together. Levi absently traced his fingers over the four faint scars on his wrist as he often did when he was not quite awake.

Thinking nothing of how each time he came out of a heat unmated, they ached.

Kenny was sitting in the makeshift office a few hundred yards away from the holding cells, looking at numbers and names. Alphas they'd captured for the pits, fighters they'd lost in the latest death matches, how many Omegas they'd sold, how much they'd made off each one. Where they were scouting for fresh meat, both Alpha and Omega alike. Things were looking up for now, but they were still not where he wanted them to be. Too close to being in the red for his liking, even after selling off so many Omegas to a nearby Alpha for his harem. A knock sounded out at his door, and as much as he wanted to tell them to fuck off, he could not.

"Come in." One of his underlings was there, and he could not even remember this one's name. Did not even try. Just glared at the man who looked far too pleased with himself until he spoke.

"We got someone into those OSC files, found that Omega you were looking for. Levi Ackerman." The man did not blink at the surname, probably because no one knew it was Kenny's own. He found himself smiling too.

"Where is he?"

"He lives and works in Shiganshina. We have an address." Now Kenny was not sure if he was smiling or baring his teeth, and it did not really matter.

"Go get my two favorite dogs. Tell them I'm sending them out to hunt, but I need to speak with them first."

Kenny thought he could taste blood, but it could just be the memory of it in his mouth. The taste of home.

Of family.
Levi was dragged back to wakefulness with a shrill, repetitive beeping, muffled by the fabric of his pants. The alarm on his phone was going off, informing him that he needed to head to one of his Omega's homes for an evening session. He pawed at his pocket blindly until it was beaten into silence, either snoozed or dismissed, he didn't know which. Didn't care, really. Not when all he could smell or feel or hear was Alpha. Eren's scent in his nose, the Alpha's mouth painting hot breath over his skin. Those strong arms wrapped tightly around him, legs tangled together. The Omega groaned inwardly when he shifted and felt the Alpha's hard length pressing into his ass. Fuck. It took all of his self control not to arch back into Eren, rut against his somnolent erection until he woke up aching for Levi. But it would be too cruel, when the Omega was not truly ready to take responsibility for it. Not yet, anyway. He eased his hips forward a bit, trying to spare Eren some embarrassment when he finally roused himself, only to have the Alpha cling even more tightly to him, growling through his slumber. Mumbling almost incoherently, but there were only two words, and the Omega could make it out.

"Mmmine.... Levi..."

There was something alive in Levi's chest, and it threatened to burst free and sail away into the sky when Eren opened lips and began mouthing at the Omega's scent gland in his sleep. Levi did not think, just tilted his head to expose his throat further, instincts taking over as he submitted to the drowsing Alpha even without words or consciousness. Just his presence behind Levi was enough, the hunger in his kiss, his clutching fingers. The Omega turned towards him to allow Eren better access to that perfect spot on his neck, and the Alpha jerked Levi flush against his body, chests pressed together tightly. Eren's arms coiled around Levi's back, and only when the Omega moaned loudly did he begin to shake off his sleep and start waking. His first response was to bite down on Levi's scent gland, and that sharp Omegan scent seemed to bring him back to awareness. Eren pulled back as though his mouth was burning, eyes wide with horror at what he'd been doing. He did not release Levi, however, just blushed as he looked down at him. The Omega was panting, open mouthed, gray eyes heated. Skin of his throat shining from a mixture of scent and Eren's saliva. So beautiful. Levi met his gaze, getting a savage thrill out of the way those green eyes were blown dark with lust. All he could think was, I am the only one who can do that to him. Just me. Possession rolled through him, as ancient as the Omega inside, and for a moment the urge to spread his thighs apart and tell Eren to bond him was almost overwhelming. The Alpha's apologetic words were enough to shake him out of it, and he was blushing fiercely, as though Eren could read his very thoughts.

"Fuck, Levi, I'm sorry. I didn't mean-" Levi put his hand over Eren's mouth to quiet him and smirked.

"It's fine. I could've stopped you. I didn't." Those green eyes went soft, and he pressed a kiss to Levi's fingertips, breathing in deep. The Omega dropped his hand, letting it rest against Eren's chest between them. The Alpha stared at him for so long Levi started to shift in place, but something kept him from averting his gaze. After awhile Eren groaned, pulling the Omega closer and rubbing his face into those raven strands.

"I want to wake up like this every morning, and go to sleep like this every night." Levi grinned where the Alpha could not see.

"You want to sleep in your jeans? You're fucking weird, Eren." Eren bit the tip of the Omega's ear playfully, either not hearing the whimpering sound he made or ignoring it.
"Smart ass. You know what I mean." Levi rubbed his face into Eren's chest, reveling in just how close he was for a few final moments before sighing.

"I have to go meet with an Omega. She just got transferred from a halfway house into her foster, and she still can't go out on her own much without freaking out. We're going to go grocery shopping and run some errands, see how comfortable she is." Eren pressed a kiss into Levi's hair, and the Omega fought down a shudder.

"I'm jealous. I want to go buy groceries with you." Levi laughed, trying to sit up only to find the Alpha's arms unyielding, holding him tight. Eren's voice was soft but full of gravel when he spoke, a dark whisper. "Just a little longer." Levi's heart stuttered so hard, he thought Eren could probably feel it. He took a few ragged breaths, and his own voice was just as rough.

"You go back to work tomorrow." Eren nodded into his dark locks. "I'm going to come by there after two. Try out the stuff you gave me, see if you're as much of a badass as Hange seems to think you are. If that's okay with you." Levi could hear the smile in his words when he answered, and he pulled back. Needed to see it on Eren's face, and it was just as breathtaking as always.

"That's great. I can't wait. Try to come before five, though, it gets a little crowded after that." Levi's brows furrowed and he cocked his head.

"What does that matter? Will you be busy? Do you have class, or something?" He did not want to disturb Eren at his job if it would be an inconvenience. A shadow passed over the Alpha's face, and his eyes flashed gold for a moment.

"I don't want everyone looking at you. Seeing how perfect you are. Trying to take you from me when you're not even mine yet." Levi did not know what he was going to say until the words were already passed his lips, irretrievable, lost to his mouth.

"Who says I'm not yours?" Now Eren's eyes lit up gold again, light emanating from them to shine on Levi's face, and before the Omega knew what was happening the Alpha was straddling him, rubbing their throats together with barely restrained violence. Eren growled as he scent marked Levi, his throat, his cheeks, his hair. Pulled the Omega's wrists up and bit the glands there before sliding them over his neck. Repeated the process with his own wrists, covering them in the Omega's sweet scent. Eren pulled back to look at Levi, gold-bright stare eating him alive, boring down through the Omega until there were no secrets left inside. He did not sound like a man when he spoke, but a beast. Still, there was a question in his tone.

"Mine?" Levi bit his lip, nodding fiercely, wrists still held in Eren's grasp. The Alpha shook as he leaned down, and Levi thought Eren was going to kiss him. Was going to let him. Would have moaned into that kiss, wanton and full of abandon. Instead Eren pressed their foreheads together and closed his eyes, releasing Levi's wrists to put one hand on either side of the Omega's face, thumb tracing over those pink lips. "Thank you, Levi." Levi reached up, threading his fingers through wild brown hair, and Eren leaned into his touch.

"You keep thanking me when I haven't done anything." When he opened his eyes again they were green, and that smile would put sunrises to shame.

"You've done everything." Levi didn't know what to do in the face of such unabashed praise, so he did what came naturally, which was to mock Eren.

"They're right, you are a lovesick idiot." The Alpha just laughed, finally sitting up and allowing Levi to do the same.
"That's me." Fuck, Eren didn't even care, had absolutely no shame when it came to Levi and that made the Omega ache in places he hadn't known existed. Somewhere between his guts and his chest, tight and sore where this Alpha was shoving himself inside. Levi ran his hands over his hair, trying to tame it down a little as he stood up and headed towards the door, pausing next to it without reaching for the knob. Eren just stared at Levi as though the Omega was going to disappear the second he let him out of his sight.

"I really have to go, but I'll come to the dojo." The Alpha nodded, and Levi opened the door and stepped outside, turning back towards Eren with a furrowed brow. "I'll see you tomorrow, Eren." Eren smiled again, reaching out to take Levi's face in his hands and press a soft kiss on the Omega's cheek. His lips hovered near Levi's skin for long moments, unfettered joy painted over his features. Eventually he dropped his hands, stepping back inside.

"I'll see you tomorrow, Levi."

The Omega drove to his client's house with one hand over that cheek, as though the touch of Eren's lips would blow away in the wind.

Levi finally made it home after accompanying an incredibly skittish Omega on her errands, and after watching the girl jump at every loud noise and cringe every time an Alpha drew close, even he was a little twitchy. By some miracle Hange was not home, still at the lab doing tests on Eren's blood that she seemed determined to keep him apprised of, despite his total lack of interest. He'd eaten and showered before cleaning up the ridiculous mess Hange left in the kitchen that morning. After leaving a profanity laced post it note on the fridge cursing her and her descendants for the next seven generations, Levi was lying in bed. It was incredibly early, barely after nine, but the Omega could not find it in himself to watch TV he wasn't interested in or read the same line of a novel over and over while his mind spun in circles.

Thoughts twisting in his head, nothing but Eren, Eren, Eren. Levi had told the Alpha he was his, and the Omega within him was screaming out the rightness of it. When he thought of Eren straddling his hips, rubbing their throats together as he scent marked him, Levi shot hard in his boxers. Fuck. His Alpha was a work of art, those green eyes gemstone bright, skin tanned and smooth and softer than it had any right to be. Muscles firm and defined, moving underneath Levi's hands in all the right ways. Voice sultry and dark, laced with need as he said Levi's name. The Omega bit his lip, trying to ignore the throbbing of his arousal even as he brought his wrist up to his face and breathed in the Alpha's scent. His Alpha. Perfect and beautiful and strong, and for some reason he wanted Levi. The Omega could not understand. Did not even want to try anymore. Wanted to give in, submit, bare his throat and spread his legs and fucking beg, and there wouldn't be even a trace of shame anywhere in him. Still, when Eren had been so close Levi could taste him, he had not kissed those lips. Held back. Didn't know why. Or maybe he did.

Part of him wanted Eren to just take it, lose himself in Levi and swallow him whole. Yet one of the very things he loved about his Alpha was that iron will, refusing to bend, unwilling to take something Levi had not offered.

Loved?
Levi tried to push the word down, but his instincts would not have it. Swelled up around the very idea, surging and throbbing and potent, love, yes, love. His instincts were not the only thing demanding attention, cock pounding with every beat of his heart, and Levi couldn’t ignore it any longer. Eased the waistband of his boxers down and sprung his arousal, sighing as it shot free of the confines of his clothes. Levi took himself in hand, fisting his length with a shudder as he hissed out profanities.

"Fuck... Shit..."

His mind was full of Eren as he slowly began to stroke, and he realized it was wetter than it should be, slick with precome. Levi let his thoughts have free reign, and he did not have to use his imagination to drive himself further into ecstasy. As he tightened his grip, all he had to do was remember. Eren buried between his thighs, growling into his skin as he savaged him. Those eyes flashing bright as he sank sharp white teeth into Levi’s chest. That voice calling out to Levi, so pretty, so perfect, want you, need you, make you mine...

"Nnggh.. Eren...."

The Omega's wrist flew faster, thumping over his crown and eliciting an embarrassingly high pitched whine. Levi reached down with his free hand to fondle his sack, squeezing and kneading, eyes rolling back into his head as he called up more memories. Eren's mouth covering his face with kisses. The way that carmel skin shone with scent and slick and sweat as he took Levi mercilessly. The feel of Eren’s knot swelling within him, claiming Levi even then. Filling and marking and taking.

"E-Eren.... haah...."

Levi arched off the bed, teeth bared, jaw tensed as he danced on the edge of climax. He wrenched his eyes shut. Eren's fingers buried inside you.

"Mmmpf...."

Heat coiled up in his gut, pressure building at the base of his spine as stars danced behind his lids. Eren's mouth on your cock, tongue licking a stripe up its length.

"Nnggh...."

The Omega was keening now, toes curling as he jacked himself, grip brutal around his shaft. His breath came in broken pants, too hot, not enough air, not finding his lungs inside his chest. Eren’s voice a bestial growl, looking up at Levi, asking, mine?

"Fuck, Eren!"

Levi came in waves, hot fluid arcing out over his stomach, his chest, dripping onto his fingers, leaking down his cock. It was a long time before Levi could see, or think, or breathe, and as he descended back down to earth from blessed euphoria, he could feel the stupid smile on his face. When his phone buzzed he jolted, guilty, as though they knew what he had done somehow. The Omega cleaned himself haphazardly, using his left hand to snag his cell and unlock it so he could read the message.

**Eren: I can't stop thinking about you. Goodnight, Levi.**

Well fuck. Levi glanced at his hand before bursting out into crazed laughter. *That makes two of us.* He texted the Alpha goodnight before curling up in his blankets.

With his nose shoved so far into his wrists, it was a wonder he could breathe.
Resist?

Levi walked into the entryway of Titan Dojo, carrying a small black bag with the shorts and gear that Eren had given him, holding a shining black card in his hand. The Omega was strangely excited to come here, partially due to seeing his Alpha no doubt, but the prospect of actually getting to fight someone after so long had him almost shaking with anticipation. Everyone Levi knew found it strange that he actually wanted to fight after being forced to for so long, but they didn't really understand what it was like. Levi was good at fighting, as though he was born to break his opponents beneath him, his body molded to strike out, punch and kick, roll, evade. Being made to so for years and years did not change the fact that it felt right, resounding somewhere deep within. A strength, wasted in disuse. Other Omegas were not like him, seeking to avoid conflict whenever possible. Most Betas unconsciously took it easy on him, which just frustrated Levi and inevitably left them hurting so much that they did not want to face him again. Alphas wanted to force him to submit, instinctively seeking to watch his eyes drop, his scent change, but not really trying to defeat him. Not in a serious way, everything within the Alphas telling them not to strike but to protect. To claim, even if they were not really interested in the Omega in such a way. Eren wasn't like other Alphas, though, and if anyone could fight their inborn tendencies if would probably be him. Levi eyed the two doors almost suspiciously, one marked 'gym', the other 'dojo'. The Omega must have looked a little lost, because the receptionist was smiling, greeting him in a cheery tone.

"Welcome to Titan Dojo! Did you need some help?" Levi glanced over to her, clearly a Beta by her subdued smell. Her name tag said 'Sasha'.

"I'm looking for Eren." Sasha's eyes darted over his throat, widening a little as she caught Levi's scent, laden heavily with traces of his Alpha. The bruising on the Omega's neck and chest were mostly faded, though the teeth marks were still clearly visible and would be for awhile. Along with the hickey Eren had put there just the previous day, dark and fresh. Seeing an Omega marked up in such a way was nothing unusual, but the way the Beta looked at him, Levi found himself wondering if there was something on his face. Like a third eye, or an extra mouth. He cleared his throat and Sasha shook herself, blinking rapidly a few times before answering.

"H-He's going to be to your left, in the dojo. Do you need a guest pass?" Levi lifted up his card, fairly certain he did not need anything else to gain entry. She nodded, gesturing towards a keypad on the door. "Just swipe it through the reader and it'll open for you. If you have any questions be sure and let us know!"

He muttered his thanks and headed over to the door, sliding the card through and waiting for the light next to the pad to turn green. The lock released with a click and he headed inside, glancing around the room and sniffing the air, the Omega inside him confident he could find his Alpha with his nose alone. Eren was nowhere to be seen, though, even if he could detect the barest traces of his presence lingering in the air. A tall blonde Alpha with a square jaw walked up to him after a minute or so, eyes questioning.

"Can I help you?" Levi looked up at him, dwarfed by his height and hating the Alpha for it.

"Is Eren around?" The Alpha glanced left and right, sniffing just as Levi had.

"Yeah, he's here somewhere, I can... smell him..." Those eyes settled on the Omega, suddenly realizing what he was, and where Eren's scent was coming from. "Holy shit. It's you." Levi's brows furrowed, mouth working faster than his brain.

"Oh my God, it is me, I didn't know. I'm glad we cleared that up." The Alpha was unperturbed by
his sarcasm, looking towards another employee with a grin before calling out to him.

"Jean! C'mere." Jean. One of the people on Eren's old squad had been named Jean, and considering where they were, it had to be this Alpha. Jean approached, closer to brunette with two-toned hair, glaring at the blonde irritably.

"What the fuck do you want, Reiner, I'm busy over." Jean AND Reiner. Levi found himself wondering if Eren's former superior was here somewhere as well, curious to meet the man the Alpha spoke so highly about. One who came closer than anyone else to besting his strength. Jean's nose was twitching, breathing Eren's scent on Levi's skin mixed with his own, and he looked at the Omega and his bite marks and bruises with something like awe. "Oh my God. An Omega looking for Jaeger. I feel like I'm seeing a unicorn, or a leprechaun." A leprechaun? Bad choice of words. Levi glared at the Alphas, and they withered under his stare.

"I feel like I'm seeing two total fucking idiots. I'm worried that you drove yourselves here. Did you tie your own shoes this morning and everything? Shit in the toilet like a big boy?" Reiner was laughing, shoving playfully at Jean, who was looking at Levi with his mouth gaping open before gathering himself.

"Look, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you. I just never thought the day would come where I'd be meeting Jaeger's..." He trailed off, and Levi knew it was because he did not know what to refer to him as. Did not want to piss the man off anymore than he already had by being presumptuous. But the Omega inside Levi was surging up, giving him no quarter, accepting nothing less than truth. Truth and possession.

"His mate."

The two Alphas gazes both went wide, glancing at each other with shock written plainly across their faces. Only then did Levi notice Eren striding towards them, steps faltering as the Omegas words carried to his ears.

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Eren rinsed off in the showers, not washing himself fully but cleaning off the sweat he'd worked up sparring and rolling with one of his clients. Levi would be there soon, and the Alpha was fairly sure that he wouldn't appreciate fighting Eren while the brunette was covered in someone else's bodily fluids. He toweled off and pulled his boxers and shorts on before heading back out into the dojo. When he looked towards the door his breath caught, seeing Levi standing there with Jean and Reiner in front of him, talking in voices too low to him to hear. A growl started to build in his throat at the sight of the two Alphas so close to his Omega, and he forced it down, trying to keep the sound from bubbling out unbidden. They were not a threat, or so Eren told himself as he approached. Reiner and Jean were his friends, and Braun did not even like guys. Still his hands itched to shove them away, and a few steps away their words became clearer.

".....never thought the day would come where I'd be meeting Jaeger's...." Mate. My Mate. Levi wouldn't say that, though, even if was true. Wouldn't claim Eren in front of people he did not know, had just met. Probably would not even say such a thing even to Eren himself. The Alpha opened his mouth to call out to his friends, tell them to stop harassing Levi, when the Omega's voice cut through the air.

"His mate." Eren's chest seized up, feet not wanting to work properly as his eyes met Levi's. Oh, fuck. No one else existed but Eren and Levi, the rest of the world vanishing out of existence as those
two words played over and over in the brunette's mind. Eren wanted to pick up his Omega and carry Levi out of there, press him into a wall and swallow him up. Take his mouth, feel it slick and sliding against his own. Wet, and warm, and willing. Settled for shoving his way through the two Alphas who stood between him and his mate, pulling Levi in for a hug as he glared at his coworkers, baring sharp teeth instinctively. Mine, mine, mine. Jean and Reiner dropped their eyes, heads tilting to the side just slightly as they submitted automatically. Eren shuddered when he felt Levi's arms go around him in turn, felt the Omega's face buried in his chest. Heard Levi breathe in deep, just as he was doing. Taking in the scent of all that was his. Then Levi spoke, pushing Eren back with rough hands that still felt so good on the Alpha's bare skin.

"Tuck your lady parts away, Eren, we're in public." The other Alphas snickered as Eren released Levi, smiling and running his hand through those raven locks, ruffling them lightly. Levi slapped his hand away, glaring at him, but Eren just grinned wider.

"I see you've met Jean and Reiner. I'm truly sorry about that." Levi smirked at them.

"Yeah, me too." Reiner just rolled his eyes, heads tilting to the side just slightly as they submitted automatically.

"Hey! We barely even talked!"

"Yeah, and you managed to call me a leprechaun within the space of three sentences. Excellent people skills you have there. Very impressive." Eren scowled at Jean, who threw his hands in the air in surrender.

"I didn't mean it like that!" Eren made a sound of disapproval before looking back towards Levi and the bag he was carrying.

"So, you wanna go get changed and stretch out a little so we can do this?" The Omega nodded, but Reiner looked confused.

"Wait, so you can do what?" Levi looked at him as though he was stupid, and Eren just started leading the way towards the back of the dojo.

"So we can fight, idiot. Where do you think we are?"

They left the two Alphas gaping at them as the pair disappeared into the locker room. Eren opened his padlock so he could retrieve his gloves and mouthguard, leaving it unlocked for Levi to put his clothes in when he was done changing. Before the Omega had a chance to do anything, however, Eren pressed him into the metal of the bank of lockers, tilting his chin up to meet that molten stare but doing nothing else to restrain him. Giving Levi room to get away, but he was going nowhere. Levi looked up at Eren, heat rolling through the Omega underneath that stare.

"You called me your mate." Levi flushed bright, but his eyes stayed locked on Eren's. Did not drop to the side as so many Omega's would in the face of their Alpha, and Eren was shivering with the rightness of it.

"Yes. Is there a problem with that?" Eren smiled wide, sliding his hand from Levi's chin to clutch the back of his head, scratching at the shorn part of the Omega's undercut.

"Not at all. I love it. Mate. Does that mean I can introduce you to my friends that way and you won't eviscerate me with your teeth?" Levi tisked at the Alpha, shoving him away as he toed off his shoes.

"As if I want your nasty fucking entrails in my mouth." Eren just kept grinning, totally unabashed.

"I'm going to take that as a yes." Levi rolled his eyes, trying to ignore the Alpha's gaze on him and
failing. Trying to ignore just how much he wanted to hear Eren's dark voice directed at his friends and family, saying, *This is Levi, he's my mate.* Snarked at the brunette instead, as he tended to do when he was uncomfortable or lacking confidence.

"Take it however you want." Eren watched Levi start to undress and the Alpha inside him was screaming in response. He reached out to stop Levi with a hand on the Omega's arm, felt his eyes light up gold, and he tried to blink them back to green as Levi glanced over.

"Could you change in one of the shower stalls?" Levi's brows furrowed as he looked at the empty room, glancing at the curtained showers with a frown.

"There's no one in here. It's not like I'm getting naked." Eren took a heaving breath, trying to keep his shit together. Couldn't, not with the knowledge that someone could walk in and see the Omega in nothing but boxers. Even if he would be wearing shorts afterwards, there was something intimate about having just one thin layer of fabric to cover him. Eren let those gold bright eyes shine at Levi, the Alpha within him surging up, strong and unwilling to bend. Unwilling to let another Alpha's gaze fall on his Omega. His *mate.* It sounded so right, even just in his mind, that Eren wanted to howl in triumph.

"Please, Levi." He must have sensed Eren's desperation because he nodded his assent and walked over to one of the showers, stepping behind the black plastic curtain to change. The thought of him half naked behind a such a flimsy barrier had Eren almost growling, clenching his jaw as he waited. When Levi emerged in nothing but loose shorts just like the ones he always wore at work, his breath caught in his throat. "Oh, fuck, this was a terrible idea." Levi scowled, throwing his clothes at the Alpha. The fabric smacked into his face and he caught them with clumsy hands, keeping them from falling to the floor in a heap.

"Why is that?" Eren folded the pants and shirt, piling Levi's stuff into his locker before closing it up and facing the Omega.

"Because they're all going to see you." He stepped forward, putting his hands on Levi's hips, fingers clutching hard, thumbs edging towards his abdomen. "Like this." The Omega flushed, but his expression was wry.

"I think they'll be more interested in how I'm beating the fuck out of you." Eren smirked, not letting go of Levi's hips but tugging him closer. Levi was *right there,* and he'd called Eren his *mate,* and the Alpha was touching him and he was not running away. It felt too good to be true.

"Are you going to be mad at me if I win?" He looked down into those gray eyes that sparked up at him, lust and aggression warring in their depths.

"It will piss me off if I lose, but I'll just be that much more determined to beat you."

"Guess I better win, then, so you'll keep coming around to put your hands on me." Levi grinned now, unable to stop himself from teasing the Alpha.

"I'd do that anyway."

He started walking out of the locker room without another word, feeling the Alpha's stare burning into his back like an open flame.

.............................................................
Eren was glad there weren't very many people in the dojo because as Levi and he stepped up on the mats, every single one of them was gathered around, looking on in shock. They had never seen an Omega in the dojo to actually fight, let alone one who looked like Levi, cut and muscled like an Alpha who shot murderous glares at everyone who looked his way. Daring them to say something he didn't like, whether it be about an Omega in the ring, or his small stature, or the fact he'd proclaimed himself Eren's mate. Levi looked at ease across from him, even though many Alphas could not fight Eren, could not even attempt to do so. Would submit before they stepped into the ring, instincts telling them to run. But the Omega was used to stepping up against Alphas that wanted his blood. Eren supposed it was nothing at all to throw his fists at an Alpha who wanted him for a mate. Eren was fighting his own instincts then, having a hard time dealing with so many Alphas this close to his mate and only when everyone took a generous step backwards did he realize he was growling at them, teeth bared. He glanced over at Levi to find him smirking, pulling his gloves on.

"Down, boy." The Alpha smirked back, eyes dancing with mischief.

"Make me." Levi cocked his head to the side, rolling his shoulders, shaking out his arms.

"With pleasure." Whispers sounded out around them as the Omega put in his mouth piece, but instead of doing the same Eren just stared. Seeing Levi in those shorts, feet bare, wearing gloves and a mouth guard with his eyes promising violence... He fought down a hard on, words falling out his mouth.

"Fuck, you look sexy like that." Levi shot him a look as a few subdued giggles erupted from their audience, most of whom had already heard from Reiner and Jean that this Omega was Eren's mate, but if they hadn't they surely knew now. Eren shrugged, totally unashamed. "Sorry, sorry, don't hit me. Not yet, anyway." Jean interrupted as Eren put in his mouth piece, tugging at his gloves absently.

"Are you guys fucking or fighting?" The brunette flipped him off with both hands and sent a glare his way before looking over to Levi, asking without words if he was ready. The Omega nodded his head, the Alpha doing the same and gesturing towards Jean to initiate the match. "Okay guys. Ready? Fight!"

Jean clapped his hands and Levi became a different person, sinking low with his hands up by his face, feet carrying him forward towards Eren. Levi was beautiful, sleek and lean and totally focused.... The Alpha had to shake himself, bringing his own hands up into a guard as they began circling. The Omega looked predatory, eyes darting around Eren, watching his footwork even as he eased closer. All the Alpha's worries that he wouldn't be able to fight Levi instantly fell away. Eren had expected his instincts to rail against this, tell him it was fundamentally wrong to fight his Omega, to strike out against him with his fists. Instead the Alpha within him seemed to understand that his mate craved this violence. Wanted to be seen not as an Omega that needed protection, but an equal. Someone who could stand with his Alpha and not behind him.

Suddenly his internal musings were cut off as Levi's foot flew towards the side of his head, and Eren ducked underneath it just in time, feeling his hair move under the impact. When he evaded the blow, however, he played right into Levi's hands, an open palm strike straight to the nose. Eren moved back, throwing out a kick of his own just to put some distance between them as he blinked through the sting in his face. Part of his mind was puzzling over Levi's hit. Why open palmed, when a fist did more damage? Even as he wondered, the answer came to him. Levi fought in the pits, for years and years, and Eren doubted they gave the Omega gloves and safety gear for the matches. Noses and jaws and cheekbones were sharper than one would think, and without proper protection a fighter could destroy their hands incredibly quickly smashing them against their opponent's face. He must have learned to save his fists for body shots where there was nothing beneath the flesh to injure the
bones of his fingers. Eren caught the Omega glancing at his gloves, shaking his head as though he'd realized his error.

The Alpha did not have any more time to ponder these things, because Levi was moving in again, fist clenched now as he swung towards Eren's cheek. The brunette blocked the strike, throwing his knee up, seeking Levi's gut and missing as the Omega spun away. Eren was distracted for a moment by the twisting of that lithe body, muscles flexing as he escaped the Alpha's attack. But the Omega did not try to gain any breathing room as most fighters would do after escaping a blow, instead spinning around to throw a reverse elbow at Eren. Levi's movements were fluid, one rolling into the next in a wave, no energy wasted as he tried to bring the Alpha down. Eren moved under Levi's arm to let that elbow sail past and threw a punch of his own. It glanced over the Omega's cheekbones as Levi turned with the force of his missed strike, the hit landing but not doing any real damage. While Levi's body was still moving back to escape Eren's fist the Alpha tripped him, sending the Omega down to the mats.

Eren moved to pounce on him, try and get his hands on that pale skin and force him into a submission hold, but fuck, Levi was fast. Scrambling up to his feet in an instant and looking at Eren like a mother who'd caught her child with one hand in the cookie jar.

The Omega began moving impossibly faster, and soon Eren could not even think, and he let instinct take over. His eyes lit up gold as he and Levi fell into sync with each other, both striking out with hands and feet. Eren blocked where Levi evaded, never letting the Alpha's blows land when he could avoid them. Several strikes landed in quick succession on Eren's face and chest as he tried to pull Levi off his feet, to no avail. The brunette would rather eat a few punches to gain an advantage, but the Omega seemed determined to dodge, dancing out of the way of Eren's fists again and again. Later on, the Alpha would realize this was also a trait that Levi brought with him from the pits, when every little ache from a seemingly inconsequential hit could mean death. In that moment, all he could do was move, trying to stay a step ahead of this vicious little creature across from him. So beautiful. It was distracting, those dark locks shining even as they matted with sweat, grey eyes on fire seeking out any weakness, any opening, any place that he could move in and strike. Body flexing and arching, feet dancing over the mats, fists clenching and unclenching as they squared off over and over.

It was only years and years of training on those mats that kept Eren in the fight. Without context grounding the Alpha in the moment, he would've been lost to the sight before him. Levi's face serious, brows drawn together in concentration as he moved in close. A bead of sweat dripping down over the Omega's collarbones, trying to pull Eren's eyes away from those fists somehow lower. Feet sliding, finding his center of gravity anew with each change in position, each strike, each dodge. Pupils narrowed down to pinpoints, lips pulling back to reveal the printed teeth of his mouth guard.

Those fists would have rained down on him, and Eren would have been helpless underneath them, a slave to the perfection of his Omega.

When the Alpha began panting with exertion he realized he would get nowhere on his feet, and as much as he loved watching his Omega move this way, he needed to bring things to the ground as quickly as possible. Already Levi had landed over a half dozen strikes on him, and there was blood trickling from his mouth, when he had only landed a few glancing blows on the Omega.

Levi was too fast, too evasive, and unless Eren could get his arms around this Omega, he wouldn't be able to finish things.

The irony of this was not lost on the Alpha.

He decided subtlety would get him nowhere, especially after several botched takedown attempts so
far. Levi would throw a kick and the Alpha would make a grab for his feet, trying to get the Omega off balance only to have him pull out of Eren's hold. Quick and elusive. So this time the Alpha just went in for a tackle, taking a punch to his cheek as he buried his face in the Omega's chest and grabbed for his thighs. Levi tried to pull back, jerking one of his legs and elbowing the Alpha in the head, trying to scramble out of Eren's grasp but he was too short, too light to effectively defend. Especially as Eren threw the entirety of his weight at the Omega, landing on Levi like a ton of bricks. The Omega fell hard back onto the mats, already trying to get his feet underneath him, heels digging into the floor and pushing off to slide out from beneath the Alpha. Eren moved faster this time, snaking his left arm around Levi's neck, jerking the Omega's left up by his face.

The Omega wrapped his legs around Eren's stomach, hooking his ankles behind the brunette's back and arching his spine, trying to put distance between them. Shoving at Eren with his right arm, throwing a few haphazard punches. Trying to slip his left arm and head out of Eren's hold. But Levi was too small, did not have the height to make the guard truly effective, at least in the way it was intended.

But then the Omega's skin slid against Eren's, sweat slicked and heated, muscles of his abdomen flexing beneath the Alpha and making their breath hitch in unison. Gold eyes met gray and they were frozen, a flush painting Levi's cheeks as he felt Eren's hips underneath his own, felt the Alpha's length throb even through their shorts. Suddenly those pinpoint pupils blew wide, only a thin ring of gray showing around the edges, and Eren's heart stuttered wildly at the sight. Levi let out a gasping breath, and it had nothing to do with the fight, rolling out from somewhere deep inside him. Eren was growling, leaning down closer to his Omega, hips brushing into Levi even tighter in the process. The Alpha's hold on Levi's arms loosened, just for a moment, but the Omega couldn't even find it in himself to struggle. Knew he would not break free of Eren's grip, not today. Levi wanted to defeat this Alpha, he really did.

Right then those arms around him felt right, and even if they were driving Levi to submit, it did not matter.

He could be weak under this Alpha, because they would be stronger together.

Eren seemed to gather himself, tightening his hold and using his cheek to press Levi's left arm into his face. With his left arm around the Omega's neck and Levi's arm above his head. Eren's face shoving in tight against it, Levi could feel the choke hold settling in. It was a blood choke as opposed to an air choke, cutting off not the oxygen from the lungs but the blood supply to the brain. If the Alpha sank it in tight enough, for long enough, Levi would be unconscious. He did not, merely held Levi in place, adrenaline rushing through his veins. From the fight, but also from having Levi in his arms, his scent in his nose, his sweat on the Alpha's skin. Levi was everywhere, and Eren never wanted to be anywhere else. Wanted to spend an eternity with this perfect Omega wrapped up underneath him, sweating and panting and writhing. The Alpha spit out his mouthguard, putting his lips up against Levi's ear to whisper out a single ragged word.

"Mine." Levi shuddered and went limp in his arms, his own mouth piece falling from between his teeth to land on the mats next to him. Eren pulled back, letting his arms go loose so he could look at Levi, and when they locked eyes the Omega nodded, scent surging up between them. Full of lust and submission.

"Mine." Levi tilted his head to the side, baring his throat to Eren with a low whimper that the Alpha felt in his skin more than heard. Eren did not think, just buried his teeth in that pale neck with a vicious growl, not breaking skin but leaving behind a mark that would be there for days. Levi, Levi, Levi... Levi was strong, and fierce, and fucking his, and he tasted so good and his voice was so sweet. Eren did not know how he'd gotten so lucky, but he wasn't one to question fate. Not when it had brought him this Omega, too perfect for words. Volatile. Vicious. Breathtaking. The Omega's hands were buried in Eren's hair pressing him closer, those legs coiling back around the Alpha's waist. Only
when Jean's voice sounded out did they both jolt, remembering where they were, at least a dozen sets of eyes on them.

"Victory for Jaeger, submission via arm triangle choke from top mount."

There were a few people clapping as Eren released his bite, but he did not move away from Levi. Pulled the Omega's arms around his neck and stood, Levi's feet scrabbling to hold tighter against the Alpha's back. Eren was silent, just carried his Omega past the onlookers and headed straight for the locker room.

Levi whined as the door fell shut behind them, not caring if anyone heard. And when that sharp mouth fell against his throat again...

The Omega whined even louder, and cared even less.
Eren was biting into the Omega's throat as he pressed Levi's back into a bank of lockers, legs still wrapped around his waist. Levi was whining, an Omega's cry, and the Alpha growled in answer as he pulled back to look at him. His mate. He knew his eyes were glowing gold, could see the light playing over Levi's face. The brunette looked at those pink lips with raw hunger, the only part of Levi he had not pressed his own against. Eren tore his eyes up to meet the Omega's gaze, begging without words. He needed to taste him, needed to feel that mouth on his own. More than he needed air to breathe, this Alpha needed Levi's kiss. Needed it now. Eren waited for an answer, a word, a nod. Anything.

Instead of words Levi buried his hands in Eren's hair and leaned forward, bringing their lips together with a moan. Fuck. Mine. Mine. The Alpha couldn't decide if the Earth had stopped spinning beneath him or began to turn faster, only that he was dizzy and breathless in its wake as their mouths melted against each other. His thoughts were full of lust and painted red, guttural sounds pouring from somewhere in his chest as he claimed the Omega's lips for his own, just as he'd said he would. It was not gentle, or easy, or chaste, but neither were Eren and Levi. They were strong and vicious and violent, and this embrace was no different. Tongues writhing together, Eren's slipping into the Omega's mouth to lick, to suck, to take. The Alpha shuddered as he felt Levi rocking his hips against him, felt his arousal hard and aching beneath his clothes. He wanted to speak, wanted to ask the Omega a thousand things, tell him he was beautiful and fierce and perfect, but he did not want to surrender those sweet lips just yet. Bit at them, tugging the bottom one out and sucking it into his mouth. Tasting Levi's tongue and teeth and flesh, exploring every inch inside. Desperate, and eager. Starving for Levi. It felt as though he'd been starving for this Omega his entire life, and only now was his hunger even beginning to be sated. The Alpha's chest started to ache, and it took Levi pulling back with a gasping breath for Eren to realize he, too, needed air.

Eren stared at Levi with eyes full of wonder, as though he was watching something miraculous take place. A pilgrim setting his sights on something holy and incorruptible after an eternity of blind faith. The Alpha eased Levi down to his feet so he could reach up and touch his face, thumbs brushing delicately over the Omega's pink cheeks as they both panted into each other. Levi's fingers slid out of those messy brown locks to clutch Eren's shoulders, knees shaky beneath him. When Eren spoke it was a whisper, as though he was afraid to shatter the moment that stretched between them, scared a loud voice might cause this Omega to spook and run.

"Come home with me, Levi. Let me bond you. I- " I love you. Eren cut himself off, biting the words back and not for the first time. He would say them, had to, but not here. Not in the locker room where he worked surrounded by a bunch of Alpha's dirty clothes and the scent of stale sweat. "I need you. Please."

Levi opened his mouth to answer only to be interrupted by the shrill ringing of a phone in someone's belongings. After a few moments of listening to the tone another joined it, and they realized the sound was coming from Eren's locker. Both of their phones going off at the same time, and though Eren wasn't sure who was calling Levi, he could guess which of his friends was currently ruining the fucking moment. Jean had probably texted Armin and Mikasa about an Omega showing up to the dojo and proclaiming himself Eren's mate, as well as their fight. Now he would have to hear the two bitch endlessly about the face that Jean met Levi before they did and how unfair it was. Eren could care less, would let the thing ring until it went dead if it meant he could keep holding Levi, but the Omega seemed eager to latch onto the distraction in the face of his Alpha's question. Levi moved away from the brunette and took a step towards the lockers, assuming Eren was going to open his up and answer the phone, only to be held back by the Alpha's arm grabbing his hip. Levi turned to look
at him, and Eren's brows furrowed as he let his gaze bear down into his Omega.

"Will you come with me?" Please, Levi. Eren didn't say the words, but he didn't need to. They were on his face and in his voice, written over his very being. All that he was pleading shamelessly for this Omega to let him in. To stop fighting. Stop running, for good this time. He watched Levi's adam's apple bob as he swallowed heavily before dropping his eyes to the ground. No. It was more than enough for the Alpha to understand and Eren's heart sank at the refusal, but then the Omega nodded his head, a flush painting his cheeks. The Alpha felt the stupid smile on his face, bright and wide and ridiculous, but there was nothing he could do to stop it. Just pulled Levi in for a hug, grip going tighter and tighter around him until the Omega huffed out a ragged breath.

"You're going to fucking suffocate me before we go anywhere." Eren relaxed his grip and laughed, opening his mouth to speak only to be cut off. "If you thank me, I'm going to punch you in the face."

The Alpha snapped his mouth shut then laughed even louder, ruffling Levi's hair instead, and his gratitude came through the gesture strong and blatant. Thank you, Levi. Eren wanted to kiss him again, over and over, needed to savage those lips until they were red and swollen under his mouth, but he did not want to get carried away. His Omega was coming home with him, and he respected Levi enough not to lose himself somewhere that they could be seen or heard. Levi was too important for Eren to claim in some shady locker room, the voices of a dozen people who were strangers to the Omega filtering through the walls. The Alpha wanted to get Levi back into bed, lay his lithe little form down on sheets that smelled of him. Press him into soft bedding as he worked every inch of that muscled body until Levi was shaking and begging and desperate for his Alpha. Those dark raven strands haloed out on Eren's pillow, clutching at the blankets he slept on each night, thighs shoved up into his chest...

"Eren, Jesus, calm the fuck down. They can probably smell you outside." Levi's voice was wry as he pulled out of the brunette's arms, but now that he mentioned it, even the Alpha could smell the lust coming off himself. Stinging his nose with its potency, but it was not only his own. He could detect Levi's twisting with it, surging up to match his Alpha's, along with a faint sweet scent that had Eren's mouth watering. Slick. The Omega was slicking in response to Eren's desire, and the brunette growled at the thought of anyone else catching the traces of it when they left. Levi must have read his mind, speaking in an almost embarrassed tone as Eren moved to open the locker. "Let me rinse off really quick and we can take an actual shower at your place."

The Alpha sighed and nodded as relief coursed through him, feeling stupid and thankful all at once. He moved away to let Levi get his clothes and bag, changing his own quickly while the Omega stepped into a shower stall, the sound of running water breaking the silence after a few moments. After tossing his sweaty shorts into the employee hamper he took his phone from the locker and cringed as he read the missed calls and messages. Three calls, one from Armin and two from Mikasa, along with over a half dozen text messages from them.

Mikasa: Jean says 'your Omega' showed up at the dojo and said he was your mate. What the fuck, Eren? You didn't think to tell us you were mated?

Mikasa: Why did Reiner and fucking Jean hear about this before me? I'm kicking your ass next time I see you.

Mikasa: You fought your Omega at the dojo without calling me? We're definitely fighting. I need to kick you in the face.

Mikasa: If you don't call me or text back soon, I am going to your house, letting myself in, and waiting until you get home. This is bullshit.
Armin: I can't believe Jean and Reiner got to meet Levi before I did. Who is apparently your mate, and I didn't know about it. I hate you right now. And congratulations or something, you fucker.

Armin: Jean says Levi almost kicked your ass, then you two were about to start going at it on the mats. Smooth, Eren. Really smooth. You better call your sister, she says we're going to your house if you don't get in touch with her.

Armin: You're too late, we're buying beer and crashing your house. Sorry. But not really, because you should've told me about this, I'm offended. Are you bringing Levi?

Fuck. Eren stared at his phone for a long time, cursing inwardly at his sister. He could call her and try to convince her to come by some other time, but it would be useless. The Alpha would have to literally fight her to get Mikasa to leave his house, especially once she found out Levi was coming with him. Eren wanted nothing more than to take his Omega home and put the bonding marks on him, feel Levi underneath him as the mating took hold. Blood and scent mingling together, tying Levi to him with an Alpha's mark. Wanted to whisper those words in his ear, telling Levi just how much he meant to him. That he was all there was now. He certainly didn't want to deal with his friends at the moment, even if he did felt a little guilty about shutting them out lately. It's not as though he meant to keep this from Armin and Mikasa. How could he tell them something he wasn't even sure of himself until less than an hour ago? When Levi emerged from the shower, fully dressed with his hair damp and dripping water down his neck, the Alpha was still glaring at the screen.

"What's wrong?" Eren looked up, frozen at the sight of those wet black locks. He blinked a couple of times before Levi's question registered, shoving his phone into his pocket as he answered.

"Word got around to Armin and my sister that you showed up here. That you're my mate. They're pissed I didn't tell them anything. Mikasa has a key to my house, and they're waiting for me to come home so they can yell at me." The Alpha waited for Levi to look as annoyed as he felt at the interruption, only to watch him break out into a smirk.

"Oh, this should be good. Let's go." Eren's brows furrowed in confusion.

"You don't mind? I mean, this is not exactly... what I had planned when I said I wanted to take you home. Not that I don't want to just spend time with you, or introduce you to my family...." He had the decency to flush as he said it, biting his lip as his eyes ate up the ground. Levi said he would come home with Eren, but now Mikasa and Armin were there. It would not be easy to get rid of them, not when they were meeting the Alpha's mate for the first time, and Eren didn't know how long the Omega would linger. He wanted to bond him, wrap him up in his arms and fall asleep pressed in close, but this was Levi. There was no guarantee he would hang around just because Eren asked him to. But the Omega was laughing now, grinning at Eren with those grey eyes dancing.

"I'm sure it's not what you were thinking. You're a mated, unbonded Alpha. Pretty sure that makes you the definition of 'one track mind'. But you were introduced my annoying, embarrassing friends, one of whom literally tried to kick your ass. It's my turn now. Gotta meet the family sooner or later, right?" The way he said it, *meet the family*, made it sound like they were his own now. Fond, and affectionate. Even so, Eren did not like it. Wanted to keep Levi all to himself. Took a step towards the Omega and brushed dark strands out of his eyes before pressing a thumb to his lips.

"I don't want to share you with them." Levi shivered under his gaze, and he answered in a voice almost too quiet to hear. Eren could feel his mouth moving with each word.

"I'll still be there when they leave. I'm not going anywhere." The Alpha's breath caught, eyes
flashing gold again with emotion.

"Promise me." There was no hesitation, no pause, no thought. Just the sound of his mate's voice giving him everything he wanted, granting all his wishes with only two words.

"I promise." Eren heard it whispered from Levi's lips. Felt it under his thumb. Against his skin. In his chest. *I'm not going anywhere.... I promise.* 'He dropped his hand from the Omega's face, smiling at Levi for all he was worth.

Almost opened his mouth to say thank you. Almost.

They left the locker room and headed towards the door, breezing past anyone who tried to talk to them, when Eren remembered their mouth pieces were still on the mats. The Alpha ran to pick them up and put them away, leaving the Omega to wait by the exit. He stood there picking at his nails, silently hoping no one tried to talk to him when an Alpha with shaggy blonde hair approached him. Cursed inwardly, sighing as he drew near. Levi had not noticed this one before, and when he got close enough to detect the Omega's scent his brows furrowed. He took in Levi with wide eyes, confusion crossing over his features.

"You're Eren's Omega, aren't you? I thought you both left already. What's your name?" The Omega looked at the blonde with furrowed brows of his own, wondering at the look on this Alpha's face. Like he'd seen a ghost.

"I'm Levi. And you are?" Now the Alpha's eyes were roaming up and down, and he looked taken aback. Reached out to take Levi's right wrist, tugging it up to look at the underside. Eyes shooting even wider as he took in the scars there. Levi glared at him, trying to tug his arm out of the Alpha's grasp and failing.

