Anonymous

by Pondermoniums

Summary

Levi isn’t a member of the pack, but when he accidentally kills the alpha’s mate, he still has no choice but to run as Alpha Erwin Smith comes after him.

Levi has always considered himself an outcast, but in a setting where packs control neighborhoods of the city, he finds himself a pariah with no safety nets to catch him.

Notes

Thank you for checking out Anonymous! If you're here from Something Else, you are much loved, and if you're new to my page, then stay a while :) Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes
Levi stared at the notebook on his lap, rereading his words and tumbling them through his brain.

“Your face is going to stick like that if you keep it that way,” a female voice utters around a mouthful of dry cereal.

Levi only lifts his eyes to glare at his sister before resuming his thought process. Just as soon as the tip of his pen touches the paper, his phone buzzes. Frustrated at being interrupted, he reads the alarm and rises from the futon. Isabel tears her focus away from Netflix to ask, “You’re leaving? Oh, curfew?”

Levi sighs while running a hand through his soft, black hair. “Petra and I have work to do anyways. It’s a small price to pay to get along with this pack.”

Farlan meandered into the living room of the apartment, drinking right out of the milk bottle. “Remind us again why you’re free-loading with this pack when you actually live with us?”

As Levi stuffed his phone, notebook, water bottle, pen, and keys into his rucksack, he responded, “I actually have friends who happen to belong to the same pack, which allows visitors, but those visitors have to abide by pack rules. Curfew is one of them. Stay out of trouble.”

“Bel, do we have trouble planned?” Farlan asked Isabel, just to goad Levi on his way out the door.

“Not until I finish *Marco Polo,*” she returned, eyes trained on the screen.

“Okay, no trouble, then,” Farlan smiled, waving his brother out.

The apartment complex Levi exited was not classy or posh by any means, but it was in a safe neighborhood, and that was better than they had lived in the past. Where he was going, though, was posh, and the city’s grimy metro didn’t even reach it. Not that Levi minded; he preferred riding his bike into the gated community and swinging his bike into Petra’s smooth, concrete driveway instead of paying for the filthy ride anyway.

Striding right through the front door without knocking, Levi found her and Hange lounging on the couches of the open floor plan. Without looking up from her Sudoku puzzle, Hange greeted, “Hey boyfriend.”

Levi scowled even though he’d long since gotten used to Hange’s form of sincerity. Petra smiled as she rose and kissed him on the cheek. It had taken him longer to accustom to that, but once he did, he found he quite liked it. “There’s salad in the fridge.”

“Thanks,” he murmured, almost too quietly to hear. Frankly, he didn’t care whether it was salad or month old lasagna, he was happy to have free food. Either way, he ate better being Petra’s friend than he had in his entire life.

As he drizzled vinaigrette over the greenery, he inquired, “What’s the occasion outside?”

“Neighborhood potluck tonight,” Hange responded, scribbling numbers in most of the boxes all at once.

Levi plunged his fork into the food but froze. “Did I come on the wrong night?”
“It’s voluntary,” Petra assured kindly, knowing his aversion to social events. “We’re not going either, but Erwin will probably come by just to check in.”

Erwin.

Levi filled his mouth with bitter leaves just thinking about him. He’d only actually interacted with the pack’s alpha twice: when he was obligated as a guest to meet the alpha, and when he’d accidentally stumbled upon a block party and the man had given him a beer in passing. Of course this meant that Levi had no reason to loath the man, but he kept a far distance between himself and alphas as a general rule.

A far distance between packs in general, actually, but then he’d met Petra with Hange in tow, so he’d made an exception.

Hange finally set her puzzle down and looked at him to say, “Oh, the Red Rose called. We’re set for Saturday.”

Levi took a place on the other end of the couch Petra was on, silently eating his meal while Petra chimed her enthusiasm. “Yay! I like the Rose. There’s a good crowd there. Have you made anything new?”

Levi shook his head but balanced the plate on his thighs while he shrugged out of his rucksack. He was careful to not touch the sleeves of his shirt on the lining as he pulled out the notebook for her. She used the satin string to turn to the most recent entry, and scanned over the words. He’d written them in about ten minutes, just a spurt of inspiration, but he fully expected Petra’s brute criticism.

Instead, she uttered, “I like this! It’s…rustic…and honest.”

“It’s shit,” he countered, skewering a grape tomato.

“You say that about everything you write,” Hange scoffed. She sat up to reach across the coffee table and take the book. Her eyes wandered over the page and she grinned in that maniacal way Levi knew could either mean brilliance or deviance.

She recited, “I want to be your stolen prize. I want to be your crave in the night. But by morning’s come, you’ll worship the sun, and I will be lost to heal my frights.”

Looking up at him, she smirked kindly, “Who are you writing about?”

“No one,” he answered easily, throwing a glare in her direction. “Can you make something out of it or not?”

She chuckled like it was a rhetorical question. In a way, it was, but Hange was used to his prickly exterior to know when to back off. “You give me the spell and I make the magic.”

Someone knocked on the front door, then, and both Petra and Hange shot to their feet. Levi remained where he was as the door opened to reveal an annoyingly tall blond man with angular but strong features, and a smile he was beaming at that moment.

“Hello Petra, Hange…ah, and Levi.”

Levi spared him a glance and a single wave of his fork before returning to his salad. Other alphas would have deemed Levi a rude little shit and thrown him out of the neighborhood, possibly snapping his neck in the process, but Erwin’s smile never faltered, totally unbothered.
“Mike’s grilling tuna and Gunther’s baked brownies, among other things. Would you like someone to bring some plates over?”

“Thanks, Papa Smith,” Hange said, “but we had a late lunch. We’re all set.”

“I see,” the smile returned. “If that changes, there’s wine and beer if you’d like some. Just come to the cul-de-sac. Levi, that includes you.”

When Levi’s dark lashes lifted to acknowledge the invitation, a woman’s voice sounded from down the street. Erwin flashed his smile in her direction, and Levi knew Marie was likely coming up the driveway.

Standing, Levi made a point to pass behind Hange and take the book from her before disappearing to the kitchen. The last thing he needed was Erwin’s annoying alpha mate to get curious and pry into his business. Sure enough, the woman appeared and Levi was thankful the kitchen was out of the front door’s view. Marie was a strong, lovely woman, but she was simply too…too something. Levi would have called her too alpha, but it went beyond that.

Erwin was tolerable. Marie pried into people’s business like she belonged there, and manipulated members of the neighborhood even if Levi was the only one who noticed this. She’d convinced Petra that her favorite cheese was mascarpone until Levi firmly reminded her that it was havarti, and had been in the entire three years he’d known her.

Granted, it was just cheese, but that kind of thing did not fly well with him.

The door finally closed, and Hange and Petra returned to the living room and crossed right over to the kitchen. Petra opened her laptop while Hange sat at the granite counter where her synthetic soundboard was set out. She began creating rhythms and beats that Petra recorded on her computer for future use.

“Not that one,” Levi shot down immediately when he heard something that didn’t fit with the mood he’d written down. “The other one. Build on that.”

They worked over the course of the evening and into the night until Levi decided he needed to go for a walk, and the potluck should be finished by now. Leaving Petra and Hange to it, he only grabbed his phone and keys out of habit before strolling down the street. Levi passed by houses of all sizes but they were equally out of his price range. Not that he would buy one anyway—he would have to become a sworn member of the pack to join the community. Neither were in the cards for him.

It was actually a rare night off for him, and he was glad it happened on such a nice evening. The sky was clear, and the neighborhood was far enough out of the city so that stars could be seen. The air was rich with summer musk, and fire flies flashed their bulbs every now and then as he passed.

At the sound of a voice, his feet stopped. His body remembered faster than his mind did, and he placed a careful hand on his forearm. Levi felt the leather cuff that was as wide as wrist was to his elbow. In the oppressive summer heat, he often caught curious eyes looking his way because of the long sleeve shirt he wore, but he learned to ignore them. It was for everyone’s benefit that he keep the brace covered. If people saw it, they’d ask questions Levi didn’t want to answer. He liked to think he didn’t even need it anymore, but he’d grown attached, dependent on it, and as much as that fact sickened him, he also refused to let this habit die. It had kept him and his misfit family alive.

But he took a deep breath, let his hands drop back to his sides, and reminding himself that he was in a gated, protected community. Good people lived here, like Petra and Hange.
“He’s not fucking interested!”

Levi’s brows reached for his hairline. He was no stranger to crude language, but the person speaking sounded livid. Of all the places to have a conversation, he didn’t think tucked between two houses was it, but then he saw the curve of the arm, signifying that they were speaking on the phone.

“Oh please,” they scoffed confidently, “the blonde has no idea about that, let alone how the banks are running dry. What do you take me for? He’s too busy coddling his neighbors.”

Levi’s eyes widened. It seemed there was corruption in paradise. This was not his pack, he had no business with it, so he turned around and began to walk back toward Petra’s, when he realized the call had abruptly ended.

He turned so quickly that the figure had to halt right behind him. Levi’s instincts kicked his mind into autopilot as his arm struck out, and was expertly blocked by the stranger. They twisted his forearm, but Levi’s cuff was designed for such tactics. A blade swung out, tearing right through his sleeve and landing in the person’s chest. Levi knew he’d pierced the heart by the spurt of blood that came with the blade when he withdrew.

Both he and the stranger stared down at the fatal wound for a long second, then the stranger’s knees buckled and Levi caught them. Their hood fell back, and Levi felt his own heart grow cold in his chest.

Marie.

Conniving traitor or not, Levi had just killed the alpha’s mate, and his mind sped through choices to an immediate decision: run.

Unceremoniously dropping Marie’s body, Levi did just that, running like his heels were on fire and the entire pack was after him. Because once Marie’s body was found, it would be.

“AAAHHHHH!” Someone screamed behind him. “ALPHA! CALL THE ALPHA! MARIE’S DEAD!”

But he didn’t expect it to be so soon.

Panic swelled in Levi’s lungs, urging him faster, rushing burning pain through his legs. He shot around a street corner then cut right through someone’s yard. The gate was in front of him. By this time he couldn’t tell the difference between pounding feet behind him or his own pulse in his ears. He sprang lithely into the air, curling into himself and twisting horizontally so he cleared the candy-striped barrier, landed on his feet, and didn’t stop sprinting until he was in the city. He nearly broke down the door of Isabel and Farlan’s place before collapsing on the carpet, his heart nearly tearing apart from running and fear.
Levi’s feet hit the gravel and he tumbled into a roll. Springing up to his feet, he never stopped moving as he sprinted onto the ledge of the building and flipped over the edge. Some expensive apartment balcony is below, and he lands on the terrace edge. A yappy ball of white fluff barks from inside, but Levi is already gone, climbing agilely down the building until he is near enough to another and leaps across the distance.

His heart is pounding so strongly he can feel it in his fingertips as well as hear it in his ears. His shirt is drenched with sweat but every time he’s irritated or out of breath, he keeps going. When the soft soles of his flexible shoes finally hit the concrete of the sidewalk, he simply runs faster, freed from elevation to weave through the crowd. He hears complaints and shouts of surprise, but he’s rolling over the hood of a cab and on the other side of the street.

Levi finally came to a stop by his favorite café. The whole block reeks of coffee, tea, and overly sugared pastries, but he frequents the place so often the barista hands him a glass of water without a word. He doesn’t stay long; just long enough to finish his water, catch his breath, and let the potent stench of coffee grounds soak into his clothes.

It had been a long time since Levi had reason to run through every layer of a city. His body had grown weak, his muscles atrophied, and it was now screaming at him for not keeping up the frantic workout regimen.

“Levi! Levi!” Isabel had cried, shaking him until he awoke with a sore heart and lungs that still felt like they were on fire. She and Farlan stared down at him and his torn shirtsleeve, the bloodied blade hidden underneath it and the sweat still moist on his skin.

Levi had told them everything right there as he removed the leather brace and washed the blade, oiled the leather. He then got into the shower and scrubbed his flesh raw. When he was out of the shower, the three of them agreed that they could only wait. Levi wanted to skip town, but he could not make Farlan and Isabel do that…again. He also knew that if anyone from the Smith pack was coming for him, they were coming for Isabel and Farlan, and Levi wanted to be here when they did.

So after his shower he’d done the only thing that remotely brought him solace: he wrote. He’d fisted his hair at the realization that he’d left his notebook at Petra’s, but he had more. Piles of
waiting paper were the only things he had a surplus of.

When he could no longer write, he'd opened the window, and jumped out of it. They happened to live on the second floor, so he landed in a roll, but he kept running, jumping, sprinting, flying.

It had been six days since Marie had died.

Every muscle in Levi’s body had felt pulled, knotted, and ready to snap since then, but already he could feel them strengthening. He felt tighter, his sinew building power but not getting bigger; his softer flesh shrinking.

Then again, that could be the lack of water in his system as he swung the apartment door open and marched past his siblings playing a board game. In the shower, he held his mouth open and let his stomach fill while the salt washed from his body. He paid special attention to his neck, pits, feet, and crevasses of his groin with the soap before bundling himself in a towel.

Other than his phone, this towel was his most expensive item. It was as large as blanket and so plush it could have been a comforter on a bed. Once he’d finally gotten all of the lint out of it, the towel was his favorite possession. He took a long moment to simply be in it, wrapped in soft, unthreatening warmth.

When he emerged, Isabel and Farlan were standing expectantly. Levi finished pulling down his dark blue shirt and waited for them to speak. Farlan lifted a suitcase from the far side of the couch. “We thought you weren’t planning on running.”

“I’m not,” Levi growled. “I’m moving.”

“Where?” Isabel exclaimed, more annoyed than panicked. “You said—”

“I’ll only be two floors up,” Levi curtailed, taking the suitcase. “Close enough if danger comes, but far enough so it will look as if we’re not together.”

Levi could feel his siblings exchange glances and stare into his backside. His hand was on the doorknob but he turned around. “Say it, whatever it is you’re thinking.”

Farlan raked a hand through his mess of hair, his light blue eyes flashing in the light of the window. “Look, it’s been almost a week, and nothing’s happened. Your friends would know where you lived, right? The pack should have been here by now.”

“No one knows where I live except for the two of you,” Levi countered. Isabel’s eyebrows furrowed. “You’ve known them for three years.”

“Which means I’ve taken great care about it,” he snapped. “Say what you want to say.”

He could see the tick in her jaw when her teeth clenched, but Farlan spoke for her. “Other than your skewed definition of ‘friends’, we need to really think about this. Either these people aren’t coming, or we need to get the fuck out before the storm hits.”