"No fucking way." The Alpha's voice sounded awestruck and disbelieving. Levi opened his mouth to hiss out some furious words only to be interrupted by a vicious growl, cutting his eyes to the side to see Eren there. Seething, eyes alight, fists clenched as he bared his teeth in fury.

"Mike. Let him go. Right now." Mike dropped Levi's wrist as though he'd been burned, and Eren snatched it away. Lifted it up to his neck and rubbed it against the scent glands there, glaring at the blonde the whole time. Erasing the faint trace of Mike's smell that might be on the Omega's skin. When he was done he did not release Levi's hand but laced their fingers together before turning back towards his boss. "There a problem here, Zacharius?" Mike was still staring at Levi's scars, shaking his head slightly before breaking out into a grin.

"No problem at all. Sorry about that. Sorry I missed your fight, too. They said your mate here almost had you beaten. Would've liked to see that." The brunette still seemed angry, looking at Mike like he could set him on fire with his eyes.

"If you can keep your hands to yourself then maybe you can watch next time." The blonde threw his hands up in a gesture of surrender, dropping his eyes but not baring his throat.

"Sorry, kid. Didn't mean any harm. All right? It's nice to meet you, Levi. Hopefully I'll see you around."

Levi didn't answer as the Alpha rushed away, rubbing at the scars on his wrist absently with the fingers of his left hand. Eren pulled him out the door and they went to their separate cars, but Levi's mind was miles away. Years away, in a hospital bed on his birthday, wrist wrapped in bandages.

Wondering what an Alpha was doing in an Omega hospital, and why he would have nails sharp
enough tear open flesh. Four years ago.

Levi almost veered off the road as the pieces fell into place, and those lines on his wrist started to ache.

Eren asked Levi if he was okay several times on the way up the Alpha's driveway, and he lied and said everything was fine when really he was reeling inside. He would be lying to himself, too, if he couldn't admit he'd thought of just driving on past Eren's house, trying to process what he'd learned before facing him again. The Omega felt stupid for not putting it together before now after Eren told his story. Levi had only recently been freed from the pits, only to be hospitalized on his birthday for a lingering infection in his thigh. He'd needed emergency surgery, and barely escaped without losing his leg. How many Alphas could there possibly have been in an Omega hospital four years ago? Just one. His Alpha. Who had woken up from a rage induced coma after grabbing an Omega's wrist. Eren had said grab, not scratch, but he'd been through so much at the time. Levi doubted his friends would have added to that guilt by telling him he scarred some unknown Omega's arms with vicious claws, red eyed and feral. The brunette said he did not remember anything before he woke up. Obviously did not remember seeing Levi there. Why had Eren snapped out of his coma when he spilled Levi's blood? It couldn't just be exposure to an Omega, Eren had been near so many of them right after he'd killed all those Alpha's.

Was it the reason Levi felt so drawn to Eren, an incomplete bonding calling out the Omega inside? But only a willing Omega could be bonded by an Alpha, even partially, and Levi had been anesthetized and delirious. Unconscious in a drug induced fog. He couldn't consent, not in such a state, not even on a primal level.

Could he?

Had his instincts surged up when they sensed this Alpha, wanting him for their own even as Levi slept? Knowing, not by sight or touch or thought but by something deeper, that Eren belonged to him? Levi wanted to believe it was impossible, but so was a red eyed Alpha killing dozens of his own kind before going comatose only to be brought back from the edge by an Omega's blood.

Levi's blood.

Part of his mind was screaming at him. Yes, this is why you want this Alpha. A half-forged bond seeking to draw you together. It is not really you who desire him, but the Omega inside you. Even as he thought these things, he knew it was a cop out, an excuse. His fear crawling to the surface to make itself known. The fear of trusting others. The fear of giving up control.

The fear that he would need this Alpha like he needed air and blood and warmth. Forever incomplete without Eren by his side. But it was too late for that now. As he followed Eren inside his house to meet his family, he realized he'd already chosen.

Levi was already lost. Lost to green eyes that flashed gold as they ate him alive. Warm hands threading through his hair. A dark voice whispering in his ear, 'You are all I want.' Tanned skin and strong arms and a smile that shone like the stars.

Levi was lost, and if it meant giving up this Alpha, he did not want to be found.
Levi braced himself as he trailed after Eren into the house and dropped his bag by the door, only to find the living room empty. The Alpha looked around before calling out to his family, heading towards the kitchen automatically.

"Mikasa?" A voice responded, and as Levi followed Eren into the kitchen he saw a dark haired female Alpha rifling through the brunette's fridge.

"Eren! You don't have anything to eat here! Buy some groceries, you lazy shit. And I'm fucking mad at you, I knew you were after that Omega but you should've told me you were mated. I shouldn't have to find out from fucking Jean, of all people." Mikasa kept digging, moving aside cartons of milk and a pitcher of cold water to search behind them.

"Mikasa, listen-" She cut him off, finally grabbing a bag full of grapes and pulling a bottle of beer out along with it. Eren was glancing awkwardly between Levi and Mikasa's back, ruffling his hands through his hair.

"You fought him without telling me? And you also didn't tell me he was a shorty. I hear his tiny little ass almost fucked you up on the mats. I wanted to see-" Mikasa finally turned around, going silent as she took in Levi standing next to her brother. She looked nothing like Eren, but Levi vaguely remembered the Alpha mentioning that she was adopted. He lifted a hand to wave at her, lips pressed into a thin line as he fought down a scowl.

"Mikasa, this is Levi. My mate. Levi, this is Mikasa, my stupid fucking sister who doesn't know what boundaries are and thinks it's cool to show up at my house uninvited and eat my food." Mikasa tisked at him, gesturing towards his fridge indignantly.

"What food? This is rabbit food." She checked herself, rolling her eyes before turning towards Levi. "It's nice to meet you, Levi. I'm glad you and Eren are mated, now maybe he'll stop staring off into space alternating between pouting and smiling at nothing." Levi cut his eyes at Eren with a smirk only to find the Alpha blushing and sputtering.

"Sh-shut up, Mikasa! You're not helping!" The Omega laughed, helping himself to a beer as well before they headed towards the living room.

"I think it's helpful." Eren glared at him, and he just smiled wider. The Alpha was looking around, brows furrowed.

"Where's Armin?" Mikasa froze as she was sitting down on the couch, a worried expression crossing her face. She bit her lip, glancing between Levi and Eren guiltily before her gaze drifted towards the Alpha's room.

"Uhhhh...."

The Omega glanced over and Eren, only to see his face twist into a mask of annoyance as he began stomping into his bedroom. Levi went after him, and when he caught sight of the Alpha's bed he felt fury roll through him in waves. There was a little blonde Omega curled up in Eren's blankets, sleeping peacefully. Oblivious to the irritated Alpha and enraged Omega standing mere feet away. Levi wanted to grab the intruding Omega and throw him from the bed. Pin him to the floor. Hiss in
his face, *This Alpha is mine, his bed is mine, you don't belong there.* He fisted his hands, clenched his jaw. This was Eren's friend, his family just as much as the Alpha in the living room. He could not attack him before they even met. Eren had kicked his shoes off after they came in the house, and now he lifted a foot up and shoved at the blonde's shoulder hard enough to send him rolling into the floor. It was more satisfying than it should be to watch him stumble to his feet, half asleep with a grimace on his face as he rubbed at his eyes.

"Eren, you asshole."

"I fucking TOLD YOU, Armin. You can't take naps in my bed anymore." The blonde was still swiping drowsily at his closed lids, growling half heartedly at Eren.

"But your bed is so comfortable. I always-

"ARMIN." The sleepy Omega blinked his eyes open, realizing with a start that Levi was standing there. Teeth bared in a hiss, head cocked to the side. Fists opening and closing with barely restrained violence. "This is Levi, Armin. My mate. Which is why I told you a week ago that you can't take naps in my bed anymore." Armin was backing away in a wide circle, making his way towards the door as Levi took a step towards his Alpha. Moving as the blonde did so that he was standing between Eren and the Omega at all times. Armin paused in the doorway, hands up in a gesture of surrender.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean anything by it. I've been wanting to meet you, Levi." Levi opened his mouth to say that everything was okay, that there was no harm done. But that was not what came out.

"Get the fuck out of here."

His voice was guttural and vicious, eyes almost glowing with hostility. It was like meeting Historia all over again, but this Omega had no marks, had no Alpha of his own. Had known Eren since they were children. Had been curled up in his bed for years. This Omega had breathed in Eren's scent before Levi even knew he existed. Now Levi's hands itched to strike out at him, and it was all he could do to hold himself back. If he moved an inch, there would be blood, and this tiny blonde Omega was not like Levi. Armin would break under his fists like glass, would shatter into a thousand pieces, and Eren would hate Levi for hurting someone so precious to him. The blonde fled out the open door without another word, and Eren eyed Levi warily.

"I'm sorry, Levi. I told him not to do that shit, but Armin's stubborn. It won't happen again, now that he's met you. I think you still weren't quite real to him. I've been alone so long, it was sort of... an abstract idea, that I'm mated."

Levi wasn't listening. Felt instincts rising up in him that demanded he lay claim to this Alpha. Mark him, and bite him, and bond him. The Omega needed those red slashes across Eren's throat, his wrists, his thighs. So everyone would know just by looking that Eren was Levi's. Needed his scent to change, just slightly, the barest traces of Levi coming out of Eren's own skin. He dropped his unopened beer to the floor before tackling Eren onto the bed and burying their mouths together, straddling him as he wrapped his arms around the Alpha's neck. Eren's own arms went around the Omega automatically, like they belonged nowhere else but holding Levi tight against him. The Omega tilted his head, tongue delving into the brunette's lips possessively, messy and vicious. *Mine. Just mine.* When he'd woken up that morning, Levi was not sure about being bonded, about belonging to an Alpha in such a way. Now he was desperate, and Eren's fingers clutching at his back and sliding under the edge of his shirt were not enough. He needed those hands tearing off his clothes, pressing him back into the sheets. Easing his thighs open wide as Eren slid between them. The sharp scent of lust rose up in the air, and Eren was growling into their kiss as he rolled them
over. When he was on top of the Omega, Levi's legs slid around his waist, heels digging into Eren's spine as he tried to bring them closer together. The Alpha was shoving his way impossibly deeper into Levi's mouth, forcing the Omega's jaw wide as he sought to swallow him up. Then Levi heard a strangled noise coming from the doorway, and they broke apart in time to see Mikasa stepping out of it and into the hallway out of their line of sight.

"Uhuh, Fuck... I'm sorry, I just.... Armin wanted to know if he should go. Now I'm wondering if we should both go. We can come back... later, or tomorrow, or something." Eren looked down at Levi with a question in his gold bright eyes, panting, hands moving on their own to stroke his hair. The Omega swallowed, wrenching his eyes shut for a moment before forcing words out.

"No, it's fine just... Give us second." They listened to the sound of her footsteps as she headed back into the living room, and Eren leaned down to press their foreheads together, smiling with his eyes closed as he spoke.

"That wasn't awkward at all." Levi had to laugh. When the Alpha opened his eyes again they were green, but they still lit Levi up inside. Eren looked at the Omega hungrily, letting his gaze roam down over his body before settling back on his lips. "When they leave, we can pick up where we left off."

It wasn't a question, but Levi nodded anyway, afraid to say anything and hear how wrecked his voice sounded. Eren brought their lips together again in a gentle kiss, totally unlike the others they had shared. Brief, and soft, and easy, and Levi's chest was aching with the affection in it when the Alpha pulled back to stand. The Omega sat up, but did not get to his feet, instead eying Eren's bed with a frown. He looked to the Alpha, then Levi's cheeks flushed slightly as he glared at him.

"Not a fucking word about this."

Eren's brows furrowed in confusion when Levi crawled into the middle of his mattress and laid down, pulling the sheets up around him and rubbing them against his throat, his wrists, his face. Wrapped his arms around the Alpha's pillows, sliding them over his skin. Rolled back and forth across the blankets, sniffing them, hugging them into his chest. It took a few moments for Eren to figure out what he was doing, and when the brunette realized Levi was scent marking his bed he felt warmth swell inside. The Omega was getting rid of the lingering remnants of Armin's smell. An unmistakable sign of possession, a claiming of territory. A declaration of ownership, and Eren couldn't stop the smile from splitting his face wide.

Levi could have changed the sheets, was itching to do so, but that was surrendering, somehow. He did not want to wash this other Omega's scent away. Levi wanted to overpower it, wanted to erase it with his own until all that Eren would smell when they lay back down in his bed was Levi. The Alpha was grinning, he could feel the fucking satisfied bliss radiating off of Eren at the sight of his Omega marking the bedding, and Levi did not even care. Let him watch. Let him smile. Eren was his, and Levi would not allow some other Omega's scent cling to the Alpha's skin as they came together. When all he could smell was Eren and himself he got up, arms crossed, eyes on the ground. He felt embarrassed, was scowling at the floor when Eren's arms went around him, that dark voice speaking right in his ear.

"I can't wait for them to get out of here so I can get you back in those sheets."

Levi knew there was nothing to be ashamed of, especially not when this Alpha was so unabashed, so ridiculously eager to claim him for his own. Still be fought the flush from his cheeks as they headed towards the living room.
Eren's family was strange, but considering he was best friends with Hange, Levi supposed he couldn't really criticize. He sat next to the Alpha all evening, and the brunette was nothing if not generous with his affection. Put his arm around Levi's shoulders, or a hand on his thigh. Leaned over from time to time to bury his face in the Omega's hair and breathe in deep. Eren's sister and Armin watched with rapt expressions every time, like they were seeing some natural phenomenon in action. Volcanoes erupting, meteor showers falling in the sky, tidal waves that swept away cities. Eren pressing a kiss to Levi's cheek, smiling a victorious smile as he blushed under the touch.

Mikasa seemed to bring out the worst in Eren, both of them growing loud and belligerent as they bickered with one another. The female Alpha gave Eren ten kinds of hell for fighting at the dojo when she wasn't there to watch, and he was unapologetic and boisterous in his replies. Armin was quieter but just as outspoken in his own way, mocking the two Alphas as easy as breathing in between his interrogation of Levi. The blonde had apologized for intruding in Eren's bed and assured Levi it wouldn't happen again before assaulting him with a barrage of questions. Where he worked, where he lived, how he learned to fight. Levi gave him the short version of his captivity in the pits, only faltering when he noticed the two Alphas had ceased their arguing and were listening intently. They'd ordered pizza and the Omegas had watched Eren and Mikasa devour an obscene amount, shaking their heads at the sheer volume of food an Alpha could put down. The conversation was winding down, and Mikasa was cleaning up their mess as they prepared to leave. Levi was far happier than he wanted to admit that they were taking off, only half listening to Eren and Armin's conversation until he heard the word 'heat'.

"I can scent your heat already, it makes my head hurt. You need to go down to the dojo and pick out your next victim soon." Now that Eren mentioned it, Levi could detect the barest traces of pheromones coming from the blonde. He'd be in heat in four or five days probably, and Levi found himself wanting to hiss all over again. Threaten the Omega, make sure he would stay far away from Eren, even though it was ridiculous. These two had known each other for over a decade. If they were going to mate they'd have done so a long time ago. Still, Levi's instincts did not want to listen to reason, and they riled up even further as a sly smile crept across Armin's face.

"I'm sure I'll be up there in the next few days. Jean says he doesn't want to deal with me right now, but I think he could be persuaded." It took a few minutes for Levi to realize that the Omega had no intention of suppressing his heat, and he felt his brows furrowing in confusion.

"You don't suppress? Do they not work on you?" Suppressants didn't work on Levi at all, and it would almost be worth the debilitating headaches and rampant nausea to have the illegal drugs they'd used during his captivity if it meant he did not have to go through an unsuppressed, unmated heat. Not that it mattered now. Levi had an Alpha of his own, and once they were bonded none of the pills would have worked anyway. Suppressants did not work on bonded pairs. Instead of suffering through aching bones and heated skin, he would be at Eren's mercy. As much as he wanted to hate the idea, Levi realized he was eagerly trying to calculate how much longer he had before his next cycle, and he shook the thoughts away. The blonde was grinning as he stood up, pocketing his phone and grabbing his keys.

"Nope. Suppressants make me feel like shit, and I like to take advantage of my heats. The sex is great if you find the right Alpha, and then you get to make them take care of you. The follow up care is almost better than the mating, to be honest, as long as you didn't pick some Alpha bastard. They give you baths, and wash your hair, and bring you your meals. It's like two or three days of being royalty. Glorious servitude, making an Alpha fall all over themselves to please you." Armin sighed as he headed towards the door with Mikasa. "I thank God every month that I was born an Omega. It's wonderful. Anyway. I'm glad we got to hang out. I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot of each other. Oh,
Eren, we're watching the fights at my house this weekend, inviting everyone from the dojo. You still coming?" Eren made face, lip curling up in what might have been disgust.

"Is Thomas going to be there?" Armin rolled his eyes.

"Probably, if he thinks you'll be there." The brunette groaned, leaning back into the couch with a huff.

"Why do you always invite him? He doesn't know when to quit." The blonde shrugged, unapologetic.

"I didn't invite him, Connie did, and it was before all this.-" Armin gestured towards Levi and Eren with his hands. "-happened. If Levi comes he'll leave you alone anyway, right? It's been months since you hung out with everyone, and I'm sure they're all curious to meet your mate." Armin waggled his eyebrows suggestively. Eren just sighed.

"I dunno Armin. We'll see what happens. I'll let you know."

Mikasa finally left the kitchen, moving to stand next to Armin. They all muttered their goodbyes as the pair filed out, and Levi found himself pondering the blonde's words. 'I thank God every month that I was born an Omega.' Levi had spent his heats doing the exact opposite, cursing whatever deity or power in the heavens that made him what he was. Something that was meant to be weak, and submissive. Yielding to that which was stronger than him by nature. Then he looked at Eren, and knew he'd been wrong all this time. About what an Omega was meant to be. He had not been born to be under some Alpha's thumb, or shielded behind them. Levi didn't exist to be controlled or protected.

He existed to stand beside this Alpha. Each of them there to be strong when the other was weak. Greater than the sum of their parts. Made whole in each other in a way they would never be alone. Eren locked up after his friends, and Levi was talking before he even realized what he was going to say.

"Who's Thomas?" Eren looked vaguely uncomfortable, and Levi found himself narrowing his eyes.

"He works out at the gym where I work. He's an Omega. He.... shit, he's been after me for a while. I've told him over and over again that I'm not interested, but he's pretty relentless. Nothing has ever happened between us, though, I swear." Levi bristled at the idea of an Omega chasing after his Alpha, following around at his job like a stray dog. Wondered if he'd ever sought Eren out when he was in heat, trying to sway the Alpha with the scent of pheromones and raw need. Levi clenched his jaw, hissing out his next words through bared teeth.

"Shower. Now."

Once they were in the bathroom with the water temperature set, Levi started to undress only to have Eren pull his hands away. The Alpha met his eyes, and Levi watched them change from green to gold as Eren began removing his clothes. Pulled Levi's shirt off over his head slowly, fingers ghosting across his ribs, heat following everywhere he touched. Unbuttoned Levi's jeans and slid them down along with his boxers, eyes never wavering from his face even as the Omega stood naked before him. The Alpha shed his clothes in a heartbeat and tugged them both into the shower, hot water soaking Levi's raven strands. The Omega half expected Eren to jump him as soon as they were in the tub, but he did not. Just washed Levi with agonizing tenderness. Massaged shampoo into his dark hair with those long fingers, leaning Levi's head back as he rinsed so none of the foam would drip down into the Omega's eyes. Ran the bath sponge over every inch of Levi as though he would break.
Levi was hard and aching from those hot, gentle hands all over him, but Eren acted as though he didn't notice. Soaped between his thighs like it was the most normal thing in the world, like Levi wasn't jerking under the touch. As though the scent of his desire wasn't filling the air between them like smoke. By the time they were both rinsed clean Levi was almost shaking with need. When they stepped out Levi reached for a towel to dry himself only to have Eren take it away. Rubbed it vigorously over Levi's hair before drying his skin, and the Omega swore he could feel Eren's heat through the cloth. Lighting him up as he touched each part of Levi. Cleaned him, and dried him, staring at him all the while like he was something precious. All there was in the world.

The Omega was not surprised when Eren picked him up and carried him to bed. Did not protest, just went limp in his arms. The Alpha crawled onto the bed and lay Levi down in the soft blankets, eyes shining with emotion. Crawled over him, caging Levi in with his arms, his legs. His whole body surrounding the Omega, and all Levi could do was pant. He wanted to tell Eren about his scars, about their past. How it had been he who woke the Alpha up from his daze. Wanted to say something about fate, and destiny. About how both their miserable pasts had brought them together. That he would live through his suffering a thousand times over if it meant finding this Alpha again. About how much that scared him.

No words came out, but Levi didn't mind. Not when Eren was looking at him like that, a blind man seeing the sunrise for the first time. He reached up to touch Levi's face, thumb running over his lips, noses so close they brushed together. It was the Alpha who spoke then, and nothing had ever sounded as beautiful or as honest as that dark voice whispering to Levi.

"I love you, Levi." Levi thought his heart had stopped beating, or maybe it was moving too fast in his chest. He didn't know what sort of expression he wore, only that his mouth was hanging open, but it had Eren smiling. The Omega reached for words, or sounds, or thoughts, and found himself empty of everything but feeling. The feeling of being wanted by this Alpha, more than he wanted anything else, or anyone else. Of belonging. Of home. "You don't have to say it. You don't even have to feel it yet. We barely know each other, and it sounds stupid, but it doesn't change anything. I needed to tell you. I love you." Levi couldn't say it back, even as it surged up in his veins, swelled inside his lungs, swam through his vision. Tripped over his very thoughts, dizzy and unbalanced. Found himself speaking anyway, unsure of what was coming out.

"I-I... I feel it, too. Just... g-give me some time." Eren's eyes went wide, strobing back to green for an instant in his surprise before lighting up gold again, bright and sure and strong. He smiled, and Levi fucking melted underneath him.

"Can I bond you, Levi? Please. I need you to be mine. I want to be yours."

This time there were no more words between them. Levi just nodded, and whatever had been holding the Alpha back vanished into nothingness, because Eren was ravenous. He took Levi's mouth, licking his way inside with unrestrained hunger, growling, an Alpha's call. Levi whined in answer without conscious thought, the Omega within crying out. Eren rutted down into Levi, grinding their arousals together, skin sliding on skin and the Omega felt his eyes roll back into his head. Nothing had ever been so perfect as Eren frotting into him. Eren pulled back, biting his own lip for a split second before he buried his hands in the Omega's hair and bit savagely into Levi's throat.

Then Levi felt it, something he'd never felt before. As though Eren was reaching inside him, wrapping a fist around his heart and tugging it out through his mouth. The bond, pulling on everything Levi was, the Omega strung tight, vibrating with energy. Pressure building within him until he could feel it everywhere, curling his toes, gritting his teeth, muscles tensing and shivering.
Levi realized that he was fighting it, and that's not what he wanted to do. Levi wanted to surrender. Didn't know how. Felt desperate. Then instinct came to his rescue, and he buried his own teeth into the other side of Eren's neck with a growl.

Ecstasy.

Levi was coming as the bond soared through them both, Eren shuddering out in climax over him as they were overwhelmed together. Joined. Connected. The Omega's whole world was shifting and spinning, and suddenly Eren was everywhere. Levi could smell him, and taste him, and see him, but he could also feel him. Not just his skin and his mouth and his hands, but his emotions, the euphoria shooting through him. Twining with Levi's own until the Omega did not know where he ended and this Alpha began. Levi knew he was slicking again, could smell the sweet scent, feel himself growing wet and needy beneath the brunette. Eren pulled back and rubbed their bloody throats together, still growling as he did so. Levi felt the ghost of something across his skin there, and he knew the first of the bonding marks was in place, a red slash over his scent gland. The Alpha put enough space between them to stare at Levi's neck, eyes flashing impossibly brighter.

"Mine."

Levi couldn't even nod, just tilted his head to expose the unmarked side of his throat in unspoken invitation, and Eren did not need to be asked twice. Sank his teeth into it, groaning as he felt Levi's sharp mouth do the same. Thrust mindlessly against the Omega as he slid those bites together, reveling in vicious joy as both sides of Levi's throat were striped in red. He pulled Levi's wrists up to his mouth in a frenzy, marking the glands there. Shoved his own into Levi's lips and watched with golden eyes as the Omega put those beautiful red slashes on his skin. All that was left were those pale, gorgeous thighs, and it only took a fraction of a second before Eren rolled them over, laying on his back with Levi atop him.

"I need to mark your thighs. Come up here, let me taste you."

The Omega realized what he was asking, cheeks blushing bright as he moved up to straddle the Alpha's face. Eren was spreading his legs, exposing the scent glands on his thighs, but Levi couldn't look away from his shaft. It was throbbing, hard even though the Alpha had just come, pearly fluid leaking from its pink tip. He wanted to suck it, wanted to pull it between his lips and take it down into his throat. Almost had his mouth to it when he felt a sweet, perfect stinging in his left thigh and remembered he had a job to do. Needed those crimson slashes across this Alpha's glands. The Omega could picture Eren fighting in the dojo, shorts riding up as he sparred and rolled to reveal Levi's marks there. Bit down a little harder than necessary on each one before rubbing his wrists over the wounds. Levi watched, enraptured, as the color appeared before his eyes. When Eren finished marking his own thighs he felt the bond settle fully into place, invisible threads tying them together, and Levi suddenly felt complete. Whole, and filled, and perfect. A piece of himself he had not know was missing falling into place after all this time. Once the heady feeling of the bonding slid back, Levi was about to climb off of Eren, only to feel strong hands clinging to his hips.

"Mine. You're mine now."

Before Levi could respond, Eren's mouth descended on the Omega's entrance, licking up the slick there and then latching on tight.

"Unnnnh..."

Levi grunted and went limp atop the Alpha, boneless, breathless. Wretched and full of want. That hot tongue delved inside him and Levi saw stars, everything hot and wet. Too much and yet not enough. He was making embarrassing noises, whining and whimpering as Eren ate him alive. When
he finally pried his eyes open Levi was greeted with the Alpha's swollen length, and he did not hesitate. Just leaned forward and took it into his mouth, delighting in the guttural moan he pulled from Eren as he swallowed him down. Levi had a hard time breathing through the feelings that rolled through him. Of being wanted, and needed. Being desired so powerfully that he made a slave of this Alpha. Then Eren slid two of his fingers inside of the Omega, swirling his tongue over the tight ring of muscle as he thrust them deeper, curling and scissoring and seeking. Levi moaned around his cock, bobbing up and down on it, trying to keep himself from being distracted by those hot digits inside. Laved at Eren, tasting the salt of his precome. He felt heat pooling in his gut, creeping down his spine, climbing up his shaft, and he pulled off of Eren.

"S-stop." Levi climbed off the Alpha, who had a worried expression. "D-don't wanna come again yet. N-need you inside."

Eren was on top of Levi in a flash, kissing him hungrily. Their lips slid against each other, moisture leaking between their mouths, and Levi tasted a hint of sweetness that had to be his slick. He shivered as the Alpha bit his lip, sucking it between his own before devouring Levi's mouth again. Tasting teeth and flesh and skin. Eren's hands were easing the Omega's thighs open, and Levi threw them wide at the touch. Wanted Eren buried between them, shameless and unabashed. They did not separate as the Alpha lined himself up with Levi's entrance, easing inside inch by inch. The Omega knew he was making debauched noises, moaning and mewling, shivering as he was filled up. His hearing, his sight, his mouth, his skin. His body overwhelmed, nothing but Eren, Eren, Eren. Levi's hands were hungry on that tanned skin, sliding up and down his back, fisting in his hair, easing over his chest. Eren was holding Levi's hips in a brutal, bruising grip, and the Omega just wanted to say 'Tighter, more, yes, please... 'Moaned again instead when Eren was fully seated inside, breaking their kiss to stare down at Levi with eyes full of affection. Pressed their foreheads together as he moved one hand up to thread through raven strands.

"Levi. I love you, Levi."

"M-me, too." Levi still couldn't say the words, but as he looked into those bright gold eyes, it did not matter. They were shining with unshed tears, and only when Eren thumbed one off of Levi's cheek did he realize he was crying.

"Are you okay? D-did I hurt you?" The Omega shook his head, tugging Eren down tight against him to bury his face in the Alpha's bloody throat.

"No. It's fine. It's p-perfect. Y-you... You can move now. Please, Eren." Eren's hands brushed dark locks out of Levi's face, even as it was hidden from his view.

"Okay."

When he moved, it was not fast or hard or savage. The slow slide of skin on skin, pulling out of Levi only to ease back inside. They kissed, pulled each others hair, dug nails brutally into flesh. Tongues twining together. Hair falling into each others eyes. Levi scratched vicious lines down Eren's back as he thrust into him with infinite patience, like he had all the time in the world.

And then the Omega realized that he did. Eren had an eternity to make love to Levi, to bend him and twist him. To split him open and fill him up. To make Levi his, over and over. Breathe the same air. Taste wet skin. Overcome with the scent of sex and mate. It was not clean, or neat, or pretty. It was bloody, and messy, and exhausting, slick and sweat and crimson fluid spread between them. Seed drying on their skin as Eren made Levi pant for breath, moaning out the Alpha's name as he begged for more, please, Eren, more, more....

It was not pretty, but it was beautiful, and that was more than enough.
A shrill ringing woke Eren from his slumber, windows still dark with no trace of morning light shining outside. He felt euphoric, a sense of peace flowing through him, and it took only a split second for the Alpha to realize why. Levi was sleeping in Eren's arms, face nuzzling into his chest, the Alpha's scent all over him. Inside, too. Bonding marks on his wrists, his neck, his thighs. His. Levi was *his*, and everyone who saw him or smelled him or sensed him would know that he was taken. Eren had never really cared about the strength of his inner Alpha was before, because it had not mattered, but now he was grateful for just how powerful his scent was. Other Alphas would smell Levi before they even saw him and want to flee, want to get away from the Omega lest they anger the Alpha who put those marks on him. Just the thought had Eren grinning with satisfaction, stroking raven strands out of Levi's sleeping face until another loud ring interrupted his thoughts. All his friends had specific ringtones, and this was not any of them. Eren felt his brows furrowing as he pawed at the bedside table to grab the phone, only to cringe when he accidentally answered it before he saw who was calling.

He squinted at the screen, the brightness blinding him, struggling to make out the time as well as the name.

11:37 PM. Erwin Smith.

Fuck, the Alpha would not have answered the phone if he'd known it was Erwin. Not in the middle of the night with Levi resting next to him, anyway. Their last meeting had been anything but friendly, and Erwin had surely spoken to Pixis. Knew about Eren's past, all he had done. But now that Levi knew his story and did not mind, what Erwin thought suddenly didn't seem very important. Who cared what this Alpha's opinion of him was? Eren's Omega was in his bed, marked and bonded and *taken*, and that was all that truly mattered. A voice called out a muffled hello from the speaker, and Eren pressed it to his ear with a grimace.

"Is there some kind of emergency, Mr. Smith? It's almost midnight." Levi shifted in bed next to him, grey eyes blinking open only to wince against the light of Eren's phone. The Alpha pressed a button to darken the screen as Levi sat up with a confused look on his face.

"*Not as of right now, but there could be. Is Levi with you, by any chance?*" Eren growled, teeth bared at someone who could not even see them, scent riling in the air as his body readied to fight an enemy who was miles away. Levi could undoubtedly hear the voice through the phone because he groaned, collapsing back into the pillows with muttered profanities.

"Levi is here in my bed. We we're sleeping until you decided to call in the middle of the night. So unless this is something important-"

"*His safety could be at risk. Can I speak to him, please? You can put me on speaker, if you like.*" Eren went totally still at those words, lip curling up as he growled again, loud and vicious. He tapped a few buttons on the screen until the blonde was on speaker phone as Levi eyed him warily from the pillows.

"You're on speaker. Levi's awake."

"*Levi?*" The Omega sighed, resting his face in one arm as he answered, Eren holding the phone between them.

"Shitty eyebrows. What the fuck do you want?" Erwin's voice crackled from the earpiece, loud and intrusive in the quiet of the room.
"I'm glad I found you at Eren's. I've been trying to call you for the last couple of hours but you haven't answered your phone. You can't go back home right now, Levi. I had Hange pack up most of your clothes and toiletries, along with your laptop and work files." Levi interrupted, now sitting straight up with a scowl on his face.

"What the hell do you mean I can't go back home?" Eren looked worried, glancing between the phone and Levi.

"We had a security breach in our network, and someone accessed your personnel files. Your address has been compromised, and we're fairly certain it's the same people who kept you imprisoned all those years. They've been resurfacing in the underground, and we're trying to track them down, but it looks like they're searching for you, too. I need you to stay somewhere safe until we get this sorted out. We're very close to locating their base of operations, the pit where they keep their prisoners and hold their fights. But you can't go home until they're behind bars, Levi. It's not safe." There was a strange light in the room, and only after he moved his head and saw it dance over Levi did Eren realize it was his eyes, lit up gold with emotion. His Alpha's scent was fierce in the air around them, and before he noticed what was happening he had Levi in his arms, massaging the glands in his neck as he tried unsuccessfully to bite back a snarl. The phone was now pressed awkwardly against the Omega's chest, and Levi took it from Eren's grasp so Erwin would actually be able to hear them.

"I'll fucking kill them. They lay their hands on Levi and I'll rip them off. I'll tear their fucking hearts out of their chests." The scent of submission rose up from Levi, the Omega inside him yielding to the will of his Alpha automatically, melting against him even as he rolled his eyes.

"I was sort of counting on that. I'm assuming it's okay if Levi stays with you?" Levi scoffed, glaring at the phone as though Erwin could see him.

"Erwin I can't just force Eren to let me stay here, that's-"

"Levi, shut up. After telling Eren you're in danger, do you really think he's going to let you out of his sight? Are you stupid? Are you really going to pretend he wouldn't give his right arm to have you staying with him?" Eren felt Levi crane his neck up to look at him, but he didn't give him any space. Just clung tighter to the Omega, everything in him awash with fury and instinct. His voice was bestial and low, and Levi shivered at the sound of it, fighting to keep the smell of arousal down.

"Levi will stay here until it is safe for him to go home. He can work from here, or from the office at the dojo when I go to work."

"Good. Levi, Hange will bring your things to you tomorrow, either to Eren's house or the dojo. She's staying at the labs for now. Oh, Eren, I talked to Pixis the other day and he gave me some of your medical records, pertaining to your condition in Trost and after you returned to Shiganshina. I wanted to ask your permission to release them to Dr. Hange Zoe for her studies. I also wanted to speak to you about joining my OSC team, if you are interested." Eren blinked a few times, trying to think through the fog in his mind, which was nothing but protect, defend, avenge. It was a minute or so before Erwin's words sank in, and he finally forced out a reply.

"Give her the records, I don't care. And if Pixis told you everything and you still want me working with your guys, I'd be open to discussing it. Just let me know when."

"She'll be quite happy, I'm sure. I'll be in touch. Do not go home under any circumstances, Levi. Do you understand?" Eren hissed again, tapping the phone off speaker and bringing it up to his ear.

"You don't order Levi around. No one does. Do you understand, Mr. Smith?" A dark chuckle sounded through the phone, and Eren was baring his teeth again.
"Forgive me. I'll contact you soon."

Erwin hung up with a click and Eren set the phone down on the nightstand trying to get his anger in check. There was no one to fight here, only the ghosts that haunted his mate, and he needed to calm his rage. Levi opened his mouth to speak, only to have his words cut off as Eren wrapped him up in his arms, face buried in the Omega's hair. Someone wanted to hurt Levi, wanted to put him in chains and force him to fight. Wanted to make him a slave. The Alpha had only just made Levi his, those marks so fresh in the Omega's skin that blood still oozed from the scabs of his bites. Eren was vibrating with aggression, embracing Levi so tightly that he was having a hard time breathing, but the Alpha could not pull away. Rolled the Omega to his back as dark thoughts swirled through him, images of Levi in a cell, or laying half dead on the floor of a fighting pit. Eren lay on top of him, breathing hard, fisting his hands in the Omega's dark strands.

"I won't let anything happen to you, Levi." Eren waited for Levi to tell him that he did not need his protection, that he could keep himself safe. Knew it was true, that his Omega was fierce and strong. Needed to be the one to keep him safe anyway. More than he needed anything else, the Alpha needed this. So when Levi spoke, words soft and sure, Eren felt his breath hitch in his lungs.

"I know you won't." Eren eased back to look at the Omega, releasing his hold on Levi's hair so he could brush it out of those beautiful eyes. "There's something I meant to tell you before, and when Erwin mentioned your medical records from Shiganshina it reminded me." Levi looked serious, moonlight illuminating his face just enough to show the worry there.

"You can tell me anything." The Omega lifted his arm up, pulling one of Eren's hands from his face and forcing the fingers over his skin. There were four scars there, and though the Alpha could not see them in the dim light, he could feel them in Levi's flesh. He'd noticed them before, first when he met the Omega in the shelter and then later as he'd sunk his teeth into Levi's wrists. The marks were not close enough to his scent glands for Eren to actually bite in his ministrations, but it was a close thing.

"You gave me these. Four years ago. I was at Shiganshina Omega for an emergency surgery, and when I was headed for post-op an Alpha grabbed my arm. Scratched me, left these scars. I woke you up. It was me." Eren ran his fingers across the jagged marks, letting Levi's words sink into his mind. He felt suddenly dizzy, history realigning itself to fit this perfect Omega within. Levi had been at the Omega hospital. Eren had touched his skin, drawn his blood, and the Alpha's eyes had gone from red to green. From feral to lucid. Mine. Mine even then. Mine for so long. Levi had brought him back from madness, from being lost on a sea of fury and bloodlust. A creature of nothing but instinct, thoughtless and enraged.

Levi gave him back his humanity even as they'd slept. Ships passing in the night, until Eren went into that shelter to find Levi there. Saving the Alpha from himself time and time again.

Giving him everything. The whole world.

But Eren hurt his Omega, left scars in him when he was already injured. Broken his skin, and then was not there to bandage him, to care for him. Someone else had treated wounds he'd given Levi, disinfected them as he winced, wrapped gauze around them with careful hands. Done his job, because Eren had not known Levi existed.

"I'm so sorry I hurt you." Levi shook his head, tugging Eren down until the Alpha's ear was pressed against his heart. It was fluttering wildly in Levi's chest, and Eren felt himself flushing for some reason he couldn't begin to understand.

"Don't be sorry. I'm glad. My blood brought you back, right? There's no other explanation. Even
then, even before we met..." Levi trailed off, and the Alpha moved to tower over him, arms bracketing his head.

"You were mine." Eren brought their mouths together, licking his way inside of Levi slowly as the Omega's arms circled him tight. Whispered soft words against Levi's lips between kisses. "Already mine. Made just for me." The Omega nodded, and Eren took it as permission to ease his hand down between Levi's legs, kneeling those thighs open wide. A sweet scent assailed the Alpha, his Omega slicking for him, and he growled as he palmed Levi's arousal.

Eren spoke to Levi as he took him, things the Omega had heard from him before. Eren said them anyway, over and over. Etched them into Levi's memory. Burned them into his soul. **Beautiful. Strong. Perfect.**

**Mine, mine, mine.**

....................................................

When Eren's phone woke them again, this time with the alarm, it was eight AM. They groaned in unison as the Alpha blindly pawed it into silence before tugging the blankets back up around them and burying his face in Levi's neck. Eren mouthed at the Omega's throat just over the scent gland, wrapping Levi tight in his arms and throwing a leg across him. Joy sailing through him at the sight of his Omega, sleepy and perfect in the light of the morning. Levi's body was boneless under his touch, relaxed and blissful as the Alpha's hands ran up and down his chest. Only when Eren rutted against him, erection pressing into the Omega's ass, did Levi pull away.

"No." Levi turned around in Eren's arms, facing him with a serious expression. The Alpha readjusted his grip, pulling Levi close again with his legs as he ran his fingers through the Omega's black hair. He grinned down at him mischievously, brown locks sticking up a thousand directions.

"What do you mean, no? I haven't done anything." The Omega narrowed his eyes at Eren, reaching up to tug playfully at his hair.

"Tch! Not yet, maybe. I'm still sore from last night, and I'm sure your lazy ass doesn't set an alarm early enough to accommodate a morning fuck. I need another shower before we go up to your job, and to try and see if Hange will bring my laptop to the dojo. I need another shower before we go up to your job, and to try and see if Hange will bring my laptop to the dojo. I can access some of my stuff from a regular computer, but it'd be better to have mine." Eren trailed his hands down Levi's neck, around to his back, easing them lower and lower until he gripped the Omega's hips, thumbs tracing circles over the hipbones.

"I could call off. Stay here with you while you work." Levi put his palm flat over Eren's face and shoved him backwards before sliding out of his grasp and heading towards the bathroom.

"Yeah fucking right, as if I'd get any work done that way. You'd be all over me the entire day, relentless and insatiable. No, we'll go up to the dojo and at least I can get a few things done. There's a computer I can use in the office, right? Surely?"

Eren mumbled an affirmative and flopped back into the blankets in defeat, watching with hungry eyes as Levi climbed into the shower. The Alpha made no move to join him. Eren wasn't sure he had the restraint necessary to keep his hands off of Levi and as much as he wanted him, he also didn't want to hurt him, especially after being so rough on him the night before. Over and over.... **Fuck.** Eren groaned as he pushed the thoughts from his mind. The Alpha would also be getting sweaty again as soon as he got to work, and would be forced to rinse off several times throughout the day. There was no point in showering before he left, and he was reluctant to wash Levi's scent from him so early in the morning. Eren wanted it to linger in his skin, wanted the Alpha's around him to smell
his Omega. Learn his scent by heart, and know that Levi belonged to Eren. He sighed when Levi pulled the shower curtain closed and rolled out of bed, pulling on a t-shirt and jeans before packing a gym bag with fresh gear.

When Levi finally got out of the shower breakfast was waiting on him, bacon and eggs along with toast and an orange that had somehow escaped Mikasa's notice, sliced in quarters. The Omega did not hesitate to eat Eren's food as he had the first time but dug in immediately, clearing his plate in just a few minutes. At the sight of Levi eating food he'd prepared the Alpha inside of Eren roared in victory. His Omega, taken and marked and bonded. Sated and clean and rested and fed.

That victorious feeling stayed in place the entire trip to the dojo, even after Levi told him to wipe the stupid look off his face.

...............................................

It was Eren's job to open the dojo on Wednesdays, so there was no one present other than Sasha manning the reception desk. She nodded a greeting at them as the Alpha unlocked the doors to the other side of the building, eyes wide as she took in the sight and scent of the fresh bonding marks they both wore. After catching a glare from Levi she looked away, flushing and suddenly becoming very interested in her computer. Once Levi was set up in the office Eren got to work getting the equipment ready for the day, disinfecting the shower floors and making sure the hampers were empty. He swept the floor, despite it being done the night before at closing, just to be safe. It was getting close to opening time, and just as Eren was about to abandon his warm ups to unlock the doors he scented someone. Familiar, but at the same time strange.

"Jaeger." Ymir was a few feet away, already dressed out in shorts and a tank top, arms crossed as she glared at him. When they each caught sight of the bonding marks on the other their eyes went wide in unison.

"Holy shit, that's why you smell so fucking weird! Historia finally let you seal the bond?" The glare vanished from her face as she smiled, nodding her head.

"You smell pretty strange yourself. That vicious little Omega of yours wearing the red now too, eh?" Eren rolled his eyes in response.

"You haven't even met him, how do you know he's vicious? I mean he is, but that's not the point." There was a glint in Ymir's eyes as she smirked, running her tongue over her teeth in a predatory way.

"I haven't met him, but Historia has. I take it he neglected to mention that he cornered my Omega in her own house, snarling at her like an animal because she had your scent on her?" Eren blinked stupidly for a second, mouth gaping open silently.

"You're shitting me." The brunette shook her head, one hand finding her hip as she continued.

"Historia applied to be an Omega foster for OSC. Since she's an Omega herself, they sent your boy out to do the home inspection. He caught your scent on her and went fucking ballistic. She had to throw a few swings at him before he snapped out of it. Now they're apparently best buds or some shit, but I still don't like it. You need to keep your mate in line." Now Eren was narrowing his eyes on her, scent swelling up in the air, harsh and aggressive.

"I don't need to do anything. As long as no one was hurt, then it's none of your concern what Levi does, is it now?" Their gazes lit up in unison, gold reflecting gold. Neither one of them realized they
had moved forward, but suddenly the Alphas were inches apart, each one biting back a growl.

"He threatened my Omega." Eren bared his teeth, and Ymir hissed back at him, the air between them thick with tension. Eren felt himself growing increasingly furious, the very idea of someone telling him to *keep Levi in line* making him see red. As though his Omega was an unruly pet to be leashed. It was offensive, and he wanted to strike out at Ymir for the implication. Better yet, he wanted to watch Levi do it himself, but the Omega did not need to be brought into this.

"She's fine. They're 'buds', by your own admission. So I suggest you keep your opinions of Levi to yourself, unless you'd like me to put you in your place." Eren tried to stop, he really did, but he couldn't help it as he sneered, words dripping with venom. *Little Alpha.* Ymir's eyes flashed bright as she lunged at him, only to be pulled back at the last second by Jean, who pinned her wrists up by the small of her back. He spoke low in her ear as he took steps backwards, easing them away while she fought his grip.

"Whoa whoa, easy there, let's take a minute and calm down, kids."

Eren felt a hand restraining him as well, resting on his shoulder, heavy and familiar. Mike. The older Alpha knew if he tried to legitimately hold Eren back it would only make things worse, riling him up instead of calming him down. That palm on his shoulder had him wrenching his eyes shut, tilting his head, taking deep breaths. Counting one, two, three, four, five... He reached twenty before he opened his eyes again, and Eren could feel that they were green. Ymir's own had flashed back to brown and she was shaking Jean's hold off, clenching and unclenching her fists. She popped her jaw before looking at Eren again, and it was a few moments before the anger drained out of her face, a storm passing as though it had not existed. She smiled, and it was not predatory, but full of mischief.

"You look good in red, Jaeger." Eren smiled back, bright white teeth shining.

"You too, princess." Those dark eyes flashed but her smile didn't falter, and they went their separate ways without another word. Jean stood there dumbfounded, shaking his head as he looked over to Mike.

"Two bonded Alphas. God save us all."
"Get on your feet, Omega!"

My name is not Omega. My name is Annie. My name is Annie. My name is Annie.

A mantra she played in her head over and over, yet still felt everything slipping away. All that she was disappearing somewhere inside, locked away where it would be safe. Not a sister, or a daughter, or friend anymore. Nothing but Omega, the only thing she'd ever despised about herself, now her sole identity. She spit blood into the dirt of the pit, pulling herself up from her knees as every muscle of her body protested. The Alpha before her was not dead, but he would not be getting up anytime soon. It was not over, though. A metal door at the end of the pit opened up, another Alpha entering the fray. Cracking his knuckles, a feral smile on his face. Annie could tell which ones were here against their will and which ones were not, and this Alpha had nowhere on Earth he'd rather be than breaking the weak under his fists. That was good, it was better this way.

So much easier to let her fury rain down on them.

"Look alive, or die, Omega."

My name is not Omega. My name is Annie. My name is Annie. My name is Annie.

But she did not feel like Annie, not anymore, and if she ever left this place, it would still be a death sentence. Because Annie would die before she let another Alpha lay hands on her.

One way or another.

Levi was, to put it mildly, totally fucked. He stood in line at the grocery store, leaning on the handles of their shopping cart as Eren translated for the blonde Omega woman in front of them. She'd been trying to pay, clearly not understanding the cashier's questions, mumbling out a few phrases to herself in Trostian. Then the Alpha had stepped up, words foreign to Levi pouring out of his lips, and the woman was visibly relieved. Even if she did eye the Alpha a little too closely, his scent no doubt overwhelming in her Omegan nose. An Omega could not be marked by more than one Alpha, but an Alpha could bond many Omegas at once. It was not something that happened terribly often anymore, nor was Levi the slightest bit worried that Eren would try something like that, but he found himself idly stroking his bond marks. Making his scent rile up in the air around them, drawing both the blonde's eyes as well as his Alpha's. He shot the woman a look, dark and warning, and she took a step away from the brunet as he continued to translate. Levi knew that what Eren was saying was nothing out of the ordinary, just helping them straighten out exactly how she wanted to pay for her purchases, but coming from the Alpha's mouth in that fucking voice... Eren could translate the newspaper for Levi in Trostian, and he would still be panting at the sound. It was far more erotic than it should for something so mundane.

The Alpha had insisted on stopping to stock up on food once they left the dojo for the day, and Levi had no objections. If he was going to be staying with Eren for awhile he would probably have to get used to things like this. Hange was always the one buying groceries for them, because Levi bought nothing but 'bullshit healthy food' when he got them himself. He sometimes went out shopping with his clients, especially when they were fresh out of an Omega halfway house, but not very often. So weaving through the aisles with Eren by his side, the Alpha asking him what he liked to eat or if he had any food allergies, urging him to toss in whatever he liked...
Levi felt itchy somehow. A stray cat that had never been touched with a needy human stroking it, wanting to lash out even though it felt so good....

When the Omega refused to put anything in Eren's basket other than his preferred cleaning supplies the brunet picked up his phone, texting for a few minutes. Then he began circling back through the store and putting Levi's favorite foods in the cart, strawberries and yogurt and every kind of nut imaginable, and the Omega knew he'd been texting Hange. Fucking four eyes.... Now they had a staggering amount of shit, piled up above the metal rim of the basket, and Levi was listening to the lilted tones of Eren's Trostian as he shook hands with the grateful blonde. The woman bit her bottom lip when their hands were joined, looking up at Eren, starry eyed. Any Omega would be when faced with the brunet, scent stronger than any they'd probably ever smelled. Gemstone eyes and tanned skin and fuck that, he belongs to me. Levi let out a growl without meaning to, but he did not drop his eyes when she looked his way. Bared his teeth instead, and she jerked her arm away, snatching her bags up and rushing from the store as though she was being chased.

Eren made his way back to Levi with a smile on his face, rubbing his wrist over the scent gland in the Omega's neck. It was a simple gesture, one Levi had seen countless times before, Alphas marking their Omegas casually as a sign of affection. The Omegas always looked so fucking content, basking in their Alphas attention. Saying I love you without words, and Levi found himself frozen as Eren began piling their food onto the counter, oblivious to the Omega's inner turmoil. Once they were finished, bags filling up the brunet's trunk to bursting, Levi climbed into the passenger seat.

"So you speak Trostian?" Eren nodded, cranking the car and putting it in gear before backing out of the parking spot. The Alpha had specifically mentioned that he did not speak the language when he was serving overseas, so it did not make any sense that he spoke it now. Eren did not say anything else, though, and Levi scowled at him. "Care to elaborate?" Trostian was not a language that was incredibly common in the area, or even the country. Not a lot of Trostians around, compared to other nationalities. It was also incredibly difficult to learn, totally different from their own, sentence structures strange and complicated. Eren just shrugged, looking a little shy.

"A bunch of the Omegas who were in the Breaker's Den I... I took down, they started writing me letters. At first they were sent to the Recon Corps, but then Pixis set up a post office box and gave me the key. Most of them were really young at first, anywhere from eight to fourteen or so, but even the older ones hadn't been given any formal education, so they started out as cards with little crayon signatures." He took a sort of ragged breath before continuing. "Drawings of me as a stick figure with red eyes and claws, little hearts in the air and shit." The Alpha ran a shaky hand through his hair, looking unsteady. "Jesus Christ. Anyway. As they got older they kept writing, but it was all in Trostian. They went through the trouble month after month, year after year, to keep sending me letters. Some of them pages and pages long, especially the ones who were older and remembered everything better. It seemed shitty to not be able to read them, so I taught myself Trostian. I still get them. The letters, I mean. You'd think after four years they'd stop."

Levi could tell it wasn't really that the Alpha expected them to stop, but that he wanted them to. Wanted to forget about that bloody part of his past, one that weighed on him when it should not. Killing was not easy, Levi knew better than anyone, but it was not something to be ashamed of. Not in this Alpha's case, anyway. The world was a better place without those monsters in it, and even if it haunted Eren's dreams, Levi was glad it happened. But not just because those Omegas deserved the vengeance this Alpha had given them.

If he had not spilled so much blood, gotten lost in a cloud of rage, he would not have been in Shiganshina Omega hospital four years ago. Would not have touched Levi, scratched him, put his mark on the Omegas skin.
Levi caught himself running needy fingers over his scars, warmth spreading through his chest. Treasuring them in a way he never had before. Yet another mark that Eren had put on Levi, and the Omega in him loved being claimed. His scent was changing, growing stronger, dark with burgeoning arousal and Levi had to force words out to distract himself before the Alpha caught on. Knew he was too late when those eyes flashed gold for the barest of instances, but continued anyway.

"You saved their lives. Killed the people who'd been brutalizing them. I can't say I'm surprised they want to express their gratitude." Eren shot him a look, blinking too fast, clearing his throat. Trying to think through the scents Levi was throwing off, no doubt. Tore his eyes away to focus on the road, rubbing at his chin. The movement caught Levi's gaze and he realized there was stubble there, more than a five o'clock shadow. Probably a couple of days worth of growth, and suddenly the Omega wanted to rub his face against it, feel it scratching across his skin... *Fuck, stop it, Levi...*

He found he could not, and they drove back to the Alpha's house in silence, Eren's jaw tight as he drowned in the scent of his Omega. Willing. Wanting. And finally unashamed.

Neither one of them made an attempt to get their groceries from the trunk once they arrived at the brunet's home, nor did they mention it to each other as they headed towards the porch. Levi followed Eren inside, and the door was barely closed behind him before he was on the Alpha. They'd ridden home suffocating in the Omegas raw desire, and it surged up between them now so strong that Levi could *taste* it. Wanted to taste the Alpha instead, and he buried their mouths together, uncaring of the fact that he had to stand on his toes to do so. Eren was groaning as he wrapped Levi in his arms, and he licked his way into his mate's mouth, letting himself be lead towards the couch.

This Omega could lead him anywhere. To the ends of the Earth. Into the depths of hell. Eren would follow on hands and knees, a smile on his face as he crawled after Levi.

Now Levi was shoving him down onto the couch, straddling the Alpha's lap as their tongues writhed together. Clutched at Eren's hair. Whined into his lips. Pressed in tight against him, and it still was not enough. Would never be. Levi wanted to climb inside his skin, live within his chest. Curl up next to Eren's heart and listen to it beat just for him. The Omega felt his Alpha's arousal pressing up from beneath, growing harder with each passing moment, and before he could stop himself Levi was fumbling with Eren's belt. Breaking their kiss to suck the tanned skin of Eren's throat, lust filling him up until he could not breathe.

"*Fuck, Levi...*"

Eren sounded lost, and Levi knew why. The Omega had never initiated things this way, but something was different now. He could feel the bond tying them together, could sense this Alpha inside, a part of himself. Twisting him up, and he never wanted to be unraveled. Wanted Eren to tangle them up even more, knotted and inseparable.

Wanted to be mangled by this Alpha, in the way only Eren could. Broken in all the right places, and Levi knew this Alpha would piece him back together. Over and over, for the rest of their lives. The thought should frighten Levi, but he was long past fear, at least where Eren was concerned. The Omega growled out a word, thoughts of that blonde Omega woman flashing through his head.

"Mine." He sank his teeth into Eren's neck and the Alpha moaned, thrusting up against Levi as he let out a harsh breath. Nodded fiercely, knowing the Omega would feel the movement even if he
couldn't see it. Eren needed him to know, yes, yours, but there were no words in him. Just heat and want, desperation rising until he could taste it on his tongue, could feel it in his mouth. Visceral and consuming. The Alpha could smell it coming off of Levi too, the Omega within him calling out to Eren, not asking but demanding, and he could not find it in himself to care.

*Let me be a slave to this Omega. Wrap me in his chains and lay me at his feet.*

Levi was still licking at the Alpha's throat when he finally managed to free Eren's length, the Omega's palm hot as it closed on him. Eren bucked into Levi's fist, sliding his hands down that pale skin and into his pants, grooping at the Omega's ass with greedy fingers. Shoved them further in, circling around Levi's slicking entrance but not breaching it. He wanted to make love to the Omega, wanted to feel them joined together, but he was nervous.

"I-Is this okay? I don't want to hurt you." Eren had not been gentle with his mate the night before, and the last thing he wanted to do was take him when he was sore and aching. But then Levi was standing up, shedding his pants and boxers as though the were on fire before climbing back onto the Alpha's lap. Taking Eren's hand and guiding it down to his ass, burying his face in the brunet's locks and nodding.

"S'okay. I'm fine." Still the Alpha hesitated, not sure if Levi really wanted this or was just trying to please him.

"Are you sure? We don't-" Levi rocked against him, rutting into his hand with a groan.

"Please."

_Fuck._ Eren nosed his way through Levi's hair until he found his mouth, kissing him hard. Wet, and messy and so fucking sweet, it had the brunet's heart stuttering in his chest. One of the Alpha's hands was clutching Levi's ass, spreading his cheeks as the fingers of the other hand delved inside. Scissoring Levi open, the Omega whimpering against Eren's tongue, fists clinging tight to his clothes. He was impaling himself deeper on the brunet now, fucking his fingers, and it was not long before he was panting and flushed and so fucking ready, Eren could not wait anymore. Neither could Levi, apparently, because he was easing Eren's fingers out of him and taking the Alpha's cock in hand, lining it up with his entrance. They were still mouthing at each other as the brunet pressed inside, the wet slide of skin on skin making his eyes roll back in his head, Levi lowering himself down until he was sitting on Eren's thighs. The Alpha stayed still, wanting to be sure Levi was ready before he started to move. Afraid to hurt him. Needed to keep him safe, even from himself. His Omega had better ideas, releasing Eren's lips to throw his head back as he began riding him. Wanton and eager. All Eren could do for a moment was watch, enraptured, as Levi moved up and down, grinding his hips in delicious circles. Then he was slipping the Omega's shirt off over his head to get at that milky flesh underneath, sucking a nipple into his mouth. Levi arched into him with a whine, burying a hand in Eren's hair. Holding the brunet against him, giving himself over to the sensation of that hot tongue laving him, licking him. Teeth scraping over his chest. Hands digging into his hips, hard enough to bruise, yet still not tight enough. The Alpha was lost again as Levi fucked him mindless, moving his body in ways that had Eren seeing stars. His Omega was taking him, the Alpha helpless to anything but melt underneath. He released Levi's nipple with a wet pop, head falling forward until his forehead was pressed into the Omega's chest.

"Levi... _fuck, you're so good... s-so good to me..." Eren was rewarded with a mewling sound, and suddenly Levi's pace was frantic, hips gyrating almost violently atop him.

"Hnnn..... C-close..." The Alpha began driving into him, meeting him thrust for thrust. He didn't
realize what he was doing as he flipped Levi over, shoving his back down into the cushions and spreading his thighs wide. "E-Eren... Haaaahhh...." The Alpha was growling out words as he savaged the Omega, his whole body shaking under the assault. Bringing Levi closer to the edge with each thrust, each twist, each breath.

"So fucking good, Levi... " Eren took Levi's cock in his hand, thumbing over his leaking crown and stroking wildly.

"Eren..." The Omega was grasping blindly at the Alpha's clothes, as though they were all that was holding him in place. Keeping him on the ground when he would float away, vanishing in a sea of heat and want and right there, right there, please, oh God.... Knew he was speaking out loud without meaning to again. Did not care, because this Alpha had him. Would not let go of Levi. Would not deny him. Would not forsake him. His mouth fell open on a gasp, and Eren could feel Levi's muscles spasming around his length. Watched him bend forward, spine arching, teeth bared with a hiss. The brunet moved impossibly faster, nipping at Levi's throat. Hissing into the Omega's ear, and then he was coming, shooting white ropes of seed out between them.

"Mine. All mine."

His Omega clenching him tight, the smell of his climax, the flush of his cheeks.... *Fuck,* he was beautiful, and precious, and all there was, and Eren was erupting inside him, knot swelling up to lock them together. Every time they made love it happened, tying Levi to his Alpha.

Mangled by this Alpha in the way only Eren could.

Broken in all the right places, and Levi felt himself being pieced back together even then. Strong hands pulling him tight as the brunet carefully rolled them over, letting the Omega sprawl across his chest. Ran long, hot fingers over his cheeks, his lips, his closed eyes. Threading them through his hair. He pulled his legs up to cage Levi in, easing some of the strain where they were connected, trying to make the Omega more comfortable. Then he slid his hands between them, unbuttoning his shirt and tugging it open to get the mess of Levi's seed away from him. Thoughtful, and tender.

The strongest Alpha Levi had ever laid eyes on, one who could tear people's hearts from their chest. But he'd brought Levi's to life, stoking it like a flame until it glowed within him. Bright and hot, blinding even wrapped in his bones, and Levi could not push it aside.

"I love you, Eren." The Alpha froze, a strange sound coming from his throat, and then he was holding Levi painfully tight. Breathing erratic and shallow, and he did not answer the Omega in words.

Just brought their lips together and poured his love into Levi through his mouth. It was more than enough, filling him up until he thought he might drown in it, but that was okay.

There would be no sweeter way to go than swallowed up by this Alpha, and Levi let the maelstrom of Eren's touch carry him away.
Revile

Then

Kenny wasn't sure why he was standing outside of a house he had not laid eyes on in over fifteen years. He hadn't attended Kuchel's funeral. Had not wanted to face the ghosts of affection that still lingered somewhere unfamiliar in his chest. Somewhere long since sealed up, full of things that were sharp and rusted. Dangerous in all the wrong ways, ready to slice him open from within. The phantom touch of hands on his skin, lips in his hair. A soft, sweet voice whispering in his ear, everything he wanted in the whole world. None of it his.

Even when he'd been buried inside of Kuchel, her sweat slicking his skin, her nails in his flesh, she was not meant for Kenny. His brother had always been one step ahead of him in life, despite being his twin. When they played together as children, he was faster, stronger. As they grew older it only got worse, and Kenny began to wonder what it was like to feel the sun on his face, because he was forever in Benjamin's shadow. He tried not to let it bother him, and Kenny succeeded for the most part.

Until his twin brought home a Beta girl, dark hair and grey eyes with a fire burning inside her, and even with a ring on her finger Kenny could not stand idly by. He needed that fire to burn him, and later on when Ben joined the military over Kuchel's vocal protests, he wanted to shout with victory. Kuchel was not a bad person. She was not weak, or cruel, or spiteful.

But she was lonely, and everyday someone who looked just like the man she loved came to her house with flowers. Kind words and warm skin and infinite fucking patience, and Kenny could not hold it against Kuchel when her resistance fell away so quickly. She smelled like honey and her hair was like silk and when she called out his name, Kenny knew what heaven felt like. It was in her arms, breathing in all she was. Tasting, and touching. His whole being swallowed up by this slip of a woman. More than the sum of her parts. A force of nature that left Kenny devastated in its wake, and he'd never been happier to be broken.

When Kuchel told Kenny she was pregnant, he felt joy like never before. Euphoria, stark and dangerous, swelling through him like the tide. Just as temporal, because she crushed his joy with a handful of words. 'It could be his, as far as he knows. I'm telling Ben it's his baby. We'll raise it together, Kenny. You and I were never meant to be, this was a mistake.' He thought he knew what anger was growing up with his brother, but he'd known only a pale reflection of it. Fury rolled over Kenny in that moment, and he was clenching his fists, gritting his teeth.

Palms itching to close around that pale, slim throat. Press down until her molten eyes went dark. All of her still and silent and his, just his, and no one else would ever lay their hands on Kuchel again. Feel her heat. Taste her breath.

Kenny left that day, put miles and miles between them until she was nothing but an echo. Never met the boy that could very well be his son. Was his son, most likely. There was no way to know for sure, but Kenny felt it somehow, even from so far away. His child, his blood. Raised by a man with his face and his voice. So much more than he would ever be, everything Kenny had dared to want securely in his grasp.

Levi. She'd named his son Levi, and now Kenny wanted nothing more than to watch someone bleed. So he fought everyone he could get his hands on. In bars, back alleys. He fought husbands who
came home and caught him with their wives, and there were few things in life Kenny loved more
than the look on their faces when they caught sight of him.

Defiling what they loved most in the universe. Taking their whole world, dragging it through the filth
that he was, and none of them would ever be clean again. Soon going after random Alphas on the
streets was not enough, and he found himself in the fighting pits. Working his way up from nothing
and destroying anything that got in his way. Kenny lived for that moment of total domination, his
opponents broken beneath him, a pile of blood and bones.

Those precious minutes before the emptiness set back in, swallowing up the air in his lungs until
Kenny could not breathe.

When one of their pit bosses got busted by the OSC, there was no one more qualified to take over
than Kenny, and soon they were drowning in profit. Because Kenny was merciless, and there was
nothing more profitable than being able to throw lives away as though they were nothing. He put
men in cages with a smile on his face. Snatched up Omegas and sold them like chattel.

Wrecked everything that he could, trying to make his world a mirror. He wanted to look around him
and see the devastation he felt inside take form.

Kenny did not find out his brother was dead until after the funeral was long over, the soil on his
grave already settled and grassy. He ran calloused fingers over the granite of the tombstone, buried
them in the earth that separated Ben from him. Kenny wanted to feel something, anything. Bitterness.
Hatred. Regret. Hope, that maybe now he could claim what had been his all along. Levi was only
five years old, young enough to forget all about his 'father'. But no matter how deeply Kenny
reached inside, there was nothing there but flesh and bones. He left it all behind, and Kenny did not
look back. Stopped wondering what Levi looked like, sounded like. Did he have Kuchel's eyes? Her
hair, her voice? Did he rub his fingers over his lips and look at the sky when he was thinking as she
always did? How old would he be when he presented as Alpha?

Did Levi feel hollow inside, too? Was Kenny even capable of creating something that wasn't
broken?

He fled back to the pit that was his home, back to sounds of violence that were music to his ears
now. A song that played in the back of his head. A requiem for all he ever hoped to be, and for
eleven long years, Kenny wallowed in it. The power he wielded over so many lives. A snap of his
fingers, a word from his lips, and blood painted to earth in beautiful shades of crimson.

Then Kuchel went into the ground, too, right next to Benjamin. Killed by a drunk driver, swallowed
up by dirt and time. Forever out of his reach, and Kenny felt like he was dying, too. He would never
touch her, or smell her, or taste her. But he saw those eyes again at her funeral, rimmed with red
and shining with unshed tears. Hidden under long black bangs, sitting a top a vicious scowl. With his
fists clenched and his gaze burning, Levi looked so much like Kuchel that it made Kenny's chest
ache. Everyone left the cemetery, heading home to change their clothes, take a shower, watch
television. Shake the despair off like so much dust, their mourning over, their duties complete.
Leaving behind no one but an orphan in a house that would always be empty and a man who was
too weak to fill it. Levi had not seen him where he was lurking in the trees, but Kuchel's attorney did,
and he expressed his condolences before dropping burdens at Kenny's feet. He did not hear
everything the man said, just bits and pieces, but it was more than enough.

Levi was only sixteen, and he had no family left to look after him. Kuchel had been drowning in
debt before she passed away, and their house would be foreclosed on soon. If Kenny did not take
over guardianship Levi would be put in foster care until he was eighteen. The attorney droned on
and on, but Kenny wasn't really listening, mind wandering instead.
What if this was his second chance? Levi was small, but he was strong. It was obvious in the way he held himself, coiled tight, ready to strike. He could stand by Kenny's side as an Alpha, help him run the pits, keep the men in line. His son, taking over all he'd worked to build. His legacy. Destiny, pure and simple.

A few days later Kenny worked up the courage to come to the house he saw only in dreams, and caught a scent that had him frozen in place. Levi was in the house, and he smelled like Kuchel, but there was something else there, too. Something that had Kenny baring his teeth, ready to lash out at any Alpha that came near this place. It was so out of context there it took Kenny awhile to figure out what it was, and even then, he'd never scented it this way before. Heat. Levi was an Omega, and he was in his first true heat. Unsuppressed as they always were, because there was no way to stop them. But Levi was his son, and the smell of his heat had Kenny ready not to claim but to protect. To destroy with teeth and fists and fury anything daring to get too close to Levi while he was desperate and vulnerable and so young, fuck, why did they go into heat when they were still children, anyway? Sixteen was not old enough, not by a long shot. Not for this.

Then his mind caught up with everything that was happening and Kenny's blood ran cold. Omega. His son was a fucking Omega. Weak, and god damned useless. An Omega could not fight in the ring, or help Kenny lead. All they could do was cower and breed, and he felt that rage rolling through him again. Wanted to watch those same grey eyes turn cold and empty.

Empty just like he was. Nothing left but ashes, and Kenny had been right.

Everything he touched was broken. Everything he created, worthless.

Especially Levi.

He'd stayed in his car across the street for the duration of Levi's heat, instincts unwilling to let him stray. The Alpha in Kenny forcing him to protect, even when he wanted to destroy. When the scent of heat had faded from the air, the invisible hold on him shaking loose, he picked up his phone. Told his men he had the address of an Omega ripe for the taking. An orphan. Virgin, fresh out of his first heat.

Pretty like his mother, and just as weak.

Or so Kenny thought, until Levi tore out two of his captors throats with his teeth. Broke noses. Gouged out eyes. Fought so viciously when they tried to lay hands on him that his boss was ready to put him down. Kenny felt a strange pride swelling through him as Levi bit and scratched and growled. My son, he thought, but it was too late for that. Too late for affection, or emotion. All that was buried in the past now, under layers of earth and time and hatred.

So he threw Levi into the pits and watched with a heart made of stone as he ripped through his enemies. Teeth gritted, eyes on fire. Covered in the gore of Alphas that were supposed to be stronger than him. Supposed to be faster, fiercer. Better. Yet they were not, and they fell before him one after another, puppets with their strings cut. Lifeless and hollow. Kenny was always in the shadows, hidden from sight. The echo of a man who was supposed to be dead, and the Alpha wanted to laugh at how right that was. Blood rushing through his veins, air flowing into his lungs.

Dead inside, just like the Alphas they dragged from the pit each night, and just as empty. Soon Levi would be empty too, and Kenny felt like weeping. Whether it was from joy or despair, he wasn't quite sure, but it didn't matter, really.

Tears were tears no matter the cause, and Kenny wouldn't let them fall.
There was a certain magic that happened when her mother did this, Hange was sure of it. A power that only she wielded, woven from soft words and darkness and the echoes of an ancient past long forgotten. Hange curled up in bed with blankets piled all around them, the lights turned off, window opened to the night. Her mother read her fairy tales by candlelight, voice coiling through the air with the smoke from the wicks, and Hange liked the scary ones the best. So her mother made it dark, shadows dancing along the walls, low sounds rolling in from outside, and Hange smiled as she cowered under the soft blankets. It felt dangerous somehow, letting all these words loose in her room. Being at the mercy of ghosts and the worst kinds of fairies. Witches and warlocks and vampires. Evil queens with death on their hands and little black hearts. But her favorite stories by far were those about the Primals.

Alphas who went mad with Bloodlust and destroyed entire villages, eyes lit up red with claws that dripped blood. There were many different stories, but in the books Hange's mother read, they all went much the same. A Primal lost his mate to some tragic circumstance, or was separated from them in some way. Then their eyes flashed red and they tore apart any Alpha that stood in their way, mindless with the need to take vengeance. Only the Omegas spared, but for a little Beta girl, that was no comfort. Those Primals without mates would linger in the woods, calling Omegas to them with magic, and they fled into the trees as though pulled by invisible strings. Hordes and hordes of them, whole towns full, heading out through dark forests or into the depths of caves. Gathered around a red eyed Alpha like lionesses around the leader of their pride, hunting for his food and bringing him water even as he grew weak and feeble. When the Primals in the stories died, the Omegas were wretched with grief, inconsolable.

If they returned back to their homes they were burned alive, the villagers thinking that dark magic still lingered in their veins.

Sometimes one of the Omegas turned out to be his destined mate, put on earth by the heavens just for him. All the stars in the sky proclaiming them bound together, constellations shifting to form their image in the night. There was a constellation named after the great Primal, blocky lines traced together in the darkened pages of astrology books. Two figures side by side, tied together by the strings of fate. It was still there in the sky, lighting up the eastern horizon in late autumn.

Hange would go outside at night and look up at it, the chill of fall biting through her clothes. Reaching her hand towards the twinkling lights of the Primal with a strange euphoria inside. Witches were nothing but folk tales. Vampires, fairies, ghosts. None of them were real, just words on paper, but the Primals were different. Alphas were real. She saw them every single day, teaching in her school or walking on the sidewalks. Working in stores. Talking and laughing and fighting, they were not just a story in a children's book. If Alphas existed, then the Primals could, too. Hange was sure of it, small hands grasping at light that was thousands of years old before it reached her eyes. Starlight born of galaxies far away, places she would never see with her eyes, and there was a beauty in that. When she told her mother she thought Primals were real, she expected her to disagree. Tell her they were nothing but a scary chapter in one of her favorite bedtime stories. But she should have known better, really. Her mother just smiled, brushing long brown strands away from her glasses. Looked at her with an expression so fond that Hange could feel it even now, swimming in her chest. With that love in her face she changed Hange's whole world, a handful of words twisting all that she was into something new, something more.
"Maybe your right, you're so smart, Zoe. When you grow up maybe you can find out. If anyone can do it, it's you, love. You can do anything you set your mind to. I can feel it."

As she looked up into the sky now, it felt like fate that the Primal constellation stared back at her. Decades later, and Hange's mother was gone. Lost to a disease that often ate away at Betas, some flaw in their DNA that showed up from time to time.

One that would claim no more lives, because Hange had cured it. Broken those genes open until they could no longer defy her, twisted them until they were what she wanted them to be and nothing more. Whole, and well, and now pregnant mothers got a vaccination two months into their second trimester to prevent it from claiming their children's lives later on. All because of fairy tales, and those words echoing in Hange's mind year after year. 'You can do anything.... I can feel it.' A hope that can only be instilled when a child is young enough to believe that anything is possible, and that hope lingered within Hange for her entire life.

Her mother was gone, but those stars were still there. Shining through the windows of the lab, and the data spread out around her told a fairy tale all its own. Hormones she'd never seen before swimming in Eren's blood four years ago. A type of adrenaline new to science, its structure strange and intriguing. Capable of making someone stronger, faster, more aggressive. Pheromones that had leech from his glands, designed to attract Omegas desperate to protect him. Erwin's words echoing in her head now instead of her mothers, telling Hange that it was Levi who woke Eren up from his daze, his scent and his blood. Pulling the Alpha back from a haze of rage and violence, even as he slept.

Hange had felt joy when she cured the illness that took her mother, but it was tinged with sadness, because Hange had been too late. Too late to save her. Too late to keep her here. But now...

There was no sadness edging out this euphoria. Hange still read those stories sometimes, her mothers touch burned into the pages. The soft sound of her voice echoing in Hange's ears as she touched the paper, ran them over the ink. She could feel her mother in that book, and right then, Hange knew she was smiling down at her. Because she had been right.

Fairy tales were real.

And Hange could do anything.
"Are you sure you really want to do this Jean?" Eren's voice was rough, full of gravel, and he gritted his teeth as he spoke.

The two toned Alpha nodded, though, putting in his mouth guard as he bounced on the balls of his feet. Levi was on the mats across from him, dressed out in his shorts and gloves, mouth piece already in place. Jean had been insisting that he wanted to fight the Omega since Eren had done so that previous Tuesday, itching to get in the ring with someone who had almost bested the green eyed Alpha. It was Friday now, and while Eren was tired of listening to Jean whine about wanting to go toe to toe with Levi, he was also not sure this was wise.

The past few days had been nothing short of perfection for Eren. Paradise made flesh. Heaven on Earth. He woke up next to Levi each morning, and the Omega did not even flinch when Eren wrapped his arms around him. Nuzzled into his throat, still scabbed and bruised and bitten from where they'd bonded one another. Red slashes over his glands, and nothing had ever been so beautiful. It was only those marks that kept him seated next to the mats now, along with Mike's hand on his shoulder. Armin was nearby, eager to watch another Omega put an Alpha on his ass. He'd been lurking around the dojo for a couple of hours, ostensibly to watch Levi fight, but Eren knew he was really there trolleying for an Alpha to mate during his upcoming heat. The Alphas at the dojo gave him a wide berth, knowing full well just how terrifying the Omega could be. It was amusing to watch, and Eren wanted to laugh at them. All these powerful Alphas, watching Armin as though he was some kind of predator, ready to pounce on them at the first sign of weakness. Jean was the only one not distracted by the scent of Armin's looming heat, focused instead on Eren and his mate.

Jean thought he needed to fight Levi, but Eren was not entirely confident in his ability to let that happen. This Alpha would throw his fists at the Omega, grapple with him, kick and roll and strike. Try to hurt him. Try to make him submit, and even if it was as an opponent and not an Alpha, Eren wanted to growl. Had growled, earlier, before Mike showed up. There was still a rumbling noise itching at the back of Eren's throat, fists clenched so tight it was painful, and he had to look at the red marks on Levi's neck to calm himself.


Jean and Levi were both looking at Eren with wary expressions, waiting for him to nod. To give some sort of signal that he would not leap into the fray as soon as it began, all teeth and violence. But he could not manage anything, not a word, not a sign. All he could do was bare his teeth at Jean, hissing through them, making everyone around him take a step back. Mike moved in behind him then, kneeling, wrapping an arm around Eren's chest. With the blond Alpha pressed in close, someone Eren was used to yielding to holding him back, someone he was used to obeying...

Eren found himself calming, just slightly, some of the tension easing out of his muscles. Mike's voice was low in his ear, soft and questioning.

"You gonna be able to do this, kid?"

No. Fuck, no. How was he supposed to sit there while an Alpha struck out at Levi? But that was the wrong answer. His Omega was strong, and vicious, and full of confidence. It was clear from Levi's expression when Jean challenged him that he did not have the slightest doubt in his ability to bring this Alpha to his knees. If Eren could not sit back and let Levi do this, it sent the wrong sort of message to the Omega. That Eren thought he was weak, unable to take care of himself, when he was
entirely capable of handling any Alpha in the dojo. He'd almost beaten the brunet, after all. Eren did not doubt Levi's ferocity, but the Alpha within him bristled at the thought of someone laying their hands on his Omega with intent to do him harm.

*Jean wants to hurt your Omega, wants to hit him, wants to make him submit. He'll try to take Levi from you, he'll try to-* Mike's arm tightened around him, scent riling up in the air. Protective. The smell of an ally, a comrade. Someone who had shed blood to save Eren, who'd fought tooth and nail to keep him alive when others wanted to put him down. Someone who was not afraid of him, even knowing what he was capable of. That familiar voice rang out next to him, asking without so many words.

"Eren." Eren looked up, meeting Levi's eyes with furrowed brows. The Omega cocked his head to the side, looking at Jean for a moment before glancing back to Eren, and even if he didn't speak, the Alpha knew what his mate was saying.

*Do you really think I cannot win? That I am helpless without you?* No. He did not.

"I'm fine. It's fine. Kick his ass, Levi. Wipe that smug look off his stupid horse face."

It was hard to tell around the mouthguard, but it looked like Levi was smirking, and he nodded before turning his attention to the Alpha across the mat. Connie called out the start of the match, but Eren barely heard him, focusing on Levi instead. The way he sank down into a crouch, hands up by his face, feet already dancing over the floor. It was sinuous, and he found himself envying Jean this fight. Eren wanted to battle his Omega again, wanted to feel those muscles straining against him as they sound to find purchase.

*You can feel those muscles underneath your hands later...*

The Alpha bit back a groan, watching with golden eyes as the space between Jean and Levi disappeared, the former throwing out a tentative jab at the latter. *Tentative* was his first mistake, and Levi did not let him get away with such hesitation. Jean ate a right hook to the face, failing to bring up his guard in time to block. Most opponents would back off after a successful strike, give themselves a moment to plan their next attack. Levi was not most opponents. Jean was still reeling from the impact of Levi's fist when the Omega stepped in close, burying a knee in the Alpha's gut. Jean managed to pull back and escape some of the force the blow, but Eren heard the air come out of him in a rush. The Alpha retreated, eyes watching Levi much more carefully now, the way a predator watched a venomous snake. One he knew would strike, vicious and full of poison.

Jean was faster than Eren, even he would admit it, and there were few people in the dojo that could match that speed. He came to rely on it in his fights, which was not a bad thing. Using your strengths to your advantage was necessary, and Jean knew he was quick on his feet.

But Levi was faster, closer to the ground, and the Alpha was barely keeping up as he slid in and started throwing punches and kicks. Jean could not manage to get in any strikes of his own, using all of that speed to evade instead of attack. He had no choice, not with the Omega's fists striking out at his face, feet slicing through the air to try and take out his legs. Part of Eren was incredibly curious, wondering if Levi would actually try to take an opponent so much larger than himself to the ground in order to finish the fight. Once they were on the mats, any size differences would be almost irrelevant, but getting Jean to ground would be a trick for someone as small as Levi. He would probably have to wrap his legs around the Alpha's waist and use his weight to topple them. Eren went tense at the thought of Levi and Jean grappling on the floor, writhing against each other. It was totally different in the context of a fight, nothing sexual about it in any way, and yet-

"Eren."
Mike's voice grounded him yet again, and it was only then he noticed he was growling. Levi and Jean were totally ignoring him, though it probably took a lot of effort to do so, and the Alpha silenced himself, not wanting to distract his mate. Teeth gritted, nails cutting into his palms, but he managed to bite back any noise. Jean was ducking under Levi's hands, darting out of the way of those feet, but Eren could see he was flagging. Jean had not expected Levi to be so aggressive, and Eren knew it was because he was Omega. Even if it was subconscious, the Alpha inside of Jean did not expect Levi to be a challenge. That ancient part of him saw Levi and thought, *here is an Omega, they will submit to me.*

Yet Levi did not submit to anyone but Eren, and even then it was not a true submission. Not an admission of weakness, or defeat.

When Levi yielded to Eren, it only showed his complete trust in the Alpha. *'I am strong enough to give you this, because you will not hurt me.'* In the face of this Omega, Eren was powerless to do anything but obey. All he had to do was speak, and the Alpha would fall all over himself to comply. And Levi knew it.

Now the Omega was creeping up towards Jean with fire in his eyes, and even before his fists moved, Eren saw that it was over. Those hands were too fast, and Jean was not ready for them. The first strike missed, but the second hit home, and *hard,* right in the mouth. Jean staggered backwards, dropping his guard as his head spun, and Levi was merciless. He landed another blow to Jean's jaw, and a third to temple. The Alpha's head snapped to the side, mouthguard flying from his mouth, and when he landed on the mat Connie whistled loudly. Jean was not unconscious, but this was no tournament match, and it was clear he was done. Unable to defend, dazed and blinking up at Levi as though he wasn't entirely sure what had happened. Armin cheered loudly, letting out a couple of whistles even as he helped Jean to his feet, and Connie called out Levi's win.

"Victory for Levi, technical KO. Got put on your ass fast, Kirstein."

Levi grinned as he pulled out his mouth guard, heading over to where Jean stood, wobbly and disoriented. The Alpha noticed him there and grinned, sounding more cocky than someone who looked unsteady on his feet had any right to.

"I'll get you next time, you bastard." Levi rolled his eyes, tugging off his gloves as Armin laughed.

"Isn't that what you tell Eren every single time?" Jean shoved at the Omega, making an irritated sound through his teeth.

"Someday it'll be true."

Assured that Jean was fine, he walked over to Eren as Mike finally released the Alpha from his hold.

"You still all twitchy, Alpha?" Eren stood up, shuddering involuntarily at the sound of Levi calling him *Alpha.* The Omega did not appear surprised when Eren pulled him in for a hug, rubbing his scent glands over Levi's throat as he growled. *'Guess that's a yes.'*

"Shhhhh. Give me a minute." Another Alpha had been trying to hurt his Omega, and even if he knew there was no real danger, Eren needed a moment. To calm his breathing, to slow his heart beat.

To convince the Alpha inside him that he did not need to tear Jean apart, piece by piece. Listen to him beg for mercy.

He eased back from Levi just slightly, taking the Omega's chin and angling it upwards. A blush painted those already pink cheeks a brighter shade as Eren brought their mouths together. It was
light, the barest press of his lips to Levi's, but Eren needed that kiss. Needed to taste his Omega, if only briefly.

"Well, that was certainly interesting." Eren's head snapped up at the sound of Erwin's voice, breaking them apart even sooner than he'd intended. His arms went tighter around Levi of their own accord. They'd made peace with one another, but his instincts recognized the blond as a threat in spite of that. He'd fought him, the memory of their bout still etched into his fists, and the Alpha inside was wary. Eren hadn't noticed the other Alpha there, unsure of when he arrived, and anyone who could get so close without him being aware of it was dangerous. Mike stepped between the pair and Erwin, arms crossed, glaring. He did not seem to appreciate the other blond's presence, either.

"Mr. Smith. I believe I told you that you weren't welcome at my place of business. Is there something I can help you with?" He sounded deceptively calm, even as everyone in the room could smell his scent in the air. Harsh and aggressive, a territorial scent, and this dojo was Mike's territory more than anywhere else on earth. Erwin held his hands up in a sign of surrender, grinning at the other blond.

"Hey, I come in peace. Ask your boy there." Eren sighed, still clinging to Levi, ruffling his hair affectionately. The Omega seemed annoyed by the gesture but allowed it grudgingly, even as he wanted to shove Eren away. The Alpha could feel the tension in Levi's body, and the fact that the Omega didn't fight his hold had his chest aching.

"It's fine Mike. We made nice." Mike glanced at Eren, who nodded, before relaxing his posture.

"All right. You start any shit here, Erwin, and I will remove you from the premises myself. Enthusiastically. All right?"

"Understood." Erwin still managed to sound condescending, and Mike made an amused sound as he went back to his office. Eren was almost disappointed. To watch those two Alphas go at it would be a sight to behold. Erwin turned towards Levi and Eren, holding up a small bag and making a sheepish face. "Ah, Hange sent me down here actually. She wants to know if I can take a swab of your glands for her research. I told her to come herself, but she's... engrossed, as it were. Hasn't left the lab for the last few days." Eren finally released Levi from his arms, rubbing absently over his scent glands.

"My glands?"

"Both yours and Levi's. Just a cotton swab, wipe it over your scent glands, stick it in a bag. You can do the honors, if you'd like?" Erwin held out the bag, and Levi snatched it away with a huff.

"Fucking stupid glasses. Is she at least eating?" The Omega dug through the package and retrieved the swabs, wiping at his own glands and bagging it before repeating the process with Eren. There was no way to mark the samples, but an Alpha and Omega had totally different hormones in their scent glands. Hange would be able to tell who's was who's, even without a label, despite the fact that Eren had just scent marked him.

"I made her eat something before I agreed to come retrieve the samples for her. She grumbled about it but choked the food down. I can't stay too long, I've got to drop these off before I go back to the office. We're processing applications for my new assistant." Levi furrowed his brows in confusion.

"What happened to your other assistant?"

"She's having a baby. Decided she doesn't want to work through her pregnancy. She's having some complications and the doctors have advised she stay off her feet for the duration." Armin was there suddenly, standing next to Erwin with a predatory smile on his face.
"What does being your assistant entail, exactly? Mr...." Erwin blinked down at the Omega, nostrils flaring as he took in Armin's scent.

"Smith. Erwin Smith." He held out his hand in greeting, which Armin shook eagerly in both of his own. Brushing his wrist across the back of Erwin's knuckles, just slightly, and Eren fought down a grin. The Alpha would be smelling that scent on his skin for days, no matter how many times he washed his hands. A reminder that there was an Omega nearing his heat, close enough that he'd reached out and touched him. Eren saw the Alpha's eyes flash bright at the contact, heard the sharp intake of breath that preceded his next words. "And you are?"

"I'm Armin Arlert. A friend of Eren's. I work in customer service, but I've been looking for an office job for awhile now. Is your assistant a secretarial position? Because I have quite a bit of experience as an administrative assistant. I think I could be of... some sort of use to you, Mr. Smith." Armin finally released Erwin's hand, reaching up to brush a few stray locks of hair out of his eyes, and the Alpha followed the gesture with hungry eyes. Armin's hands lingered by his throat, casually, even as his fingers rubbed over the gland in his neck. The Omega's smell swirled stronger in the air around him, and Erwin blinked a few times, cocking his head in a canine fashion.

"It's pretty much a secretary, yes. Taking phone calls, organizing paperwork, scheduling, things like that. If you think you have the necessary skills, I might be able to put you to work. After you fill out an application and attend an interview, of course. I'm heading to the office now, I can bring an application to Eren for you later, if you'd like." Armin smiled wide, closing the distance between them, biting his lip briefly.

"Or I could accompany you. I don't live too far from here, if you wouldn't mind dropping me back off at home afterwards?" Levi and Eren watched the exchange, sharing an amused look.

"I don't mind at all, though you'd have to come to the lab with me and meet Hange. If it's not too much trouble."

"I'd be interested in meeting her, after everything Eren's told me. She sounds quite brilliant." Armin and Erwin had already started walking towards the door, engrossed in their conversation, when Levi cleared his throat. Held up the bag with their swabs in it, eying Erwin as though he was an idiot. Eren couldn't really blame him, Armin had that effect on cocky Alphas, after all.

"You might be needing this, Mr. Smith." Erwin had the decency to look embarrassed as he retrieved the bag, but wasted no time in rejoining Armin, who was waiting by the door. As soon as they departed, Eren and Levi locked eyes before bursting into laughter. Holding their sides as they leaned over, overwhelmed and shaking with it. Eren found his voice first, though it was breathless and high pitched.

"Oh my God, your friend is so fucked, Levi."

"Literally so."

They started laughing again, loud and unchecked. It was a long time before they got their shit together, and Eren could almost feel sorry for Erwin.

Almost.

Eren watched Levi eat. Carefully, as though he would miss some vital detail. It was something he did every time they had a meal together, and if the Omega noticed, he did not mention it. Eren got a
savage joy out of making food for Levi, watching him devour it bite by bite. The Alpha inside him sang out the rightness of it, his Omega filled up with food Eren had prepared. Sustaining him, in a basic way, and the Alpha had to fight down a smile at the sight. His own food was always cold when he got around to eating it, but Eren did not care. Levi offered to cook every evening, but the brunet refused so adamantly that he did not push the issue. Eren knew many Alphas insisted their Omegas cook, and could not understand why. He wanted to take care of Levi in every way that the Omega would allow. Wanted to feed him, and clothe him, and provide for him, even though he could do these things himself just fine.

A part of Eren briefly envied his ancient counterparts. If they'd lived long ago, the Alpha would have delighted in running through the forest, searching out prey. Skinning it, and cooking it in a fire he started with nothing but sticks and strength. Levi would fill his stomach with meat Eren had hunted, wear furs from the animals the Alpha brought down. Drink water the brunet gathered from a river. Go to sleep at night in a shelter wrought from Eren's hands. Protected by his teeth and his claws and his will, kept safe from harm in Eren's embrace.

And Levi would have hated every second of it, probably.

Now the Omega caught him staring, brows coming together in scowl.

"What?" Eren blinked, looking guilty, and stammered over his words.

"Uh, n-nothing, I, ah-" The Alpha's phone buzzed on the table, saving him the awkwardness of admitting to Levi that he was watching him eat like some sort of psychopath.

**Mikasa: You coming to watch the fights at Armin's tomorrow?**

He must have been frowning at the phone, because Levi spoke up.

"What's wrong?" Eren sighed heavily, fingers hovering over the keys, unsure of his answer.

"Mikasa wants to know if we're going to Armin's for the fights tomorrow." Levi's eyes flashed, full of some emotion the Alpha couldn't decipher.

"Your little admirer is going to be there, right?" *Thomas.* The Omega's voice was acidic and sharp, and Eren found himself cringing.

"Yeah, probably." Levi stabbed into his salad with staggering viciousness, meeting Eren's gaze, and his words brooked no argument.

"We're going. I need to meet your friends anyway, right?" The Alpha could smell Levi now, scent full of possession and hostility. He was fucking *jealous,* and Eren wanted to revel in it. Knew better. Bit his lip, fought down a grin.

"Ah, yeah. Sure. They'll be happy."

**Eren: I'll be there. Levi too.**

**Mikasa: K. I'll let everyone know. If your mate is there, everyone's gonna show. It's hard to imagine you bonded. It'll be like an exhibit at the zoo or something.**

Eren rolled his eyes, but even Mikasa's bullshit could not put a damper on his joy. Levi wanted to go to the party, and the Alpha was positive it was not out of eagerness to meet his friends. The Omega wanted to be there to stake his claim on Eren. To mark his territory. To challenge a perceived rival.
Eren felt victory roar through him, primitive and triumphant. He'd always dreaded having to deal with Thomas, but as for tomorrow?