“Neither of you are involved in this,” Levi declared. “As far as they're concerned, you’re not involved with me.”

“Levi,” Farlan chided. “We don’t mind moving again—”

He’d had enough of this. If anyone so much as touched Isabel and Farlan’s door, he’d cut them to
pieces. He almost wished Erwin Smith would just show up already so he could do it. Levi hated this waiting game, and he knew how disgusting and macabre it was that he’d rather see more blood on his blade than wait, to hope.

Levi realized Farlan had stopped speaking and his siblings were staring at him. His arms were taut, his hand crooked so his fingers were reaching for the loop of leather at the base of his palm that connected to his blade, ready to draw it out if an enemy didn’t do it for him, as Marie had done.

The stance wasn’t because he felt threatened by Farlan or Isabel. It was this whole city and its packs that chewed people up and spat them out if they didn’t like you. And no one liked Levi, except the two most good-hearted people whom he was scared shitless of getting killed one day.

Relaxing his stance somewhat, Levi murmured, “You’ll go. I’ll stay.”

Isabel crossed her arms. “Don’t give me that shit.”

“Watch your fucking mouth, Isabel Magnolia,” he growled.

“Yeah, speak like a lady,” Farlan agreed, and then said to Levi, “Don’t give us that shit. We’re family. We’ve always been family, and we’re staying that way, no matter if this idiot pack doesn’t know who its real friends are.”

“I’m not a real friend to them,” Levi declared measuredly.

Farlan scoffed. “From what I heard, you were chums with two pack members and were invited to all of its soirees. You were pack in everything but in name.”

“I stumbled into one block party. That doesn’t make me pack. I killed the alpha’s mate, Farlan! If I was pack, they might investigate the murder and then chop my head off, but I’m not. This sort of thing gets you and Isabel kidnapped, tortured, raped; meanwhile my body gets hunted down and torn limb from limb, while I watch what they do to you.”

Now Farlan was the one to cross his arms, as if to shield himself from Levi’s words. “What the hell did you get up to while Bel and I were in school?” he asked rhetorically, although Levi could see the frightened curiosity in both his and Isabel’s eyes.

He rubbed the stress in his forehead. “School…you guys can’t transfer again. You were pack in everything but in name—”

“Don’t worry about it,” Isabel said calmly, “because we’re not going anywhere. You’ll be two floors up. We’ll be right here. Farlan and I work enough to pay the rent on our own, and we’ve already removed your name from the lease.

“You’re also forgetting, like the stubborn dumbass that you are, that you taught us how to fight. Be it with a fork, dagger, or our bare hands, we can defend ourselves and we can defend you. Stop acting like you’re not our brother, because that’s fucking insulting.”

Levi felt his throat tighten, unable to speak even if he’d known what to say. His feet might as well have been nailed to the floor until Farlan cooed, “Come here, crybaby. I’ve got you.”

Levi’s face scrunched against Farlan’s chest and he felt the youth’s arms wrap around him tightly. “I’m not crying, you dirty bastard,” he chastised, but now Isabel was hugging him from his other side.

Levi groaned and disengaged to grab his suitcase. “Scream loudly enough and I’ll hear you through these walls.”

The apartment he entered was a studio that proved surprisingly spacious. Although, there was essentially just enough room for a bed, a yoga mat, and a bedside table or dresser of some sort. An alcove made way for a sink and counter space but no kitchen appliances, and a door led to the bathroom. It was not bad considering Levi was one person; the place was clean, cheap, and had the necessary utilities. Even if it didn’t, Levi would still be unpacking his suitcase to use his clothes as cushions and his towel as a blanket, considering he had yet to purchase a bed. He didn’t want any smells on him to lead back to Isabel and Farlan, so he didn’t bring his own full sized mattress, nor the futon.

Levi fished out his phone to set a reminder to get a futon or mattress pad or something to separate himself from the floor, but he became distracted by approximately thirty-nine text messages from Hange and Petra.

*Hey, where’d you go?*

*Holy shit, Levi! There’s a murderer in the neighborhood! Get your ass back here!*

*Levi…?*

*Levi, you need to answer your fucking texts because it's looking real suspicious with you gone…*

He scrolled to the most recent messages:

*Look, this isn’t a trap, I swear, but we’re sticking to our gig Saturday night at the Rose. Eleven o’clock. Just sing one damn song to prove you’re alive, at least? And help us get paid?*

Levi scowled at that…and then checked the balance in his bank account. It didn’t look good. A gig at the *Red Rose* would earn him enough for a month’s rent; plus tips, he could eat all three meals a day, and possibly help his siblings out with their funds.

He didn’t need to look at the calendar, but he opened the app anyways, gazing at the little box that represented Saturday…tomorrow.

“Will be a lovely day to die,” he murmured to no one, and then found his notebook to write that down.

Chapter End Notes

Now that the exposition's out of the way, let's get started....
Levi grimaced at the hoard of people waiting outside of the *Red Rose*. He seriously considered just sneaking through a back door or a window as he scrutinized the bouncer standing outside the door. The man was three times bigger than Levi and could easily be paid off by the Smith pack…

A pair of giggly girls cut to the front of the line, cleavage practically bursting from their dresses and a blatantly handling a roll of bills with which they were trying to bribe the doorman. Levi’s brows rose when he saw the bouncer shrug them off and jab his thumb at the end of the line… which stretched around the block.

Levi sighed and crossed the street with his ID card ready. The man’s eyes locked onto him before he was halfway across, but he took Levi’s card and nodded over his shoulder. As Levi passed through the velvet rope unhooked for him, the large man murmured gruffly, “Break a leg.”

Levi arched one of his sleek brows but gave a curt nod and entered the haze of light, sound, and noise. The whole place was alight with blue but the stairs that led up to balconies overlooking the massive dance floor were illuminated with red under the treads. Levi maneuvered through the writhing crowd that was already intoxicated by cheap vodka and overplayed radio hits.

The stage was a runway platform on the second level. Levi felt his heart rise a little; he liked being out of people’s reach, and in this club, everyone would be too busy dancing or shagging on the dance floor to pay attention to who was singing. The bar lined the base of the platform, saving space by having drinks and music in one place and also providing gimmicky architecture.

Levi floated up the nearest staircase, eyes scanning the crowd for any faces he might recognize. So far, the only person he knew was a bald man with a waxed mustache sitting in the VIP section: the club’s owner. In another situation, Levi might have approached to shake his hand and thank him for the opportunity to perform, but Dot Pixis was an alpha with wide connections. Not to mention that Levi liked to uphold the name of his band: *Anonymous*. He wasn’t interested in fame; he just wanted to get paid for hobby.

Petra and Hange had finished setting up their equipment and startled when they saw him approaching. Hange came right up and smacked the back of his head.

“Where the fuck have you been? You leave your shit at the house while a murderer gallivants through the neighborhood! Half the pack blames you for Marie’s murder!”
Levi’s arm flexed but he expected worse, so he merely narrowed his gaze at them. “Only half?”

Hange rolled her eyes and went back to testing her soundboard for technical glitches. Petra’s hands were on her hips as she looked Levi in the eye. “Did you kill her?”

Levi countered with, “Is your alpha here?”

“No, he isn’t. I told you this wasn’t a trap and I fucking meant it. Answer the question.”

He huffed a sigh. “Yeah. I did.”

Her expression slowly dropped into a frown. “Did she deserve it?”

Levi’s mouth opened, and then shut again. He hadn’t been expecting that response, but apparently he wasn’t the only one who disliked the female alpha. “She was talking on the phone with someone. It sounded like she was working against the pack and she knew I overheard. She attacked me.”

Petra took a step forward, not threateningly, but curious. “Going against the pack, how?”

He shrugged. “I don’t know. She mentioned how the blonde had no idea about something; I’m assuming the blonde is Erwin. It also sounded like she was milking the pack’s bank accounts.”

Hange’s head had perked up to hear the conversation. “Well I guess that means we should get started if we want to buy groceries. Levi, I hope your pipes are warmed up. We’re on in fifteen.”

Levi scowled. “Just start playing our beats and fade out the main music. I’m ready.”

Petra intervened, “But we’re not scheduled until—”

“I can’t stand fifteen more minutes of this,” he curtailed, gesturing to the music currently playing over the speakers. He took the microphone off the counter where all of Hange’s equipment was stationed. Tapping the head and hearing a hushed thump over the speakers, he knew it was ready. About a minute later, he recognized his own songs trickling over the space. He saw the crowd below shift as people replenished their drinks, took bathroom breaks, or went to mingle at the tables on the first floor or the VIP booths on the second.

As Hange’s beats and Petra’s melodies began to grow louder, Levi closed his eyes, letting himself fall into the music. His shoulders began to move, his body pulsing with the percussion. He felt the stage beneath his feet, separating him from everything he despised: obnoxious people, their lies, their wandering eyes picking him apart.

He sang softly into the microphone, letting the song build itself. “When I came here last night, you fell into my line of sight, now everywhere is the imprint of you.”

The lyrics gave way to allow the music to pick up, and people began moving to the music below them. Levi wandered the stage, interacting with the space because he hated being a statue; movement eased his anxiety and helped spread the music to every corner of the space.

“Let’s keep this anonymous. But when the stars cry, we’ll conquer the skies.”

One song turned into three, and then nine, and when Levi finally called it quits to rehydrate, it was two in the morning. He was so sweaty from the sweltering lights that when he raked a hand through his hair, it stayed in place. Some girls caught him on the balcony, complimenting his hair gel before he told them to fuck off.
A male voice laughed behind him. Levi turned to find Dot Pixis ushering the women to a booth and then holding a hand out to him. “That’s quite a voice you’ve got.”

“Thanks. I was born with it,” Levi sassed. He just wanted to get home and shower. He knew a burrito place that was open late…

Pixis guffawed and Levi could smell scotch on his breath. “A voice is an instrument. You have to learn how to use it like every other tool, and you’ve mastered yours. Your team obviously collaborates well. It’s been a pleasure listening. I hope to have you back soon.”

Levi had no choice but to shake his hand again, but this time, a petite moneybag was thrust into his hand. His eyes bulged slightly at the plush feel of it. “What, do you just keep hundreds of dollars tucked under that booth?”

Pixis chuckled, his attention already returning to the women in said booth. “My people know good music when they hear it. As I said, I hope to see Anonymous again.”

Levi knew Pixis’ reputation as a greedy man. His was the only club for several square miles because he ran them out of the neighborhood. He had the best real estate, liquor, and apparently was tired of paying radio-dependent DJs. Levi knew it was an incredible compliment that the man was offering a steady income in a place like this, but Levi couldn’t help but feel suspicion. Being nailed down in one place was dangerous.

He doubled back to split the payment three ways with Hange and Petra, and then he didn’t stick around. Petra had been nice enough to park his bike behind the club with his rucksack hanging from the handlebars, so he swung into main street traffic, easily getting across town before the burrito truck drove home.

Levi was glad for the hollow, lightweight metal of his bike as he carried it over his shoulder to store it in the closet across the hall. By this point, Levi had enough stamina to eat, shower, and then pass out.

But not in that order. He kicked the door shut behind him, leaned over to turn the bathroom light on, and turned to dump the food and backpack on the recently purchased futon—

Levi halted as if he’d run into an invisible wall. Sitting on the futon, knees crossed, was Erwin Smith.

Chapter End Notes

Cliff hangerrrr.
Innocent

Chapter Summary

Erwin confronts Levi about Marie's murder.

Levi dropped everything and ran. Out the door, down the stairs, his feet thundered over the treads. If Erwin was here, the pack was here. Isabel and Farlan…why didn’t he check on them before coming up here? Why didn’t he—

“Guh!” he exclaimed as something large slammed into him. The stairs rose to meet his face, but Erwin twisted with Levi in his arms, and they tumbled down to the next landing. Levi ignored the fact that Erwin had just taken the damage and tried to lunge down the next flight of stairs.

Erwin held firm, and Levi collapsed with his arms trapped under Erwin’s. His feet kicked, trying to at least make them both topple down the last flight of stairs. Levi’s torso begged to expand so he could breathe, but Erwin was too strongly wrapped around him.

“Levi! Be still!” he commanded.

Levi grimaced at the feeling of Erwin’s breath in his ear. His body temperature piqued with anger, lack of air, and something Levi refused to acknowledge. He finally got his left hand free, and he gripped the edge of the stair. Erwin squeezed around him and the last of his air wheezed out of his lungs. Levi’s body failed him, and he went slack, his vision blurring.

His lungs filled…and then they filled again….and he slowly became aware of Erwin’s body around him, his arms expanding so Levi’s torso could stretch for air, and his unbelievable warm, fresh, clean scent around Levi, filling his nostrils and making his head swim all over again. Levi fought against the hormones that rose within him and tried to get his right arm free, but Erwin tensed around him again.

“Let me go!” Levi growled.

Erwin jerked his body, jostling Levi. “I’m not here for them, Levi! I’m here for you!”

That only made him increase his struggles. Levi finally managed to get them hanging over the edge of the stairs, but Erwin twisted again so their feet hung over the edge instead of their heads. Levi growled deep in his chest, causing Erwin’s alpha instincts to react; he picked Levi up just enough to slam his back on the floor. Levi’s teeth chattered and his eyes went wide at the sight of Erwin looming over him.

“I know Marie’s death was an accident of self defense. I was there, Levi. I knew she was a traitor. I know you’re innocent.”

Erwin held Levi’s right arm against the floor while his other arm was planted across Levi’s collarbone. The pain of an elbow digging into his shoulder roused Levi out of incredulous shock. He tapped Erwin’s arm, which obligingly lifted. The blond man sat back on his rear, giving Levi room but still holding a large hand over his right elbow.

The two of them caught their breath, and when he was ready, Levi’s first question was, “How do
you know about them?"

Erwin looked at him as if they hadn’t nearly just suffocated him. “Oh, Farlan and…Isabel, is her name? I looked into your background when you first came to Petra’s a few years ago. I don’t let anyone near the pack whom I don’t know about.”

Levi wasn’t sure if he should be more concerned how easily Erwin found his family or what this meant for him, because if Erwin had done a background check on him, Levi wouldn't have been allowed within five miles of his neighborhood. “You obviously didn’t research enough,” he grumbled, and then moved on, “How did you know? About…”

Erwin proffered one of his annoyingly kind smiles. “Marie. You can say her name. She wasn’t my mate; that was a misconception she cleverly spread amongst the pack. I was on the other side of the house, listening to the same phone call she attacked you for overhearing.”