The Alpha could not wait.

..........................................................

He waited until Friday to make the call, after days of sitting idle.

"There's no one here, boss. It's a ghost town, been empty since we got here. Somebody spooked your little Omega, caught wind of the intel we got somehow. We're not gonna get anywhere this way." The Alpha waited for a response, feeling an itching sensation in his jaw. They'd been watching the house constantly, waiting for someone to show up. It was clear now that the OSC knew they'd been in their systems, gotten this address. He was twitchy with the need for action, but so far there was nothing but waiting, and Alphas were not patient. His companion shifted in place, keen ears waiting for their boss' reply.

"Kick the doors. See what you can find. Let me know something before you do anything else."

"All right, boss."

"How many times have I told you, don't fucking call me that."

"All right, Kenny."

There was something immensely satisfying about rearing back and battering a door down with his foot. The way the wood splintered under the force, chunks flying in the air, hinges loose and forlorn. Something beautiful about the way it was thoroughly broken. Would not close again. Would keep nothing out anymore. Would never be whole, because he had destroyed it.

He destroyed people that way, too, and it was even more perfect.

The house was incredibly clean inside, and it did not take long to find something useful. A pile of papers sitting out on a desk, neatly stacked.

South Stohess Omega Refuge

Discharge Release

Patient: Levi Ackerman, Omega, RH

Released into the care of: Eren Jaeger, Alpha, RT

There was more information, dates and signatures and notes taken by doctors and nurses, but that was not what caught his eye. He read the address of the Alpha with a smile on his face, teeth feeling sharp in his mouth, and it was moments like these he did not mind being Kenny's dog.

Because it meant he got to hunt, and right then he was eager for the chase.
Regroup

"Target has moved in, he's been inside for a couple of minutes now, stand by at ready for orders."

The OSC strike team had been laying in wait for the past few days, rotating out in shifts, listening for some kind of signal from the tech crew watching Levi's house. Commander Smith insisted a team be there twenty-four seven, ready to take into custody anyone who tried to enter by force. After a whole lot of nothing, they were all starting to get antsy and bored. It would not be the first time that Smith had set them up to watch some Omega's house for weeks only to finally decide nothing was going to come of it and call the team off. There was little in life more frustrating that gearing up in body armor and sitting in the back of a van with seven other Alphas and Betas, sweating in spite of the air conditioning, breathing stale air. So when their resident communications officer perked up, the order to stand by ready given, they could scarcely believe it.

Cards fell forgotten to the floor, handheld gaming systems clattering on metal, rifles loaded with nonlethal rounds taken from racks overhead. A few of the soldiers pulled out handguns instead, better at close range than some of the long weapons, while a couple were bare handed. Ready to try and take down their opponent while the others neutralized him with tazers and rubber bullets. They rolled out their arms, shook the ache from their muscles, pulled their face masks into place. Crouched next to the back exit, adrenaline starting to flow.

"Single target, armed, dynamic unknown. Assume Alpha. Both teams move in on my mark." They could hear the countdown through the earpiece, but the officer held up his hand anyway, three fingers in the air. Folding in one by one, until he was clenching a fist. "Three, two, one. Go, go go!"

Two strike teams was overkill for a single person, but they had not been sure how many targets might show up, and wanted to be safe rather than sorry. They leapt from the back of their vans, situated on opposite sides of the house. One parked in an empty garage, the other nestled in a tree line down the road. They were inside the house in less than a minute, fast and agile.

The other Alpha watched from the woods behind Levi's house, high up in a tree to gain the best vantage point. She'd seen one of the vans roll up, and it did not take a very keen eye to be able to tell it was the OSC. Not when you knew what to look for, as she did. But they needed to get into that house either way, even as anxiety swelled through her, so she'd suggested they split up just in case. One on watch, one kicking the door, and as a female Alpha her male counterpart had insisted he be the one on the ground, despite the fact that she could take him in a fight with one hand tied behind her back. Their strike team descended on her companion, even as the other Alpha rattled off an address through the phone at her ear, and she burned the numbers into her memory before relaying the information to him.

"Marlo, you've got company. A lot of them. You're not gonna be able to fight your way out of this one. You gonna let them take you?" It was a rhetorical question. They'd been raised by Kenny and his crew ever since they were children, orphaned on the street. She realized later that if she'd presented as Omega, her life would've been much different. Sold off to a harem, or whored off to victorious Alpha fighters as a war prize. But Omegas were weak, and that was their place in the scheme of things. To serve, to submit, to obey. It had been beaten into at a young age, but even before that the first thing they learned was not how to read or write.

It was never surrender.
And always go down fighting.

"You got that address?" Hitch nodded, then realized he could not see her. Answered instead, voice not betraying the anguish she felt. It had been her idea for one of them to wait in the trees, and she should have known he would insist it be her. If she'd kept her mouth shut, they could have had one last battle, standing back to back against the world. Marlo had been her companion ever since they presented together. Not a mate, no, but a brother in arms. They'd fought side by side year after year, snatching up Alphas for Kenny's pits and eluding the OSC. Now... well..

There was no eluding this.

"I got it. I'll take care of things." She could hear the sneer on his face when he spoke, and even in her grief, Hitch couldn't help but smile.

"Tell Kenny I'll see him in hell."

There was a loud crunching sound before the call disconnecting, Marlo destroying his phone no doubt. If the OSC got into it, they would be able to track her down through the call he'd just made. There was no point in listening to the fight going on inside the house. Only one end left now, and she didn't want to hear it. She could think about it later, once her mission was accomplished. Marlo had died for this, and she would not let it be in vain. Hitch crept away into the darkness, making her way to the car they had stashed a few miles away. The Alphas address was easy to find with her phone, tapping a few keys. She would not rush into that place as they had before, thoughtless and impatient.

It only took a few hours of watching 'Eren Jaeger's' house to realize there were OSC here, too. She cursed, muttering profanities as the same car patrolled, parked, sat for awhile. Circled the block, parking in a different spot, oblivious to her presence in the backyard of a nearby home. She was not equipped to deal with another OSC team, not by herself.

And that was before she dared to walk down the sidewalk, disguised as a jogger, earphones in her ears and feet eating up the pavement. Trying to smell the people inside, see if she could tell how many there were. If it was only two, just the Alpha and an Omega, it would not be so bad. She could wait until they went somewhere, see if any OSC tailed them, take care of the Alpha and throw the Omega in her trunk. She was strong, and there were very few enemies she could not take down.

Then she caught the Alphas scent, from farther away than should be possible, and felt her guts run cold. Oh, fuck. Hitch suddenly wanted to run away, wanted to jump in her car and drive. Far, and fast, until this Alphas scent was nowhere to be found. It was the most overwhelming thing she had ever smelled, and for Hitch, that was saying something. She'd seen Alphas rip their way through a dozen opponents in the pits, covered in blood and scent, dominant and terrifying.

It was nothing compared to what she scented now. This Alpha was a fucking monster, and her ego was nowhere near large enough to try and convince her she stood a chance against him. Not only that, but there were traces of another smell mingling with the Alphas. Sweeter, less sharp, and it took only a few seconds for Hitch to realize with horror what it was. Bonded. The Omega they were after had bonded this beast of an Alpha. Recently, too. She carefully made her way back to her hiding place, scowling and furious.

A freshly bonded Omega in the care of an Alpha more powerful than any she'd ever come across. She'd have more luck breaking into OSC headquarters by herself and taking out its Commander bare handed than snatching an Omega from that house.

She could wait. Hitch could call Kenny, and have him send another team of Alphas. More than two,
because they would definitely need them. But even as the thought crossed her mind, it tasted bitter in Hitch's mouth.

Defeat. Calling in more Alphas was defeat, and not just for her, but for Marlo, too. If she could not do this herself, then Marlo had died for nothing. Still, Hitch could not beat a monster like that. Maybe if she had a tranquilizer, but even the normal shots would probably not do the trick for this Alpha, and she hadn't brought any with her anyway. Had not thought she would need them just to get her hands on an Omega.

A conversation flitted through her mind, Kenny on the phone with someone in Shiganshina, one of his cohorts. A doctor, who supplied him with drugs to knock out especially powerful Alphas they wanted for the pits, currently engrossed in research at an underground lab here. Hitch was dialing before she could take a breath, and Kenny answered almost immediately.

"You have the Omega?"

"No. We lost Marlo. I found the Omega, but he's with an Alpha I'm no match for. I need some tranquilizers, some powerful ones. Your doctor friend still in Shiganshina? I could use his help. Is he willing to get his hands a little dirty?" Hitch could feel Kenny smiling, and a chill ran down her spine.

"He certainly is."

Levi had not meant to get drunk, really. Buzzed at the very least, mind starting to blur at the edges a bit. But there were so many of Eren's friends at Armin's, and even if he'd already met most of them, they all wanted to talk. Not only that, but even when they were not asking the pair questions they were staring. Grinning like idiots at Eren and Levi, whispering to one another, looking far too pleased with themselves. Armin and Mikasa had both been there when they'd arrived, Eren and Levi depositing themselves on the couch together. Levi sat on the side, Eren pressing in next to him closer than necessary, the clear staking of a claim. As though there was some Alpha there who would be idiotic enough to try and take Levi from him. It was ridiculous, and stupid.

It made Levi warm inside in places that were just now becoming familiar, and he fought a smile from his lips and blush from his cheeks. He was wanted, and protected, and this Alpha would bare his teeth and raise his fists if someone even looked at him wrong. The Omega wanted to hate it, wanted to scowl. Wanted to be annoyed, to feel insulted at the implication that he could not look after himself.

All he could do was keep fighting the smile that wanted to form on his face, euphoric and giddy and fuck, he was so stupid.

Everyone filtered in one by one after them, Jean and Reiner showing up first, the former still sporting a shiner that made Levi grin in spite of himself. The Beta who worked the desk at the dojo arrived next, Sasha, along with another Beta who Levi had seen several times but never officially met. Connie shook his hand as they were introduced, eliciting a snarl from Eren than had the Beta giggling. He turned to Levi with a sympathetic smile, sitting down on the other couch as Sasha collapsed next to him with a plate full of food.

"Oh God, can't even shake your hand. It's just as bad when you're not fighting anyone I guess." Levi smirked in answer.
"It's constant, really." Eren was indignant, coming to his own defense.

"Hey! It's not constant. And you're one to talk, you almost ate Armin the other day!" Levi shot him a vicious look, but Armin entered the room then, nodding in agreement.

"It's true. He almost ripped my throat out."

"Don't forget Historia!" Ymir and Historia had come in the front door and made their way down the hall, catching the last bits of conversation.

"Yeah, you did sort of attack me." Levi glanced between the two Omegas, glaring, taking a generous drink of his beer.

"So much for Omegan solidarity. Fuck both you guys."

Everyone just laughed, and then Levi began working on his booze in earnest. It was... too comfortable there, too relaxed. Levi felt out of place with his harsh words and angry demeanor, wondering why he still felt the need to be so defensive. He was with his mate, meeting Eren's friends. If they couldn't stand Levi, it was going to make Eren's entire life miserable. His Omega and his friends constantly at odds, never quite in sync as they should be, and Levi cringed at the thought of being a source of contention. He did not want these people to resent him for taking their friend away, for being difficult and unsociable and just generally an asshole. So if Levi had to down a few beers to loosen up?

It was a small price to pay for Eren's happiness, and hell, it had been a long time since he drank more than a couple of drinks at a time anyway.

More of Eren's buddies arrived, a giant of a Beta named Bertholdt and some people from the dojo that Levi had seen in passing. Each time someone shook Levi's hand or smiled a little too warmly, Eren snarled and bared his teeth. No one looked bothered by it, so used to submitting to the Alpha that they did it automatically. The brunet seemed almost embarrassed by it, but was still unable to reign in his aggression. Just put an arm around Levi, tugging him in closer, idly scent marking the Omega's hair as he chatted with Jean. It was an effort not to shudder, that rich scent washing over Levi in waves. Soon there were too many people to really keep track of, but it did not matter. He felt much more at ease, talking to Armin while Eren and Jean bickered about one thing after the other. The actual fights had not yet started playing out on the screen yet, and everyone milled around idly, eating and drinking. Sasha and Connie wandered in and out, going for more smoke breaks than was probably healthy, but Levi wasn't their mother. He did wonder how they could stand the stench, because even from so far away it had his nose wrinkling. Then again they were Betas, their noses less keen.

Eren was more affectionate than usual, probably because of all the people there, though there were no unfamiliar Alphas. Just his sister and Jean, along with Ymir and Reiner. Still, Eren's free hand was always on Levi somehow, toying with his hair, resting on his thigh. He nuzzled the Omega's locks and whispered in his ear, pressing soft kisses to his cheek from time to time. Levi tried not to wince underneath the attention, unused to someone lavishing touch on him in public that way. Still he blushed, and scowled, glaring at Eren when he ruffled his hair or pulled the Omega in to bring their mouths together briefly. There were people everywhere, 000-ing and aww-ing at them whenever they caught the Alpha cuddling against his mate. Levi was not ashamed to be tied to Eren. Who would be? He was fucking beautiful, and strong, yet still the gentlest Alpha Levi had ever met. Levi was proud to be his mate, even if he wasn't ready to admit it, to himself or anyone else.

He just didn't like being the center of everyone's attention. It made him twitchy, all those eyes on him. The feeling of being watched intensified, and he glanced around the room until he found the
source. A male Omega he'd never met was staring openly, nursing a beer and standing in the doorway that led to the kitchen. Blonde and lean, eyes glittering as he looked at Levi and Eren. Predatory, and full of mischief. There was only one other Omega who was supposed to be in attendance that night, and Levi realized all at once that this had to be Thomas. The Omega grinned at him as though reading his mind before backing away into the kitchen, and Levi was on his feet in an instant. He muttered something to Eren about getting another beer and vanished before the Alpha could respond.

When he caught sight of the Omega, the blonde was leaning against the counter, still smirking. Levi crossed his arms, sizing him up automatically as though he were about to face him in the ring. Nothing. This Omega was nothing, as enemies went. There was no awareness to him, eyes not keen enough, limbs weak, frame loose. Even in his drunken state, Levi could have him on the ground in an instant.

But not all battles were physical, and those eyes might not been sharp enough to beat Levi in a fight, but they seemed to bore into him. Down through his chest, into his guts. His arms looked weak, but his skin was smooth and unscarred, golden hair falling across his face. He was not strong, but he was pretty, in a fragile sort of way. Someone an Alpha would fall all over themselves to protect, and Levi found himself scowling as he spoke.

"I don't believe we've been introduced." The Omega smiled, and it was more feral than it had any right to be coming from the blonde's helpless form.

"From the way you're looking at me, I think my reputation might precede me, unfortunately. I'm Thomas. It's nice to meet you." Levi cocked his head to the side, instinctively exposing his mating marks. Look at my Alpha's teeth, and his bond, and the marks from his mouth. See how he wants me.

"Is it now?" Thomas laughed, throwing his head back, and it sounded bright. Vibrant, and confident, and Levi hated this kid suddenly, even more than before.

"I take it you would be Levi?"

"Levi, yes. I'm Eren's mate." The blonde Omega smiled, rubbing the tip of his beer bottle back and forth across his mouth.

"I can see that. Scent it, too. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't jealous. How'd you manage to lure him in? I could use some pointers." Levi growled low, taking a step forward. Aggression rolling off him in waves, scent riling into the air. Fierce, and territorial. A challenge as undeniable as any Alpha's, and just as serious.

"Eren's mine. He's got a mate now. If he wanted you, he would've had you already." Thomas leaned forward, throwing a glance towards the living room, gaze lingering on Eren, and Levi found himself outright snarling then. He did not even want this Omega looking at his Alpha. Didn't want him in the same room, in the same house, breathing the same air. His hands fell from his chest, clenching at his sides, eager to fist and flex. Levi's body wanted to fall into a fighting stance, wanted to tackle this Omega to the ground and force him to submit. But that would not be defeat, not for an Omega like this. One like Armin, who did not fight with his strength but with his wiles. It would be a victory, an acknowledgement that Levi saw him as a threat. That he was insecure in the bond he shared with Eren.

Afraid to lose his Alpha to another Omega. Afraid Eren would cast him aside, and choose someone else. Someone happy and carefree. Someone that was all smiles and laughter, bright eyes and soft touches.
Someone who was so different from Levi, the Omega could taste blood in his mouth, and only then did he realize he was biting his tongue to keep from tearing out this boy's throat with his teeth. This boy who was still fucking grinning, looking like he was enjoying himself.

"He's got a mate. But an Alpha like that could handle more than one, don't you think?" Thomas leaned back then, face close to Levi's, eyes dancing. "We could share." Levi wrenched his lids shut for a moment, fighting his instincts. Instincts that told him this Omega would not be a threat if he was bleeding out on the floor, that fucking smirk melted away into nothingness. When he pried his eyes open again they felt strange for a second, and Thomas looked at him with a furrowed brow as light flashed out between them. *Light?* But Levi could not be worried about that. Not with a rival in front of him, looking as though he'd already won something.

Levi wanted to wipe that look from Thomas's face with his fists.

"He doesn't need more than one, and I don't share." The tightness in his eyes faded, and then Thomas was looking smug again, and he whispered in Levi's ear.

"Maybe you don't share, but you also look like your ready to scratch your skin off every time he touches you. How long do you think he'll be happy with a mate who simply tolerates his affection, rather than enjoys it? I'm not going to try and take your mate from you, Omega. But once he tires of being tolerated instead of mated, I will still be here." Thomas pulled back to meet Levi's gaze, still talking too low for anyone else to hear. "Eager, and enthusiastic, and willing. And those marks you have will look so damn good on me, I can hardly wait. Until then, little Omega."

Levi clenched his teeth, listening absentely as Thomas eased around him left the kitchen, muttering goodbyes to everyone as he apologized for leaving early. Something about work, Levi didn't really pay attention. He stood there for a long time, lost in thoughts that were red and furious.

*Mine. Eren's MINE.* He was, it was true. They had the marks to prove it, their scents tied together, the Alpha's teeth etched into Levi's skin.

*How long do you think he'll be happy with a mate who simply tolerates his affection....?*

The Omega could not deny, that was what it looked like. That Levi simply tolerated Eren's touches, his kisses, his attention. As though he indulged the Alpha, and did not truly enjoy those things himself. But Levi didn't know how to *do this*, how to be close with someone, how to give in. How to let Eren love him without feeling self conscious, especially with all those eyes on them.

The Alpha deserved better than Levi. Someone who would melt under his hands, and his lips, no matter who was around. Someone who-

Suddenly there were arms wrapping around Levi's waist from behind, a face nuzzling into his throat, and the Omega knew who it was in an instant. By scent, and the feel of Eren's skin, and the way Levi's bonding marks heated up at the slightest touch. *Alpha. Mine.*

"Are you okay? I saw Thomas leaving, and you were in here with him awhile. I was curious, but I didn't want to... intrude, or something. I wanted to let you... I don't know, handle it yourself." Levi leaned into Eren, letting his head fall back on the Alpha's shoulder and breathing him in. The smell of his Alpha reached inside, calming his racing heart, slowing the blood flowing too fast through his veins. Making him relax, easing the tension from Levi's muscles. All those doubts fell away, and he turned around in Eren's arms, standing on his toes to take the Alpha's mouth.

Eren's lips were hot on the Omega's, those big hands holding Levi tight against him as their tongue's writhed together. No hesitation, no fears, just *Alpha* and *Omega* and all Levi could think was *Yes,*
mine, just mine.'

Maybe Eren deserved better than him, but people didn't always get what they deserved. This Alpha was stuck with Levi now, and if he had to step outside of his comfort zone to let Eren know how much he cared, the Omega would do it.

He would walk through fire. Crawl through glass. Shed his blood, his sweat, his tears.

He would kiss this Alpha for all he was worth, and not care who was watching.
It was after midnight by the time the fights were over, and for the first time ever, Eren had paid almost no attention to them. Usually it was hard to tear his eyes away, his focus on the different techniques of the fighters hard to shake. Their strengths, their weaknesses, the opening the Alpha would have used to defeat them, had he been their opponent. It was second nature for him now, picking apart every movement, knowing where he would have thrown a punch or a kick, when he would have brought them to the mats. He'd been far more interested in Levi that night, who snuggled into him like a cat, less inhibited with every beer he drank. The Alpha was always the one cuddling Levi, not the other way around, and Eren did not exactly mind. Lavishing affection on Levi was not something he would stop doing anytime soon. It was instinctive, the most natural thing in the world to take Levi into his arms and hold him close. Kiss him, and run fingers through his hair. Mouth lazily at his throat, tasting Levi's scent straight from the source, and though the Omega melted under Eren's touch, he rarely initiated things himself, even in private.

When the Omega's body went loose with alcohol, eyes growing fuzzy and dazed, that changed dramatically. As soon as Thomas left, Levi seemed different. Resolved in some way, though Eren didn't know what had happened between them, he couldn't manage to be bothered by it. Not when Levi's head was on his chest, hand fisted in Eren's shirt, then later on slipping underneath it to absent trace over the muscles of the Alpha's abdomen. There was no way Levi consciously realized what he was doing, and it took every ounce of Eren's willpower to be still beneath Levi's fingers and not arch up into the touch. When those long, lithe fingers began idly scratching through the coarse hair right above the waistband of his jeans, Eren had to hold back a groan. He couldn't entirely control his scent, however, riling up with lust, and though Levi did not seem to notice in his drunken state, the other Alphas in the room did. Eren bit his lip, head falling back onto the couch as Ymir and Jean fought down laughter, side eying the pair. Not that the Alpha cared, he wasn't the slightest bit embarrassed. Levi might be, once he became aware of just how demonstrative he'd been in front of all of Eren's friends, but he wasn't about to stop him.

His Omega curled up against his chest, marked and covered in his scent, those hands on Eren's skin, the Alpha's arms wrapped tightly around Levi... There was no better place to be, and if Levi was embarrassed about his actions later on, it just meant Eren got to watch the Omega flush at the memory.

Finally all their friend's had gone home, leaving only the pair and Armin behind, the blond Omega idly cleaning his house. He was in the kitchen now, out of sight, but the Alpha could hear dishes clattering around in the sink. Eren was about to suggest they head home when Levi straddled him on the couch, hands clutching at the Alpha's brown locks. The Omega brought their mouths together, and despite being on his best friends couch, Armin in the next room, Eren did not have it in himself to push Levi away. His hands slid up the back of Levi's shirt instead, pressing him closer, Eren's mouth opening as the Omega shoved his tongue inside. Never in a million years would he have expected Levi to be so forceful, and he was shuddering beneath him. The Alpha made a growling noise into Levi's lips, rutting thoughtlessly up into him. His Omega tasted like beer, sour with a hint of lime, but Levi's own flavor was underneath it all and Eren could not get enough. God, he was fucking perfect, those fingers twisting brutally in Eren's hair, whining against the Alpha's mouth. Small and strong, boneless right then, writhing in Eren's lap in a way that had the Alpha breathless. They had begun to get lost in each other when Armin's voice broke through, wry and amused.

"I don't really mind if you fuck on the furniture, but just know it's not the couch's maiden voyage. That ship has sailed many times, with many passengers. Just put down a blanket or something, I don't want to clean up Levi's jizz."
Eren broke away from Levi then, tucking the Omega's face into his neck instinctively. Hiding him from prying eyes, even if those eyes were Armin's, and he was not a threat. Levi didn't appear to be very aware of Armin's presence, licking at the Alpha's throat now, making Eren shiver. It took a few moments to find words, but then he spoke, standing up and taking Levi with him.

"I think we'll be heading home now." Levi wrapped his legs around Eren's waist, arms going over the Alpha's shoulders as he nuzzled into him. Still awake, backing off of Eren now to blink at Armin, more conscious of his surroundings.

"Mmm. Drive safe. Don't let Levi blow you on the way home, it's dangerous." Levi flipped the blond off, shooting him a glare even as Eren fired back a retort.

"You'd know, wouldn't you." Armin made an irritated noise, opening the door for them.

"Jealousy doesn't suit you, Eren."

"Who's jealous of getting in a car crash because they were sucking the driver off?"

"We we're in a parking lot, he forgot to put on the emergency brake and- you know what, shut the fuck up and get out of my house. Take that drunk ass Omega with you." Armin smiled through his insults as Eren filed out the door.

"Night, Arm."

"See ya."

They headed down the porch steps, but as soon as Eren reached the yard Levi started to struggle against his hold.

"Put me down, I c'n walk." Eren grinned, squeezing the Omega's thighs even tighter, keeping him in place.

"I don't wanna, though."

"Eren, don' be a shit." The Alpha finally eased Levi to the ground anyway, smirking, holding onto the Omega's shoulder as he weaved on his feet for a moment.

"You good?" He steadied quickly, batting Eren's hand away from his arm only to lace their fingers together.

"M'fine. Let's go home." Home. Levi said it naturally, without hesitation or qualification. Not your house, but home. It was meaningless, probably, something the inebriated Omega said without thinking.

The idea that Eren's house was Levi's home made warmth swell through the Alpha, and he could not imagine feeling happy there if the Omega ever left. They made their way towards Eren's car, dark thoughts swirling in the Alpha's mind. When everything was safe, the threats to Levi neutralized, his own place secure again, would he return there? Leave Eren behind to lay in an empty bed, thoughts full of nothing but Levi, the few miles that separated them feeling like oceans instead? The Omega had been staying there for less than a week, and it was already familiar in all the best ways. Waking up next to him each morning, Eren's face buried in Levi's hair, watching him stumble sleepily into the bathroom. The way he tried to keep all the different types of food on his plate from touching.... Eren never wanted to let Levi go. Wanted to keep the Omega tucked away from the whole world, hidden in his embrace, for only his eyes to see. Sacred and untouched.
They were in the middle of the street when the Alpha froze, looking around suddenly, instincts surging to the fore. Threat. Somewhere hidden in the darkness, someone was watching them. The hair on the back of his neck stood up, a growl forming in his throat just as he felt a sharp sting, right in his scent gland. Eren reached up to paw at it, coming back with an empty tranquilizer dart in hand, the liquid now flowing through his veins, cold and dangerous. Eren felt rage begin to surge through him, could taste it in his mouth, fists clenching. Someone is trying to take him from me. Whoever had hacked into Levi's files on the OSC's computer network had found the Omega, somehow. Followed them to Armin's house, waited for them to leave. Eren could tell his eyes were starting to light up, strobing, everything tinged with stuttering red in a way that was terrifyingly familiar, though he'd only felt it once before.

In Trost, just before he'd torn dozens of men apart with his bare hands. Ripped open their throats, gouged out their eyes. Eren might be afraid of just what he was capable of, but in that moment it was buried under fury, and all he felt was gratitude.

He'd never been happier to be a monster in the night, eyes flashing from gold to red and back again, teeth sharp in his mouth. But the tranquilizers were working their way through his system astonishingly fast, and it was a battle to stay upright. Levi. Levi. Instead of fighting the unnatural instincts trying to rise up Eren reached for them, unable to pull them out through the murk of the drugs. He had to protect his mate. Had to keep him safe, had to-

Eren saw a second dart flying towards Levi, heard it whistling through the air, and even with his vision beginning to go hazy the Alpha slapped it to the ground before it could hit the Omega. Levi noticed it smashing into the concrete, plastic and metal shattered at his feet, and confusion spread over his features as Eren tugged the Omega behind him.

"Eren?"

The Alpha tried to blink through the fog that was swimming up over him, only to feel another sharp sting in his throat. Fuck. More icy liquid seeped into Eren's blood, and he was cold all over, even with the anger trying to burn him alive from within. The world spun in violent circles around him, shaded in flickering crimson, and the brunet could feel his heart beating in his temples. Throbbing, pounding, each pulse filling him with malice even as it sucked the strength from his bones. The Alpha fell to his knees, Levi crouching next to him and tugging the tranquilizer out with wide eyes. Realization seemed to hit him all at once, his gaze darting up to the tree line across the street, but the Alpha started shoving him towards the house. Tried to speak and found his mouth full of cotton, tongue swollen and useless. He swallowed around the saliva that was suddenly pooling there, failing to shake Levi off of his arm. Inside. Levi would be safer in there, he could call the cops, the OSC. Get a knife, a weapon of some kind to defend himself with. Being out in the open was the worst thing they could do, and even if Eren's legs would not work, he needed to get his mate back in Armin's house. The Alpha growled out an order at Levi, trying to fill it with command. To make him obey, as he never had before.

"Inside." Eren gave Levi another push, almost landing on his face in the street as the Omega swayed under the blow, catching himself at the last moment. But Levi just moved in closer, hands finding Eren's cheeks, voice desperate.

"Eren-"

"INSIDE! NOW! Call Erwin!"

His words were guttural and inhuman, an animal learning how to speak for the first time, but it didn't matter. Levi wasn't listening anyway, and when Eren's world began to spin faster and his arms gave out beneath him, the Omega pulled out his phone. Dropped it, hands fumbling, reaching for it again
as the Alpha tried to drag himself back up off the pavement. Tried and failed, limbs going numb, full of static and lead. Levi was speaking to him, though the Alpha could not really understand what he said, mumbling frantically and crouching beside Eren. Levi abandoned his phone to try and help him to his feet, snaking an arm under his shoulders and pulling. It was no use, Eren was dead weight, and a lot of it, his Omega weaving under the strain before they were even partially upright. Eren collapsed into the street again, elbows sliced open on the asphalt, legs splayed out behind him.

Damn it. He was fucking useless, helpless to protect his mate when Levi needed it most. The only thing he truly wanted was to watch over the Omega and Eren was failing. It would not just cost Eren his pride, though, if he could not keep the Omega safe. Levi's very life was on the line.

Voices drifted into the Alpha's ears then, a pair of them, not trying to conceal themselves anymore as they appeared from the shadows. Two figures, an Alpha and a Beta, and Eren growled even louder and tried to put himself between them and Levi.

His Omega wasn't having it, standing in front of Eren and falling into a crouch. It was loose, still sloppy from all the booze he'd drunk that night, but only if someone knew what they were looking for. His eyes wanted to close, Eren's sight beginning to go dark with shadows, but still Levi looked fearsome. Vicious, and unmerciful.

Breathtaking even as their world crashed down around them, and the Alpha felt pride shoot through him. Mine. He's mine.

Eren could hear Levi growling too, a primal noise straight out of ancient forests. Echoing off dark cave walls, rolling over ageless mountainsides. A sound that would send chills down anyone's spine, yet the female Alpha before them just laughed as she closed in on them. Unable to find her instincts, a lifetime of disregarding Omegas making her reckless no doubt. If she was listening to the Alpha inside her?

It would be telling her to run.

"Let me take care of this one on my own. I don't need your fucking tranq's to handle some little Omega bitch."

If the Beta answered, Eren did not hear him. Could barely make out anything now, but he could tell when Levi started to move. The Omega was a blur, snarling as he lashed out at his opponent, all fists and righteous anger. Whirling through the air, ducking and striking, the sound of his blows impacting flesh echoing through the night. Eren wished with all that he was that his eyes would work better, because it was only a few moments before he heard a snapping noise, followed by an anguished cry. Not Levi's, but one pulled out of an Alpha's throat. Surprised, laced with agony before falling silent. Then there was a wet sound, some gurgling, and Levi knelt next to him again. Mouth bloody, fists painted red, eyes lit up. Not in a metaphorical sense, shining with rage, though it was there, too.

They were throwing out light like an Alpha's, bright white in the darkness instead of gold, yet gazing at him with so much concern it made the brunet's heart clench. Levi had just torn out someone's throat with his teeth, an unknown Beta still lingering close, yet here he was worrying over the Alpha. All Eren could do was stare, biting his lip until he tasted blood, trying to keep his lids open. Levi stroked hair out of his face, holding Eren's cheeks in his gory hands, brows furrowed together.

"Eren? You okay?" No.

He managed a shake of his head, because as much as the Alpha was loathe to admit it, he was definitely not okay. Eren was going under fast, about to be swallowed up by the drugs in his veins,
and there was still an enemy nearby. There were footsteps drawing closer, the Beta's scent growing more potent as he moved towards them, and Levi stood up. Eren watched splashes of blood drip from his fingers, falling to the ground like raindrops, until the Omega clenched his fists. Crouched again, growling, teeth bared as he hissed at the Beta, who let out a dark laugh.

"Oh, I'm not so foolish as to think I can take you. Especially not after that little display."

A staccato thumping noise sounded out, and then Levi collapsed against Eren, a tranquilizer buried in his chest. Eyes holding Eren's for the barest of moments, hands reaching towards the Alpha's face, that white light going out before Levi's lids fell closed. No, no, no. Levi. Eren was fading, but he managed to get his arms around Levi somehow, tugging the Omega flush against him. Still growling, snarling. Trying to make out the Beta's face as he crouched down, smiling at them, gun shining in his hands.

"You took two of these, right in the neck. You should be comatose, but you look like you could still rip my throat out." The Beta's grin went wider as he pulled out a needle, uncapping it. A familiarity itched through Eren, not this man's face or his voice, but his scent.

They smelled almost the same, Eren and this man, and he felt his guts began to twist at the thought. The Beta stuck the needle in Eren's neck, emptying the contents and making his world turn black. He tried to snap at the man, take his fingers off, latch onto his hand, but without sight he was lost in darkness. The last thing he heard was the Beta's voice, something like pride in the words.

"Still fighting, even when you can't win. That's my boy."

And then, nothing.
Chapter Notes

Trigger warnings, I guess? Verbal threats of rape, abusive language, degradation, humiliation. Basically just a bunch of Alphas talking shit. (Rest assured there will be no noncon in here, depicted or discussed, despite the threats that are made.)

Edit- warning for forced medical experimentation, needles, and parental abuse, of sorts

Everything was fuzzy where there should be clarity, soft edges making him squint and cock his head. He stared up at his father with wide eyes, and Eren watched Grisha tap on the side of a syringe, holding it upright and squirting a few drops of milky liquid out the sharp tip. A pearl of the fluid remained there catching the light, ominous somehow, and Eren found himself biting his lip and furrowing his brows.

"Will it hurt, Daddy?" Grisha's cool hand closed around Eren's arm, already tied off with a strip of rubber tubing, and he smiled down at his son fondly. The boy's nose stung, the overwhelming scent of disinfectant along with the blinding fluorescent lights overhead making his eyes water. Paper crinkled underneath Eren where he sat on the examination table, his feet dangling high off the ground, and his father's voice was not the comfort it should have been. That voice had read him stories before tucking him into bed, and made shushing noises as he cleaned Eren's scraped knees and busted knuckles. It had whispered good night to him, flowing through the dark of his room to wrap around Eren like a blanket. It had assuaged his fears, and answered his questions, and said his name with so much affection that Eren could feel it in his bones.

In that moment it was cold and detached, as though a stranger were speaking to him, and Eren felt his guts twisting.

"No, son, it won't hurt. Just a little sting. It's for your own good." Grisha's eyes glittered strangely, something dark passing through them, and Eren suddenly couldn't find air to breathe. The boy tried to back up on the table, tried to tug his arm out of Grisha's hold, but his father clung tight.

"I-I don't want it." He jerked harder, panic rising in his blood, but his father's fingers just dug in deeper as he brought the syringe close. Grisha had an air of insanity, head twisted to side, and Eren wanted to run.

"It'll make you strong." But Eren did not want to be strong, not if it meant listening to his father talk in the voice of a stranger. Not if it meant having that ethereal liquid flowing in his blood. There were whimpering noises falling from his throat, animal and desperate, and Grisha smiled at him with too many teeth. "Shhhh, Eren. Everything will be fine."

His father plunged the needle into his veins, and Eren's world exploded into a wash of fire and agony. He screamed until his throat bled, saliva pink with it as it dripped from the corners of his mouth. Seized until he was covered in bruises, blue black marks painted over his knees and arms and chin. Retch until his muscles protested every movement, every twitch, every breath. His lungs were full of burning coal, his eyes sewn shut with pain. His little body twisted in on itself until it felt like he would never stand again, bones put together wrong in his skin, a puppet with his strings tangled together.
It did hurt, and nothing was fine, and Eren never saw his father again.

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A red fog surrounded the Alpha, so thick he could not see more than a few feet in front of him, an eerie light shining through the gloom. He lay on the ground, which was softer underneath him than it should have been, and smelled like leather and disinfectant. The crimson mist swirled around his face with each breath he took, invading his very lungs, and he felt weaker with every wave of it that washed over him. Eren did not know where he was, exactly, or how he'd gotten there. A voice whispered from somewhere nearby in quiet snatches of noise, a radio not tuned in quite right, static breaking through the sound. Inaudible, but whatever they were saying felt irrelevant to the Alpha, a thousand miles away and totally inconsequential. His body was both too light and too heavy all at once, limbs unwilling to move, yet every part of him floating and untethered. There was something very important Eren was forgetting, and it felt vital that he remember. As though he would die if he could not, the whole world collapsing into nothingness, an empty, hollow void. Then something clicked together in his mind, sharp and loud, and all he could think was mate.


Levi was in his arms, and even if he could not mange to look down at the Omega, Eren felt his weight there. Comforting. Familiar, and warm, and though he couldn't do much with his body Eren found his arms would still clutch Levi tighter. So he did, the scent of his mate stronger than the murk of the air he was breathing in, and he shoved his face into Levi with a snarl. Once he started making noise Eren could not manage to stop, and he growled louder as feelings of unease crept through him. He wanted to bare his teeth, but his lips would not pull back from them, held together with invisible thread. Why was he so desperate to hold Levi closer? To gnash his teeth and snap his jaws at the encroaching darkness? To curl his hands into fists. To rip open flesh. To rend and sever and destroy.

Levi. Protect.

The voice was louder now, closer, and suddenly Levi shifted in Eren's arms, his weight falling away from the Alpha. He lurched after his mate, the cloud of red spinning around him violently, numb fingers clutching tight to Levi's clothes. Eren felt himself making bestial noises, a vibration that made his throat ache and itch. Levi was still just a dark mass pressed into Eren's chest, his vision blurred and useless, but now there were tendrils of shadow prying the Omega away. The Alpha reached for that fury of his again, seeking the strength he claimed through rage, only to come up empty. It was there deep within his chest, he could feel it, but everything inside him was cold and taut and Eren could not break free. A fire burning under frozen waters, desperate to be unleashed, and he needed that blaze alight in him.

Eren could save the whole world, if only he could stoke those flames.

Then Levi was gone, the traces of his warmth still clinging to Eren's skin, and anger suffused him like a living thing.


He could taste the hostility in his mouth, everything he was born again in those beautiful shades of red. The Alpha was blood, and fire, and death, and as soon as the ice in him thawed Eren would pull whoever took Levi from him down into hell. They would know suffering. He'd teach them fear. Eren would lay hands on them and listen to their prayers, words falling on the deaf ears of gods who had forgotten they ever existed. That ancient part of Eren was howling for vengeance, and he wished he could give voice to the sound, because his enemies would tremble in his wake.
Then the voice was right in his ear, the words impossible to ignore, even as they slid through the fog of his malice.

"Don't worry, son. You'll get him back. I promise."

But that voice was a liar, and if Eren did not see Levi again, he would make sure it fell silent for good. There was a frustratingly familiar sting in his neck, and everything was swallowed up by cold, unmerciful black.

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The first thing that struck Levi as he swam up through the haze of unconsciousness was how loud it was, though he couldn't exactly figure out why. Sounds rolled around him in stuttering waves, surging higher in volume before dying away again, a tide of noise that was trying to drown him. Levi sat up with his eyes wrenched shut, feeling the world spin beneath him at the motion, and the Omega clung to the ground as though it would keep him from falling. Was he still drunk from the previous night? It certainly seemed that way, nausea taking over his guts in a visceral way, and before he could even consider where he was Levi retched into the floor. The taste of bile in his mouth was pungent, as was the smell of his sick, and he backed away from it blindly, pawing at his mouth. A distant part of Levi was questioning where Eren was, why he was leaving the Omega to be sick alone on his hands and knees, unable to even open his eyes. Instincts wondering, 'Where is my Alpha?'

Those same instincts had Levi's lids snapping open in an instant, memories flashing through him all at once, lips coming up in a snarl. Needles buried in Eren's neck. A female Alpha's blood in his mouth. A Beta with a gun in one hand. A stinging sensation in his chest, Eren reaching for him, irises red with fury. Then, darkness.

Once his eyes were open, double vision making him blink, Levi took in his surroundings with a scowl on his face. He was in a cell, the metal of the bars cutting into his back when he sagged against them, the concrete he sat on damp with condensation. There was no bed, or furniture, the only things in the room besides his puddle of vomit being a metal bucket in the corner and a bottle of water. Levi snatched it up without thinking, and only after he'd drained half of the liquid did he realize it might not be wise to drink anything they provided him with. Only then did he notice the metal shackles on his wrists, though there was no chain stringing them together.

The Omega inside him swelled up, loud and insistent, asking the same question as before but with more urgency. Where is my Alpha?

He did not smell Eren anywhere nearby, and the Omega had not realized until that moment just how used to his Alpha's scent he'd become. It was ubiquitous and constant, the musk of Eren's presence soothing him in ways he'd been unaware of until it was gone. Inundating his clothes, lingering in his skin, and now its absence made the Omega's chest hurt. Levi's eyes darted around, his sight starting to clear, and the murky noise he'd been blocking out all rushed in at once. The voices of over a dozen Alphas, all of them locked up just as he was, reaching through the bars of their cells as they called out to him.

"Hey look, he's awake!"

"Boss brought the next bitch in early to tease us."

"This one looks feisty!"
"Smells like shit though, he's got mating marks. I can still scent his fucking Alpha on him."

"That just means he's fresh! Take those clothes off, Omega! Let me see that ass I'm fighting for, maybe I'll go easy on you!"

They leered down at Levi as they catcalled, licking their lips or pawing obscenely at themselves, though a few simply sat in their cells watching. Levi let out a vicious growl, raising his chin instinctively to show his mate marks, meeting their eyes one at a time. When his gaze did not fall away in submission as the Alphas expected they riled even further, cursing at him and spitting in his direction.

"We'll teach you your place, you god damned slut! Just wait!"

"I'll fuck that disrespect right out of you, little one!"

The Omega growled impossibly louder, drawing up to his feet and rolling out his shoulders. He stretched his limbs, working the stiffness from his muscles and trying to test the steadiness of his stomach. Levi did not need things spelled out for him to understand where he was, or what he was doing there. He was back in the pits, hunted down by the people who had kept the Omega captive for all those years and dragged back to this hell to fight for them. Last time he had been kept with the nearby harem, but everything was still achingly familiar, even after so long away. The stench of unwashed Alphas, most of them lost to madness after being forced to fight for their lives time and time again. The dimness of the underground. Desperation rising in his throat, hands shaking with the need to break free.

Body aching with the memory of violence, the taste of blood in his mouth coppery and unmistakable. Levi wondered if the Alpha it belonged to was dead, as he had countless times before. How many people had he killed now? Throats torn open with Levi's jaws. Eyes gouged out with Levi's thumbs. Necks broken under his hands. Skulls bashd in beneath his heel. Levi remembered picking teeth out of knuckles, could feel the ghost of them there now, grinding against his bones. Tearing apart his skin. He remembered his opponents faces, golden eyes flashing dark before him, bodies going slack in death. He had not forgotten, but he'd managed to lay those memories aside and move on. To wake up each morning without their screams echoing in his ears, to go to bed at night without washing his hands over and over, trying to clean blood that was no longer there. Levi had not forgotten, but he'd managed to pretend.

Now he wondered how. How had he slept, dreamless and deep, with all these shadows lurking inside him? How had he gone to work, and smiled with his friends, and pretended to be whole?

How had Levi fallen in love with an Alpha, one who looked at him as though he was all there was in life, when the Omega was so broken?

Levi didn't know. But when he stroked the red marks on his neck, felt them heat under his touch as he snarled at the Alphas around him, the Omega realized he did not care. Levi had never been here, because he was a different person. Just as merciless, and just as strong, but no longer feeling worthless and alone. There was an Alpha out there somewhere who was looking for him. One who would break any chains that held him to get to Levi. Who would tear down walls and rip apart foes. Eren would leave a trail of corpses through this place, and these Alphas would fall to their knees and weep. Levi smiled, predatory and feral, and kept warming up his muscles. Popped his jaw, cracked his knuckles. Getting ready, because sooner or later they would come for him, and drag him to the ring. These Alphas would stand against Levi, an Omega, and expect him to be weak. Expect him to yield, to submit, to obey.

Levi would show them how wrong they were. They might be strong, and fierce, and violent. But
they were not as strong as *Eren*, and Levi *was*, and he would take them to the ground and break them open.

And if Levi was still in chains when his Alpha showed up, their enemies would be piled up at the Omega's feet.
Levi was grateful for the soft cotton of his shirt, and he ignored the catcalling Alphas around him as he shed the garment and destroyed it. The cloth tore easily, and Levi shredded it into strips and wrapped the ravaged knuckles of his right hand, layering it thick enough to protect the wound without hindering his ability to make a fist. He had been too long out of the pits, and when he'd fought that Alpha in front of Armin's house, Levi was careless with himself. Let his fists fly without hesitation, without thought of where they were landing, or how it might affect him later on. The Omega's mind had only held one thing in that moment, clouded over in a rush a fury, and that was Eren.

Protect.

His vision had gone bright with anger, and everything disappeared until nothing existed but mate and enemy. Instinct took over, leaving the Omega more beast than person, and Levi bit out part of the Alpha's throat in the blink of an eye. Watched in a detached sort of way as she fell, blood pouring from the gash, eyes wide. Left her gurgling on the ground, clutching at her neck, voice in his mind singing out victory.

Yet he had not been able to keep either one of them safe from harm, had not even been able to stay by Eren's side, and Levi fought back a wince as he tested the wrap. A little tight, but it needed to be, or else the cloth would come loose in the middle of the fray. It had been years since he had to do such a thing, but it wasn't something Levi was ever likely to forget. The last thing he wanted was to give his opponent something to grab onto when his agility was one of his best assets in a fight, or be distracted by the pain in his knuckles. The Alphas around him muttered in amusement as he cared for his hand, and stretched his muscles, laughing when Levi ripped away the bottom part of his jeans until they fell just above his knees. They would have impeded his movement, and any chill he felt at the loss would be worth it to stay alive in the pit. He was already barefoot, and the concrete was gritty on his skin, scraping at his heels like sandpaper. From what the Omega could gather, they seemed to think he was going to be presented to the winner of the next match as a trophy of sorts, and that Levi was preparing to fight off their advances. The idea that Levi believed he stood any chance of defeating them seemed to entertain the Alphas. Those who had been taunting him before continued to do so, and he tuned out the jeering and obscenities as he eased back down to the floor of his cell. Pacing the concrete incessantly would tear up his feet even further, and Levi was already dealing with a sore fist. There was nothing left to do but wait, and Levi had no idea exactly how long it would be before someone came to drag him to the pit. The Alphas seemed antsy though, restless, and Levi would be surprised if he didn't end up fighting at least one of them soon.