Levi propped himself on his other elbow since Erwin wasn’t letting go of his other one. “You mean you’ve been fucking that woman for years because you wanted to keep an enemy close?”

Erwin’s smile faded somewhat. “I’ll admit that I had feelings for her in the beginning, but I discovered her true nature almost immediately. I did what was best for my pack by keeping her where I could watch her.”

“You should have been watching your bank accounts, because from what I heard, she’s drained them dry.”

Erwin laughed, and the mirth was so out of place Levi felt uncomfortable. “She’s been emptying false accounts. That’s why she was on the phone in the first place: her employer was figuring out that she was giving them nothing.”

Despite his better judgment, Levi asked, “And who was her employer?”

Erwin rolled a brawny shoulder in a shrug. “A rival pack that is getting more aggressive. They want the neighborhood. They’re also not happy that I’ve been able to out maneuver them at every turn.”

Levi’s eyes apathetically rolled. “It’s a comfort to know you’re humble. Could you get off my arm?”

Erwin’s brows lifted as if he hadn’t realized he was still holding Levi’s elbow, but he removed his hand and Levi rose to his feet. His destination was still the same, because he wouldn’t believe Isabel and Farlan were safe until he saw it with his own eyes.

Levi turned the corner and was reaching for the door when he stopped and turned. “What do you think you’re doing?”

Erwin gazed down at him expectantly. “Meeting your family.”

Confusion ruled Levi’s emotions. “No, you’re not. We’re not a part of your pack. Go home.”

“Why not?” Erwin intercepted before Levi could disappear inside the apartment. “You’ve known us long enough. You’re an overnight guest often enough.”

The hairs on Levi’s neck prickled. “I don’t appreciate you being a fucking stalker—”

“I keep tabs, I don’t stalk…except Marie, for obvious reasons.”
The door was pulled right out of Levi’s grasp, and they found a groggy Isabel and dewy-eyed Farlan glaring back at them. “Well don’t just stand in the hallway all night,” the former simultaneously accused and invited.

“All morning, more like,” Farlan yawned, and then his eyes narrowed on Erwin. “Who are you?”

“Erwin Smith,” the man responded, extending his hand. “I’m terribly sorry for disturbing your sleep.”

Both Isabel and Farlan mutely stared at him before looking to Levi for direction and explanation. He shook his head angrily and pushed into the room, knocking Erwin’s waiting hand out of the way. “Are you okay? Nothing out of the ordinary?”

Erwin sighed, his large body taking up the doorframe as he leaned against the jamb. “No one is coming to harm them, Levi. I told you: I know you’re innocent.”

“Yeah, well half of your pack doesn’t think so,” he snapped before disappearing to search the apartment. He passed through his former room longingly, wanting nothing more than to burrow beneath the bedclothes. However he finished his sweep of the place, including the windows before returning to the living room.

Isabel lurched away from him. “Levi! You reek!”

“I wasn’t going to say anything…” Erwin agreed guiltily. “You smell like you’ve spent a night in the Red Rose.”

“Oh!” Isabel chimed gleefully. “You got the gig? Why didn’t you tell us?”

“I’ve been trying to get in there for weeks!” Farlan exclaimed accusatorily. “You’re not setting foot in there again without me!”

“Gig?” Erwin repeated, looking to Levi with an intrigued expression. “Are you a musician, Levi?”

He scowled. “You keep tabs on me, but you don’t know what Hange and Petra do in their spare time?”

“I allow my people their secrets when it counts,” he smiled consolingly. “For a place like the Rose, I imagine you’d have to impress Pixis with an original taste, something eclectic.”

“You obviously haven’t heard him sing,” Farlan quipped. "You'd think he was an angel if his horns didn't obstruct the view." Levi shot him a fiery glare, to which his brother merely grinned sleepily.

Isabel was still holding the door open and frowned up at him. “Why are you standing out there?”

“I haven’t been invited in,” he answered reasonably. Levi turned and found blue eyes gazing at him, silently asking permission to enter.

“You barged right into my place,” he reminded.

“Yes, because I didn’t think you would answer my calls if I tried,” Erwin responded flatly. It certainly would have been easy for him to ask Hange or Petra for his number, and Levi would have certainly thrown his mobile across the room or out the window.

“Hang on,” Farlan interrupted from where he’d flopped on the futon. “So the two of you are fine? Why the hell am I still up at three in the morning?”
Levi shook his head, striding back toward the door. “My food’s cold and all I want is to bathe. Call me if you need anything,” he added to his siblings. Erwin moved out of his way and Levi heard him apologize again to Isabel and Farlan, wishing them goodnight.

Levi was almost to his floor when he felt a presence behind him and abruptly turned to find Erwin behind him again. For a towering figure, he moved awfully quietly. “What are you doing?”

Since he was behind him on the stairs, Erwin gazed up at him. “I’m seeing that you get home safely. Although, if you live up here because of me, I think you can move back in with them, now.”

Levi scowled, discomforted by how easily Erwin read the situation. “For the last time, we’re not pack. I don’t want to be a member of your pack, and if we’re fine, then we’re fine. You don’t have to see me anywhere.”

For a long moment, Erwin’s expression was eerily placid, and Levi half-expected to be thrown down the stairs for such a remark to an alpha. He stood his ground, though, refusing to reveal his fear.

Erwin finally blinked and looked away, nodding. “You’re right. I shouldn’t impose where I am not wanted. Good night, Levi, or good morning, as Farlan pointed out.”

Levi’s lips parted as he watched the alpha turn and descend the stairs without looking back. Levi resumed his path in the opposite direction, shaking his head to clear it of thoughts of—

“Levi.”

He froze and peeked over his shoulder at Erwin on the landing.

“I’m sorry for chasing you after the incident with Marie. I should have realized I was frightening you by running after you.”

Levi frowned as he processed his words. In his panic, he’d thought a lot more people had been chasing after him, but if it was just Erwin…what did that mean? He asked as much: “Why were you chasing me? Didn’t you have a body to clean up? A pack to mollify?”

If he didn’t know any better, Levi would have labeled Erwin’s smile as bashful right then. “The pack could wait; you were the one running. I wanted to catch you and assure you everything was all right…or as all right as the occasion could be. You know, I pride myself on being faster than my size allows. It’s one of the reasons I became pack alpha—I’m just as fast as I am strong…but you astonished me. The way you leaped over the car barrier…”

He shook his head, but didn’t avert his gaze from Levi’s. “You deserve wings.”

Levi swallowed thickly, no longer hungry for the cold burrito waiting for him.
Sweet Things

Chapter Summary

Levi’s life returns to normalcy until his apartment is discretely broken into.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Vanilla cappuccino!” Levi called before tearing his apron off. It was the last drink of his shift, and now he was tossing his apron in the direction of wall hooks and striding out of the café. The girl who’d handed him the glass of water two days ago—Michelle? Mika…Mikasomething—called out, “Turn the espresso machine on before you leave! We’ve got three orders!”

He did so in passing, the whir of the machine and crackling of grinds sounding behind him as he left. Levi didn’t bother remembering names because the employees were just regular people who were either not connected to a pack or completely ignorant of packs’ existence; plus, he was already on his way to his next job at the library.