He had no sense of how much time had passed since he'd taken that dart to the chest and collapsed next to Eren in the street. Probably less than a day, but there was no telling how long the tranquilizer had kept him knocked out. They could have given him more drugs while he slept, left him in the sway of unconsciousness for much longer than that.

Levi could be thousands of miles away from Eren, across oceans, deep under foreign soil in strange lands and he would be none the wiser. The language and races of his fellow prisoners suggested otherwise, all of them looking and sounding pretty much as Levi did, but the thought still made him ache. The Alpha might also be locked away in a cell somewhere nearby, growling and seething and furious. Ready to rip apart everyone and everything that stood against him, because there was one thing the Omega knew without a doubt.

Eren would tear the whole world down to get to him.
Levi wasn't sure which of the two ideas was more repugnant. That Eren was far away, safe from the monsters who held Levi captive but unable to reach him. Or that he was right there with the Omega, trapped in a cell, either blind with rage or drugged and delirious. Unaware of where Levi was, or if he was safe. Blaming himself, because that was what Eren did.

He carried the weight of sins that were not his own. Struggled to save everyone with nothing but his fists, teeth gritted and eyes lit up gold.

None of this was Eren's fault, but that would not stop him from claiming responsibility. When he saw Eren again, the Alpha would apologize. Levi knew it like he knew the sun would rise, and he fought down a grin even through his desperation. Eren, covered in gore and bruises, eyes glowing with vengeance and hands still dripping crimson. Saying 'I'm so sorry, Levi,' even as he defeated their enemies. Only as the thought flitted through his mind did Levi realize how sure he was that he would escape. It was not a far away possibility as it had been the first time he'd been imprisoned. Not some fantasy that rocked Levi to sleep at night, visions of freedom soothing him into wretched nightmares until he woke up in hell again and again. Each sunrise a new day of misery. The promise of agony. The degradation of being made a slave to the wills of men who did not deserve the air in their lungs. But not this time. The certainty Levi felt was bone deep, filling him with a warmth that started in his mate marks and spread throughout his skin.

Levi would claw his way out, or Eren would claw his way in. The Omega knew it, like he knew the sun would rise.

The tranquilizers they hit Levi with must have still been lingering in his system, because eventually his eyes threatened to close. Levi blinked them open, fighting the sleep that wanted to come, but eventually it was no use. Levi slid into darkness with thoughts of blood, and how much of it he was willing to spill if it brought him back to Eren. How much violence he was willing to commit. How many lives he was willing to end.

The answer was as many as it takes, and Levi's smile was feral, even in his dreams.

.....

Icy water poured over Levi, enough of it that his hair plastered against his face, and he sat up with a gasp. All the air stolen from his lungs, and Levi was upright in an instant, panting through the shivering cold. Crouching, hands fisted by his face, every part of him ready to attack but with no enemy to be seen. He caught his breath, adrenaline surging through him so fiercely he could taste it, water dripping down to pool on the ground at his feet. Levi's eyes darted around, finally settling on the Alpha guard outside his cell with a now empty bucket in hand. He was huge, as all the guards were by necessity, dominance rolling off him in a cloud. They would be expected to manhandle any Alphas that got out of line, so it was no surprise they were the most intimidating men there. The nearby Alphas laughed so loudly at the sight of Levi drenched and growling like a surly cat that the guard's words were almost swallowed by their raucous sound.

"Thirty minutes, Omega. Suggest you wake up and get ready."

Levi couldn't even manage to be angry at the guard, only bitterly grateful that he'd been given a chance to wake up properly before being expected to fight. The man was gone without another word, kicking at the bars of a few cells to rouse the Alphas within, banging his metal bucket on others when that failed. The occupants hissed and snarled at him, but got grudgingly up off their makeshift beds, mostly made of filthy discarded clothing. Levi shuddered at the sight, and he would sleep on concrete for the rest of his life before he so much as touched those disgusting rags. Eventually the entire cell block was on its feet, Alphas pacing and posturing, or just reading themselves. Levi checked the wrap on his hand, unwinding the strips and tightening cloth until he
was satisfied with it. He stretched and twisted, working as much of the soreness out of his muscles as possible, eying some of the Alphas as they moved. Levi wouldn't really know what they were capable of until they got into the pit, but still he watched, ready to exploit any weakness he could. Once his body was warmed up he bounced on the balls of his feet. Paced back and forth. Took a drink of the water that remained in his bottle, careful not to swallow too much, lest his stomach rile up again.

After what felt like hours there was the rattle of chains, and two guards began moving down the cells. They would pause in front of them, and the Alpha inside inevitably slid their arms through, allowing the guards to attach chains to their shackles. No one argued, or put up a fight, and the Omega wondered just how long they'd been in this miserable place to be so meekly obedient. One after another, and everyone in the cell block was chained at the wrist save Levi. The guards stopped in front of his cell, brows furrowing as they considered the Omega.

"You gonna be a little shit, Omega?" The guard did not sound hostile, or aggressive. Just curious, genuinely wondering if he would have to force the Omega to obey. Levi stared at the bars keeping him prisoner, metal separating him from all the damage he wanted to do to these people, and thought no.

Not yet.

So he eased both hands through a single opening in the bars, watching as the guard fastened a chain between them, locking it in place. Then Levi noticed a different set of chains in the other guard's hands, shackles already hanging from the ends, and he motioned towards Levi's feet with his head.

"Ankles too." The Omega threw a long glance around them, eying the Alphas with no chains on their legs, before looking back at the guard in wordless question. He shrugged, no trace of apology on his face, and nodded at Levi again. "Dunno how well you're gonna behave. Boss man said fists and feet both. So ankles, now, or we're gonna tranq you again and throw you out there half asleep to get your face bashed in."

Levi made an irritated sound through his teeth as he put first his right foot, then his left, out to be shackled together. When he pulled them back the chains rattled metallic with his every movement, adding to din of noise around him. Steel grinding, links dragging on the concrete, shackles ringing against the cell bars. The music of subjugation. A song of desolation that these Alphas knew by heart, and Levi vowed he would not be there long enough to learn its verses. The guards gave him a last once over before nodding, one of them taking off down the block. The other guard lingered, shooting a look at the nearby Alphas and leaning in close to Levi's cell. He spoke low enough that no one else would hear, and Levi found himself cocking his head, eyes narrowed.

"Word of advice. These guys, they lose a fight tonight? They'll be in recovery for a few days, maybe a week most likely. Couple might die, but they can't afford to lose too many. Gotta keep the matches going. But you lose?" The guard looked Levi up and down with something like pity, gaze hovering over the mating marks on his neck and wrists longer than necessary. "You lose they'll toss you in a cell with whatever Alpha managed to beat you and leave you there. Boss's orders." Levi bared his teeth in a hiss without thinking, growls bubbling up in his throat, a strange fluttering sensation dancing across his eyes. The guard blinked at him, confused, before Levi bit out words in a guttural voice.

"Trust me, I know."

The man nodded, still looking at Levi with wide eyes, before heading back down the block. The Omega wondered why the guard had bothered to warn him at all. Maybe he was used to the senseless violence of the pits, but the brutalizing of an Omega did not sit well with him. If there was
no harem on the grounds, it would not be too strange of a notion. Gray morality, strangely unforgiving of some things while others did not warrant a second thought.

Maybe Levi would feel guilty for killing him later.

But probably not.

...

Levi was not the first fighter taken to the pits, or the second, and as the Alphas around him disappeared one by one he started to realize his match would probably be the last. They'd put him up against whoever stood victorious in the last fights, maybe. Or have him go up against more than one opponent.

To prove his strength, or to showcase his weakness, and Levi was happy to oblige them.

There was someone, somewhere nearby, who'd been around when Levi was held captive all those years ago. Who knew what he was capable of, and wanted to use that skill to their advantage. To make money off of the Omega's suffering. Levi didn't know who they were, exactly, but sooner or later either he or Eren would find them.

They would not have the chance to take Levi a third time.

When the guards finally came to unlock his cell, Levi was quaking with barely leashed energy. Each time they'd moved down the row of prisoners anticipation swelled up in him, only to fall away as they took someone else to the ring. Again, and again, until he vibrated with aggression that was desperate to be let out. So as the guards led him down the corridors by his chained wrists carried him forward eagerly, like he'd been waiting all his life for that very moment. There was no escape, not yet anyway, and Levi felt old instincts rising in him anew. Fists ready to fly, teeth ready to gnash. Every part of Levi overcome with the need to defeat, the need to destroy.

To lay his enemies out in the dirt, lest he be there instead. Beaten, and then locked up in a cell with the Alpha who'd bested him, injured and at their mercy. Levi would not allow it. The Alphas there were prisoners, just as Levi was, but he buried all that somewhere deep in his mind where it could not break free. Most of them were beyond saving, long since lost to that ancient part of themselves that said 'kill or be killed'.

Levi could flip that aggression on and off like a light switch. Or he used to be able to, anyway. Living with the harem forced Levi to be calm when he would have gone crazy, the presence of so many Omegas soothing to him after the raw emotion of a fight. There were no Omegas waiting for him once the night was over, but there were marks in his neck to remind Levi of what he truly was.

A mate, and not a monster. No matter what the Omega had to do they could not take that away from him, and when the guards unlocked his shackles and shoved him forward into the pit, there was nothing in him but violence.

The door swung shut behind him, bars just like his cell, and Levi glanced around to take in his surroundings, blinking the grit out of his eyes. It was not as large as the pit he'd fought in before, but it looked much the same. A small abandoned indoor arena, somewhere a circus or rodeo might have once set up. Local rock bands no one had heard of, or low rent conventions. A circular dirt floor stretched out in front of Levi, splatters of blood here and there from the previous matches, wooden walls around six feet tall giving way to stadium seating. It was nowhere near capacity, but the first few rows of benches were filled with jeering Alphas and Betas, some of whom shouted profanities and weaved drunkenly in their seats. A few were obviously guards, spread out along the front
railing that separated the seats from the pit, armed with what might have been actual guns but were probably tasers. The rail they leaned on looked like something originally meant to keep livestock from injuring the crowd.

Still doing its job, only now the livestock stood on two legs instead of four and were even more desperate to be free.

Levi's gaze was pulled across the pit at the sound of a door closing, and an Alpha stood there rubbing at his wrists, newly freed from their shackles. He sized Levi up, a smirk spreading over his face as he moved forward. The Alpha looked as though he'd already won the battle, and Levi knew he must have been told his opponent was an Omega. He was relieved to be fighting Levi instead of another person of his own dynamic, thinking it would be an easy victory. A loud voice broke through the noise of the crowd, and Levi cringed at the squealing feedback of the microphone.

"Last match of the evening, friends! Here's what some of you been waitin' for! Shorty over there is an Omega! Vicious little thing, and we're gonna see what he can do against our reigning champion! All right boys, any time now! Let's fight!"

As Levi dropped into a crouch all of those years of freedom vanished into nothingness, and he was an animal again. Merciless and unfeeling, the Alpha across from him no better, and they closed the distance to circle each other. He felt the dirt slide beneath his feet, heard the shouts of the crowd in some faraway place in his mind. Smelled dry earth and the coppery tang of blood. Cigarette smoke. Spilled beer. It all came together to make a wretchedly familiar scent, one that smelled like anguish. Like memories. Like misery. A past Levi left behind, only to have it chase the Omega down and swallow him whole again.

Levi brought his guard up high as the Alpha edged in closer, a feral grin on his enemy's face, those eyes flashing gold with hostility. His voice oozed confidence, and the Omega would be happy to tear that bravado into pieces, as soon as he had the chance.

"Go down easy, little Omega, and I'll treat you real nice when we get back to my cell. Gentle, even." Levi growled, flashing the mating marks on his throat before spitting into the dirt.


"Soon. Patience."

Levi bared his teeth in a snarl, and the Alpha moved in at the sound, trying to catch the Omega unaware. Sloppy, and unguarded. Careless against what he viewed as a weaker opponent. He threw a fist at Levi's face, and the Omega ducked underneath it with ease, right elbow cocked in readiness. Levi slammed it up into the Alpha's chin, and his head snapped backwards in a spray of blood. He'd bitten down on his tongue, and from the amount of red seeping down the Alpha's face, Levi guessed he'd probably see a chunk of it on the ground somewhere if he bothered to look. He did not, instead lifting his foot and burying it in the Alpha's gut, shoving him backwards. The Alpha stumbled, almost going down on his ass before managing to find his balance again, wincing as he wiped at his lips. He looked incredulously at the crimson liquid coating his hand, shifting his tongue around experimentally in his mouth. Then his eyes lit up with fresh rage and the Alpha growled as he bared gory teeth at Levi. The crowd cheered loudly, obviously not expecting much out of Levi and pleasantly surprised at his display of aggression. He tuned them out, gaze locked on the Alpha in front of him as he threw himself towards the Omega.

He was all anger and no finesse then, furious not just at being injured, but at suffering such a wound at the hands of an Omega. Someone who was meant to be weaker than him, someone he thought
should submit. Should obey. Should *kneel*, throat bared and eyes on the ground. Yet here Levi was spilling his blood, and the Alpha could not think through his outrage. The Omega had seen it time and time again, an Alpha's disbelief that Levi could actually hurt them, and he exploited it without regret.

The Alpha tried to trip Levi then, and the Omega darted out of the way and followed up with an open palm strike to his enemy's nose. Trying to spare his knuckles further injury, if he could manage it. His opponent pawed blindly at him, trying to grab onto Levi and throw him in the dirt, to no avail. The Omega slipped out of his grasp effortlessly, and as he moved to avoid strikes and keep his feet all he could think was *Eren's faster than you, Alpha.*

*Eren's stronger.*

*Better.*

If they expected Levi to fall beneath this Alpha, they had underestimated him greatly. Over the past days he'd spent at the dojo with Eren as he worked, they'd rolled together on the mats again and again after Levi inevitably lost his feet. Each time ended with the Omega locked in a hold or a choke, much to his frustration. Unable to move, or breathe, Eren smiling down at him with all the love in the world. They were equally skilled, but Levi was rusty, and Eren did not hold back in the slightest. In the filth of the fighting ring, as he knocked the Alphas teeth from his mouth and slammed him down on his back, Levi was grateful for Eren.

*Thank you for not thinking I was weak.* In that moment, even if his mate was far away, Eren made Levi strong.

Levi pounced on the Alpha before he even hit the ground, knees moving to pin down his arms, and he did not give the man a chance to so much as breathe. The Omega rained down blows, elbows and fists and palm strikes, his right hand aching with every hit. The Alpha went slack underneath him, not yet unconscious but clearly defeated. Dazed, hands fallen down at his sides, and the announcer was sounding out Levi's victory with surprise laced through the words. A buzzing sound rang loud in the Omega's ears, his signal to climb off and head back to the door he'd come in through, but Levi payed no attention.

The Alpha looked up at him in confusion, still not quite believing he'd lost, and in that moment Levi could walk away. Get up, and leave the Alpha there on the ground to wallow in agony. Levi had won, he'd beaten his enemy. The fight was over.

But it was not. Not really. Because this Alpha would be taken back to an infirmary cell somewhere, and lick his wounds, hating Levi all the while. He would heal, and once the Alpha was well he would stand against the Omega again. Next time he would not think Levi weak, and the fight would be more brutal. Hard fought, but Levi would win, because he had to. Then the Alpha would do the same thing again and again, facing off against Levi each time his injuries mended, rage growing with every defeat. If he remained in this place, eventually, Levi would not have a choice. With hands closing around his throat or fists beating at his face, Levi would have to kill this Alpha. He remembered the agony of mercy, and how it came back to haunt him with broken bones and blood in his mouth. When the dirt of the pit was the place he called home, Levi had learned lessons not with words but with pain.

Lessons about mercy. About pity. About humanity, and how it was sometimes necessary to lay his aside.
Unaware that his eyes were throwing out light Levi reached down, placing one hand on either side of the Alpha's head. Slid one around to the back of his neck, the other moving forward to grip his chin, and the last thing the Alpha beneath Levi ever heard was a lie.

"I can't be sorry."

Levi snapped his neck, the roar of the crowd louder than his own savage growl, and he was glad that together they drowned out the noise of bones breaking under his hands. He still felt it, all that tension giving way, no resistance left as he dropped the Alpha's head back into the dirt. Levi climbed off the Alpha and walked back towards the door he'd been brought in through, mouth still twisted in a snarl. He fought the expression off his face, trying to appear calm when he approached the bars to stick his arms through. The guards were still there, wide eyed, chains dangling from their hands. They looked from the dead Alpha to Levi and back again, disbelief plain on their faces. Then one of them broke out into a slow grin, nodding at the Omega as he fastened the shackles to Levi's wrists.

"Damn, Omega. Didn't think you had it in you."

_I'm full of all sorts of surprises._

Levi remained silent, shrugging as he offered his feet up one at a time for the guard. Once the metal was snapped around Levi's ankles they opened the door, both of them with taser guns in hand, eying the Omega warily. The Alpha who had warned Levi of the consequences of losing gave him a slow nod while the other spoke up, his gaze narrowed.

"You gonna behave? Cause I can hit you with this now and drag you back to your cell by those ankle chains if ya aren't." Levi made an exasperated noise through his teeth, shooting the Alpha a glare.

"Can we just fucking go so I can wash this blood off? It's disgusting." He took hold of Levi's chains, giving them a harsh tug as he started walking.

"All right, all right, relax, Jesus. Let's go, psycho."

Levi followed obediently, listening to the sound of the crowd fade behind them. It was not too far to the block Levi had been kept in, but it felt like an eternity before they drew close to the open door of his cell. The Alphas who'd been returned to their own cells called out to him, not believing he had won, asking if he'd already gone ass up for the victor. _He finished with you so soon Omega? Must not have been that good, eh? That Alpha of yours back home worn you out already?_ Levi ignored them. Closed his eyes for the briefest of moments. Took a deep breath. Swallowed hard. Levi reached down into the blackest part of himself, and pulled up the shadows that lived there. He let them seep into all the empty places inside, until hostility filled his lungs, his eyes, his mouth. The hollow of his chest. The warm place in his palm where his fingers made a fist. Every little crevice alive with anger, and his eyes shuddered behind his lids. As soon as he opened them strange shadows were cast around him, and it would be much later before he thought to wonder why. One of the Alphas nearby went slack jawed as he stared at Levi, mouth open to speak, but the words did not come fast enough to warn anyone. When the guard in front pulled the keys from his pocket, Levi let all his air out in a rush.

He slammed himself into the guard behind him, catching the Alpha by surprise and knocking him to the ground. Levi took a moment to kick his right hand, sending the taser flying, before fixing his attention on the other Alpha. He'd already started to turn around at the sound of the scuffle, and Levi jumped into the air and wrapped the chain between his wrists around the guards throat. The Omega shoved his knees into the small of the man's back, arching away, cutting off his air. The prisoners
erupted into a chorus of noise, cheers and exclamations, as the guard clawed at the chain circling his neck. Started to fall to the ground, and in that moment between standing and kneeling Levi buried one hand in the Alphas hair, the other sliding forward to grip his chin tight. The Omega bared his teeth and for the second time since he'd woken up caged, with a growl and the snap of bone, a life ended between his palms.

The Alpha fell forward in a lifeless heap, neck broken, and Levi landed on top of him with a thud. A loud roar sounded out behind him, and he took a heavy blow to the back of the head before he had a chance to move. The Omega jerked under the impact, ears ringing, vision flashing with a burst of light as he tried to blink his way through the pain. Levi could only be grateful it was a fist instead of a taser round, and he laid both palms flat on the concrete and swung his leg in a wide circle, taking out the Alpha's feet. The guard had not expected Levi to get his bearings so quickly, not after taking such a powerful hit, and he landed on his side in a tangle of limbs. Levi surged forward, snarling as he straddled the guard's chest, eyes shining. All instinct, the Omega inside him desperate for freedom, no matter the cost. The Alpha under Levi was big, and dominant, but he had not spent seven years fighting for his life against others like him. He had not fallen asleep in the dirt of the pit covered in someone else's blood, head spinning with agony, wondering if he would ever wake again. Had not been a slave, not as Levi had. In the face of the Omega's fury, covered and blood with his eyes lit up white, the Alpha hesitated.

Levi buried his thumbs in the man's eye sockets, and with screams in his ears and a grip that went deeper than flesh, he lifted the Alpha's head up and smashed it back into the ground. Once, twice, three times, and those hands that had been clawing at Levi's own went slack and loose as blood pooled underneath the Alpha's cracked skull. Levi pulled his thumbs out with a wet sound, one that was nostalgic in all the wrong ways, and he did not even look twice at the Alpha he'd slain. The one who'd taken time to warn Levi of the consequences of defeat. Who'd tried to help, in his own twisted way. Levi wasn't sorry he'd killed the man.

The Alphas in the cells around him were shouting now, ordering Levi to let them out. Some threatened him, while others promised to help him escape if only he'd free them. He tuned out the noise, scrubbling across the ground for the set of keys that would open his shackles and releasing his ankles first. The wrists came next, and once the chain was loose he wrapped it around his left fist, keys still clutched in his right. He threw a haphazard glance around, pocketing the keys and taking one of the fallen guards tasers instead. It only held a single round, but one less opponent might mean the difference between escape and recapture. Levi could not risk it. The pit was behind him, all those corridors leading to nothing but cells and and the arena itself. There would be an exit there, surely, but too many guards for the Omega to take on. Levi ran forward towards the doors at the end of the block, heart beating wildly in his chest, hands shaking. If he could get outside, they wouldn't stand a chance of catching him. Not out in the open. The Omega was fast, and desperate, and he would vanish from their sight as though he'd never existed at all. He just had to get there first.

Levi had barely made it a dozen running steps, feet leaving macabre prints in the concrete, before the doors he fled towards burst open to reveal three Alphas. It took them a moment to process what was going on, two guards dead on the ground behind Levi, the Omega running free. Unchained, weapon in hand, covered in splashes of red.

That moment was long enough for Levi to fire his taser at one of them, two metal prongs sinking into his flesh, and the Alpha in front went to the ground seizing as electricity arced through his body. Overcome in an instant, body no longer his own. Levi tossed the spent taser aside, forcing his feet even faster, desperate to close the distance between them. To reach the Alphas, and eat them alive with his fury. The other two were in motion immediately, one lifting his own weapon up to shoot,
only to have Levi there already. Right in his face, too fast, too close, and Levi's teeth sank into the flesh of the Alpha's throat with a visceral crunch and a spray of crimson. The guard made a noise, something gurgling and surprised, and Levi jerked his face backwards. Spit blood and meat from his mouth, already moving to strike out at the last of the guards.

A clicking sound reached the Omega's ears then, followed by a sharp pain in Levi's shoulder, and suddenly the blood in his veins was on fire. Tased. The last remaining Alpha had gotten off his shot, and at such close range it was no wonder he'd managed to hit Levi with it. The Omega fell, muscles disobedient as electricity sent him quaking onto the concrete. Through the acid of misery blossoming from his shoulder to spread throughout his body, he twisted his arm up to pull out the electrode. When his hand made contact it was immediately worse, agony shooting up his wrist and into his arm, a circuit made of Levi's flesh. He gritted his teeth through the sharp wave of pain, jerking the electrode free, sending it skittering away. Tried to get to his feet, only to find his muscles were still made of liquid, collapsing under his weight.

Then there were blows falling on him, fists and feet, the ring of metal singing through the air before a chain impacted into Levi's back. Reinforcements had arrived, and they were swift and merciless as they beat him into the ground. Levi tasted blood again, his own this time. Felt the telltale cracking of a rib as one Alpha's foot landed heavy against his lungs. His vision began to go black, nothing in his ears but the feral growling of Alphas, until a voice broke through the flurry of his suffering.

"Boss'll kill you himself if that Omega dies." Everything stopped except the noise, which increased in volume. Alphas angry at the sight of their fallen brothers, eager to take Levi's life in kind. A single kick landed, and after a particularly savage snarl, a second Alpha spoke.

"He fuckin' killed three of us! Kenny'll get over it!"

"He'll kill you, and then he'll kill me. He's not fucking around here, and neither am I. Get that Omega back in his cell, and then go report to Kenny and tell him what happened. He's gonna want to have a talk with this one, I'm sure."

Levi blinked the shadows out of his eyes, but he was powerless to do anything but writhe as the Alphas dragged him back down the block. Someone fished the stolen keys from his pocket, and then the earth disappeared beneath him as he was thrown into his cell. Every part of the Omega screamed in agony as he impacted against the bars before landing heavy on the concrete. Once the world stopped spinning Levi found himself on hands and knees, and he looked up to see one of the guards standing outside his cell, glaring at Levi with murder in his eyes.

"Boss man is gonna come see you, you little fuck. You'll be sorry for this later. Kenny'll make sure of it."

Levi spit gore at the Alpha's feet before smiling up at him, teeth pink, eyes flashing white.

"Can't wait."

The guard furrowed his brows, confused even through his anger, but he left without another word. Levi noticed how quiet it was, and realized the Alphas around him were totally silent. Staring at him where he knelt on the floor, covered in the blood of the men he'd slain. Meat in his teeth, flesh under his nails. There was no more jeering at the Omega, no more threats or taunts or promises of what they would do to him.

A scent curled into his nose, and Levi drank it in like flowers sucking rainwater in the desert.

They were afraid, and Levi thought, 'Good.'
They should be.'
Rework

Chapter Notes

There is some fanart I would like to direct you to.
Blauerozen did a beautiful commission of red eyed Eren in Bloodlust for me. Sleazyjeezy also did a red eyed Eren plus Levi which is awesome. I may have shared it before, but I'm not quite sure. Llussoire also blessed me with bitten and bloody Eren and Levi, and they're absolutely perfect. Thanks to everyone who is kind enough to draw for my story, it really keeps me motivated.

Ice in his veins. Not like before, when it cooled his rage, drawing Eren into darkness and stealing Levi from him. No, the chill in the Alpha’s blood sought to wake him now, to pull him from the depths of slumber and throw him into brightness.

Eren was falling in reverse, gravity still trying to hold him down as he surged forward towards consciousness. A thousand shades of black rushing past, an ocean of drugged sleep he was swimming through, and when Eren broke the surface of awareness he gasped like a drowning man. His heart tried to beat its way out of his chest, every inch of him suddenly itching to run. He tried to throw himself upright, the glaring light overhead blinding him, only to feel something tugging at his wrists. Wrapped around his chest, his arms, his thighs. Tight on his throat and forehead, straps holding him down in more than a dozen places. Leather restraints, reinforced with some kind of metal, rigid strips digging through the material to bite into Eren’s bones.

Not enough, the Alpha inside him whispered.

Nothing would ever be enough to hold him for long. Eren’s body hurt everywhere, and his mouth tasted like metal, and he still did not know where he was or why, but all of that was secondary to the mantra playing out in his mind. There was only one thing that mattered, and the ancient part of Eren surged up again to growl and seethe within him. Speaking to Eren in that language which had no words, but the Alpha understood it effortlessly. His true native tongue, ingrained into the brunet before his mouth had ever moved around a single sound. All of him alight with the need to obey, unified towards a single purpose.

Get out of this place.

Go and find Levi.
The snarl that slid out from between his teeth was loud in the quiet of the room, and he blinked the spots from his vision to look around. The stinging scent of disinfectant filled his nose, and it wasn’t the cold sterility of the run down hospital room he found himself in or the sharp press of an IV in his veins that had Eren tripping backwards through the decades of his life and into childhood.

It was the man standing next to his bed, still shooting fluid through the tubing that snaked into Eren’s arm, a warm smile on his face.

*Again, and again, and again.*

He’d been filling Eren full of needles the last three times they’d met, and if Eren had his way, he’d show Grisha there were things sharper than steel.

His teeth, and his claws, and his rage.

“Rise and shine, son.”

Grisha’s voice was quiet and fond, and memories slipped over Eren’s mind unbidden in flashing images and quiet words. The Beta running his fingers through Eren’s messy hair to work out the tangles, or wrapping a towel around him when he stepped out of the bath, body dwarfed next to Grisha’s own. Eren remembered looking up into those eyes and thinking his father was so big, and strong, and smart. That if he could ever be half the man Grisha was, it would be more than enough.

Now all he could think was, *liar.*

*Thief.*

Grisha had given Eren life, and then taken everything from him, piece by piece.

Eren choked on his own fury, acid in his mouth, and it swelled over his tongue until the Alpha was alive with it. He felt his eyes shivering, lips pulling back from his teeth in a savage growl as he fought his restraints with fresh resolve. The brunet could break them if he tried, could tear through the straps like paper if only he could call up that ruthless being that lived down in his chest. Eren reached for the darkness inside, the merciless red vengeance that would swallow him whole. Make him a monster instead of a man. Turn him into something he’d feared becoming for years, something he’d resisted with every breath he took. He’d fought against losing control for so long, schooling his
breathing, counting off his fury. Jaw clenched and eyes held shut, terrified of what he knew he could be, but Eren wasn’t afraid of that beast inside himself anymore.

He would pull it close. Hold it tight like a lover, let it possess him until he could feel it just beneath his skin. A savage twin he carried in his flesh, one he called on when he needed strength, and it rushed up to keep safe everything Eren claimed for his own. Ready to rend open all that had ever existed to get Levi back, and Eren pulled harder on the strands of anger that were coiling within him, eager to let them break loose.

Nausea curled in his guts then, irises sharp with pain. His teeth itched, the Alpha’s fingernails sore around the cuticle, and Eren felt his glands start to throb. Hot and visceral, as though they would melt through his very flesh, and Grisha’s voice was chiding.

A father scolding his son, and Eren wanted to rip the Beta’s tongue from his mouth and drop it at the man’s feet.

“Ah, I wouldn’t do that if I were you.”

Eren snarled louder at the words, trying to find some of his own and failing. His mouth would only let those animal sounds out, and that was probably fine. There was nothing he needed to say to this man, and his growls communicated what his voice could not in brutal tones of dominance that anyone could understand. Grisha just laughed as he trashed the needle he’d used, low and relaxed, and the Alpha quaked with the violence that wanted to pour out from his fists. When Grisha spoke again he met Eren’s eyes, and the Beta’s gaze was full of affection.

“I’d save all that for later. You’ll just make yourself sick right now. I know you’re trying to call up the Bloodlust, but it’s not going to work at the moment. I tapped your mate’s glands and extracted some of his omegaline hormones to create an inhibitor. It pulled you right out of the rage state, and I gave you another dose just now when I woke you up to prevent it from manifesting again too early. Even if you could manage to shift into it, you’re probably too far away from your little pit fighter to get to him before your body starts crashing on itself. One of the many downsides to your reactivated Primal genes, I suppose. Though the benefits are definitely nice, especially in your case.”

His tone had sounded detached, as though he was talking mostly to himself, but Eren could make some sense out of it even through the murk of the drugs that still lingered in him. Grisha was just putting a name to what had been mostly a feeling for Eren. A title his fury could bear, and it tickled at the edge of the Alpha’s mind with familiarity. Fairy tales read to him from storybooks, about Alphas who tore apart armies or destroyed villages with eyes that shone red. Monsters who played boogeyman to little children, fables meant to teach them to be wary of the things that could hurt them.
Don’t go into the woods after sunset, or witches will eat you.

Don’t trust strangers, or they’ll carry you away into the darkness.

Don’t cross a furious Alpha, or they’ll rip you into pieces, eyes lit up with rage.

Nothing more than stories, or so he had thought. Now Grisha was telling Eren he was the boogeyman, and the Alpha could feel only gratitude. He wanted to be a monster in night.

Eren would be anything he had to in order to get to his mate. He’d known that Levi was responsible for pulling him out of his catatonic state all those years ago, the Omegas blood waking him when nothing else would. Grisha had put needles into his mate, and drawn out those same pheromones to bend Eren to his will. Using Levi’s very essence to tame the Alpha, and Eren rankled at the thought of this man’s hands on Levi.

Pulling him out of Eren’s arms. Taking his blood, his hormones. Pressing metal straight through his mate marks, leaving the Omega sore underneath those stripes of red. The Alpha in him was screaming that the only pain his mate should ever feel there was the sting of Eren’s own teeth, and anyone else who hurt Levi would feel that suffering tenfold.

Grisha had taken Levi away from Eren and delivered the Omega back into the hands of his enemies. Left him in a cage somewhere, hurting and alone. For all Eren knew the Omega’s bones were all broken, teeth knocked out, veins sliced apart. Eren’s mind painted dark pictures for him of all the things that could be happening to his mate. He knew Levi was still alive, because the Alpha could feel the marks on his throat, his wrists, his thighs. When someone who was mated died, their partner’s marks vanished into nothingness. It was supposed to be incredibly painful, but the ache of the mate bond being severed was nothing compared to the knowledge that came with it.

If those marks on Eren’s skin disappeared, no amount of chemicals injected into his veins or metal strapping him down would keep the Alpha from tearing out Grisha’s throat with his teeth.

Eren had been following Grisha with his eyes as the doctor rummaged around in paperwork for a moment, making notes here and there before turning back to face his son. He hesitated for a moment, as if unsure what to say, but then the words began falling from his lips all at once.

“I was so sure you’d be a Beta. Almost everyone in our family is, and all the genetic indicators
seemed to point to it. You were almost ten, I would’ve known then, Betas present so early… But I couldn’t wait until you presented because it would be too late. Once your dynamic was in place there would be no changing it. All my research would have been wasted, and I was so close! I knew I could make an Alpha out of you!”

Grisha’s eyes glittered then, those same hints of insanity Eren remembered from when the Beta shoved a needle into his tiny arm and left him seizing, choking on his own blood. The Alpha’s fists clenched tight, fingernails cutting into his palm, lips starting to ache from being twisted into a snarl for so long. His father had made an experiment out of him, left him for dead on the floor of his lab, and for what?

To try and change his dynamic? To turn a Beta child into an Alpha.

As if the world wasn’t lousy with them. As if Alphas weren’t already enough of a plague on humanity, taking and forcing and destroying.

He felt queasy again, lungs unable to get enough air. Whatever Grisha had given him was reacting to Eren’s instinctive attempts to pull up the Bloodlust and making him sick. The Beta continued, unfazed by Eren’s posturing.

“I underestimated the strength of your reaction to the Alpha serum. If you had truly been a Beta, I think it would have been fine. But you were an Alpha all along. I was stupid not to consider the possibility, I got too eager. I knew it would make you sick, but I never expected…”

Shadows crossed over his face, something like sadness, and his voice sounded lost and forlorn.

“I thought I’d killed you, Eren. Your heart stopped twice, and the second time, I panicked. I have worked my whole life trying to get the formula right, and I was devastated to lose you, but I couldn’t throw it all away. Not when there was so much at stake. An end to the subjugation of Betas everywhere! A chance at equality! No more dropping our eyes and submitting, just because we lack the strength of a more powerful dynamic.”

He met Eren’s eyes again, but whatever he was hoping to find there, the look on the Alpha’s furious expression was not it. Some of his excitement eased back, and he continued on, more subdued.

“I took my research, and I fled. It was wrong, I shouldn’t have left you there. But what’s done is done. I left you, and left your mother, and went to work for a… rather questionable laboratory,
doing some fairly unethical things for a group of dubious entrepreneurs. I thought you were dead for over fifteen years, too terrified to come home even when I heard your mother had died. Then four years ago one of my employers contacts in the Recon Corps caught wind of an incident in Trost. An Alpha gone berserk, killing dozens of people by hand at some Breaker’s Den. Considering the kinds of things they want me to accomplish, they were very interested to get their hands on your medical records. Blood samples, alphine hormones and the like. When they snuck me into the Omega hospital in Shiganshina I didn’t know the name of the Alpha. The Corps did a pretty good job of keeping everything under wraps, but once I laid eyes on you, there was no doubt.”

Grisha smiled wide, and it twisted his face into something more bestial than Eren had ever worn on his own. Crazed, and inhuman, and Eren knew he wasn’t the only monster in the room.

Not by a long shot.

“I didn’t make an Alpha out of you, because you had been one since the day you were born. But I did make you something else. Something more. Turned on genes that had lain sleeping inside Alphas for thousands of years. Mankind didn’t need the Primals to survive anymore. There were no animals coming into our villages to prey on us, no warring tribes taking our children. We evolved past the need for them, but the genes are still there. Not in all Alphas, even. Before I found you again in Shiganshina, I wouldn’t have even known where to look in Alpha DNA to find the Primal markers. But your blood opened my eyes to a whole new world, son. I don’t care anything for the things my employer wants of me. They have… a clouded view of the world, motivated only by greed. But the more results I give them, the longer I can stay in their laboratories and pursue my own ends in secret. They were getting a little impatient with me, because I’ve been unable to show them the results they’re after. The serum is almost perfected, I just need a little longer. I was starting to think hope was lost, but now…”

Grisha trailed off, eyes floating aimlessly around the room, looking at something Eren could not see. Something that was playing out in his own mind, and Grisha’s fingertips dance erratically through the air, painting a picture there with his madness.

“Watching the way your Omega’s hormones interacts with your own underneath a microscope is like a work of art, Eren. Sealing the mate bond with one another has changed your very DNA! The Omega’s, too! Made you more. Made you better. It’s not something I can replicate, exactly, and a duplicate is never quite as perfect as the original, but it’s enough. I can give my boss something to sate his appetites temporarily. I have time, now.”

The Beta met Eren’s eyes again, manic joy painted over his features, a blind man with new eyes seeing the sun for the first time.

“You gave me everything!” Something went loose in Eren’s jaw then, mouth finding its purpose,
and the Alpha’s voice was dark with hatred.

“You took everything from me once already. Then I find the only person who can make me whole, and you took that, too. You say you want equality, but if that were true, you’d be trying to turn Alphas into Betas, and not the other way around. We’re a fucking scourge on mankind already. All you want is strength. I am going to get free, and I am going to rip you apart. If you tell me where Levi is, then I will kill you quickly, but you’ll be dead all the same. It’s the least I can do for humanity. Protect them from you and your fucking equality.” Grisha looked disappointed, as though he’d expected a different answer, and he pulled another needle from his pocket and fed it into Eren’s IV.

“I know you’re angry, you have every right to be. I took your mate from you, and gave him to a snake of a human being. But you’ll get him back soon, and Kenny deserves every ounce of vengeance you take from him. My employer bankrolls his little enterprise, and it gives me access to a wide variety of Alpha DNA, but I’m done with that now. I have all the blood I need, right in these veins of yours. Kenny treats everyone as though they’re his subordinates. At his beck and call, to do with as he pleases. It will be a pleasure to watch you tear through everything he’s built with nothing but your teeth. I’m going to put you back to sleep now, because I’m not quite through with my tests, and you’ll shake off the inhibitor soon. Doesn’t work quite as well without your little mate around, and the supply I have is finite. Can’t synthesize it. But I’ll wake you up again soon, and send you after our mutual enemies. I can’t wait to watch you work, son. It’s going to be breathtaking.”

Eren’s voice was a growl, and his throat stung with every word, sounds pulled out from animal lungs to be forced through a mouth that wanted to shift into something inhuman.

“I am not your son. Why did you tell me any of this? Why even wake me up?”

All his life, Eren had pictured his father dead in the ground somewhere. Rotting away, nothing but bones. He wished he’d been right. Wished he’d never heard Grisha’s voice again, or seen his face, or felt his touch. The Beta shrugged sadly as he depressed the plunger on the needle and shot ice back into Eren’s veins, the brunet’s eyelids going heavy. Grisha stroked the hair out of his eyes, and Eren could not even pull away, the weight of the drugs like stones on his chest.

“It’s been twenty years, Eren. I wanted to hear your voice. I… I missed you.”

Blackness crawled over him, a dark tide pulling him back beneath its waves, and the last thing Eren thought was Levi.

*I’m coming. Just wait.*
The fluorescent lighting flickered overhead, making Levi squint against the strob ing brightness. He’d only been left in his cell a half hour or so before the guards pulled him out again. They seemed to have steeled themselves, ready for Levi’s resistance, but all the fight had gone out of him. Every inhale was accompanied by an ominous rattle, his ribs sore as they flexed over his lungs. Breathing hurt, and exhaustion threatened to overtake him, eyes trying to slip closed of their own volition. All the adrenaline from his bout and subsequent escape attempt had fled his system, and he was shaky and somnolent in its wake. Levi could barely stay conscious, let alone go toe to toe with a half dozen furious Alphas eager for violence. There was no way he was getting away any time soon, not with his injuries and the hungry attention of the guards roaming the halls.

In that moment all Levi really wanted to do was sleep, and the rough concrete floor of his cell was more inviting than he thought possible.

When they’d opened his door with clenched fists and keen eyes to find Levi drowsy and resigned, the Alphas seemed almost angry. If they tried to kill him, Levi would fight them. Viciously, ignoring the screaming of his bones and the quake in his muscles long enough to make his captors regret ever laying eyes on him. They had made it clear that someone important wanted him alive, though.

So Levi was more annoyed than worried as they shackled his hands behind his back and half dragged him into a room that smacked of abandonment. Cobwebs in the corners, empty other than the chair they strapped Levi to, something ancient and metal he had no chance of breaking.

Not that he wouldn’t try, should the need arise.

They chained his hands behind the chair, tight enough that his shoulders arched back under the strain, and his feet were likewise bound to the chair legs. If he fought his bonds he would probably just fall over, but Levi saw no point in trying. Not with so many Alphas lurking just outside the door. Another chair was placed across from Levi, and after a few tugs on his chains to ensure he was secure, the last of the guards left the room. Levi should have been afraid, probably. An Alpha in charge of an underground fighting ring would be there soon. An Alpha responsible, both directly and indirectly, for the deaths of countless people. One capable of unimaginable cruelty who held Levi’s life in his hands. Levi should have been wary, at the very least. Terrified, if he had any sense of self preservation.

The Omega fell asleep in his chair.
Quiet laughter curled through the room as Levi woke up. Something soft and amused, incongruous when Levi considered the rusty taste of blood in his mouth and the Alphas he’d slain so recently that their bodies were probably still warm. The heat of life not yet faded from their skin, and maybe when the ghosts of their fists didn’t haunt Levi’s flesh, he would start to regret the lives he’d taken. They’d haunt his dreams eventually, the Omega was sure.

The laughter stopped before Levi became fully aware of himself, and his vision was blurry when he opened his eyes. An Alpha sat in the chair across from him, tall with ragged dark hair peeking from beneath the cowboy hat he wore. Hands on his thighs, knees spread wide, taking up more space than he needed to as all Alphas did. He was looking down, and the hat obscured his face, but there was something familiar about him Levi couldn’t quite place. Then he spoke, and everything in Levi went still, as though if he moved he would break some kind of spell. Sever something unseen that Levi wasn’t sure he wanted to destroy just yet.

“You poor thing, wore yourself out the first night.” The Alpha’s voice dripped with sarcasm, and Levi cocked his head, trying to clear the fog in his mind. He opened his lips, but there weren’t sounds in his mouth. Just sand, and cotton, and the Alpha continued on. “I think my boys expect me to threaten you. Punish you for tryin’ to escape. Can’t blame ‘em, I guess, after you put three Alphas in the dirt for good without breaking a sweat.”

“Four.” It was out of Levi’s mouth before he could stop it, sardonic and oozing confidence, and if he wanted to earn this Alpha’s ire Levi certainly had a good start.

The man just laughed, and Levi was going to say more, but then the Alpha took off his hat. Set it down on his knee, holding it in place, and Levi was falling. In every direction at once, until he was dizzy and unhinged.

The man’s scent hit him like a physical blow, and Levi recoiled, face twisting up in disgust.

This Alpha smelled just like him. Almost identical, only the twinge of dynamic to set them apart, and even as reason told Levi what a fool he was the word fell from his lips.

“Dad?”

Levi had not been very old when he lost his father, but he’d been looking at pictures of the man for years and years, and some things weren’t easily forgotten. There were knives in Levi’s chest, a wound long healed reopened in an instant. He’d not thought about his father in a long time. The ache was still there, though, buried somewhere deep in Levi’s bones. Pain that lay dormant in him, just waiting to crawl to the surface.
But his father was dead. Levi had seen the man in his coffin. Had watched it lowered into the ground, his mother standing next to him. She hadn’t cried, but her hands had been shaking, and Levi knew she was falling apart inside. Trying to hold herself together for him, and he’d wanted to tell her not to, his little fingers grasping hers too tightly as tears slid down his cheeks.

*You can fall apart. We can break together.*

Levi’s head cleared then, the shock fading away, pieces of this new puzzle coming together in a way that made more sense. He shook himself, brows furrowed, scowling.

“Fuck. Uncle Kenny ?”

He’d never met his Uncle, hadn’t even been sure the man was still alive until that very moment. His mother had talked about Kenny, fondly but carefully, like something might shatter if she used her words too carelessly. Her hand came up to her chest sometimes when she mentioned him, teeth gnawing at her lip, eyes darting up to the sky.

The man in front of Levi was indisputably his father’s twin, though the differences between them were obvious. His father had never kept his hair long, or worn the scraggly kind of beard this Alpha sported. Hadn’t carried himself the same way, or laughed dark and menacing with eyes that promised violence.

He hadn’t forced Alphas to fight to the death for his amusement. Hadn’t kidnapped Omegas.

Maybe his father’s hands had their share of blood on them, a stain born of warfare, but not the kind Kenny’s did. Blood he’d sought out, reached for, hungered after.

Kenny smiled wide, teeth sharp and eyes dancing, and when he spoke Levi felt sick.

“You were right the first time. Son.”

……..
There was dirt in her mouth, and the world rocked unsteady beneath her, listing side to side briefly before she found her footing again. Her eyes stung but she didn’t allow them to stay closed, blinking through the grit to better see her opponent. The third match of the evening, a hulking giant of an Alpha who was all fist and no strategy. He seemed to think he could take her down using brute force, but she would teach him otherwise. Whether or not he’d be thankful for the lesson, she couldn’t really say.

Annie wasn’t sure he’d be conscious after she taught him that size wasn’t everything in a fight.

They’d thrown her in the ring every day since the suppressants had taken hold, and Annie swallowed the pills down like she was starving for them. The last thing she wanted was to go into heat in a place like this. She shoved them into her mouth like candy, the medicinal taste lingering on her tongue for hours, and then squared off against whatever Alpha they threw at her. Until her legs shook underneath her, until her vision hazed over in red, until Annie was more pain than person.