As much as Levi enjoyed having his clothes smell like coffee, cinnamon, and vanilla, the job at the library was his favorite. There was a massive bike rack on the side of the antiquity-styled building, and it was quiet. Not to mention they sold tea and snacks at the price of a broke college student’s budget.

Speaking of, he passed the study area strewn with tables, one of which Isabel sat with her nose in a book. Behind her, Farlan was flirting with a girl from some class. They often came here after classes finished to study, be with friends, and see their brother. Farlan ceased flirting when he saw Levi drop a parcel of mocha-caramel bark beside Isabel. It was just a bag of jagged, crumbly candy—the leftovers of the coffee shop—but he always brought them for his brother and sister.

Isabel’s eyes were slightly pink around the edges from staring at the textbook, but her smile shined as she looked up at him, the corners of those eyes wrinkling. “Thanks, Levi,” she whispered gratefully.

“Mm!” Farlan approved around a bite. “Salted caramel! The café’s stepping it up.”

Levi climbed to the next floor and began returning a cart of books to their shelves. The walls were glass, so he could see Isabel and Farlan studying below, as well as the library’s foyer even further down. The high windows illuminated the place with golden light and fractals as it split through the glass walls. Some murmurings wafted from below, but up here only the scrape of pages disturbed the silence. Levi was able to let his mind go numb, his thoughts wandering as he returned tomes to their shelves.

He turned the corner, and had already set three books on the shelf when he realized who was standing next to him. “Hange?”

Her head perked up from a book with a lollypop sticking out of her mouth. Her expression opened, “Boyfriend! How are you? You never said you worked in the library!”
She took a step closer, and paused, her nose sniffing. “Two jobs? At what coffee place do you work? It smells nice…”

Hange leaned forward to get a better whiff, but Levi palmed her face and held her at arm’s length. “They’re all the same.”

“They can’t be,” she refuted, smelling his hand instead. “You smell… I don’t even drink coffee but I might if you made it.”

“That’s because I’m damn good at making it,” he sneered gently.

Hange smiled and swatted his hand away. She nodded at the cart of books. “Can I help with those?”

He peered at her. “Why? It’s my job.”

“So?” She hoisted a small pile of them up and examined the labels before finding their places on the shelves. “We’ve got a few calls for gigs this week and next.”

“Where?” he asked conversationally, pushing the cart to the end of the aisle.

“Um…” Hange recalled, “Trost… The Horned Stag… Titan’s Ale… and the Rose.”

Levi’s head lifted. “The Rose again?”

“Oh yeah,” Hange nodded eagerly, walking with him around the corner and selecting another pile of books. “Pixis wants us every night this weekend. We’re booked solid. I hope you drink that coffee you make.”

“I prefer tea,” he revealed, “but I can go without sleep. When’s the first gig?”

“The Stag Wednesday night. Ladies’ night,” she winked. “You’ll bring them in, they’ll bring the men, and thanks to half-off drinks, we’ll leave with a pile of tips.”

Levi frowned as he placed a book decorated with frogs on the shelf. “What do you mean, I’ll bring them in?”

Hange was busier flipping through the pages of the books she was holding than setting them on the shelves. “Women think you’re cute. Hot stuff, actually. It’s almost a shame you swing for the other team.”

Levi stilled, not from embarrassment but because he’d never revealed such a thing to Hange or anyone except Isabel and Farlan. “How do you know that?”

Hange blew a raspberry in the open air. “You’re always coming over to Petra’s house but never flirting with her. I’m mostly straight and I still want to get between her legs.”

Levi pressed his lips together, willing that mental image away. “You’re not mostly anything, Hange, except fucking nuts.”

“Thank you,” she beamed, finally putting the books where they belong. It was a testament to how well she knew him when she continued, “But don’t worry about Ladies’ Night. You come off as a perfect dick wad to people who don’t know you.”

Levi rolled his eyes. “Thanks?” and then he froze as Hange’s arms hugged him from behind.
“It’s okay because I know you’re a sweetie at heart, and I’m the only one who matters.”

Levi huffed an involuntary laugh and patted her head. “Keep telling yourself that… Hange get off.”

“My legs stopped working. Carry me.”

Levi disentangled himself and dropped her where she was. “You cruel bastard!” she chided, but then was back on her feet and pushing the cart for him. “So Erwin visited your place, yeah?”

He glared at her suspiciously. “How do you know that?”

“Because he made an announcement to the pack this morning, detailing your innocence and how Marie was a lying bitch. I never liked her. Beautiful woman, and could make the best pot of chili known to homo sapiens, but she laughed like a dolphin. Did you know Erwin wasn’t mated to her? That was a shock. She was over at his house so often, but technically she didn’t even live there.”

“I never cared about Marie until she was sneaking up behind me to cut my throat,” Levi countered stiffly, and then added warily, “How did the pack take it?”

Hange shrugged, slouching over the cart while she pushed it. “Still some suspicion, but if Erwin says you’re good, then you’re good. You should come over tonight with your journals. We’ll make some new stuff and Petra’s cooking lasagna.”

Levi immediately deemed that a bad idea. “Not tonight. We’ll go to the Stag with what we have, and maybe give Pixis some new material on Sunday.”

“Ooo,” Hange considered. “Like a grand finale. I like it.”

She helped him with the rest of the books and departed with a wave of her lollypop. Wednesday came soon enough and true to Hange’s prediction, Levi was assaulted by female affections before and especially after his performance. He kept his complaints to a minimum since they brought in enough income for Levi to cover his sibling’s rent for the month. He liked to pay for them so they could save their money for other things.

When Hange said they were booked solid, she meant it, and Levi found himself in the Titan's Ale Thursday evening, and then there was the Rose all weekend. Friday at midnight, Pixis dismissed them from the Rose, saying, “Let them remember you when they’re sober. You’ll need the rest for tomorrow and Sunday.”

After Levi left the adrenaline haze of the club, and climbed the stairs to his apartment, he realized the man was right. Three nights in a row with two day jobs…Levi had already called to leave a message at the café, letting them know he’d be late the following morning. After a quick but thorough shower, he fell onto the unfolded futon, naked and not even bothering to properly dry, simply landing in the towel as he was.

The next time Levi opened his eyes, there was a light rhythm knocking on his door. A glance at the window told him it was still early morning, but he dragged himself out of bed and found a pair of boxer briefs and a shirt. He opened the door wide, lifting his eyes to see Isabel and Farlan checking in before school.

Instead Erwin gazed down at him.

Levi shut the door.
“Levi, please let me in.” He could hear Erwin’s smile in his voice but he shook his head at no one as he turned the electric kettle on.

“It’s too early for your stalking.”

Erwin chuckled, “I’m not stalking, I’m inviting you to breakfast. Hange mentioned that you refused to come by the neighborhood earlier this week. I wanted to make sure you know it’s safe.”

“Hange can mind her own business and you can sit at breakfast by yourself,” Levi called through the wall, tearing open a tea bag.

“That sounds depressing,” Erwin sassed, and then his eyes widened when the door spontaneously opened. Levi thrust a mug of tea in his hand, and shut the door again. He heard that smile again as Erwin said, “Thank you…what shall I do with the mug when finished?”

“Throw it out a window, for all I care,” Levi shot back, intending to get at least two more hours of sleep before work. He assumed Erwin had left because he didn’t hear anything else as he fell back onto his waiting futon with a loud creak.

Pixis' warning about Saturday and Sunday was not ill placed. Even Hange was surprised by the crowd below the stage. “Shit,” she uttered.

Petra nodded her agreement. “This is going to be a long night.”

“Just start playing,” Levi commanded softly. He ignored the hubbub on the floor and let his body begin to sway with the music. In the back of his mind, he noticed that it grew quiet around him, people actually intent on listening as well as dancing.

“I remember feeling dark…waiting for the lights to fade. Let my surroundings match me, let me… feel everything you can be.”

He felt the soles of his feet glide over the stage; he wasn’t paying attention to his movements, but apparently someone was, because he heard a whoop of excitement somewhere in the crowd. All he cared about was the song building around him.

“Next time you see my face…I try not to feel erased. But you have taken hold of me, you… offer back my pieces with fees.”

After he’d finished, he was already walking off stage when an applause sounded. He found Pixis in his booth and broke right into the conversation to say, “I’ve got ideas for tomorrow.”

The man didn’t seem perturbed at all, and he frankly told the people in his booth to get out so he could speak with Levi. After hearing his ideas, Pixis laughed, “That’s quite a gimmick. The bar staff won’t like it much…”

“Can you do it?” Levi pestered.

Pixis waved his hand as if to throw concern away. “I like a shocking effect. The bar staff will be told to bring towels if they’re so concerned. I will put the switch in the console for one of your Anonymous members to control.”

Levi nodded, collected his dues, and left to inform Petra and Hange of the plans. Petra stared blankly at him. “We haven’t got a new song for that.”

“We will by tomorrow,” he declared, pulling out a folded piece of paper and giving it to Hange.
She hungrily scanned the page and smiled. He added, “I’ve got more if we have time.”

“You off tomorrow?” Hange asked.

“Yeah, if you can promise my head won’t get lopped off the second I enter your neighborhood.”

She looked at Petra and rolled her eyes. “Salty as ever.”

Petra smiled, tired but excited for new material. “The door will be open for you. Come whenever you like.”

Levi hoped the pack had enough time to have cooled off over the death of Marie, but he let the worry fall to the back of his mind as he rode home. The musky night air dried some of the sweat on his face and chest, but he was still damp when he dropped his clothes in the sink and ducked under the torrent of shower water.

Levi soaped his body from the feet, up. He washed his hair last and took the time to massage his neck, and around the small, sensitive glands that were hidden behind his ears, along his hairline at the base of his neck. Most people, unless they were regular humans, had their glands further down on their neck, visible if you looked just under their ears, where their chins met their necks. Levi was unusual in this way, and had been sited as having gills because of the abnormal placement. Over time, though, he appreciated where they were. The shampoo and conditioner of his hair covered his naturally fresh, warm, and slightly sweet odor, and his sweat dripped down to cover it also.

At times like now, when he was alone in a shower, shrouded with steam, he liked massaging the areas, cleaning them out and letting his natural scent into the open air. He felt ten times cleaner because of it.

He brushed his teeth in the shower and sat on the toilet seat, taking his time drying and cleaning out his ears. He wanted to just fall into bed nude, but in the summer heat and less-than-ideal air conditioning, it was easier to wear a pair of underwear and a t-shirt to absorb the sweat, then just change into something clean in the morning.

Levi bowed his head as he walked to his bed, languidly pulling a brush through his hair before letting it fall to the side as he planted himself face first on the pillow. He was already meeting the watery depths of slumber when a hushed sound reached his ears, not unlike an intake of air or a sniff through nostrils.

“Oh, I never knew you were omega.”

His eyes popped wide open and he was rolling off the bed to his feet instantaneously. He was so tired, he hadn’t even noticed Erwin sitting on the other side of the futon. Levi’s chest was heaving with defensive anger as he pointed finger at the door. “Get. Out.”

Chapter End Notes

I just really like Erwin barging into Levi’s space.
Chapter Summary

Levi’s home is about to be turned upside-down.

“Don’t you want your mug?” Erwin asked, holding up the dishware Levi had given him that morning.

“I want you to get out!” Levi growled. “It’s four in the fucking morning! You have no reason to be here!”

“Yes I do,” he declared, still holding the mug aloft. “It’s not my fault you wouldn’t let me in if I tried.”

Levi’s nostrils flared as he breathed for patience. “Did you break in here while I was in the shower or did I walk right past you?”

“Both,” he gestured to the corridor. “You walked past me in the hallway and I slipped in when your bathroom door closed.”

Levi scrubbed a hand over his face, glaring at Erwin between his fingers. “What will it take for you to get the fuck out?”

Erwin’s hands settled on his lap around the mug. “Breakfast would be nice.”

Levi’s nails clawed at his cheek until he animatedly threw them in the air. “I don’t have time for breakfast! I’m working tomorrow. All of tomorrow, with your pack members, no less!”

“Do you have a gig tomorrow?” Erwin deduced, much to Levi’s consternation. “Where is it?”


Erwin’s eyes narrowed and his lips pursed slightly as he contemplated, “It’s at the Rose isn’t it? Knowing Pixis, that wouldn’t surprise me.”

Levi’s fists dropped beside his hips. “You’re not invited!”

“It’s a public place,” the alpha reminded.

“Shut up! You’re not invited and you’re not coming!”

“Why not?” Erwin exclaimed, those blue eyes gazing up at him pathetically. Levi scrubbed his hands over his face again, fistig his hair in frustration. He really didn’t have anything better to say than the truth.

“Because I don’t want you there!”

Erwin scoffed before his eyes. “And here I am about to buy you breakfast.”

Levi’s hands trembled in the air like he wanted to throttle him. “You’re not buying me breakfast! I
“Fine,” Erwin said, looking at his watch. “Five hours should be enough. I’ll pick you up at nine.”

Levi blinked dumbly. “Huh?”

Erwin stood so the futon rested between them, but he turned with a stern expression on his face. “Just answer me this: pancakes or waffles?”

“Neither!”

“Waffles, then,” Erwin decided on his way to the door, where he chimed, “Sleep well!”

Levi stood there with his jaw open. What the hell just happened? He marched forward, making sure the door was in fact closed and that the lock worked before resuming his prone position on his bed. He glared at the side of the sheets that smelled like Erwin, and he dejectedly rolled over to the other side.

Despite the intrusion, Levi’s exhaustion pulled him under, and next he knew, he heard a light knock on his door, followed by the sound of it opening. He ignored the fact that he’d awoken on Erwin’s side and mumbled, “Why doesn’t my lock work?”

Erwin smiled and held up a key. “Isabel let me in.”

His eyes widened. That was the last time he brought her mocha-caramel bark.

Rising from the bed, Levi strode forward and snatched the key before closing the bathroom door behind him. He’d skipped dinner the night before and his stomach betrayed him by gurgling loudly. Swiping the bar of soap over his neck and face, Levi washed and brushed his teeth before he pulled on a clean pair of jeans. It occurred to him that Erwin had now seen him in his underwear thrice, but the man seemed more determined on getting Levi to breakfast, instead of keeping him out of his pants.

Isabel and Farlan would already be in class by now, so Levi shoved the key underneath their door and planned to chew them out over it later. In the mean time, Levi had to deal with Erwin’s stupidly nice car as they drove to his restaurant of choice. At least the venue didn’t seem too upscale, although the hostess looked up at Erwin with sparkling eyes to hear his reservation name. Any place that needed reservations was bound to be expensive.