Her muscles were sore, but that was a part of Annie now, as much as her hands or her skin or her voice. At first the ache that lived in her bones had been a nuisance, but Annie was starting to appreciate it for what it was.

It told her she was still alive. Wincing with every breath, but still breathing. Eyes that were swollen from lack of sleep, but still they opened again and again.

Knuckles that bled, but still she threw them at her enemies, and they fell beneath her one after another.

She drew her hands up to her face in a tight guard, ready let them fly again as the Alpha across from her moved in closer. His nose askew, gore leaking from his mouth, snarling. He was barely on his feet anymore, weaving under the strain of all the blows she’d dealt him, not to mention how many times she’d thrown him into the dirt and darted away. Normally Annie would have leapt on top of the Alpha to finish him off, but it was a dangerous prospect with an opponent as large as this one. He had too much reach on her, too much weight, and she wouldn’t risk those big arms closing around her and trapping her in place.

It only took one more swift kick to the face to bring him down into a jumbled heap, and Annie eased a few cautious steps back as the Alpha’s handlers stepped into the arena to drag him away. There weren’t any spectators, just guards that she often saw roaming the halls near her cell. Usually when she dropped an Alpha there was another one heading into the pit to face her, but this time the bars opposite Annie didn’t open right away. The pause in fighting made her wary, and she narrowed her eyes all around her.
A faint scuffling noise sounded out from across the pit floor, and a few moments later an Alpha finally emerged. Smaller than any she’d fought so far, but Annie of all people knew just how misleading that could be.

The Alpha’s hands were tied behind his back, ankles shackled so tightly they had to almost drag him out the door and into the pit. He was gagged and blindfolded, crimson streaks seeping down his chin. The Alpha was shirtless and barefooted, wearing ragged shorts that were dark with dried blood. His chest and arms were painted in bruises and cuts, and Annie couldn’t help the cringe that overcame her at the sight of him.

Gagged, and yet she could still hear him growling, even from so far away. His lips were pulled back from his teeth in a snarl, and he fought viciously against the three guards who manhandled him to the ground. They maneuvered him face down into the dirt to take off his ankle shackles, and only when he lifted his head up and arched backwards to hiss at them did Annie notice.

The Alpha had mating marks on his throat. Red streaks over each of his scent glands, and something lurched in Annie’s guts at the sight. He was there against his will, just as she was, dragged from his home and thrown to the wolves. No mated Alpha would willingly step into a fighting ring like this one. None in their right mind, anyway.

But this one didn’t look like he was sane anymore. He looked fucking rabid, twisting furiously beneath the three men who worked his bonds off. As soon as his wrists and ankles were free the guards all shared a look, and they fled together through the barred door behind them. It slammed shut before the Alpha could get his feet, ringing out metallic and final.

He was upright in an instant, clawing off his blindfold and gag, eyes darting around like a caged animal.

Annie supposed they were both caged animals, and misplaced sympathy rolled through her in a wave, followed immediately by the first hints of fear. Three Alphas had been necessary to drag this guy into the pit, blindfolded and shackled and gagged. Beaten, cut open, more bruise than skin. When his eyes settled on her, Annie felt like prey in a way she never had before, all her instincts swimming up and telling her, no.

Don’t fight.

Just run.
But there was nowhere to go, nowhere to run, and even as the Omega in her shivered in terror Annie lifted her fists.

Nothing to do but fight, or surrender, and Annie would die before she rolled over for some Alpha.

Even one who was a slave like her.

Her opponent cocked his head, creeping closer and falling into a crouch. Now that he was free Annie saw that he favored his right leg, almost imperceptibly, and Annie hated herself a little for cataloguing the weakness as though it was a weapon she could wield. She could pick out the mate marks on his wrists too, red slashes proclaiming that he had an Omega to call his own. Somewhere far from this place, if he was lucky.

Annie was pretty sure he wasn’t, if he’d found himself there.

They sized each other up as the gap closed between them, the Alphas watching gone strangely quiet, and a few steps later she figured out why. They caught one another’s scents in the same moment, nostrils flaring, both of them going tense and uncertain.

Then his eyes flashed white, just for an instant. Fast enough that Annie wasn’t quite sure she’d seen it at all, and he dropped his hands to his sides and hissed out the word like a curse.

“Omega.”

Annie looked at him, almost offended, her own hands easing down but still in a low guard. She was an Omega, and she knew just how viciously they could fight when provoked. Annie didn’t know this one, and she wasn’t going to risk her safety out of some ungrounded loyalty to her dynamic. The Omega was waiting for an answer, but all she could come up with was accusation.

“You too.”

He took a few staggering steps closer, thoughts moving fast behind his eyes.

“How long have you been here? Have you seen an Alpha with mate marks? Tall, green eyes, dark
complexion?” He sounded desperate, and Annie took a step back as the Omega closed the distance, cautiously keeping space between them. He rolled his eyes, moving forward again. “I’m not going to fight you, Omega. I just want to know if you’ve seen my mate.”

Annie snarled at him instinctively, unable to hold it back.

“My name is not Omega. It’s Annie.” Something softened in him then, understanding that went deeper than words.

“Annie. I’m Levi. Have you seen a mated Alpha?” She shook her head, ignoring the guards watching, yelling out insults, urging them to get their fists up and fight. Annie couldn’t find it in herself to go after an Omega who had no interest in doing so, no matter how her captors might react.

“You’re the first person with mate marks I’ve seen since they brought me here. A month ago. Maybe more. How long have you been here?” Levi shrugged, something dying in him at Annie’s words, a hopeful light she had not noticed until it winked out.

“Few days, almost a week. This time.” This time? Dread pooled in Annie then at the idea of leaving this place and being brought back. Of tasting freedom and being thrown back into a cage.

“This time?” She asked, Levi looking around as though sizing up the guards. There were too many, even for the two of them, and he seemed to realize it. Sagged a little, eyeing the exits, trying to find escape when there was none.

“I was here once before. Or somewhere a lot like this.”

“For how long?” Annie wasn’t sure she really wanted to know, not with the look Levi wore, but the question was out before she could stop it.

“Forever.” Levi seemed to realize what he’d said only after he’d spoken, and he amended his answer with a sigh. “Eight years, almost.”

Annie sank into herself until the gravity pulling her down made it hard to stand. Eight years. She had barely been locked away for a month and she was ready to claw her eyes out. Rip her skin off.
Slice herself open, until all that she was poured out onto the floor and she didn’t have to hurt anymore.

But Annie didn’t know how to give up, even if it would be easier to stop fighting. She might have been about to say something, but the doors on either side of the pit opened to reveal a pair of Alphas entering from each side. A voice called out from the stands, sounding far too pleased with things.

“If you won’t fight each other, we’ll have to make it more interesting!”

Annie turned, and the two Omegas moved so they were standing back to back without hesitation. He was warm at her back, and something inside her was soothed that had long been uneasy. Annie leaned into Levi a bit without meaning to, and he pressed back, answering her unasked question. Something she was ashamed to feel, unable to voice, unwilling to acknowledge. Are you there? Am I still alone?

Annie was tired of facing the whole world on her own, and the heat that slipped through her shirt from Levi’s skin was more comforting than she ever would have expected. Speaking in a language without words, Levi told her all that was necessary with the solid weight of his presence.

Yes, I’m here.

I’m with you.

She would have to rely on Levi to hold his own, even if he looked like he was barely holding himself upright. He still leaned a bit too heavily on his left leg, and she stood closer to his right side in order to better shield him. Instinct, to keep her ally safe if she could, to protect him from further injury.

“What’s wrong with your leg?” Annie needed to know, needed to be aware of just how fucked they were.

“I think it’s broken. I’m not too sure.” He sounded calm, unconcerned, and Annie laughed. Bleak and hopeless, like everything in her life then.

“You’re screwed, Omega. We both are. Broken leg is a death sentence here.” She was profoundly sad at the thought of this Omega dying, all that ferocity and fire ebbing into nothingness. From the
corner of her eyes she saw Levi shake his head, the Alphas getting closer all the while.

“No. It’ll be healed by tomorrow, probably. Everything will.” Levi sounded forlorn, drugged almost, and Annie scowled at him over her shoulder.

“What do you mean?” He wasn’t making sense, and Annie started to think maybe he’d lost it. Maybe Levi was damaged inside, too, his mind broken along with his body. If it was she couldn’t really hold it against him.

She was already cracking somewhere behind her eyes, pieces of herself closing off, parts of who she was being honed down until there was nothing left but violence.

“I dunno,” Levi said. “I think it was a mating gift.”

He still sounded bizarre, half asleep or lost to madness. Annie turned a bit more, and her breath caught as some of the bruising on Levi’s shoulder vanished before her eyes. It was barely noticeable, one of the blue back marks fading into purple, a cut sealing up as she watched. What the fuck? Levi was healing already, supernaturally fast, and a dozen questions Annie did not have time to seek answers for swam up in her mouth.

Then Annie realized with horror what that meant for Levi.

They could beat him half to death, and he would be whole again in a handful of hours. How many of his bones had they broken? How many organs had they ruptured? She wondered if his teeth would grow back. If they cut off his fingers would the digits reform?

How much of this Omega could they destroy, only to watch as he came back together? How much of Levi had they taken?

Annie was sure there were some things that could not be healed. Could not be regrown, could not be mended, could not be made whole again.

Even when Levi’s bruises faded, his cuts closed, his bones straightened, the Omega would still be broken. Annie knew it, because it was like looking in a mirror.
She didn’t have any more time to reflect on it, because the Alphas were on them, and all she could do was lift her hands. Bare her teeth.

Pray that Levi was more than just aggression, that there was something within him cruel enough for victory.

The two Alphas in front of her attacked in unison, giving Annie no room to breathe. She ducked under a heavy fist and arched away from a sharp knee, delivering a blow to one of the Alphas guts before dancing out of their range. Annie didn’t spare Levi a second glance, and her fight was about speed and misdirection, as they always were. She was never quite where they expected her to be, always two steps ahead and in the wrong direction. Her strikes were heavier than they planned for, her feet quicker, and it wasn’t long before she had one of them on his knees. It was hard to get enough air, her breathing fast, sweat pouring down her face. Fighting Alphas over and over wasn’t easy, no matter how many times she triumphed. Annie delivered a brutal kick to the Alpha’s face, knocking him out cold, and then she turned her attention to her other enemy.

Only to find Levi there, his face dripping blood, his eyes lit up white and throwing out shadows onto the ground. He leapt onto the man, landing on top when they both tumbled to the ground, fists flying savagely. Carelessly, and Annie flexed her own, thinking of just how much those blows would hurt Levi later.

Except that they wouldn’t. It will be healed by tomorrow, probably. Everything will.

Annie wondered what kind of monster they’d brought down into the bowels of the earth with her. One whose wounds healed in hours instead of weeks.

One with eyes that flashed white, who asked for nothing but his mate.

The Alpha went still under Levi’s hands, and Annie waited for him to get up, but he did not. Levi took a deep breath, and closed his eyes briefly. Gathered himself and reached down to hold the Alpha’s face in his palms, and with a pop she could feel in her jaw, Levi snapped his neck. Her eyes went wide when he turned to face her, Levi’s own bright with emotion, nothing visible in them but malice. Inhuman. Animalistic. Feral, and beastly, and Annie didn’t want to look at him any longer.

“The other one, is he dead?”
His voice was different than before, guttural and rough, and Annie could only shake her head in answer. Levi uncoiled from the ground and slunk over to the unconscious Alpha, kicking him onto his back with a grimace, as though touching him was repugnant. He leaned down, and Annie didn’t want to watch but she couldn’t turn away. Levi twisted his head to the side with ruthless efficiency, and the Alpha twitched hard and then stopped moving altogether.

When Levi stood up and stepped close to Annie, she stared openly until his eyes flashed back to gray, and the relief she felt was palpable. Something primeval locked away inside him, tucked behind an eerie calm that belied the things he’d done. The lives he’d taken without missing a beat, without batting an eye. Without hesitation.

“You killed anyone in here?” Annie shook her head, and he shot her a serious expression. “The sooner you start, the better off you’ll be. When they come back to fight you, they come back angry.”

There were guards heading into the ring to return them to their cells, one from the side she’d come from, five from the other. The Alphas from Levi’s corner had shackles and chains and tasers, along with grim looks on their faces. They looked like men headed to the gallows. He turned to face them, throwing Annie a long look over his shoulder, eyes pleading.

“If you see an Alpha with mate marks, he won’t fight you. Tell him I’m here. His name is Eren. His eyes are green.” Levi laughed then, sharp and joyless. “Or red, maybe, if he ends up here. Go back to your cell now. This fight isn’t yours.”

She started backing away, eyes glued to Levi as he fell into a crouch. More of his bruises had faded, now that she knew what to look for, dark blue washing out to a lighter shade. Annie expected the guards to drag her off, but they seemed just as interested in the violence about to play out across the pit as she was.

For a moment Levi stood still and silent, waiting, and when he finally moved it was like watching a hurricane make landfall. A storm knocking down trees, a volcano erupting to set fire to the earth.

A force of nature, ruthless and unforgiving, and Levi imposed his devastation on everything around him. One of the Alphas shot a taser round at him, and he rolled out of the way, liquid and unfazed. They surrounded him and closed in at once, trying to overwhelm Levi with numbers, and for a moment it appeared to have worked. With nowhere to evade he disappeared beneath their angry blows, and the Alphas dogpiled him, the clank of chains suggesting they were trying to get his shackles on.
Then they all flew out at once, one of them shivering to the ground with a taser round buried in his chest.  

Another dropping to his knees like a stone, blood pouring from him in a stream, half his throat torn open. In the few seconds it took Levi to spit the flesh from his mouth one of the three remaining Alphas managed to get a shock round off, and Levi fell alongside the guards he’d taken out, electricity arcing through him. Once he stilled, the taser having run its course, the Alphas pressed their advantage.  

They kicked Levi back and forth across the ground between them, in his chest and his stomach and his face. Crimson spray shot out from Levi’s nose, and Annie was surprised by the whine that came out of her throat. Something foreign rose up in her, and it took a few heaving breaths to realize it was her Omegan instincts.  *Help him*, they said.  

*Save him.*  

*He’s one of us.*  

But Annie could not even save herself, and she allowed the guards to bind her wrists and lead her back to her cell. A little slower than normal, feet dragging heavy, not quite willing to carry her.  

She lay in her cell that night after catcalls of the Alphas around her fell silent and stared at the ceiling. Annie thought of her family, as she always did, mind drawing back towards the things that were sure to hurt her. Her parents searching for her in all the wrong places, frantic and unhinged. Her friends, and her coworkers, and all the places she’d left a void behind, however small. The coffee shop she went to every day on her break. The gym she frequented, working herself harder and harder, trying to forget what she was in the swell of exhaustion. To forget that she was an Omega. That people took in her scent and thought they knew her when they really had no idea.  

She thought of Levi being lost in the underground for eight years. Of the way his eyes flashed white. How he moved, sinuous and fast and dangerous. Of the warm press of his shoulders against hers. Someone at her back, strong and ferocious and unwilling to yield. Those bizarre feelings of kinship she’d never felt before, creeping up and whispering *yes*.  

*He stands with me. We are the same.*  

She thought of the mate marks on his throat, and how unfathomable it was that Levi let an Alpha
stake their claim on him after all he’d suffered.

Maybe it was Levi who’d staked his claim with those marks. Taken an Alpha and made them his own. Bent them to his will. Seized that which he wanted.

So strong that an Alpha did not make him feel weak.

She fell asleep thinking of a green eyed Alpha fierce enough to call Levi his mate, and wondered if he’d ever see his Omega again.

....................

The scent in his nose was not the harsh antiseptic he’d breathed in the last time he woke, but something softer. Something that made Eren’s nose twitch as he struggled to take it in and make sense of his surroundings, and then-

Grisha.

Eren pulled against restraints that were no longer there before he even opened his eyes. He fought nonexistent bonds, and when his hands moved freely awareness surged in, forcing his lids wide. Already growling, fists curled into claws, lips pulled back from his teeth. He jolted upright fast enough that he would have fallen had he not already been on the ground.

On the ground surrounded by dark, unfamiliar woods, starlight shining overhead and wind whispering through the trees. Dressed in the same dirty clothes he’d been taken in, a t-shirt and some old jeans, worse for wear with the vague scent of hospital clinging to them.

He rubbed at his wrists, remembering how unforgivingly they’d been tied, how brutally he’d fought the leather that held him, yet there was no bruising there. No scab where his IV had been removed, and when Eren felt cautiously at the places he’d been hit with tranquilizers, his muscles did not protest. He’d skinned his elbows when he fell down in front of Armin’s house, remembered the scrape of asphalt on his flesh, but Eren’s fingers found no wounds there.

Everything was healed, as though he’d never been taken, and Eren wondered how long he’d been sleeping in his father’s lab. At the mercy of a lunatic, lost in the sway of drugs and delirium.
Defeated by a needle and a man who knew only how to run.

All Eren could do was fight, and the irony was not lost on him. He would have been fighting Grisha even then, if only the Beta was there. The only thing left of Grisha was the faintest trace of scent on Eren’s clothes and some footprints in the leaves disappearing into the forest. Eren could track him if he wanted, but he was willing to bet the trail ended in a set of tire imprints that led to a road nearby. Then it would be left or right, and any guess was a fifty-fifty shot. He didn’t know why Grisha had dumped him off in the woods, or where he’d gone, but Eren wasn’t about to try and puzzle either of those things out. He didn’t have the patience for it.

Not when Levi was still missing.

Levi.

Something dark swirled through his chest, and Eren was on his feet so fast it was dizzying. As if summoned by thoughts of his mate there was a buzzing in his pocket, a phone. His phone, he realized when he pulled it out, a notification scrolling across the screen that proclaimed he had a text message from an unknown number. Eren unlocked it to find a video there, accompanied by one line of text.

Sic ‘em, son.

He glared at the words, but when Eren brought up the video and hit play, there was no air in his lungs. No air anywhere. The quality was poor, grainy black and white filmed from a camera somewhere up high on a wall. Even so, it wasn’t that hard to figure out what was happening.

Eren could pick out the lean, muscled lines of his mate anywhere.

It wasn’t one single video, but rather a montage of scenes spliced together, all from the same type of shitty, low rent camera.

The first clip was Levi being shoved face first into a wall, blood running dark down his face. Then a shot of Levi on the ground, a half dozen figures kicking him over and over, until he went eerily still between them. Levi thrown into a cell to collapse onto the floor in a heap, clutching at his ribs and coughing up gore. Levi with his hands bound behind his back, gagged and blindfolded and shackled, a man burying his fist in the Omega’s gut.
Levi snarling, eyes on fire, fighting until he could no longer stand, but eventually falling to the blows of too many enemies.

Levi unconscious with fluid leaking from his mouth. Levi being tased, seizing on the ground while the men around him laughed.

Eren could not watch anymore, and not because he didn’t want to see. The phone cracked in his hand, screen going black, and Eren dropped it to the ground. He searched for the fury inside him that had eluded him before, and it was as easy as breathing to find it. Eren called out to that savage creature that was his brother, and it answered with a snarl and a shudder, everything suddenly painted vivid shade of red. The trees and the stars and the sky, the moon hanging crimson above him. There was no nausea, no cold chill holding his rage at bay, no drugs making him slow and helpless.

There was only anger, and vengeance, and Levi, where’s Levi...

Someone had his mate. Someone was hurting him. Keeping him from Eren. Forcing him to fight. Bruising him. Breaking his bones, spilling his blood. A voice curled up from within the Alpha, wordless but impossible to misunderstand.

They put their hands on our mate.

The growl that poured out of Eren was ancient and unearthly, and birds startled out of the trees nearby. Eren didn’t blame them.

Soon men would be running from him, too, fleeing like rabbits at the sound of a hawk. When he glanced around there were bizarre shadows dancing in front of him, his eyes throwing out light into the darkness. He closed his lids, hands shaking with hostility, jaw shivering with the need to bite. To break and savage and eviscerate.

To rend, and sever, and destroy.

Where’s Levi?
There was an answer inside of Eren. An invisible bond tying him to Levi, and Eren knew he’d be able to find his mate anywhere on earth. Even if he had to climb mountains, or cross rivers, or swim oceans.

Walk through fire, crawl through glass. It did not matter. Eren closed his eyes, and felt Levi in his chest and his lungs and his mouth. Living in his veins, beating with his heart.

When his eyes came open, macabre red lighting his way, Eren was already running. Levi was close. He could feel it, the pulse of Levi’s heartbeat, the thrum of his breath, the heat of his flesh.

Eren couldn’t smell Levi anymore, the Omega’s scent long since faded from his clothes, his skin, not a single trace of it remaining.

He would tear his way through whoever stood between him and his mate, and then Eren would pull Levi close and breathe him in again.

*Soon, mate. I’ll be there soon.*

Eren pushed himself impossibly faster, and his coherent thoughts eased back until nothing but a beast remained of him. Animal, and ruthless, and starved for retribution.

Lusting for blood, and Eren did not know how much it would take to quench his thirst.

Every Alpha who’d lain hands on Levi would have to be enough.
RE: Unite

Chapter Notes

I recommend that you read the first chapter of *Shades Of Gold*, the winmin side story to this, before you read this chapter. Even if you don't like winmin, the first chapter is not ship related really, and it has relevant plot information for this chapter. You won't be lost if you don't read it, but it will shed light on some things that happened earlier in the story.

Warning: This chapter is incredibly violent and gory.

The woods were a fog around him, passing by so quickly he couldn’t even feel the branches and underbrush scratching at his clothes. When something snagged on his shirt he barely noticed, shedding the torn rag without missing a step. His throat vibrated with the constant thrum of a growl, and if he’d been in his right mind, he would’ve tried to quiet the noise in order to conceal his approach.

But Eren’s right mind was far, far away, and there was no finding his way back to it.

Not yet.

So the handful of guards posted outside the entrance to the compound were peering into the trees as Eren drew near, heads cocked, listening to the feral sounds of his snarling grow louder and louder. A couple of them unholstered their weapons, barrels pointed at nothing in particular, staring out into the dark of the forest surrounding them. Even with an Alpha’s vision, they could not see what was coming.

Not that Eren perceived them as ‘Alphas’ or ‘enemies’ or even as men as he closed the distance between them.

Eren’s lips were pulled back from sharp teeth, nails curving out from his fingers like claws, eyes lighting his way in scarlet. With something living inside him that knew nothing of mercy, Eren’s gaze landed on the guards, and all he saw was *prey*. Not foes, not monsters, but the physical sum of their parts.

Veins that would tear, and bones that would shatter, and soft flesh that would rip open beautifully.
The only thing Eren could see of these men were all the ways he could break them. And it would be swift, and vicious, and he felt himself roaring in a wave that started in his guts and rolled out of him like the tide.

He was on the guards before they could blink, nothing more than a blur of movement in the corner of their vision, and then Eren was in their midst. Surrounded by startled Alphas, and a couple of them managed gasps of surprise that would never quite bloom into shouts or exclamations.

They became wet, gurgling sounds instead as Eren reached out with both hands and slashed open their throats. Their skin tore like paper and his nails sank deep, cutting through arteries, snagging on vertebrae. One smooth swipe of his claws, one neck after another, but it was over so quickly the expressions on the Alphas faces did not change. Shock, and disbelief, and then crimson spray erupted from the wounds. It dripped over Eren’s fingers, shooting out across his face and chest in stuttered bursts.

The warm liquid felt right on Eren’s lips, in his mouth, and the moment it ran over his tongue there was no Alpha within him anymore. It was all he was, all he had ever been, all he would ever be.

All he needed to be. Alpha, and mate, and monster, and Eren was not lost underneath but bound together with his ancient self. Inseparable, irretrievable. Eren was not sorry.

Their bodies hit the ground in unison, sprawling with limbs askew, weapons falling from their hands to land soft on the earth. In another time, another place, Eren would have snatched one of the pistols up. Checked the clip with quick efficiency, used it against the Alphas he’d soon be coming up against.

Right then, Eren had no use for guns. No use for blades, no need of bullets. He was inside the compound before the guards he’d dropped even stopped breathing, some sort of corridor leading off in three different directions. Straight ahead seemed to go directly to the pit, while to the left and right poorly lit concrete hallways headed who knew where. Eren didn’t need to know where they led, it wasn’t important.

He could feel Levi, could follow the pull of his mate better than any map even with his eyes closed. Eren turned left, and it was only a few dozen feet of flickering fluorescent light and dirty concrete beneath his feet before he came upon more guards. Three this time, and they saw him as he came around the bend in the hall, blood soaked and red eyed and growling. It went without saying that he was an intruder, someone unwelcome.
Someone dangerous.

Eren came for them like dawn came for the night. Inevitable, but quicker, and louder. Teeth bared, hands itching for violence, running even faster at the sight of fresh meat to slaughter. There was enough distance between them that they all pulled out weapons, one of the Alphas reaching towards the wall to activate what must have been an alarm of some sort. Probably a fire alarm, originally, but there were no flames burning when the shrill noise began pealing through the building.

Just Eren, and he was more devastating and unpredictable than any blaze. The guards did not hesitate to fire on Eren, stopping where they were and aiming towards him carefully. They pulled their triggers once, then again and again, and most of the bullets flew wide, ricocheting off the walls or sinking uselessly into the cement. One found home in Eren’s left shoulder, and he was aware of the impact in the same way someone would notice a bug bite.

It itched, and it was annoying, and he let out an irritated hiss as he fell on the stunned Alphas. They saw the bullet hit. Saw blood pouring from the wound.

Saw Eren keep moving as though nothing had happened at all, and their minds were not working fast enough to keep them safe. Eren grabbed the wrist of the first guard he encountered, twisting it until the gun dropped from his hand. Then he slammed his arm down on the Alphas elbow, causing it to snap, bending in ways it was not meant to bend. There was pink-white bone jutting out of his skin now, and the guard screamed in agony. Soon it would not matter that his arm would never hang quite right from his shoulder again, though.

Eren put a foot in in the Alphas gut, gripped his wrist a little tighter, and tore the limb from its socket. He discarded it carelessly, letting it fall at the feet of its former owner, who collapsed on top of it clutching at his stump with his mouth open on a wordless cry of pain. The arm had not come off cleanly, and considering how much he was bleeding, Eren did not spare him a second glance. He’d be gone soon enough.

One of the two remaining guards was trying to eject his clip with shaking hands, and Eren knocked the gun to the ground, causing the Alpha to meet his gaze. There was fear there, and resignation, and Eren wiped it all away when he buried his thumbs in the guard’s eyes. Kept them there, listening to his screams, feeling the Alpha paw frantically at his face and chest as he tried to get free. It was futile, and pointless, and Eren used his grip on the guard’s skull to pull his head down.

Eren lifted his knee to slam it brutally into the Alpha’s nose, once, twice, and then with the gruesome crunch of broken bones, the guard went limp between his hands. He was out, but Eren wasn’t sure if he was dead or not.
He snapped his neck just in case, and then pulled his thumbs from the Alpha’s eyes with a sickening pop, mouth splitting open in a feral smile as he looked up towards the remaining guard. Something dark swam up in him, and wretched joy swelled through Eren’s veins, ancient like starlight.

Because the last Alpha was running, and Eren was alive right then only to chase him. To catch him, and to kill him, and Eren would find Levi and carry his mate past the carnage he’d wrought with pride in his chest and triumph in his lungs.

*Look what I’ve done, love.*

*All this for you.*

No one was watching, but even if they had been, Eren moved too fast for normal eyes to follow. It was tempting to let his prey gain some distance, give him the illusion of escape just to watch the hope drain from his face when he looked over his shoulder to find Eren too close, too fast. The predator in him delighted in the thought, reveled in the gore on his skin and the bodies in his wake. But Eren did not have the patience for it, not with Levi humming louder in his blood, so near the Alpha could almost taste it.

He tackled the Alpha from behind, right arm slipping around his throat, years on the mats in the dojo causing him to go for a choke instinctively. Eren increased the pressure until the guard was gasping, clutching desperately at his arm, struggling to breathe through an airway that was rapidly being crushed. Even so, Eren did not have time to wait for this Alpha’s eyes to blink closed, to wait for him to suffocate. His left hand came around on its own, claws seeking out the soft skin of his victim’s throat. Eren meant to slit it, but the nails sank in too deep, and as he pulled them from right to left to end the Alpha’s life his head came off entirely. The body underneath him fell with a thump and started twitching, residual electrical impulses making it jerk and seize. The monster Eren had become did not like it. He wanted his prey still and submissive, even in death, but this would have to do.

When Eren stood the Alpha’s head rolled away, jaw still working open and closed, leaving a trail of crimson behind it. He started running again, invisible strings pulling him forward towards Levi. Someone was shouting up ahead, and there was the stomping of feet, the clank of metal, the noise of resistance. Another, larger group of guards appeared as Eren rounded a corner, a pair of doors behind them leading somewhere loud. Somewhere full of Alphas.

And behind them, behind the press of fresh victims, Eren could feel Levi.

The guards drew guns, and tasers, and pulled out knives.
Eren raised his fists. Growled through a smile.

Ran faster.

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The wailing of an alarm startled Levi to wakefulness, and he sat up too quickly, sides twinging in protest. A few hours before he’d been in the ring, and once they tired of throwing Alphas at him, they’d beaten him into stillness and tossed him back in his cell. He was fairly certain a couple of his ribs were broken at the time, but they’d mostly healed after a little rest, nothing left but an ache in his muscles and some fading bruising to tell him anything had happened at all. There was still blood caked on his knuckles, and face, and arms. Levi did not have many opportunities to clean up. Sometimes the Alphas in the cells next to him would silently pass their water ration through the bars, since Levi was given almost nothing to eat or drink, but he usually finished downing the bottles before he even thought of rinsing the filth off himself.

They were undoubtedly hoping that if they ended up in the ring, Levi would be merciful. They’d seen the things the guards did to him, how many it took to bring him down. How quickly his wounds healed, bones pulling back into place, bruises vanishing, cuts sealing up into nothingness. Only twice had his opponents walked back to their cells instead of being dragged off for disposal.

Both of those times, the Alphas had not even tried to fight. Just went down to their knees, and bared their throats, and that was enough for Levi. He wasn’t monstrous enough to kill someone who yielded so readily.

Never had been, even after spending years and years in hell.

Now the shrill ringing of bells invaded everything, Alphas wincing all around at the noise, and though it sounded like a fire alarm Levi knew there were no flames burning anywhere. Even before he heard far away screaming that cut off too abruptly to be anything but violence. Before blood spattered across the small windows in the doors that led off the cell block, before the rattle of gunfire broke through the din, Levi knew the chaos was not from a blaze.

Because he could feel Eren. His presence rolled over the Omega all at once, mate marks heating up on his throat and wrists and thighs. He felt his eyes light up white, and a whine left Levi’s throat against his will even as he bared his teeth, the keening wail loud and high pitched and instinctive.
Calling to his mate, and the sound had every Alpha in the room furrowing their brows and cocking their heads at him in confusion. It was the first Omegan thing they’d ever observed him doing, and Levi clutched at the bars of his cell as the whine faded into a vicious growl. Eren was fighting alone, too many enemies, and Levi was too far away to help him. Levi’s hands shook with restless energy, and soon he was bouncing on the balls of his feet, pulling hard on the metal that kept him from his mate even though it was pointless. There was no give to his cell, no weakness, no flaws that would let him break free. He hissed in frustration, head thrashing back and forth, the need to go fight beside Eren overpowering everything else. A few of the Alphas seemed to put things together, the carnage taking place just out of sight, the alarms ringing through the air.

An Omega they’d seen break Alpha after Alpha under his fists without blinking, whining for his mate. Frantically hungry for escape all of a sudden, and a few of the Alphas started muttering profanities under their breath.

If Levi was this vicious, this merciless, this fierce, what kind of Alpha bore his mate marks? They could already sense Eren in the air, something primitive and unyielding, and those with any intelligence began to stink of fear.

They were right to be afraid, and the smart ones retreated to the back of their cells and knelt down, eyes on the ground, heads already titled to the side in submission. Thoughtlessly, obeying a part of themselves that would not bend to pride when their lives were in danger. Something savage in Levi rushed forward at the sight, yes, on your knees. Submit, obey, don’t fight, don’t run.

A monster is coming, and he is mine.

Some of the Alphas looked eager, though, clutching the bars of their cells just as Levi did, ready to enter the fray. They’d been in the pits too long, and instincts that would have saved them had been whittled down to nothing but fight, and win, or die. The scent of blood was in the air, and they were starved for it, eyes gold bright with madness.

Another group of guards ran down the cell block towards the sounds of battle, a half dozen or so, careless in their rush to join their comrades. Levi reached out without thinking and grabbed the last of them by his hair, tugging him roughly against the bars. Once the Alpha was pinned to the metal of Levi’s cell, the predator in him growled out victory. He tried to snap the guard’s neck and could not get a good angle, the Alpha struggling to get away, and Levi did the only thing he could think of.

He snaked his left arm under the guard’s throat, catching his own left wrist in his right elbow, and pulled the choke tight. Tighter, tighter, and when the door at the end of the cell block opened as the guards ran out towards their deaths, Levi heard it.
Eren, roaring, and something broke open within him at the sound. Suddenly his nails were darker, long and curved and bestial, like razorblades on the tips of his fingers. His eyes flashed impossibly brighter, and Levi’s teeth were too sharp in his mouth, hungry for the taste of blood. It was easier than breathing to sink those newly formed claws into the guard’s throat and tear it open, all the fight draining out of him at once.

Levi let him collapse, rifling through his pockets until he found what he was looking for. A set of keys, and he unlocked his cell and burst forth, already running towards the furious sounds of a fight he was aching to join. He dropped the keyring, uncaring of where it landed, not worried about the Alphas around him escaping. They were not a threat to him, not really.

They weren’t a match for the animal he had become. Not with his claws and his teeth and his fists that craved destruction.

Not with Eren a few dozen feet away, killing his way towards Levi one Alpha at a time, red eyed and insane.

Then a voice sounded out from behind him, cold and familiar and far too confident considering what was waiting for him on the other side of those doors.

“Stop right there, or I’ll slit her throat.”

Levi froze, but it was hard, body screaming to carry him towards Eren. The Alpha was so close he could feel him, could hear him, and the urge to run to his mate was suffocatingly strong. He fought it down and turned, and Levi would’ve been delighted with the shock on Kenny’s face at the sight of him. Gory hands and teeth that didn’t sit quite right in his mouth and eyes that shone too bright to be real.

Except Kenny had Annie held in front of him like a shield, eyes foggy, face flushed. She’d been drugged, pupils blown, gaze drifting around inanely without settling on anything. Levi did not really recognize the signs, not in the state he was in. All he saw was that she was not fighting.

If Annie was not fighting, there was something wrong.

Kenny had a knife to her throat, a thin stream of red already dripping down from the blade, and it had Levi hissing in anger.
“Just come with me, and I’ll let her go once we get out of here. I didn’t lose two of my best dogs just to let you go. Now c’mon son, before she gets hurt.”

_Son._

It was the wrong thing to say. Kenny seemed to realize it, too, when the look on Levi’s face transformed into something frightening and ruthless. There was suddenly nothing human left inside of Levi, nothing that understood the threat of the blade at Annie’s throat, nothing willing to back down from the fury that swallowed him whole. He opened his mouth, but did not speak.

Levi roared, an echo of the sound that had come out of Eren moments before, and Kenny thrust Annie forward at him, turned, and _ran_. He’d cut her throat in the process, not deep enough to kill her, but Levi spared a moment to check on her nonetheless. He crouched down next to Annie, brushing sweaty hair out of her face, the beast that he was incapable of complex thoughts right then. Only ‘_hurt_’.

_Friend. Hurt._

She clutched the wound absently, blinking drowsy up at Levi, voice rough through the wash of tranquilizers.

“One’ let him get away. Kill him.”

_Kill him._ Levi understood that, and the only thing that would carry him farther away from his mate was the thought of his prey escaping. He ran after Kenny, through hallways full of noisy Alphas, and when Levi realized where he was headed, he couldn’t help but smile.

Kenny had run straight for the pit, leaving the metal door swinging open, and when Levi stepped out onto the dirt and felt it gritty beneath his feet, for the first time ever he belonged there. Eren was tearing through their enemies behind him. Levi’s own was within his grasp. There was nowhere else he wanted to be.

Not when vengeance was so close. Being taken again, being separated from Eren, being beaten, being fought, being broken…
It was all worth it if he could watch Kenny bleed out under his hands.

Kenny had a gun out, something black and sleek and threatening that Levi would have been afraid of before. Now it just looked small in his hands, and as he stared at Kenny it started wavering, barrel trembling along with his grip. Levi started walking forward, and Kenny trued up his aim, steadying the weapon as much as he could.

“All right, all right. Go back to your Alpha, he came here for you, didn’t he? Hate to see him go home with a corpse instead of a mate. Don’t make me kill you now, after all this. I wanted to take you with me, but I don’t want you dead, Levi.”

Levi heard him, but wasn’t really listening. It was static in his mind, white noise, and he took slow steps towards Kenny with a grin breaking wider across his face. Kenny pulled the trigger, and Levi felt his left arm twitch backwards. Like a muscle spasm, and when he looked down there was blood dripping from a hole in his bicep, but no pain accompanied the wound. He glanced back up at Kenny and cocked his head to the side, canine and inquisitive, but he did not falter. Kenny’s eyes went wide as Levi kept moving, closing the distance between them with a growl rising louder in his throat. The gun went off again, the second shot going long and hitting nothing but air. The third had Levi’s right shoulder jerking under the impact, but he didn’t take his eyes off Kenny.

The Alpha emptied his clip one bullet at a time, missing over half of his shots, and those that landed seemed to have no effect of Levi. One sank into his upper thigh, another grazing his cheek without doing much harm, a final round lost somewhere between Levi’s ribs. Each time Levi was hit he twitched, and snarled, but then Kenny’s weapon was clicking empty, nothing left to shoot.

Levi could smell his terror, and it was delicious. He breathed in deep, letting the scent envelop him, and when Kenny finally started backing away it was far too late. Too slow to run, nowhere to hide.

Levi pounced on him, rolling him onto his back, and Kenny took a breath, but whether he intended to beg or scream or cry, the Omega would never know. Levi’s fists fell, and they were cruel and sadistic and unmerciful. He felt his knuckles getting sliced open on Kenny’s teeth, the Alpha’s nose breaking under his hands, jaw going sideways as he let the blows rain down. Again, and again, and again, until there wasn’t a man beneath him anymore. Just a mass of twisted flesh and bone instead of a face, the outside finally reflecting just how monstrous he was within. Kenny’s hands dropped down in defeat, his struggling breaths subsiding to stillness, the last of them nothing more than the gurgling of blood where his mouth had once been.

He could feel it when Kenny’s heart stopped beating, not with his hands or his skin but inside him. The savage Levi had become knew his enemy was gone without having to check a pulse or watch for the rise and fall of Kenny’s lungs. There was a brief moment of triumph, a predator standing over his kill, filled with satisfaction that was as old as time. But even as he was then, more animal
than Omega, Levi expected to feel something more. Something deeper than victory, more satisfying than revenge. Levi waited for a sense of closure. Of completion. He chased after it, searching through the corners of himself, wondering why he still felt so empty.

So alone.

Then a growl echoed out through the air behind him, and when Levi looked over his shoulder, everything was right where it should be. No ache in his chest, no shadows in his thoughts, no cracks letting darkness seep out from where he kept it tucked away inside.

Eren was standing in the pit, Annie held tight in his arms, and he was a vengeful god made flesh.

Red from head to toe with only the barest hints of copper skin shining through the gore. There were cuts and scratches breaking open brighter patches of crimson, bullet holes leaking ominously from his chest, his arm, his shoulder. His teeth were pink, and blood dripped from his mouth, his hair shining with it. Eren met Levi’s eyes, and the sound the Alpha made was pained. Guttural, and animal, and Levi was on his feet in an instant. The noise hit him like a truck, pure longing, unabashed need given voice, and he whimpered out a response through a throat that had forgotten how to speak. Levi didn’t realize he had moved, only that Eren was closer, closer, closer.

He was running towards the Alpha, closing the distance like a man drowning at sea clawing his way to the surface. Because Levi needed Eren to breathe, and he wasn’t afraid of that anymore.

Eren set Annie down gingerly, but when she was laid out on the dirt he was running, too. Leaving a rusty trail of red over the ground in his wake, and as soon as Eren was in reach, Levi leapt at him. He bent his knees and jumped into the air, going weightless and disconnected for the barest of instances, and waited for something he’d once tried to get away from. Something he’d been terrified of. Something that he’d thought made him weak instead of strong. Made him less than before, instead of more.

Eren’s arms closing over him felt like coming home, and Levi wrapped his legs around the Alpha’s waist, hands fisting in his filthy hair. He was warm against Levi’s body, hotter than he’d ever been, feverish and strung tight and shuddering. Levi buried his face in Eren’s throat instinctively, nuzzling to seek out his glands, but there was no trace of his mate’s marks or scent. There was too much blood on Eren, and all Levi could smell was their fallen enemies. Meanwhile Eren was nosing hard into Levi’s neck, huffing out ragged gasps against his skin. He started mouthing at him desperately, and then Eren’s teeth sank in deep, and Levi went slack and boneless in his grip. There were no sounds other than his growling, but Levi could feel Eren through the bond, wordless yet more
eloquent than any prose or poetry. Mate. Mine. Levi moaned under his bite, trying to hold Eren tighter, to get closer, to feel more.

Yes. Yours, and Levi was suddenly frantic to get at Eren’s mate marks. He needed their scents to mingle, needed to feel Eren’s marks heating up against his own. Some part of Levi knew that without it, Eren would be lost in his fury, unable to come back from it without the oil of his mate’s scent on his skin.

Eren released his bite and sought out Levi’s mouth, the taste of copper sharp in their kiss, but neither one of them cared. It was the taste of victory, and Levi pawed wildly at Eren’s throat to clear away the gore as their tongues spilled together. Levi keened into Eren’s lips, the slick of Eren’s kiss nothing short of perfection. The sting of Eren’s teeth was a revelation on the soft swell of Levi’s mouth, and he could not wait to be spread out on his Alpha’s bed. Now that they were sliding together, the muscles of Eren’s chest and stomach flexing as they groaned into one another, now that the first hints of Eren’s true scent were coiling into the Omega’s nose, Levi could feel it.

The dull ache of his heat, looming on the horizon. Not right then, but soon, sooner than it really should have come. Summoned by his separation from Eren and their sudden reunion, probably, Levi’s body trying to keep his Alpha by his side. The Omega within him did not understand that Eren had not left them willingly, and it rushed up with the only weapon at its disposal. The promise of heat, of lust and want and mate, seeking to lure Eren in and hold him close.

Eren’s claws dug into Levi’s back, his hands bruising, his tongue starved as he ate Levi alive. The noises he made were primitive and demanding and debauched, and Levi wanted to listen to them forever. But not there, not standing in the dirt of the pit surrounded by the ghosts of the dead and the memory of pain that was etched into his flesh. He pulled back from their kiss, and Eren sought out his jaw instead, nipping and sucking his way down the Omega’s collarbones, refusing to relinquish Levi’s skin under his mouth. Levi was about give Eren’s mate marks one last swipe and bring their throats together when the rhythmic stomping of feet had them both baring their teeth towards the door they’d come through.

A half dozen uniformed soldiers were spread out just inside the pit, weapons up, alert, keen. They wore all black, masks covering their faces, the OSC’s emblem on their shoulders. Only later would Eren be able to process the words they spoke. In that instant it was threat, enemy, protect, defend. He was too lost in the Bloodlust to recognize an ally when his mate had been in danger, had been hurt, and Eren set Levi carefully down on the ground. They both fell into a crouch, Eren trying to step in front of Levi protectively, but the Omega wasn’t having it, pushing forward to stand at his side. The soldiers moved forward a few feet and Levi and Eren growled in unison, eyes flashing brighter, red and white light throwing shadows on the ground.

“These are our assets?” The words were muffled through the masks, but the disbelief was still evident, and one of the soldiers nodded in answer to his squad mate.
“That’s them, intel’s clear. Orders are don’t engage, no tranqs. Gas ‘em.” Eren let out an angry hiss as two of the men fumbled out gas canisters and then hesitated. “Do it now, you saw what they can do. Toss them.”

There was a *pop-pop*, and then a pair of smoking canisters were thrown at them, fog blooming thick into the air. Levi’s control snapped first, and he ran forward through the haze of gas only to take a deep lungful and lose his footing. His eyes started sting, and he fell to his knees, blinking through the heaviness of his lids. Levi tried to stand, only to stagger and collapse again, glaring uselessly at the men watching his struggle.

Then there was a weight on top of him, heavier than should be comfortable, but Levi relaxed into it. It was Eren, falling over him, arms and legs wrapping Levi up tight. He managed to turn into the embrace, limbs dragging with the effort, body not wanting to cooperate. Eren tucked Levi against his chest, still growling, one clawed hand stroking affectionately through Levi’s hair. Everything faded out into nothing, but Eren’s scent was in his nose, and Eren’s legs were a vise around him, sharp fingers scratching at his scalp.

Nothing could touch him but his Alpha, and Levi felt safe in the blackness.

……………………..

Erwin arrived a half hour after the first OSC team swept through the compound, and they had secured the perimeter and given him the go ahead to move in when he showed up. There were soldiers milling around outside, along with a couple of ambulances and various OSC officials. He’d been briefed on the first assault team’s findings, so after pushing through the crowd of masked men in BDU’s and a half dozen suited OSC higher ups, Erwin headed into the building. The entry had already been cleaned of bodies to make things easier on the first responders, but Erwin’s feet still sank into red stained earth, shoes making a wet noise as he pulled them free.

He headed to the left, following bloody footprints to the next scene of carnage. A pile of corpses, a severed head, a disembodied limb. He kept going, led in the right direction by the trail of brutality. It got much worse, and Erwin had a hard time maneuvering around the mass of dead men just outside a set of doors that led down a cell block. The walls were painted crimson, streaked and splattered, the floor so wet with gore and viscera that Erwin almost slipped more than once.

He stepped over unidentifiable body parts, trying and failing to get a rough count of how many people had been slain here. It was impossible when so many of them were in pieces.
Erwin passed by some teeth scattered on the floor like dropped coins. The bottom half of a jaw, a bone of indeterminate origin.

A heart that had been pulled free of its owners chest, sitting in a pool of blood.

Through the doors to the cell block, and the violence spilled out before him again, several wide eyed Alphas watching him from the confines of their cells. Shell shocked, not meeting Erwin’s gaze, and it was nothing to do with dominance and everything to do with fear.

It was not him they were afraid of, though, and Erwin well knew it.

Erwin wanted Armin to wake up. Wanted Levi to be unharmed, wanted Eren to rouse from his rage state without any lingering aftereffects. More than anything he wanted everyone safe, and whole, and undamaged by the risks he’d taken.

But he also wanted to take this violence and harness it. Wield it like a weapon.

Point it at his enemies, and watch them fall beneath it.
The med techs on duty in the ambulance that took Eren to the hospital looked on, speechless, as the bullets he’d been shot with pushed themselves out of the entry wounds. They were still en route to Shiganshina Omega, and the flustered medics bagged the spent rounds, hands moving on autopilot. When they set them aside to continue caring for their patient, all they could do was stare.

The bullet holes closed up before their eyes. Not all at once, but little by little, blood flow trickling to a stop, skin knitting together. By the time they arrived at the hospital there were only angry pink scars instead of gaping, torn apart flesh.

As though he’d been shot weeks ago instead of minutes. As though he hadn’t lost so much blood that it pooled beneath him, crimson and eerie and impossible. But then again his teeth were too long and too sharp to be human, his nails curved and pointed and black like claws. When they pulled up Eren’s eyelids to check his pupils and found irises that glowed red, lips curling into a snarl as he growled in his sleep, both techs gave up entirely. Backed away to sit on the bench running along the side of the ambulance, and tried to even out their breathing. They looked at each other helplessly, waiting for the vehicle to roll to a stop, ready to get away from the Alpha as soon as possible.

When they arrived at Shiganshina Omega and unloaded Eren, Levi’s ambulance had gotten there first. The medics who’d ridden with Levi met them in passing, looking as though they’d just seen a ghost, whispering to them in hushed voices.

*The rounds fell out of his wounds like silver bullets in a shitty werewolf movie. The holes just... closed up. Like they were never there at all.*

Then they looked down at Eren, and the sealed up entry wounds, and went quiet and wide eyed.

After that their shift was over, even if they were still technically on the clock, because they were done for the night. Everyone needed a drink, or two, or however many it took to forget the red eyed Alpha and his bloody Omega companion.

They weren’t the only ones who would be chasing the bottom of a bottle.

The medical staff at the hospital received a very specific set of protocols from the OSC concerning Eren and Levi’s treatment. The instructions arrived by fax before they did, along with some fairly impressive governmental authorizations, and a dozen doctors and administrators stared at the pages in
confusion for awhile before moving to obey.

One of the smaller wings of their third floor was cleared of Alpha and Omega staff members, a group of confused Betas ushered in to replace them. Any patients that could be relocated were moved, but the hospital was fairly crowded, and they couldn’t clear the wing entirely. They didn’t know what to expect, but two heavily sedated patients covered in blood and bruises without a single cut or wound to be seen was not exactly it.

The nurses cleaned them up as best they could, checking for anything that might have been missed, but other than the impressive bruising there was no trace of injury. Even after a battery of tests, none of the evidence seemed to indicate that anything had happened to them at all, despite assurances from the med techs that they’d suffered multiple gunshot wounds. The people who had brought them in were trained combat medics in the OSC’s employ, all of whom had served in various branches of the military, patching up soldiers in the middle of war zones.

They didn’t make mistakes like that, inventing trauma where there was none to be found. A dozen bullet wounds didn’t simply close up in the span of a half hour.

Except that they had.

Still, the staff did their best. They tried to ignore the glowing eyes that lurked behind their patients’ lids. The teeth, the claws, the hissing that pervaded everything even through unconsciousness. They ran IVs, taped heart rate monitors onto their index fingers, wrapped blood pressure cuffs around their biceps. The doctors and nurses treated them as they would any other patient, even if they were a bit unsettled by their appearance.

After they wheeled them into separate rooms, having done all they could, things got more unsettling.

There were Omegas everywhere. Patients. Staff from the nearby wings. Visitors who happened to be on the same floor. They all crowded into Eren’s and Levi’s rooms at opposite ends of the corridor, wordless and unresponsive. The Omegas perched on the beds, piled together in the chairs, sat down on the floor. They spilled out into the hallway, whining periodically in distress, as though they were hurt or confused and couldn’t figure out why.

The protocols the hospital had received made both more and less sense.

‘Omegas exposed to the patients may exhibit strange behavior. Do not interact with or provoke
them unless medically prudent, or allow any Alphas into their immediate vicinity, as they can become violent.’

So the doctors and nurses looked on helplessly when one of their patients exited Levi’s room with the dark haired Omega sleeping in his arms. He carried Levi down the hall, all the Omegas who’d been gathered in the room with them trailing behind. One was wheeling Levi’s IV pole, another carrying the unplugged monitor cables so they wouldn’t be stepped on. Their whining had stopped, and now the Omegas looked strangely content, dazed euphoria etched across their features.

The patient holding Levi headed towards Eren’s room, and the Omegas who were clustered there parted without prompting to let them pass. He laid Levi down next to Eren in his bed, careful of his IV, pulling the extra cables out of the way. Tucked them both underneath the blankets, and they folded into each other instantly, magnets drawn together even in sleep.

The Omegas left the room, each and every one, closing the door behind them. They piled up outside, packed in tightly, leaving no possible path for entry. Their heads rested on one another’s laps, legs tangling together, dozens of people who did not know one another settling down as one. Some of them slept, others leaning against the wall or another Omega’s back, eyes flitting down to the Beta staff loitering nearby.

Like they were waiting for some kind of provocation, for some sort of threat. The nurses found themselves averting their eyes, as though faced with an overly aggressive Alpha who might lash out instead of a herd of Omegas in various stages of illness and injury.

They collectively decided their rounds could wait until the OSC sent their medical teams over.

No one got paid enough for this shit.

............... 

There was a weight on his chest, moving and shifting and making it hard to breathe, but instead of panic or annoyance Eren felt warm bliss settling over him. He rumbled out a low growl of satisfaction, an Alpha’s call, and clung tighter to the heaviness pressing against him. His hands splayed out over… dirty skin, gritty beneath his fingers. Thin cotton. Then something soft and wet nuzzled at his face, making needy whimpering little noises, and-

_Levi._
Eren’s eyes shot open and Levi was staring back at him, irises bright white and glowing, brows furrowed with worry. The shining white eyes should have been startling, Omegas did not have eyes like that, but Eren didn’t dwell on them.

*This is how our mate looks, isn’t he beautiful,* and that was that.

Levi’s hair was down in his face, filthy and tangled and longer than it had been before, strands tickling at the edges of his cheekbones. Eren’s limbs coiled around him of their own volition, wrapping Levi up painfully tight, nose buried in his throat. He made a wretched sound, somewhere between a sob and groan, and his eyes stung as Levi shushed him. Made soothing noises, and pet Eren’s hair, and let himself be crushed into the Alpha’s chest.

A tear slipped down Eren’s cheek, and his lungs ached, and the joy he felt broke him into too many pieces to ever be put together again. Levi was there. In Eren’s arms, his scent in Eren’s nose, his hands in Eren’s messy hair. He was safe, alive and warm and trying to quiet Eren’s unhappy growling with wordless Omegan assurances. Hushed whines, and soft hums, and his weight pressing down deliberately harder against Eren, *I am here, I am fine.*

But the Alpha inside of Eren wasn’t placated, and he pushed Levi back even if it was physically painful to do so, to be parted from his mate’s touch. Levi went without protest, head cocked to the side in primal confusion, red light from Eren’s eyes dancing over him. He tugged Levi’s already rumpled hospital gown down his arms, tossing it carelessly to the floor. A trickle of fresh blood oozed from the spot in Levi’s elbow where he’d ripped out his own IV in frustration before Eren woke up, but that wasn’t what drew his eyes.

Levi’s chest and ribs were painted in bruises, his body dotted with scars from bullets, skin rusty with dried blood. Eren *keened,* fingers flitting from one injury to the next, mouth too full of teeth and refusing to work around the thoughts rushing in his mind.

*I let them take you, I let them hurt you, my fault, my-*

Then Levi took one of Eren’s hands, laying it flat over the left side of his chest, holding Eren’s palm against the skin. He kept Eren’s gaze, ethereal white boring into unearthly crimson, and it took a few moments, but Eren felt it. The steady beating of Levi’s heart, thumping rhythmically into his touch, strong and even and undeniable. Levi tugged down Eren’s gown with his free hand, fingertips tracing over the dozen shades of black and blue that decorated the Alpha’s skin. Lingering over still-healing cuts, pressing into sealed up entry wounds. Levi looked accusing, *see what you’ve done to yourself,* and between the worry in his too bright eyes and the thrumming underneath Eren’s palm, some of that raw anxiety fell away.
Eren slid the hand that was over Levi’s heart up, across his collarbones, around the back of his neck to pull him down. Careful of the claws still tipping his fingers, his hold gentle. Their lips met, and it was rough, and sharp, both of them growling into the kiss. Levi’s hands framed Eren’s face, Eren’s own moving down to clutch at Levi’s hips, and they trembled against each other.

When Levi rutted down into Eren both of them moaned, because even with the rucked up fabric of Eren’s hospital gown between them, it felt divine. Still Eren reached to tug the cloth out of the way, hissing into Levi’s lips before tearing the cotton apart in frustration when it didn’t budge easily. It was still looped around his arm on one side, ruined threads dangling uselessly, but Levi’s skin was on his, their arousals hot against each other, and nothing else mattered.

Just Levi’s breath slipping into his lungs, and Levi’s tongue warm in his mouth. Levi’s hips moving faster, harder, more desperately against him, precome slippery on Eren’s abdomen.

Levi eventually broke their kiss to rub his throat against Eren’s, scent glands wet and swollen from disuse, and when their mating marks brushed together they were both coming. Shaking out their climaxes, melting into one another, breathless and satisfied.

Then Eren’s eyes were green again, Levi’s fading back to gray, humanity surging up over them all at once. No claws on their fingers, no canines biting into their cheeks, no animals living within them wanting only vengeance, and victory, and mate, mine, mine. The beast just beneath the surface vanished like an exhale, like Eren had been holding his breath too long and could finally take in air.

He’d been grateful when the fury of the Bloodlust answered his call, but was just as relieved when it settled within him again, shrinking back into his darkest corners. It was still there, a monster waiting to be summoned, a dragon silently guarding its hoard.

Levi wasn’t made of gold, but the creature in Eren tucked itself around him all the same, possessive and violent and unmerciful.

After the rush of orgasm ebbed away Eren nosed through Levi’s hair until he found his cheek, Levi nuzzling back shamelessly, still holding onto each other. Too tight, too close, yet it didn’t quite feel
like enough. He wanted to pull Levi inside of him somehow, where no one could touch him again. Wrap Levi up in his arms where he was safe, and warm, and always there against his skin. Eren swallowed around the lump in his throat, mouth opening to speak when Levi cut him off.

“Don’t apologize. You didn’t do anything wrong.” Eren frowned, brows coming together.

“Levi…”

“Eren.”

His tone was chastising and brooked no argument, but Eren whined out his unhappiness, because he needed to say he was sorry. Needed to get out the words, even if it did nothing to alleviate his guilt. Levi had been taken, and beaten, and brutalized. Forced to fight against his will, made to relive a hell he had already escaped from once. All because Eren couldn’t protect him.

Because he’d failed again, as he always did. As an Alpha. As a mate. Eren could taste it in his mouth, the bitterness of defeat on his tongue like poison. He’d carry it around with him forever, an invisible weight on his shoulders, always there to remind him. To whisper, ‘not enough’.

All the strength in the world, enough to tear down his enemies by the dozen, and it still hadn’t been enough to keep Levi by his side. There were fresh tears on Eren’s cheeks then, and he only knew because Levi’s thumbs wiped them away one after another. He buried his face in Levi’s neck, where his scent was the strongest, hiding in his mate’s skin.

Eren felt safe there. And he shivered, and let himself shatter, and whispered out the only words Levi would allow.

“I love you. I missed you, Levi.”

“Me too. I’m here now.”

There was the faint sound of people getting to their feet outside the door, too many pairs of footsteps slowly fading away, but Eren didn’t notice. Levi pulled the thin hospital blankets around them both, and laid down so Eren could curl up on his chest.
They went back to sleep quickly, their bodies still fighting to heal them, to make them whole again.

But Eren already felt whole, despite the blood lingering in his mouth and the ache in his bones.

None of the staff came in while they were sleeping, afraid of bright eyes and sharp teeth and flesh that refused to stay broken.

When they woke up it was to Hange screeching at them, throwing herself onto the bed with blatant disregard for their nudity and hugging them both. Eren jolted back to awareness, but his inner Alpha didn’t rile as he expected it to at the presence of the energetic Beta. He was merely amused as he watched Levi cringe in Hange’s arms, wincing at her loud voice, and after a few moments too many of sloppy cheek kisses and grabby hands, gently shove her away. More gently than he would ever admit, but Levi was obviously happy to see her if one knew how to read him.

Even if he wiped his cheek with a disgusted look afterwards.

There were too many things that needed to be done. Eren and Levi needed to go to the OSC headquarters and give their statements on everything that had happened. Or everything they remembered, in Eren’s case. None of Eren’s friends or family had been informed that he was safe, and Mikasa would be murderous if she found out she’d been left out of the loop for even a moment. Erwin was still on site at the crime scene with his investigators, and wouldn’t be finished for quite some time. There was also the matter of Eren and Levi’s medical results, which raised more questions instead of providing answers, and they hadn’t seen a single doctor since they woke up.

But Hange was shoving a bag into their arms, waving away their concerns, telling them to get dressed.

“There’s an OSC team outside with a car waiting to pick you. I looked over your test results, and neither one of you is medically in any sort of danger. The hospital is pretty eager to be rid of you. So go home, and eat, and shower, and get some rest. There will be an armed OSC strike team parked in your front yard for now, just in case, but they don’t anticipate any continued threat considering… well. We can start dealing with all this shit tomorrow, okay?”

Hange looked vaguely nervous, and Eren got the feeling she was keeping something from him, but he took the bag she offered without protest. There were clothes inside, a pair of new phones with
her number programmed into them, and an envelope with a couple hundred bucks in cash.

Which was how they ended up in Eren’s shower together, washing weeks of sweat and filth off of one another. It took over an hour of shampooing and scrubbing and conditioning and doing it all over again and again before either of them felt clean. The whole ordeal would have taken less time if they’d just cleaned themselves instead of each other. But Eren’s hands wouldn’t stray from Levi’s skin, and Levi’s eyes could focus on nothing but his Alpha. All of their bruising was gone, now, their cuts healed, their flesh almost unmarred.

A handful of tiny scars where their bullet wounds had been, and even those were impossibly faint.

And Eren’s teeth marks etched into Levi’s throat, remaining in the skin as everything else vanished, the Omega in him refusing to let them go.

All Eren wanted to do in that moment was care for Levi, despite the looming shadow of tasks he needed to undertake. Eren knew he needed to call his sister. Armin, Jean, the dojo. Everyone deserved to know he was okay, that Levi was with him, that they’d come home. Hange had assured him that the Omega they’d found, Annie, was doing fine, but wouldn’t be allowed any visitors until the next day. They needed to to find out what room she was in, as Levi seemed keen on seeing her once she was awake.

Neither one of them had brought up exactly what had happened to them over the last couple of weeks, and while Eren was curious, he knew they would have to go over it all in excruciating detail the next day at the OSC when they gave their statements. He wanted to know what Levi had gone through, had to know. The Alpha in him would be uneasy until he did, restless, but at the same time Eren was nervous about it.

It wasn’t as though he could take further vengeance. Everyone was already dead, but Eren had a feeling he’d want to kill them all over again when Levi told his story.

Eren also needed to feed Levi. There was no telling how long it had been since he’d eaten a proper meal, and Eren wasn’t exactly hungry, but he could feel a hollowness in his stomach all the same.

There was something his mate needed more than food, evidently, because Levi tackled Eren roughly onto his bed the moment they were close enough. There were still traces of them lingering in the sheets, the smell of Alpha and Omega twining, and Eren didn’t bother to hold back the groan that came out as Levi collapsed against him.
Levi kissed him hard, straddling Eren’s hips, skin still damp from their shower. He’d brushed his teeth before they even stepped foot in the bathtub, and Levi tasted like mint, and mate, and home. Eren wrapped his arms around Levi, pulling the Omega flush against him, needing to feel his heat.

It felt like he’d been missing a limb all this time. An eye, his lungs, his skin. Unable to see, unable to breathe, everything he was raw and exposed and incomplete without Levi beside him. Now Eren was pieced back together, and Levi writhed into him, rubbing his wrists against the mate marks on Eren’s throat. Eren didn’t even think he was aware he was doing it, and that made it even more dizzying somehow, Levi’s instincts screaming at him to cover himself in the Alpha’s scent. His teeth snagged Eren’s lips again and again, tongue spilling eagerly into Eren’s mouth, and he hissed out desperate words between kisses.

“Missed you so much, Eren. Need you.” Eren whined, hands traveling down Levi’s spine to clutch at the swell of his ass, fingers digging in hard before hesitating. He broke away from Levi’s lips, struggling to find his voice when Levi mouthed down Eren’s jaw and started laving at the red slashes on his neck. His words came out laced with profanities, Levi’s merciless attentions making him moan.

“L-Levi… They had you a… fuck… a long time. Are you… shit … d-did they hurt you?” Levi nodded into Eren’s skin but seemed unbothered, muttering out his response in between sharp little bites to Eren’s glands.

“Yeah, they did. But it's fine. I’m fine now. I’m healed, I want you, please.”

Levi started rubbing his face back and forth, from one side of Eren’s throat to the other, losing himself in the oil of Eren’s scent, hips grinding into him. It was hard to keep track of his thoughts, but Eren pushed Levi’s face away until he could look into his eyes. Knew his own were gold bright and wild, but could not blink them back to normal. Then Eren let his fingers trail down between Levi’s cheeks, not touching, not teasing, but drawing attention.

“Did they hurt you anywhere that I can’t see, Levi?” Levi frowned, not understanding, still buried in a haze of lust. “If they did it’s not... Nothing will change, I just… I need to know how to take care of you. I don’t want to hurt you.” Then realization dawned on Levi, and he shook his head fervently, some of the need going out of his gaze. He lifted his hands and put them on either side of Eren’s face, eyes wide and serious.

“Eren, no. Nothing like that. And I don’t just want you to take care of me.” Eren opened his mouth to argue, and Levi laid his thumbs over the Alpha’s lips to quiet him. “I want us to take care of each other. Let me take care of you, too.”
Heat washed over Eren, mind going dark but beautiful places, and he leaned up to claim Levi’s mouth again. Eren couldn’t help the sounds he was making into the kiss, not his usual growling and hissing, but quiet gasping whines. A sweet scent curled into his nose, Levi slicking with want, calling out to his Alpha without words. Eren reached up with his left hand and took Levi’s right, folding all their fingers down save one, index fingers laid flat against one another. Then he bent Levi’s arm back, his hold on the Omega’s hand shifting as the angle changed, guiding their fingers down behind him until they were pressing into Levi’s hole. Both of them at once, their fingertips slipping inside easily, and Levi shuddered at the sensation. He arched into the touch like he’d been electrified, head falling backwards on his shoulders, cock leaking precome to pool onto Eren’s belly. He was so wet his slick dripped down over Eren’s knuckles as they both delved deeper, until their palms were messy with it. It was obscene, the slippery rush of fluid on his skin, and Eren bit his lip hard and tried to keep his eyes from rolling back in his head.

Eren pulled their fingers out together, still holding onto Levi’s hand, and the Omegan whimper he let out at the loss was almost enough to make Eren reconsider. But no, Eren could give Levi everything he wanted later. Again and again. Could knot him until they were both seeing stars, sore and sweating and breathless. Litter that pale skin with bruises from his mouth, put fresh bites into all those mate marks. Bury his face between Levi’s pretty thighs and stay there all fucking night, swallowing him whole. Making a mess of him, and then licking him clean again, until he shivered with overstimulation at every brush of Eren’s tongue. They had time.

So he sat up, Levi getting jostled lower on Eren’s body, and tugged their joined hands forward. Eren laid back against the pillows and spread his thighs wide, pressing Levi’s slick covered hand between his cheeks. He made Levi rub torturous circles against his entrance, feeling it relax under their touch as the slick did its job. Levi lips parted just slightly, and he stared down at where Eren was using both their hands to tease himself, gaze slowly lighting up. Bright, bright, brighter, until he was white eyed with a feral expression on his face. He looked up at Eren, questioning and unsure but wanting, and Eren smiled.

“Come on then, Levi. Take care of me.”

He held Eren’s stare for a moment, disbelieving. When he realized Eren was serious the sound Levi made was inhuman, and he kneed Eren’s legs impossibly wider, pressing his finger into the Alpha. Slowly, slowly, and fuck, Eren had never even thought of being touched that way, but as Levi thrust in and out, setting him on fire, he wondered why.

*Because Alphas take, and are not taken,* a tiny voice spewing ingrained rhetoric mumbled inside his mind. But Eren’s Alpha was soaring within him, swimming in satisfaction and growling out, yes.

*Levi is ours, and we are his, and he may take whatever he likes from us.*
Levi nuzzled at the glands in Eren’s thighs before sucking them between his teeth, pulling up hickeys in the skin as he worked Eren open.

He wanted to reciprocate somehow, or at least let Levi know he was okay, but Eren could do nothing besides cling to Levi’s hair and fall to pieces beneath his mouth. His free hand fistled in the sheets, arousal throbbing viciously against his abdomen, and the noises he made should have been shameful. Should have been, but they weren’t, because Eren was incapable of shame when Levi was touching him, tasting him. Levi edged another finger into Eren, stretching him apart, and it was warm and wet and perfect. He was mewling out breaths, and shaking each time Levi pressed his fingers deeper, and Eren felt owned by the little Omega between his thighs like he never had before.

By the time he had three fingers buried in Eren, Levi looked drugged. Eyes glowing bright, tongue moving messily up to the juncture of Eren’s thighs, his face shining with slick and the oil from Eren’s glands. His lips were red and swollen, his cheeks flushed crimson, his dark hair wild from Eren’s clawing.

When he glanced up into Eren’s eyes, all the air was gone from the room. Levi was wrecked, and breathtaking, and Eren didn’t know he was going to beg until he heard the words fall from his mouth.

“Please, love, I need you.”

Levi let out a rough breath against Eren’s skin, and then pulled his fingers out and moved up his body. He hooked his hands under Eren’s knees and pushed them up until they were pressed into the sheets, all of the Alpha exposed and on display.

When Levi reached behind himself to gather more slick, coating his already wet cock in it, Eren thought he might explode at the sight before his mate was even in him.

Then Levi’s crown breached him, spreading him open inch by inch, and Eren was gone. Mindless, senseless, muttering out incoherent pleas as Levi seated himself fully inside. Fuck, yes, Levi, please, and Eren opened his eyes and looked at Levi’s face only to find him staring right back. Brows furrowed, mouth open wide, irises lighting up the space between them in eerie white. It seemed like he was trying and failing to speak, jaw working around sounds that didn’t quite form the words he was seeking, and Eren could see the moment he gave up. Levi rocked into Eren, grinding himself deeper, and the world shrunk down until it was nothing but the two of them.
“Lo… love you, Eren,” he rasped out finally, melting into Eren until his face was laid against the Alpha’s throat. Eren ran shaking fingers through raven strands, legs wrapping themselves around Levi’s back, heels digging urgently into his spine.

“Love you, too. Please.”

Levi gave Eren what he asked for, pulling away and then fucking back into him brutally. It was Eren’s first time being with someone that way, and without biology on his side to make things easier, Levi wanted to be gentle. Wanted to go slow, wanted to make sure he wasn’t hurting Eren, wanted to be careful.

Found that he couldn’t, instincts taking over to scream more, faster, harder, now.

*Take what is ours.*

Eren didn’t mind. Something in him that had never been given voice was roaring with the rightness of it, with the freedom of giving everything over to Levi. There was no control, no responsibility, no Alpha lurking just beneath his skin telling Eren all the ways he needed to please his mate. There was only Levi looming over him, and there was nothing hesitant or uncertain in the way he touched Eren. His mouth was endlessly hungry against Eren’s skin, hands demanding as they moved him this way and that, hips thrusting into him with the same kind of aggression that made Levi so formidable in a fight.

He was unrelenting, ruthless. Dominating, and Eren didn’t even think, just followed his instincts and bared his throat to Levi, alight with the need to feel sharp Omegan teeth in his mate marks.

Levi growled and obliged him, biting down hard on Eren’s glands, punctuating the sting with a fist tugging roughly on Eren’s hair and particularly savage thrust. Eren groaned out Levi’s name, nails scratching vicious lines in his shoulders and biceps, boneless and shaking under the assault. The air was sweet, and Eren didn’t need to check to know there was slick wetting Levi’s thighs, his body not quite understanding what was happening but still wanting more.

It smelled like sex, like Omega and sweat and blood and lust.

Like mate. Like Levi. In his arms, buried inside him. He was on Eren’s skin, and in Eren’s mouth. Levi was everywhere, and Eren felt heat coiling inside him, twisting everything until his muscles all began to tense. He arched off the bed, trying to meet Levi’s thrusts, hands grappling for purchase.
“Levi, Levi I’m-”

Levi kissed him, though there was nothing eloquent or artful about it. Just pressed their mouths together as his hips began stuttering, taking the air from Eren’s lungs, long fingers wrapping around his cock and stroking. Once, twice, and that’s all it took. Eren came over Levi’s knuckles with a whimpers, warmth filling him as Levi buried himself to the hilt and shivered out his own orgasm. Levi worked them both through it, grinding against Eren’s ass as his climax rolled over him, lips messy on Eren’s mouth.

He finally went still, his hand gliding gingerly up and down Eren’s shaft until the Alpha’s knot began to swell. Trying in vain to tie him to Levi, to lock them together, cock still hard and leaking little bursts of seed. Levi didn’t pull out of Eren, just closed his fist tight over the Alpha’s knot, easing back to watch him shudder at the touch. When Eren’s eyes came open they were half lidded and golden, looking at Levi worshipfully.

“You okay?” Levi flexed his fingers harder against Eren’s knot as he asked. Eren jolted, and then nodded, making a vague sound of agreement.

“Mmmnnhh.” Eren was more than okay. He was liquid, and weightless, and grateful for Levi’s body on top of him, holding him to the bed when he would’ve floated away. Levi laid down on him, still sunk deep between his thighs and making no move to withdraw. As though he was about to fall asleep that way, lounging against Eren’s messy chest, fist curled soothingly around his knot. He laughed, reaching up to stroke Levi’s hair, pressing a soft kiss into it. “Comfortable?”

“Mmm.” He stroked Eren’s knot deliberately, putting a bit more pressure on it, making everything in the Alpha uncoil blissfully. “I’ll pull out when this goes down. S’only fair.” Eren was pretty sure Levi just didn’t want to move, and he couldn’t really blame him. There was something deeply comforting about being connected, instincts settling and quieting inside him. Levi continued speaking, slurred and rough and annoyed. “After it goes down, you’re up. I need you, too. Look what you turned me into, wet for your fucking knot. Christ.”

Eren groaned, hand trailing down Levi’s spine to slip against him. Then he was growling instead, fingers soaked in Levi’s slick. More of it dripped out as he toyed with him, delighting in the way Levi rutted back into his fingers, a soft little whine coming from his lips.

The scent of Levi’s approaching heat was there, probably less than a week away, an undercurrent to his natural smell. A warning, and a promise, and Eren could not wait. It wasn’t even the heat he was anxious for, the overwhelming lust and need, Levi’s desire pulling Eren’s rut from him until they were both almost inhuman with it.
Eren couldn’t wait for it to be over, because this time Levi wouldn’t run.

He could keep Levi clean, and feed him, and tuck him into fresh sheets to rest each night. Make his awful fucking tea, and carry him from room to room, Levi nuzzling languidly into his chest. Cover him in scent, and touch him and hold him and breathe him in. Eren could wait until he fell asleep and kiss his eyes, his nose, his cheeks, until Levi woke up to glare and hiss out profanities at him.

Levi wouldn’t run. He was Eren’s, now.

He would never understand why Alphas bristled at the idea of being owned.

Because he was Levi’s, and there was nothing else he would rather be.
This is less 'Part One: Chapter 34' and more 'Part Two: Chapter One'. We're gonna start out slow and build things up again.

Trigger warning for discussions of infertility.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The picture quality was terrible. Low resolution, and stuttering, a shoddy connection at the time of filming making the images lag. Bad angles and blind spots, cobbled together from a dozen places into one long, imperfect stream. Sometimes the screen split in two, showing the same thing from multiple perspectives, none of them ever really ideal. He squinted at his laptop, eyes aching from staring at the brightness in the dark of his room. The coffee in his mug had gone cold ages ago, but he sipped at it anyway, dawn light just barely threatening on the horizon outside his windows. Sleep called to him, and he rolled his right shoulder, trying to work some of the soreness from it. He should have called it a night hours ago.

Instead he clicked on the slider at the bottom of the video, dragging it back to the start to let it play once more. Twice. Three times. Again, and again, and again, yet it never got old, even if things hadn’t gone quite according to script. Play, stop, rewind.

Play, stop, rewind.

He’d already watched the best parts frame by frame. Death in slow motion, a work of art. Not one that he’d created himself, exactly, but he’d set up the canvas, and laid out the paints. Dipped the brush in vivid red and set it loose.

Even in black and white, blood looked good on Eren’s hands.

Grisha smiled at the screen, nursing his stale coffee, blinking through the glare on his glasses, unable to look away from the carnage. Eren, slicing through flesh with inhuman hands. Tearing open throats. Spitting out gore. Eren, breaking bones, and collapsing lungs.

Reaching into someone’s chest, and pulling out their heart, still throbbing in his fingers as he dropped it to the ground like so much trash.
And then Levi, fists throwing off shimmering black liquid as he beat Kenny’s face in. Eyes glowing, teeth bright, chest heaving. The surprise ending, not what Grisha had intended, but no less satisfying. An unexpected twist.

A pawn unseen in the corner of the board, promoted above its rank and slipping in quietly to take the king. The game was over for now, but the pieces were still there, ready and waiting.

So Grisha reset them, eager to watch both sides rip each other apart. He had his own game to play.

He just needed time.

Eren’s chest hurt.

Too much affection all at once, swelling inside until he had a hard time catching his breath. It wasn’t as simple as the Alpha in him wanted it to be. Not as easy. His instincts were whispering to him to relax, telling him everything was fine, all was right with the world.

Because Levi was in his bed asleep, the scent of his upcoming heat growing stronger by the hour, every piece of clothing Eren owned strewn across the mattress. Cheeks already flushed with warmth, the mating marks on his throat and wrists and thighs brighter than normal, shining with oil from his glands. Eren wasn’t sure how things had escalated so quickly in a handful of days, how he hadn’t noticed what was happening sooner.

Ever since they’d returned home, if Eren took his eyes off Levi for more than a few minutes, he tended to vanish. Not for long, because Eren always found him in the same place.

In bed, with Eren’s clothes. Shirts and pajamas mostly, soft things that Eren had worn recently, at least in the beginning. Eren hadn’t said anything. Levi obviously drew comfort from it, shoving his face into the fabric, eyes going half lidded and drowsy. With everything Levi had been through, Eren wasn’t about to question his coping mechanisms, especially one so harmless that sent fondness skittering through Eren’s chest.
The days after he found Levi had been exhausting, both physically and emotionally. Levi was on edge, especially in public. Any sudden noise or movement had him alert, eyes flashing, ready for a fight that never came. He sat in corners, or with his back to a wall. If someone unfamiliar got in his personal space they were met with a growl, and then a muttered apology under Levi’s breath when he realized what he’d done.

Eren was no better, even putting aside the nightmares that had started up again in earnest. Blood on his hands. In his eyes. In his mouth, until he was choking on it.

Bodies everywhere, twitching, crawling away from him in pieces.

Eren cased locations like he was on an op with his old squad, logging potential threats, looking for exits. It wasn’t anything deliberate, but the Alpha in him fell back into old habits hard. A soldier’s muscle memory, eyes searching for enemies, senses turned up to eleven. Eren almost felt sorry for all the people forced to interact with them in the days following their release from the hospital. It was like navigating a minefield, everyone careful not to move too fast or step too close.

Nobody wanted to lose a limb.

The joy of coming home had been dampened by the knowledge that Armin had gotten himself hurt trying to protect the two of them. Mikasa had finally told them what happened the day after they left Shiganshina Omega, unflinching in the face of Eren’s anger, having weathered it enough times that it no longer fazed her.

Now Armin lay in a hospital bed, mostly comatose, all because he’d put himself at risk for Eren. The doctors seemed hopeful, muttering about brain activity and brief moments of consciousness. According to several medical professionals who seemed like they’d rather be anywhere in the world besides talking to Eren, coma patients rarely woke up all at once, but tended to so gradually, in stages. The outlook was good, but they couldn’t give anyone any solid assurances.

Annie, the Omega they’d rescued alongside Levi, was being held for awhile longer. The doctors wanted to keep her under observation until the illegal suppressants they’d been funneling down her while she was in captivity were out of her system, just to ensure there would be no withdrawals or lingering side effects. She would be released soon, back to living with her roommates on the outskirts of Shiganshina, who were overjoyed that she was safe and eager to have her home.

The OSC’s questions about what Levi had been through seemed never ending. Eren’s interviews had been fairly brief, considering he’d been drugged into unconsciousness for most of his absence, but Levi had a lot of information to relay, a lot of pictures to sift through, a lot of reports to read.
A lot of corpses to take credit for.

He’d gone over everything in detail to no less than three separate agents, not including Erwin and Hange. Still they called with inquiries about small details, asking Levi if he remembered this or that seemingly insignificant thing. It had been hard enough for Eren to listen to the story once. Hearing it over and over was maddening, the Alpha in him restless and uneasy every time Levi recounted his capture and confinement.

Recounted all the ways Eren had failed him, in prettier words. Free of accusation but still cutting like knives.

There were only so many ways Levi could tell him it wasn’t his fault. Eren tried not to let it show, just how much he was bothered by his inability to keep Levi safe. He didn’t want to make things about him. Not when Levi had suffered so much more than he had, but Eren wasn’t alone in being bothered by it.

Talking about his captivity took something out of Levi, too. It wore him down, made him retreat into himself, lost in thoughts he’d be better off laying aside.

Eren wasn’t the only one jerking awake in the middle of the night, breathless, ready to strike out at someone who wasn’t really there.

So the first time Eren found Levi in his bed, curled around the clothes he’d slept in the night before, he wrote it off as stress. A tangible way to reassure himself of where he was, who he was with.

That he was free, and not in a cell.

The second time was after a particularly grueling OSC interview, and when he came across Levi dressed in an old hooded sweatshirt, nosing into his unwashed workout gear, Eren figured it was a comfort thing. Levi’s scent could calm him like nothing else did, it was only logical that it worked both ways.

Now, with his drawers effectively empty and his closet mostly bare, Levi barely visible in a pile of jackets and t-shirts and gym shorts, the smell of his upcoming heat thick in the air, Eren felt foolish for not recognizing the signs sooner.
Levi was *nesting*.

Eren didn’t want to talk about it. Didn’t want to address it, in any way. It was like a wild animal approaching him in the forest, creeping up closer than it should, letting Eren touch.

Maybe if he stood still enough, and held his breath, Levi wouldn’t spook.

It was like having the *best* dream, and being terrified of waking.

If he held his eyes shut, and pretended, everything would be fine. Levi would stay. Wouldn’t startle, wouldn’t close off, wouldn’t freak.

It was one thing to bond with Eren. To let Eren mark him, to share his heat again. To be mates.

It was something else entirely to acknowledge just how fast and hard he’d obviously fallen, if he was nesting in Eren’s bed for their second heat together. Omegas didn’t nest so early in a relationship. It was unheard of, something that happened in cheesy, heavy handed romance novels or old movies.

The sight of Levi sleeping in his bed, buried in his clothes, had Eren’s hands shaking. His throat tight, his heartbeat stuttering. He clenched and unclenched his fists, standing in the doorway, unable to look away. Dizzy, short of air, bones in his knuckles protesting under the strain.

Afraid of breaking some kind of spell.

Eren didn’t want to talk about, and he didn’t have to, really, if Levi didn’t want to. But there was something they did need to discuss, sooner rather than later, if the powerful, sugary warmth of Levi’s scent was anything to go by. He’d be heating in a couple of days, and a second heat shared between the same Alpha and Omega usually marked the beginning of a certain issue that couldn’t be danced around.

So Eren took a deep breath, and walked over to the bed, easing himself down on the edge, careful not to disturb any of the clothes. Eren didn’t know any of the appropriate etiquette when it came to an Omega’s nest, had never paid much attention to the subject before, but he was fairly certain knocking half of it into the floor before their heat even started would be generally frowned upon. He
reached out to cup to Levi’s cheek, fingertips ready to slip into his mussed hair, thumb itching slide over his lips. Levi craned his neck, leaning into the touch before Eren even made contact, his body hyper aware of Eren’s presence so close to a cycle.

Levi rolled over towards him, the collar of his dark green shirt falling off one shoulder as he did so, and Eren realized it was one of his own. Dressed in nothing but boxer briefs and a stolen shirt, twisting around languidly in Eren’s bed, making a low noise of contentment that hit Eren like a blow, Levi was wielding weapons without realizing it.

He blinked his eyes open slowly, looking up at Eren from beneath dark, thick lashes, his lips redder than normal, his skin smooth and perfect. Those too bright mate marks shining with scent, drawing Eren’s gaze. Hormones working overtime, trying to make an Omega as appealing as possible in order to attract their Alpha before a heat.

Like Eren wasn’t fucked up enough over Levi already.

Levi’s brows furrowed, and he glanced toward the windows in confusion, at the lack of sunlight shining through them.

“What time is it?” His voice was rough with sleep, and he rubbed at his eyes and stretched, lazy in his movements. Levi arched his back, his shirt riding up higher on his thighs to expose the marks there. Eren was staring, his mouth watering, and had to take a minute to remember why he’d woken Levi in the first place. Blinked through the lust creeping up in him, the throbbing of gold light over his eyes and the itching sharpness of his teeth.

Breathed through the surge of his instincts telling him to lay down on top of Levi and grind mindlessly against him. Eren cleared his throat, and shook his head.

“Oh, it’s… It’s after nine? I got distracted on the phone with Mikasa after cleaning up in the kitchen. You’ve been asleep for a couple hours.”

Levi frowned, but didn’t sit up, still drowsy and unwilling to totally shake off his haze. Omegas tended to sleep a lot in the days leading up to their heats.

Or so Hange assured him when he called her during one of his many naps, nervous that there might be something wrong with Levi other than lingering exhaustion from all he’d been through.
“You coming to bed?” Levi asked, and then glanced around himself and flushed a bit brighter, as if only just noticing what he’d done.

Which was apparently normal, if Eren remembered correctly. Omegas would make nests on autopilot, not even really aware of what they were doing until someone else called attention to it. Levi seemed embarrassed, not wanting to meet Eren’s eyes, cracking his knuckles one at a time with his thumb.

“Fuck, uh. You can throw this stuff in the floor, and I’ll clean it up tomorrow.” Levi scratched at his head. “I didn’t think I… I grabbed your hoodie, and then your shirt, I guess, and I didn’t mean to… be weird, or whatever. Sorry if I got all your clothes wrinkled. Shit, I can clean it up now-” Levi moved to grab an armful of clothes, and Eren stopped him with a hand to his wrist, shaking his head and brushing Levi’s hair back from his face.

“No, leave it, it’s fine. It doesn’t bother me, I’m not worried about it.”

Eren trailed off, mouth full of assurances that would probably make things worse rather than better. *You can’t help it, it’s instinctive, it’s normal*, all of which were just reminders of Levi’s dynamic that he wouldn’t appreciate.

*I like it*, which would be a reminder of how hopelessly gone over him Eren was, and possibly a little creepy. Or maybe it would be reassuring? Eren didn’t know.

He floundered for a moment under Levi’s gaze, something uncertain still there, just beneath the surface.

But Eren wasn’t about to fuck things up even worse just to avoid an awkward conversation, so he steeled himself, and started again.

“You’ll be in heat in a couple of days.” Levi nodded but didn’t respond, watching Eren expectantly, waiting on him to continue. “The second one in a row. For you. For uh… for us, together.” Now Levi looked confused, brows furrowed again as he sat up, wary and tensing.

“Yeah?”

Eren stared down at his lap, hating that he didn’t already have answers to the questions he was going
to ask. It just highlighted how little they actually knew about one another, despite everything they’d been through together. He took Levi’s hand, toying with his fingers, grounding himself.

“It’s not… I’m not trying to push you, and this might be something you’ve taken care of already, but I was wondering if… Do I need to take you to see Hange tomorrow, or to your doctor, or a clinic, or whatever? In case you needed a shot? Or a patch, or something?”

Eren was a grown ass man. He was twenty six years old. He’d served in the military, been overseas. He’d killed more people than he was comfortable thinking about. Dozens of them.

Recently.

Still couldn’t make himself say the words ‘birth control’, and hated himself a little bit for it.

An Omega wasn’t fertile for their first heat with someone. A mate that stuck around for a second heat was more likely to be there to protect an Omega’s young, which made sense Eren supposed, from an evolutionary standpoint. Maybe Levi was already on something long term, an implant or an injection, but considering where they’d met, Eren doubted it. It took Levi a moment to grasp what he was getting at, and then clarity dawned over his face.

Then he just looked uncomfortable, those eyes of his darting away again, lip worried between his teeth.

“Oh. Oh, uh, no I can’t… I don’t, uh- I’m infertile. Eh, sterile, technically speaking. Illegal suppressants are really hard on your body, and I mean…” Levi made a vague circular gesture towards his stomach with his free hand, shrugging one shoulder. “It’s all fucked, now.”

Eren was frozen, speechless. He’d known Levi had been on bad suppressants, and that they’d screwed up his heat cycle, but he’d never considered it might have left him infertile. They’d never really discussed it in detail.

They’d never discussed a lot of things.

Now he just felt like an asshole for casually bringing up what might be a sensitive subject.
“Fuck. I’m sorry.”

There was a lot he could say, but all of it would be sympathetic, and place intrinsic value on the idea of having children being an important part of an Omega’s life. Eren didn’t think any less of Levi, just because he couldn’t reproduce, but many people considered sterile or infertile Omegas to be fundamentally broken. Apologize too profusely and he might give Levi the wrong impression, but dismissing the information didn’t feel right, either.

Maybe Levi never wanted children, but to have the possibility taken away from him without his consent was still wrong.

Eren tripped over a dozen different things in his mind, none of them really expressing what he wanted to say, but Levi broke him out of his mental struggle before he could put anything coherent together.

“Nah, don’t be. Not your fault. I… shit, when I was younger I never thought I’d present Omega. Then I got… I ended up… where I ended up, right after my first heat, and I was just grateful to have my cycles suppressed in that shit hole. Didn’t find out how fucked up my body was until after I got out, and…” Levi shrugged again, eyes fixed somewhere just to the left of Eren’s head, deliberately avoiding direct contact. “I mean, I can get a shot if you want, if it makes you more comfortable.”

Levi looked like he was ready to crawl out of his own skin, and Eren’s instincts writhed unhappily within him, until he was moving without thought.

As he often was, where Levi was concerned. Levi brought out parts of him that Eren hadn’t known were there. The best of him, the worst of him.

Always more of him than Eren thought existed in the first place.

Eren wrapped Levi up in his arms, tugging them both down carefully into Levi’s nest, nose buried in his hair. He threw a leg over him, sliding the other underneath, until Levi was surrounded. Levi huffed in what could have been annoyance, if not for the way he pressed in closer to Eren, hands fisted in Eren’s shirt.

“If you don’t need a shot, you don’t need a shot. I’m sorry for bringing up something… I dunno, unpleasant.” Levi didn’t say anything, but Eren felt him shrug again, and tuck his face further into Eren’s chest. “I don’t know anything about you. We did all this shit backwards.”
Levi nodded, still too quiet, and Eren acted instinctively, pulling a stray sweatshirt and wrinkled military jacket down on top of them. A loose sheet, a scarf Armin had given him, a faded band t-shirt with a hole in one sleeve. It was too hot with nothing but their heads sticking out of an absurd pile of clothes and bedding, but Eren’s Alpha was pleased, and Levi was relaxing against him, some of the tension easing out of his muscles. When Levi spoke Eren barely heard it, words low and muffled in his shirt.

Tentative, and fragile. Ready to break.

“Backwards is fine, right?”

Eren breathed in, long and slow, Levi’s scent filling up his lungs. He kissed Levi’s temple, reaching in between them until he found the marks on Levi’s throat, wet and warm under his knuckles. Eren rubbed at them, alive with joy at how Levi leaned his head further to the side to let him stroke and soothe his fingers over the red streaks.

“Backwards is perfect.”

Like you, he thought, but didn’t say it.

He didn’t much feel like getting punched right then.

Especially not by someone who hit as hard as Levi did.

So he stayed quiet, knuckles slick with Levi’s scent, moving them back and forth until they both fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

//backflips nervously into the sun//

Gimmie some love friends.
The last time he’d seen Annie had been two days prior, when they’d returned to the hospital to visit Armin and talk to the doctors about his condition. Levi had stopped by her room, and she’d been drowsy but mostly coherent, an IV feeding her fluids and antibiotics and pain medicine. Drifting in and out of sleep, bruised and sore, but healing.

This time she was strapped to the metal frame of the hospital bed by her wrists, and he felt anger surge up in him at the sight. Felt his eyes flash, and his lip curl back from his teeth, and wondered if Eren could sense it from the floor below where he was visiting Armin in intensive care. It had been hard enough to convince him to come to the hospital today with Levi’s heat approaching so fast. The last thing he needed was Eren rushing upstairs, trying to fight nonexistent enemies for him, getting riled up and aggressive.

Bringing Levi’s heat even earlier than it already was, if he triggered his own rut out of sheer protective instinct.

Levi took a deep breath, and pushed through the outrage swelling sharp in his chest, clenching and unclenching his fists. When he didn’t feel like he wanted to hiss he stepped further into the room, crossing to sit in the chair beside her bed. Annie followed his movements out of her peripheral vision but refused to look him in the eyes, staring down at her lap instead.

“Why the fuck are you in restraints?” He asked, fingers itching to unfasten them, words clipped and flat. His anger wasn’t directed at her, but Annie seemed to get smaller in her bed, shrinking down into the pillow, guilty and sullen.

“I attacked someone.”

She’d told Levi as much when he visited her before. A nurse had come in while she was sleeping to check her vitals, and she’d woken up and started swinging. All instinct, defending herself from a perceived threat, a stranger’s hands on her while she was vulnerable. Not her fault, considering what she’d been through, and the man hadn’t been seriously hurt. The hospital staff had been understanding about it. Most Omegas who came in via the OSC’s operations were considerably meeker, but they knew Annie’s background, where she’d come from. They should have been better prepared to handle the situation, Levi thought privately, but hadn’t mentioned anything to the staff at the time.

Now he wondered if his silence had been a mistake.
“That was days ago, and you weren’t restrained then. I thought the guy was fine.”

Annie turned towards Levi, eyes still down, tugging gently at her restraints before letting them fall loose again.

“I attacked someone else. Two of my friends, my roommates. They came in to see me. I was sleeping, and one of them sat on the bed next to me and reached over to brush the hair out of my face, and I woke up and… just reacted. Broke her nose, and had her mate on the ground in a joint lock. I dislocated his shoulder before I realized who they were, where I was, that I wasn’t… back there, anymore.”

Levi went quiet, lost in his thoughts, remembering what it had been like when he was originally freed from the pits. The bizarre feeling he got when he walked outside for the first time, sunshine on his face, open air all around him. Everything was surreal, like he was dreaming.

Like he’d taken a blow to the head. Like any moment he’d wake up in the dirt, blood stained and ears ringing with a broken jaw, braced for the next hit.

His situation then had been a lot different from Annie’s now. They’d placed him in a housing unit with all the other Omegas from the harem he’d been kept with, each of them given their own room, their own bed, their own bathroom. Freedom, while allowing them to reenter society at their own pace, and at first it felt like nothing had changed.

For months they slept together in a pile on the living room floor. The illusion of safety, all of them huddled up, prepared to deal with an enemy that didn’t exist anymore. Every knock at the door, every phone ringing, every loud noise had Levi on his feet in a crouch ready to fight, with the rest of them cowering behind him. Over a year passed, but one by one the other Omegas he’d been imprisoned alongside left the house. They found jobs, and got apartments. Made friends, or returned to families who often didn’t even know they’d been set free.

It took a long time to convince them that they were still worth something. That being slaves hadn’t tainted them. That their mothers and fathers and siblings would want to see them, wouldn’t care about the things they’d been forced to do. Loved them, and missed them, and wanted them home.

Levi couldn’t blame them for their reluctance. He still hadn’t sought out anyone from his youth, even years later. Levi didn’t see the point back then, when he had no intention of living past his red heat. Why dredge up everything he’d been through and give someone hope just to take it away
again?

He’d vanished from his house at sixteen, and never come home. A sad story and nothing more. A scar cut into their lives, like those cut into Levi’s flesh. Always there, even if they didn’t hurt anymore.

The inside of his bottom lip where his teeth had sunk into it again and again. Across his knuckles, the sharp bones of his opponents breaking the skin. On his feet, the sandy floor of the pit hiding rocks and chunks of concrete to slice him open.

Not as many as it could have been. Most of his wounds had healed up on their own, nothing left of the pain but a memory, and a lesson.

*Don’t drop your guard. Don’t let them get near you. Don’t hesitate.*

Here Levi was, no longer a slave, still guarded. Still distant.

Still unflinching.

Levi walked out of the pit, but never really felt whole. He’d left pieces behind, parts of him burned away until nothing remained but steel. Forged in hostility, in conflict. Not a person but a weapon, one that couldn’t be sheathed or laid aside.

Moving through life like a blade, all sharp edges, waiting to cleave open anyone who got too close.

Eventually it was just Levi in an empty house with no one to protect but himself. Vacant rooms, and all the anger that still lived in him, eating away at Levi like acid. A few months of solitude had him regressing, sleeping in the floor again, coiled tight like a snake ready to strike. When Erwin, via a less than subtle OSC psych evaluation, insisted he move in with Hange, Levi thought he was insane. There was no way he could live with a wild, noisy Beta who didn’t know how to be still, to be quiet, to be subdued.

Now there was no way he could live without her. She’d put him back together as well as she could.
As well as anyone could. Levi wasn’t perfect, would never be.

He’d broken when his mother died, and then just kept breaking. Again and again, everything mending wrong inside him, never quite the way it had been to start with. Levi, acting as though he was okay, wearing his recovery like a mask for his psychologists, and his bosses, and his friends.

Levi knew better than anyone what it was like to feel out of place in a life that was supposed to be his own. Looking at Annie strapped to her hospital bed, free and yet not, was like ice water thrown over him.

He’d never visited his mother’s grave. Never contacted the friends he’d left behind.

Never acknowledged that he’d existed at all before he’d been put in chains.

Never tried to move forward, because he’d been treating his life like an hourglass. Just existing, and pretending, and waiting on the sand to run out.

Except now it wasn’t.

Now Levi had over a decade of old wounds inside, wrapped up tight and forgotten about. Wounds Eren would be eager to look at, and care for, and Levi didn’t know what he’d find.

Only that they were ugly. That they ran deep.

That they hurt, and once they were out in the open there would be no hiding them again.

Levi shifted in his seat, shoving his own worries down in favor of Annie’s. Expertly deflecting.

It was so much easier to worry about someone else.

“As a temporary ward they can’t press charges on you without the OSC’s support, which they won’t get in this situation.” Levi said, knowing full well that wasn’t what Annie was worried about. He was baiting her, letting her lead the conversation where she wanted instead of trying to guess at what
was going on in her head. She sighed, muscles going tense, legs shifting under the blankets.

“They wouldn’t do that, they-” Annie bared her teeth, growling in frustration. “They care about me, they know I didn’t mean to hurt them. They kept apologizing, telling me it was okay. Trying to comfort me, when I’m the one who fucking-“ She tilted her head to the side, eyes wrenched shut, hands clenched into fists again. Annie took a few ragged breaths, and then opened her eyes. “I can’t stay with them. Not yet, not like this. I’m dangerous. What if I attack them again? What if I snap someone’s neck? They’re going to release me in four more days, where the fuck am I supposed to go?”

“The OSC can put you up in temporary housing, for as long as you need it,” Levi replied, brain clicking over into work mode automatically. “By yourself, since you’re worried about hurting someone.”

Annie made a noise in her throat, something so quiet and pained that Levi felt it, a punch to his chest.

“I don’t want to be alone.” It came out in a harsh whisper, like every word hurt to say.

Like admitting to being lonely was harder than everything else she’d been through.

“Levi.”

Levi’s head snapped over to the door where Eren stood, leaning against the frame, gold eyed and concerned. His anger earlier must have been strong enough that Eren felt it through their bond, felt the flash of his eyes, the way his Omega had risen to the surface ready to snarl.

His sudden arrival had Levi’s focus slipping from Annie back to himself, to the ache simmering just under his skin, the need twisting and growing and threatening to boil over. Levi could scent Eren from across the room, tones of rut leaking into his normal smell where they hadn’t been before.

Eren’s Alpha, called up with Levi’s emotions, answering eagerly. Levi tilted his head to expose his throat, easy as breathing, warmth pulsing through his blood and making him want to whine. It was an effort to bite back the noise, and Levi tried to shake himself out of the haze his instincts wanted to draw him into, clinging to the last threads of his reason with some difficulty.

Eren’s eyes slowly faded back to green, and he inclined his head towards the hallway and took a step
backwards. An invitation, and Levi was out of his chair in an instant, drawn to Eren like a moth to flame. Once he was in reach Eren laid a hand on his cheek, then slid it down to palm his mate mark, Levi leaning into the touch and closing his eyes.

“You’re okay? I felt… something.”

Levi nodded, easing forward until he was flush against Eren, arms curling around his waist. It probably hadn’t been a rhetorical question, but Levi didn’t answer. Just melted into Eren even further, and waited on him to continue.

“I didn’t mean to eavesdrop, but… she could stay with us, you know.” Eren said, putting gentle pressure of Levi’s throat, skin wet under his fingers as Levi’s glands sought to inundate the air with his scent. He blinked his lids open slow, brows furrowing, the whole world foggy as he tried to make sense of something that wasn’t Eren’s skin, Eren’s mouth, Eren’s teeth…

Everything but Alpha was muddled and unimportant, miles down beneath the surface, buried under the weight of the lust creeping higher and higher within him.

“What?” Levi asked, voice rough, mouth full of cotton.

Eren smiled indulgently, huffing out a quiet, amused sound at his confusion.

“Annie. She could stay with us for a while, if she wanted to. She won’t be out of here until after your heat is over. I can shove all my gym equipment in the corner of the guest room and put a bed in there, or the couch folds out, either way. She couldn’t hurt us, even if she wanted to, and she wouldn’t be alone. No one understands what she’s dealing with better than you.”

It was a good idea, rationally speaking. It would be temporary. She’d be safe, and probably feel more comfortable there than anywhere else the OSC would put her.

Levi wasn’t exactly rational, right then.

He thought about Annie sleeping on Eren’s couch, under Eren’s roof, and growled, eyes flashing white as he bared his teeth. Eren laughed, tucking Levi into his chest. He nosed into Levi’s hair, and rubbed his palms up and down his back, grinning wide.
“Maybe right at the beginning of your heat isn’t the best time to discuss this. Finish up with Annie, and I’ll go see Armin, and we can get out of here. Once your cycle’s passed we’ll see if you’re still so opposed.”

It took Levi a moment to ground himself. He took a step back, reluctantly, everything in him screaming against it. He didn’t want to put space between them. Levi wanted Eren to pick him up, and carry him home, and-

Eren’s hand was on his face again, lifting his chin, thumb sliding soft over his lips. “You should probably hurry. We don’t have a lot of time, before…” He trailed off, and Levi nodded, even though Eren was wrong.

They didn’t have any time at all.

He did his best to comfort Annie, but it was hard with his heat laying on him like a shroud, burning in him like flames. Levi told her they’d find a place for her, somewhere she’d be safe, that she wouldn’t feel alone. When he offered to negotiate with the hospital staff about removing her restraints, see if he could throw around his OSC credentials and get them off, she shook her head. ‘I asked for them. Please, don’t.’

Levi left her with promises, and assurances, and nothing else. It felt like he’d made things worse instead of better by visiting, but he couldn’t take care of someone else right then.

He had to take care of himself.

Had to let Eren take care of him.

It didn’t feel revelatory until later, Levi putting his needs first, or how easy he accepted the idea of letting Eren look after him.
He went down to ICU and waited in the hallway while Eren sat at Armin’s bedside, holding his friend’s hand and whispering low.

Then they left the hospital, and headed home.

………………

Eren’s mouth was on his before they got in the door, before they reached the porch. He’d barely set foot outside the car, and Eren’s arms went around him, tugging him in close. Only the distant awareness of an OSC security detail parked somewhere on the street watching them kept him from giving in entirely, the Omega in him torn between need and privacy. Levi begrudgingly pulled back to speak against Eren’s lips as they chased his own, voice ragged and laced with command.

“Inside. Take me inside, first.”

Because he didn’t want anyone else watching, except that didn’t feel like the real reason.

*Take me to your bed,* his instincts screamed.

Levi wanted to be in the nest he’d made, surrounded by softness and Eren’s scent. He cringed even through the overwhelming press of his heat, wishing he could go back in time and stop himself from doing it, from *nesting* in Eren’s bed.

Getting down on one knee and proposing to Eren would have been less sudden, less surprising. Less awkward than what he’d done instead, which was an unmistakable proclamation of intent, however subconscious it might be.

Begging for forever without speaking, and Levi couldn’t deny he wanted it. Eren, forever.

Would’ve cut out his tongue before he said the words first, and felt like a coward for it, but it didn’t matter.

Eren would say it eventually. Eren would beg, would tell Levi what he wanted.
Eren was shameless, and fearless, and everything Levi needed him to be. He scooped Levi up into his arms, and carried him inside to his room, laying him carefully down in the tangle of clothes on his bed. Reverently, like he was something fragile. Something precious.

Like he hadn’t torn dozens of men to pieces with his hands and his teeth. Like he needed someone to keep him safe.

He didn’t, but Eren’s hands on him, gentle and adoring, made him feel weak and strong all at once.

Levi whined, thighs falling wide, head tilted back, loose and yielding and pliant. Eren nosed into his throat with a growl, shuddering all over, clutching at Levi with unabashed desperation.

Weak, and strong, and Levi stopped fighting the pull of his heat. Let it wash over him willingly, for the first time in his life.

“I’ve got you.” Eren said, and Levi nodded his head, yes, yes.

Eren had him.
I've gotten a couple awesome moodboards since I last updated. This one and this one, both of them amazing and I thank you guys endlessly for them, I love aesthetic shit for my fics, I'm weak.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Please.”

He could hear himself breathing, every exhale loud in his ears, adding to the stifling humidity of the room. His palms slipped on sweat damp skin, and he fought to find purchase, to pin the lithe body underneath him like he wanted. It was a struggle, both of them working towards the same purpose, but too frenzied to fall into sync in that moment. Long fingers clawed at his biceps, and sharp heels dug into his spine. A hand in his hair tugged and scratched, little whining noises mewled out against his collarbones, muscles flexing and straining and shaking.

“Please, I need it, I need it, just-”

Eren huffed, trying to ease Levi down on the bed and reposition him, but to no avail. He clung tight, rocking his hips, twisting in Eren’s lap. Levi’s teeth were unearthly sharp, and he used them like weapons, sinking them into Eren’s skin in frustration between breathless pleas for more, now, please, come on, come on…

Begging for Eren’s knot, everything in him alight with need, irises glowing ethereal white. Eren could tell when a fresh wave of lust was swallowing Levi, not only from his scent, but the way his eyes shifted now, steely grey transforming into bright pearlescence each time his heat took him anew. Eren’s own lit up in kind without fail, only dimming again when they were tied together, mouthing soft into one another’s throats, hands stroking gentle through tangled hair.

Shh, it’s all right, I’m right here.

Now Levi’s nest was decimated, ruined clothes tossed to the floor, everything strewn haphazard across the room. He moved frantically in Eren’s arms as he chased after a climax that seemed out of reach, eyes wet with desperation, a plaintive whine echoing constantly out of his throat. Levi was making it harder than it had to be, his Omega working against him, telling him to take what he needed.
If only he’d be still, and relax, Eren would give it to him. Everything he wanted, however he wanted it. As it was he couldn’t get deep enough to knot, not with Levi writhing on top of him, shivering and whimpering and insatiable. Eren soothed his hands down Levi’s back, pressing open mouthed kisses over his abused mate mark, bruises and bites littered across both sides of his neck.

“Levi,” he said, voice gentle, hands moving down to hold Levi’s hips, “just let me.”

It had been hours since his heat started, and Levi was flagging, too tired to roll Eren over and do as he pleased. It didn’t seem like he’d heard a word Eren said, grinding down onto Eren’s cock, grasping at any part of him he could reach. When Eren leaned back to put some space between them Levi followed, arms coiled around his neck, panting into Eren’s jaw.

“Levi, baby-relax for me, c’mon.”

Levi’s grip went tighter in Eren’s hair, and he shuddered hard, and made a broken noise. The sound made Eren ache, hitting him in his chest, striking like a blow. Anguished, and panicked, and Levi’s voice wavered when he spoke, as though he was on the edge of tears.

“I- I can’t, I can’t-”

It was instinct rather than intent that had Eren tucking Levi’s face into his throat and leaning forward, angling them both until his lips were pressed into the back of Levi’s neck. He opened his mouth to let his teeth scrape over the skin, and Levi’s head fell onto Eren’s chest, hair messy in his eyes.

“Is it okay? Can I-”

Levi nodded fast, the hand he had fist ed in Eren’s hair tugging again, pulling Eren’s mouth tighter against him.

“Do it, do it,” he gasped, every inch of him strung tight and ready to shatter, want eating him alive. Levi’s breathing was shallow, his shoulders drawn up with tension, toes curling. His heat owned him, ruling him entirely, filling up every inch of Levi until he couldn’t think past the fog of it.

Then Eren kissed the back of his neck, and opened his mouth wide. Sank his teeth in, biting down
hard, and Levi went loose in his arms with a moan. He shook out his orgasm like an afterthought, eyes flashing from white to grey like a light flickering out in a storm. His fingers slipped from Eren’s hair, head lolling forward onto his shoulder as all the air left him in a sigh. Eren kept his teeth firmly in place for a few moments, his hands on Levi’s back the only thing keeping him upright as he went boneless and liquid.

Finally calm, all that stress washed out like the tide.

Eren laid him down gently, and Levi went without protest, collapsing into the mess of blankets and clothes and sweaters that were the remains of his nest. Levi’s breathing was heavy, but it wasn’t anything labored now, a runner after a race trying to ease himself back after crossing the finish line. His skin was flushed vicious red in places. His cheeks, the tops of his shoulders, all around his mate marks. Half lidded eyes, lips bitten and swollen, worse for wear after all the attention they’d received. His arms went limp above his head, knees fallen wide. The insides of his thighs were shining, wet with slick, and when Eren pushed his legs further apart Levi didn’t fight it, pliant and hazy and dazed.

Devastated in all the best ways, covered in Eren’s scent, utterly defenseless. It was no wonder an Omega could only be scruffed in the midst of a heat, and only by their mate.

It was dangerous, how the fight had gone out of Levi all at once to leave him blissed out and smiling and euphoric.

Dangerous how pleased the Alpha in Eren was at the sight of it, Levi trusting and sated beneath him.

Levi looked drugged, now, reveling in the softness of the bed, rubbing against it like a cat. Eren was still buried inside him, and he reached down to run his fingers through the streaks of come on Levi’s stomach, unable to resist the urge. He smeared it over the muscles of Levi’s abdomen, feeling it flex weakly under his touch. Levi was too far gone to even complain as he arched into Eren’s hand, watching him with interest, eyes blown black.

“You okay?” Eren asked, and Levi nodded, rutting down lazily onto Eren’s arousal.

“ ‘m fucking wonderful,” Levi slurred, words low and rough. “Still want your knot, though,” he added, tightening around Eren, bottom lip sucked between his teeth, blinking slow.

Savaged by his heat, and by Eren, the definition of sultry.
Eren could taste blood. Could feel the warmth of Levi’s seed between his fingers, and his slick where it dripped between his thighs. Levi’s scent filled his nose, and Eren’s eyes flashed with light, glowing as they roved up and down the lines and curves of his mate.

Spellbound, until Eren couldn’t look away.

All the world and there was nothing else but Levi, and Eren withdrew before pressing back in slow. When he bottomed out he didn’t stop, but hooked his arms underneath Levi’s knees and ground himself impossibly deeper. Levi rolled his hips into the sensation, fisting his hands halfheartedly in the clothes above his head for a moment before releasing them. He panted through parted lips, cock soft where it lay on his belly, twitching with each of Eren’s thrusts.

Overstimulated, and he whimpered quietly as Eren fucked into him, eyes fluttering closed, moisture leaking from the corner of his mouth. It seemed cruel to keep going when Levi had already come. He was too raw, too sensitive, but Levi had asked for this, for Eren’s knot. Eren picked up the pace, Levi’s chest rising and falling faster, jaw shuddering the tiniest bit, fingers just barely quaking.

As though it was too much effort to be overwhelmed, and Levi laid there and took everything Eren had to give, nothing but subdued whimpers and shaky breaths.

They rocked together for what felt like ages, Levi docile and dreamy, watching Eren with hazy eyes for a few moments only to let them fall shut again. Warmth coiled low in Eren’s guts, and he moved with more urgency, fingertips digging into the meat of Levi’s thighs as he used them for leverage. His need climbed higher and higher, the part of him that was both ancient and ageless thrumming with satisfaction already.

Levi asked to be scruffed. Trusted Eren enough. Trusted himself enough.

Willing to be make himself vulnerable, to give himself over and let Eren take care of him the way he’d always wanted. Eren was lost. Ensnared, enraptured.

Eren was in love, and Levi tilted his head to the side to bare his throat. Turned his wrists until the marks there were showing. Threw his legs wider in Eren’s grip as best he could, wet red slashes across the inside of his thighs catching the light as well as Eren’s eyes. Eren, etched into Levi’s skin like tattoos, always with him, even miles away.
Through hell, and out the other side again, still together, stronger than before.

A part of Levi, and Eren came hard, knot swelling up inside of Levi to bind them to one another. He leaned forward and lay his forehead on Levi’s chest, shivering through the aftershocks of his climax. It lingered, as it always did with a knot, ecstasy rolling through him as he filled Levi up in stuttering bursts of warmth. Levi made a noise, something preening and satiated, and stroked his fingers through Eren’s hair.

Levi nosed into the messy strands, pressing a kiss there and breathing in deep. Eren whined, letting go of Levi’s legs to wrap his arms around his waist and roll them carefully to their sides. The movement pulled on his knot, not enough to be painful, but enough to draw a guttural noise from Eren against his will. It seemed as though Levi’s heat might have passed, but Eren couldn’t be entirely sure, not right then. Every few moments his cock twitched inside Levi, another gush of fluid pulsing weakly into him, and Eren whimpered at the feel of it.

“Shhh, it’s okay,” Levi said, words quiet but certain.

“I’ve got you.”

And god, he did.

....

They’d been here before, both of them laid out in Eren’s bathtub, Levi heat ravaged and aching and sore. Eren gingerly washed the blood and slick and come off Levi’s skin as he had last time, fingers cautious as they flitted over bruises and bites, careful when they eased between his thighs. Handling Levi like he was breakable, when he was made of steel.

Treating him like glass, when he was mostly stone.

Except now the tips of Eren’s fingers brushed reverently over crimson streaks on Levi’s wrists, as though they’d disappear if he was too careless.

Like it was something he might accidentally wipe away.

Now he pressed his lips to the marks on Levi’s throat, and Levi melted into him, making no effort to clean himself. Just curled into Eren’s chest, eyes closed, body lax and loose. No trace of nerves, no hint of anxiety, no worry written in his muscles, in his eyes, in his mouth. A month ago Levi had
been poised to flee, even broken down by hormones and ready to collapse.

Now Eren thought he’d fallen asleep, until he lifted a hand to back of Levi’s neck, massaging at the bite marks he’d left behind when he scruffed him. Levi moaned at the touch, tilting his head further forward to give Eren room, encouraging him silently. Eren hid his smile in Levi’s hair even though he couldn’t see it, digging his thumb into the muscle of Levi’s neck and rubbing slow circles there.

“Feels good?” Eren asked, and Levi huffed, curling into him further.

“Gonna put me to sleep. Makes me feel fuzzy. Muscles hurt less, ‘s nice.” It came out mumbled, and Eren laughed, hushed and affectionate.

“Go to sleep, then. I’ll wake you up if I need to.”

Levi sighed, shoving his nose into Eren’s throat and settling there like he never wanted to move again.

“Nnnkay,” Levi said, and it wasn’t long before he went still, breathing heavy and rhythmic.

Already asleep, and Eren closed his eyes against the ache in his chest. He clung to Levi tighter, fighting through the sting behind his eyelids and swallowing around the lump in his throat.

Held onto Levi to keep himself together, emotions welling up in him that he couldn’t lay aside.

Eren had found Levi on the edge of a cliff a month ago, ready to jump, and tugged him back from the precipice. Then he’d run, and let Eren catch him, only for the ground to drop out beneath them both.

Eren still had that weightless feeling in the pit of his stomach, as though he was in freefall, waiting to hit the earth. It felt too good to be true, that Levi was his, and safe. Snoring into his chest, unguarded, untroubled.

Unafraid.
Eren had him.

He was glad Levi had fallen asleep, because he could blame the shower for the wetness on his cheeks. Could blame the exhaustion for the way his breath hitched, and the cool air in the room for his trembling.

He was glad Levi had fallen asleep, because he wasn’t awake to watch Eren fall apart. A controlled descent, and Eren let it happen, let himself break, if only a little. Silent, but shaking.

He couldn’t stop shaking.

It was unfathomable that he had Levi there. That they’d wake the next morning, and Levi would let Eren pick him up, and carry him to the couch. Make him breakfast, rub the ache from his muscles, breathe in the faint, fading scent of his heat.

It was terrifying, needing someone the way he needed Levi. Like the air in his lungs, or the blood in his veins. He was more capable of keeping the two of them safe than anyone else alive, something beastly sleeping inside him, always there waiting to be unleashed.

Not quite human, and Eren remembered what it was like with everything painted red, claws on his fingers, teeth long in his mouth. Something primitive, something monstrous.

But even monsters could be afraid.

The water had gone cold before he managed to gather himself, and Eren turned it off, careful not to jostle Levi too much as he climbed from the tub. He dried them as best he could, and Levi barely stirred, wrinkling his nose in annoyance when Eren rearranged him in his arms.

The bed was a lost cause. Eren kicked the worst of the mess onto the floor, finally reaching the tangled sheets underneath it all and burrowing into them. Levi stayed asleep, wiggling unhappily when Eren pulled blankets around him and only relaxing when they were thrown off again.

The Alpha in him refused to settle until Levi was underneath him, pressed snugly between Eren and mattress. Nowhere to go, where nothing could get to him.
Safe for as long as Eren could keep him there. Not forever, but at least until morning, and Eren
dozed off with Levi everywhere. In his nose, and under his hands, and against his skin.

In his chest, and Eren’s eyes were green when they finally fluttered shut. Mostly a man.

At least until morning.

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Chapter End Notes

//blows a kiss at the kofi anon who requested this and flees
He’d never felt so unsettled during a raid.

Usually there was noise, and chaos, and action, not eerie stillness all around, stark shadows thrown by weak fluorescent bulbs that strobbed erratically.

His earpiece trilled, startling him in the quiet of the hallway he was clearing, but his weapon didn’t waver where it was aimed up ahead. His handler’s voice was loud in his ear, easy to make out over the soft sound of his own footsteps, the creak of an occasional floor board, the steady rhythm of his breathing.

“Blackbird to Riptide, you got eyes on anything?”

Phillip tapped at his comm link once to activate the channel, his partner silent at his back as they moved in tandem into the next room.

“Negative,” he answered, carefully picking his way around the broken remnants of a chair and trying to ignore the more glaring details of the bedroom he’d entered.

The chains on the floor. The shackles on the bed frame. The blood on the sheets, dried into something rusty and ominous. Phillip let his eyes glaze over it all, refusing to linger there, and kept moving.

“Whole lotta nothing. Looks like they ghosted fast, somebody knew we were coming,” Phillip added, checking corners, and closets, and looking under beds. Brief, and perfunctory.

Someone else would come along later and search the place more thoroughly, make sure there weren’t any Omegas hiding from them; securing noncombatants wasn’t his job.

None of it was his job, technically. His team usually ran recon and backup on missions like this, not point, but the OSC had a lot of resources tied up in the aftermath of the Shiganshina operation, and not a lot of spare bodies to throw at random anonymous tips.
An anonymous tip that looked more and more like a bust with every passing minute. They’d found a handful of Omegas here and there, all of them injured, or sick, or pregnant. More trouble to move than it was worth, so their captors had left them behind at the first sign of danger, and bailed. Lucky for them, not so lucky for the rest that got dragged along to another location, and Phillip nodded at his partner as they left the room, inclining his head towards the end of the hall.

The building they were in had been a nursing home once upon a time, repurposed into an illegal brothel-slash-drug house after it shut down and fell into disrepair. Phillip headed into what had once probably been a communal living space, the last area he was responsible for clearing.

It had been turned into a makeshift lounge, ratty old couches lining the edges of the room, a broken down pool table looming in one corner. Empty liquor bottles sat overturned on various tables, a few of them knocked over now, glass shattered on the floor. Dirty syringes, plastic bags, overflowing ashtrays. Nothing surprising, all things considered, until he noticed the dog kennel in the middle of the room.

Rusted black metal on all sides, the door yawning open, a figure inside slumped face down in a pool of blood. A lot of it, and Phillip would have assumed they were dead, except for the way their chest was rising and falling. Shallow, wheezing breaths, too fast to be healthy, and Phillip jogged forward, crouching down in front of the cage and tapping at his comm.

“Medical we need you in here ASAP, we have an Omega in critical condition, looks like…” Phillip trailed off, nose wrinkling as scents began to register through the layers of his mask. The blood, and sweat, and filth of the person in the kennel.

Along with the unmistakable scent of Alpha, and suddenly his comm lit up with noise, both members of Blackbird squad screaming in his ear. Unintelligible shouts, and then there was snarling, something vicious and animal that turned Phillip’s blood cold. Gunshots, staccato and sharp, and then a sound he couldn’t place.

Something wet, like a wolf tearing into its kill.

The prone figure in front of him twitched, like he’d been roused by the noise of the comm, or maybe by Phillip’s proximity. They blinked up at him in confusion, brows furrowed, crimson smeared messy around their mouth.

Eyes glowing red, teeth bright and sharp, and every instinct within Phillip roared at him at once.
Run, go now, but it was too late.

The Alpha lunged forward with growl. Impossibly fast, the strike of a snake, and then Phillip’s throat felt warm, and slick, and his whole world tilted on its axis as he fell to the floor.

His eyes caught on a blinking light as they fluttered shut. A tiny camera, mounted high on the wall in the corner, the strobing red LED not quite as vivid as the unearthly gaze of the Alpha looming over him.

Phillip opened his mouth, but couldn’t make any noise, and then everything around him went black.

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When he woke up in Eren’s bed, sore all over from his heat, Levi had a brief sense of déjà vu. It wasn’t the first time he’d blinked himself awake the day after his cycle in the soft blue-grey of Eren’s room, Eren closing him in on all sides. Last time he’d extricated himself from Eren’s arms and bolted, stumbling down the driveway on shaky legs, so eager to get away that he could hardly think through the panic.

Now he stretched, the urgency of his heat long gone, faded back into nothing more than the lingering warmth of Eren’s affections. His throat littered with bites, his hips bruised, the back of his neck pulsing where Eren had scruffed him.

Levi had a passing moment of curiosity, wondering why his body would heal bullet holes in a matter of minutes, yet Eren’s bites remained etched in his skin. Why his bones knitted back together overnight after they’d been broken, yet he was tender and stiff from spending hours with Eren knotted tight inside him. Not that it mattered in the end.

Eren was there to take care of him, and Levi should hate the way that thought coiled hot in his belly. How it relaxed his muscles, Levi’s eyes falling shut, toes curling into Eren’s sheets.

How he’d rather have the aches, if it meant Eren was there to soothe them away.

Eren stirred behind him, nuzzling into Levi’s hair, breathing in slow. He pulled Levi tighter against
him with a low, rumbling growl, half-asleep and seeking closeness. Levi tilted his head automatically, and Eren shoved his face into the exposed line of his neck, mouthing gently at the abused skin there.

It was sensitive, and Levi made a noise in the back of his throat, but whether it was a complaint or an encouragement, he couldn’t be entirely sure. Eren splayed his hands over Levi’s abdomen, one sliding up his chest, the other curving around his side. Gentle, and adoring, a sharp contrast to the kind of carnage he was capable of— the things Levi had seen him do with those hands.

The things he was willing to do to keep Levi safe, and it was like he’d been scuffed again with how pliant and boneless he went in Eren’s arms. Open, and unguarded.

The safest person in the whole fucking world.

“After I got taken when I was sixteen, I never went back home,” Levi said, mumbling and slurred, the words pouring from his mouth like syrup. Slow, and sweet, drugged by Eren’s presence— by the reassuring weight of Eren at his back. Drawn out by the afterglow of spending his heat together, Eren’s rut rising and falling in time with it, both of them finally back to themselves after the frenzy.

“My ah... my mom, she died right before I presented, and then I ended up with the traffickers, and when I finally got out I just… I don’t know. People visit graves and talk, right? Tell them about their lives or whatever, and what the hell was I gonna say to her? ‘See you real soon?’”

Eren’s hands stilled, thumbs rubbing lazy circles on Levi’s skin as he nosed into Levi’s cheek with a thoughtful hum. Talking about himself felt wrong, the knee-jerk urge to bury his past overwhelming, and that discomfort swelled up again like it always did.

Then Eren pressed a kiss to his jaw, and Levi took a breath, and continued.

“I had a fucking expiration date, you know? Wasn’t any point in going there and dragging all my bullshit out for some meaningless symbolic gesture. I dunno if I even believe in... anything, fuck. If she could hear me there, she could hear me anywhere,” Levi said, curling a little further into himself, as much as Eren’s hold on him would allow.

“Had a couple of friends though, knew them since I was a little kid, we were really close back then. OSC tracked them down for me after I got out since I didn’t really have any next of kin, gave me their address, their contact information. I never went to go see them.”
They’d looked for him, though. Looked for him when he went missing, and kept looking for him, long after the police had written Levi off as a lost cause. They’d put up flyers, and gone door to door, set up fundraisers to increase awareness. They’d persisted for years, well past the point that Levi himself would have given up hope. It was fairly obvious based on his recent presentation and lack of close family that he’d been taken by Omega traffickers, but without any concrete leads there wasn’t much anyone could do.

Isabel and Farlan had fucking tried, though.

They’d tried, and Levi had gotten out of the pit, and felt so far away from the person he’d once been that it seemed like another lifetime. A story someone else had written; something he’d read in a book, or watched on television, but so long ago the details were only vaguely familiar.

They’d given everything they could, but when he got back above ground Levi could barely look at himself in the mirror. It hadn’t felt like abandonment, refusing to go visit them once there weren’t chains holding him down.

It had felt like an act of mercy, sparing them the inevitable pain of losing Levi again when his last heat hit, and Levi hadn’t regretted it. But things were different, and it didn’t feel like mercy any longer.

It felt like cowardice.

“I wasn’t the same person anymore after all that, wasn’t someone they’d recognize. It’d be like a stranger showing up at their house, or that’s what I told myself. I was… I was pretty fucked up, for a long time. Which is probably obvious, considering you found me behind a red door at an Omega shelter ready to clock out.”

*I’m still pretty fucked up*, Levi thought, but he knew Eren would argue the point, and he wasn’t up for it right then. His genuine reassurances, his rationalizations.

His unfettered, limitless honesty about his feelings for Levi, when Levi still felt so fucking unworthy of them.

He was back in the pit for a moment, bones snapping beneath his fingers, flesh giving way under his teeth. Spitting gore out of his mouth, smearing it down his chin with the back of his hand. There was
blood in his eyes, and caked under his fingernails, and-

Levi shook himself, turning in Eren’s arms, tucking his face into his throat. His scent was stronger there, tied up with Levi’s own, the two permanently, irrevocably entwined. Levi inhaled, and let it out slow, Eren’s palm sliding up his spine, silently encouraging.

“I was thinking about going to see them. Now that I’m not…,” Levi trailed off, the rest of it sticking in his throat.

Now that I’m not dying, and he didn’t voice it, but Eren held him tighter all the same. Hooked a leg behind Levi’s knee, and pulled him closer, reaching up to brush the hair out of Levi’s eyes. Just listening, wordlessly coaxing Levi to continue.

Patient, and understanding, and more than Levi deserved.

“Now that I have time,” he finished instead, words rough with everything he wasn’t saying. “They live Karanese. It’s also where my mom’s buried, couple towns over, anyway. It’s a long drive, but I thought sometime in the next few days we could head out there. I can go myself, if you’re not up for it,” Levi said, even though he knew the answer. Knew Eren would go to the ends of the goddamn earth for him, let alone make a three hour drive to Karanese.

Eren kissed Levi’s cheek, and untangling his hair with his fingers, gold thrumming briefly in his eyes.

“Just say when, and we’ll go,” he said, and Levi nodded, because he hadn’t expected anything less.

Eren was like that, all or nothing, and was definitely all in for Levi.

“Tell me about them? Your friends?” Eren asked, definitely a question, giving Levi an out if he needed it.

Levi almost took it, almost shook his head and hid in the wash of Eren’s scent.

But doing things backwards only worked if they retraced the steps they’d missed at the start, so Levi
swallowed around the stones in his throat and sighed.

“They’re the worst,” he said, mouth quirking up at once corner, letting himself remember them with something other than bitterness for the first time in ages.

He’d lost a lot of time, and he couldn’t get those years back, couldn’t turn back the clock.

Lost a lot of himself, too, but that didn’t feel quite as hopeless, and Levi rolled over onto his back, and started talking.

Chapter End Notes

Six months late without starbucks but I'd still like nice words <3
There were a lot of loose ends that needed tying; enough that Levi felt overwhelmed when he thought about them too long. He’d never been very good at it, especially when it came to himself.

Levi was full of loose ends, ragged and unkempt, waiting to send him reeling at the slightest misstep.

Annie would be getting out of the hospital in a couple of days. Now that Levi’s heat had passed the thought of her being alone rankled, like he was leaving her unprotected when his instincts were telling him to keep her safe. Nostalgic, almost.

Something he’d lived with for years underground, a harem of Omegas at his back with only Levi to stand between them and the rest of the world.

They’d moved Eren’s gym equipment out of his spare room and into storage, but there wasn’t a bed for her yet, or anything else she’d need. Levi had slept on the floor for years after his ordeal, and he wasn’t sure how eager she would be to sleep on a mattress. Still, it didn’t matter if she used it or not; Annie needed as much normalcy as they could give her, for however long she ended up staying there.

Taking care of someone else was easier than taking care of himself; easier than letting someone take care of him. The knowledge sat uneasy in his skin, and Levi tried not to read into it.

Hange was sending them unobtrusive but steady text messages, asking when they might be able to come into her lab so she could draw more blood and run tests. They were decidedly subdued compared to her usual barrage of questions. Levi didn’t even know what she wanted to test them for, specifically, but it wasn’t hard to get a rough idea.

Less than three weeks ago he’d broken his arm, and shoved the shattered, gory end of it back into his skin; shifted it around until it felt right and watched it heal. Muscle knitting together, shards of bone grinding into place. He’d taken a half dozen bullets and walked them off like a twisted ankle. He didn’t blame her for wanting to get the two of them into a lab, even if he was far from excited about the idea.

While Levi had been in the pits fighting, Eren’s father had strapped him down to a table and shot him
full of hormones he’d taken from Levi; studied him like an animal, and not for the first time. He doubted Eren would be eager to submit to more of the same but he’d do it, if Levi asked.

He’d do anything Levi asked, and that made his throat tight, and beat heavy in his chest. The power that came with Eren’s loyalty was a frightening thing, and Levi didn’t want to wield it like some kind of weapon.

Not for himself.

Not for anyone.

Erwin needed to talk with them as well, and Levi didn’t like the implications— that he was still interested in having Eren on his strike team at the OSC, when that was the last thing Levi wanted. OSC teams had a low mortality rate, but it was still risky, still dangerous.

Still chaotic, and Levi had only just grasped onto the first threads of stability in his life; they were tenuous, and new, and more dependent on Eren that was probably healthy. He didn’t want Eren throwing himself into harm’s way, not when they’d come so close to losing one another.

Except throwing himself into harm’s way seemed like Eren’s specialty, especially when it came to protecting others, and Levi was terrified. He didn’t want to give the fear voice, didn’t want to put that weight on Eren’s shoulder right then.

So Levi tucked it away where no one could see, and pretended it wasn’t there at all.

If reckless endangerment was Eren’s specialty, Levi’s was steadfast denial, and after so many years of practice it came as naturally as breathing.

Then there was the matter of Levi’s job, not to mention moving the rest of his belongings to Eren’s place, or dealing with the last of the OSC’s reports and investigations. It was a lot, and Levi’s usual response to being overwhelmed was to shut himself off and address everything as clinically and quickly as possible.

But Eren was good at pulling him out of his head and showing him that not everything had to be a trial.
Karanese was only a few hours away by car.

A map showing Isabel and Farlan’s address was screenshotted on his phone, and they had a full tank of gas, and plenty of time. Levi usually hated driving long distances, or going on trips, but it was hard to hate anything with Eren there. He sang along with the radio and held Levi’s hand as he drove, rubbing his thumb absently back and forth across Levi’s knuckles, tracing patterns on his palm.

Sometimes Levi would go quiet, lost in thoughts of just how different he was now, how his friends might not even recognize him.

How they might not want anything to do with him once they found out about the things he’d done.

Blood on his hands. In his teeth, under his nails.

Dead men in his dreams, their eyes shifting gold and then blanking out entirely.

It wasn’t only about the lives he’d taken.

Levi had cast them aside. Years and years without a word, all because he couldn’t stand the thought of spending his heat with an Alpha, only to show up mated to one with nothing to offer them but excuses.

I’m sorry.

I was weak, and tired, and none of this was worth it.

An apology felt almost insulting after all this time, but Levi didn’t know what else to do, what else to say. Nerves crept in again, fresh uncertainty eating him alive, and suddenly all Levi wanted was to be back home; to hide in the dark of Eren’s room, both their scents in his nose lulling him to sleep.

Then Eren lifted Levi’s hand to his mouth, and kissed his knuckles, eyes shimmering gold as he held
his gaze for a moment.

“It’s gonna be okay. They might be upset, but it won’t be at you. You didn’t do anything wrong.”

That wasn’t true, but the fact that Eren wholeheartedly believed it was staggering enough that Levi didn’t contradict him. People had been telling him that for years and years, but they didn’t really understand what it was like, living with the kind of things that Levi had in his head.

Eren did, though.

Had the same shadows crawling around in his mind, and still looked at Levi like he was all that mattered.

Levi thought about the way Eren’s irises lit red, his nails curved into claws, teeth sharp and long in his mouth. His mate marks warmed in his skin, and white light flared in his eyes, anxiety falling back into something manageable.

Nothing could hurt Levi, not unless he let it; not alone, but especially not with Eren there. He leaned against his window and held Eren’s hand; listened to him hum along to a song he didn’t know, offbeat and out of tune.

Far from perfect; it was better that way. Levi watched their car eat up the miles, and tried not to fall asleep.

-  

The cemetery felt out of place with afternoon sun filtering through the trees along its edges, cars filtering steadily down the street nearby, birds trilling in the air. Too bright, too colorful.

Standing in front of his mother’s grave Levi was sixteen again with a hole in his chest and an ache in his lungs as he fought to get enough air. The flowers he’d bought hung limp at his side, loose white rose petals falling down around his feet. It was only as he read the inscription on her headstone that Levi realized he hadn’t remembered what day she’d died. Hadn’t bothered looking it up, hadn’t spared a single thought about it. There had been no yearly visits to see her; to tell her about his life, or how much he missed her.
How she came to him at night as he slept covered in blood, *oh, Levi, what have you become?*

She’d been taken, and then he’d been taken, and no amount of vengeance could give any of it back.

Levi shoved the bouquet in the little stone vase on one side of her headstone and stepped back. Fell into a crouch, trying to swallow around the lump in his throat, blinking to ease the sting in his eyes. A tear tracked wet and hot down his cheek, and he pawed it away with the heel of his hand, sniffing hard. When he spoke his voice was raw, a whisper lost in his throat.

Ragged and sore, like he’d spent the whole day screaming.

“Sorry, mama.”

Eren had been hanging back, giving him some space, but he was suddenly standing next to Levi, one hand coming to rest on his head. Levi leaned into his legs and let out a rough breath, laying a shaking palm on the ground at his feet.

“I miss you,” he said, and it was true for the first time in ages, because he was allowed.

Levi didn’t have to keep it buried, keep his shit together, pretend he was okay. She was gone, and he’d never mourned her; he’d never been given the chance, and now the pain was old, but no less vivid.

She was gone, and it hurt, and Levi was allowed.

Eren’s fingers were in his hair, and Levi covered his mouth with his palm, and closed his eyes.

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The house looked innocuous from the sidewalk; deep in the suburbs, off-white wooden siding, worn-out red shutters on the windows. Potted plants and a porch swing.
Levi stood at the end of the stone path that led through the yard up to the door, and tried to quell the nausea surging through him in waves. He took a deep breath, and let it out slow, popping his neck and shaking out his arms.

Like he was getting ready to fight someone instead of knock on a door.

Eren laid a palm on his cheek, gently turning Levi’s face towards him, holding his gaze. His eyes hummed gold, a reassurance more than anything else, and Eren smiled softly at him.

“It’s gonna be fine, okay?”

Levi nodded, not in agreement, but with grim determination. He wasn’t fooling anyone; not himself, and definitely not Eren, who huffed a laugh and leaned down to kiss him. Brief, and chaste, and Levi went up on his toes to press into it for a moment before pulling back.

“Ready?” Eren asked, and Levi nodded again; it was a lie, but Eren didn’t call him on it, and they headed up the walkway together. Fingers tangled, Levi’s eyes alight.

He wanted to turn and run, but he’d come this far, and there was no going back. He raised his fist and knocked on the door before he could talk himself out of it. A dog started barking from somewhere inside the house, the noise growing louder and louder as the animal moved closer.

Then came a voice straight out Levi’s past; a little deeper, maybe, but then again Levi’s memory was far from perfect, especially when it came to things from before his life went to hell.

“Bed!” Farlan shouted, the word muffled through the door, dog still barking ceaselessly. “Mari, bed!”

There was the noisy clatter of claws on tile, and more barking as the dog ignored him entirely, before a different voice cut through the din.

“Bed, Mari!” Isabel said, and the barking stopped immediately, claws clicking off into the house until the sound faded away altogether. Farlan swore, and Isabel laughed, and then the door swung open and there was nothing Levi could do but hold his breath and squeeze Eren’s hand tighter.
They were older, but it was unmistakably them—scents entwined in a way they hadn’t been as teenagers, mate marks on both their throats. Levi wasn’t surprised.

The two of them were inevitable.

Isabel and Farlan wore matching expression of curious confusion, and they stared at Levi and Eren for a moment that stretched on endlessly, Levi’s palm sweating, air burning in his lungs.

Levi had fought for his life more times than he could remember, and he’d never know terror like this; agonizing uncertainty, heart pounding, jaw flexed.

Then their eyes went wide with shock, and Isabel’s mouth fell open as she lifted her hands to cover it, gasping through her fingers.

“Levi!”

Isabel lurched forward to throw her arms around him, shoving him off balance. He staggered before righting himself, dropping Eren’s hand to hug her back, letting out his breath in a rush.

“Izzy.”

It felt strange in his mouth, and Levi was blinking away tears again, swallowing around nothing, breathing unsteady.

“Oh my god,” Farlan said, wrapping both Levi and Isabel up, fingers trembling as they fist ed in Levi’s hair.

“Sorry it took so long. I missed you guys,” Levi said, and it was true.

Had always been, even if he hadn’t let himself feel it. He’d lost his friends, and his family, and his whole life. Lost himself, for a long time.

Nothing was going to give it back; he had to take it.
Isabel was shaking, and Farlan was squeezing them both so hard it was painful, and Levi closed it eyes.

They’d been here all these years, and Levi had been too much of a coward to face them, but all that was done, now.

It hurt in the best way, and Levi sank into it, and didn’t let go.

They were here, and it hurt, and Levi was allowed.

Chapter End Notes

Tell me nice things.

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