Levi reminded himself, as the waiter handed him a menu, that he was not only cushioned by funds at the moment, but he had more gigs scheduled in the upcoming week. That hope, along with the surprisingly reasonable prices made his stomach prickle with hunger.

“What can I get you to drink?” the waiter inquired. “Orange juice? Coffee? Mimosas?”

Levi peered at him from under his brows. Champagne first thing in the morning? Did the wealthy celebrate their wealth like that?

“Two mimosas would be nice,” Erwin accepted, along with a glass of water. He met Levi’s glare and assured, “On me.”

The waiter turned to Levi expectantly. “And for you, sir?”

“Give me the strongest fucking tea you have,” he uttered, rubbing his temple. The waiter left without a word. Levi examined the menu, finding that the place specialized in gourmet waffles and
omelets. His eyes locked on an image of avocado spread on toast with smoked salmon, poached eggs, and a side of cubed potatoes smothered in spices, cheese, peppers, and onions. His mouth watered.

The mimosas arrived: two large champagne flutes of bubbly, yellow fluid with two frozen raspberries floating on top. Levi blinked as Erwin tapped his flute against his in a silent toast. He watched the glass rim rest on Erwin’s lip before diverting his attention to his own beverage. The champagne tingled on his tongue and in the back of his throat, but it mixed well with the orange juice. Levi suddenly understood why it was a brunch and breakfast drink.

Price be damned, Levi ordered the smoked salmon heaven, relinquished the menu to the waiter, and drank his mimosa while he waited for his tea to cool. Usually he drank it black to avoid buying sugar or milk, but since both were given to him, he was stirring his spoon when he noticed Erwin watching him. “What?”

“You’re thinner,” Erwin stated, eyes scrutinizing Levi as if his clothes weren’t there. “It’s only been a week, and yet you’re definitely thinner. Though I’m not concerned because you were quite heavy the last time I held you. What do you do for exercise?”

Levi shifted uncomfortably in his seat. He made it sound like he held Levi on a regular basis, not just while falling down stairs. “Parkour.”

Erwin’s brows rose. “That explains it. I’ve never seen anyone run the way you did. I’ve certainly never been able to.”

“Because you’ve never had to.”

Those blue eyes were soft as he wondered, “What do you mean?”

Levi focused on the pink fruit bobbing in his glass. “You can’t outrun anything if you’ve never been afraid of everything. An alpha like you wouldn’t understand.”

Erwin was silent for a long minute, and then he asked, “Was that why you didn’t ask about the rival pack?”

Levi’s gaze lifted. “What?”

“When I told you that Marie worked for a rival pack, you didn’t ask who it was. Also, beyond Isabel and Farlan, your background is incredibly vague. How many packs have you had to run from?”

Levi spun his glass between his fingers for something to do. “All of them,” he admitted quietly. “There was no point in asking.”

“Ah…” Erwin breathed, nodding his understanding. “Being omega, I can imagine you weren’t treated well.”

If food wasn’t on the way, Levi might have walked away from this conversation. Given that critical circumstance, he simply declared, “I don’t want to talk about this.”

“All right,” Erwin agreed, and then prompted, “Can I ask you about Farlan and Isabel?”

Levi eyed him warily. “Why?”

“They’re human. Obviously they know about packs, but I suppose I’m curious as to how you
found them.”

“It doesn’t matter how they found me,” Levi reiterated. Erwin’s eyes flashed with that tiny piece of information he’d given, but he stayed quiet. “They don’t judge a person based on how they smell. They don’t act like mindless animals.”

Erwin laughed, catching Levi off guard. “I guess you wouldn’t like Mike, then.”

“Who?”

Levi felt like he was being x-rayed, the way the light hit those blue, blue eyes. “Oh, he wasn’t there when we were first introduced. Mike is alpha as well, my second in command. He judges anyone and everything based on his sense of smell. Nice man, just…different.”

One of his dark brows lifted. “I’ll just take your word for it.”

The corner of Erwin’s mouth lifted. “I’d be honored if you did.”

The food thankfully arrived at that moment and Levi plunged his fork and knife into his meal. His eyes lolled from the melody of smooth avocado and salty salmon on his palette. The runny egg yolk acted as its own sauce, and even though he savored every bite, it was gone within minutes. The potatoes were equally delicious but Levi wished he had eaten them first.

Erwin took him to Petra’s afterward, and Levi dropped his rucksack on her couch while she and Hange wished their alpha good morning. Once he left, Hange was beside herself with glee, taking Levi’s backpack as a whole instead of waiting to be given the notebook. Between her and Petra, Levi was left on the couch, only disturbed if he deemed a melody off-putting or if they called for his input.

Levi didn’t even realize he’d fallen asleep until his tranquil dream state was shattered by a familiar sniffing sound. When his eyes burst open, however, it wasn’t Erwin leaning over him, almost nose to nose. Levi stared dumbfounded at the tawny blonde man with a light scruff before a name emerged in his head.

“You’re Mike.”

“And you’re Levi,” he returned kindly, but something in his eyes made Levi infinitely unnerved while lying on the couch beneath him.

“Mike, leave him be,” Petra scolded. “He needs his beauty rest for tonight.”

“Oh yeah?” the man asked, intrigued. “What’s tonight?”

Levi sat up as Mike joined the others in the kitchen. Levi startled internally at the sight of Erwin snacking on zucchini chips behind the island. The pack alpha smiled a greeting at him and returned his focus on Mike. “Pixis scheduled them to perform all weekend.”

“Woah,” Mike leaned his elbows on the quartz countertop beside Petra. “That means you’re good. I’ll be there tonight.”

Hange perked up from her soundboard and loop machine. “If your drunk ass gets us kicked out of the best paying gig in town, I’ll take your nose off, alpha.”

Levi watched, transfixed as Mike guffawed and returned, “You’d have to reach it first. Maybe if you put him on your shoulders,” he nodded toward Levi.
“He’s heavier than he looks,” Erwin jibed, meeting Levi’s gaze.

Hange rotated and summoned Levi over, placing her headphones over his ears. “Tell me what you think and if you like it, memorize it. We gotta be at the club in two hours.”

Levi took Petra’s laptop, which the headphones were connected to, and resumed his place on the couch to listen to the music the women had created. He vaguely heard Mike in the background ask, “Wait, isn’t that new? Doesn’t he have to rehearse with it?”

“They’re his lyrics,” Petra explained. “He sings when he wants to. I kind of like it; everyone has to wait to hear the finished product, even us.”

Levi turned the volume up, drowning them out until it was time to depart. Erwin and Mike stayed behind, but only because they were going in a separate vehicle. As much as this annoyed him, Levi preferred not knowing when or if they arrived. The last thing he needed was to be self-conscious about something he enjoyed, something he was genuinely good at.

The *Red Rose* was in full swing when they climbed up to the stage. Pixis gave Levi a nod in passing, and he found a slightly different microphone waiting for him on the counter. A blue piece of tape was around the base, labeled Water Proof. He noticed that petite shelves were behind the bar, loaded with towels.

He nodded to Hange, who began playing her beats while Petra faded the current music out. This time, when the crowd recognized the music switch, they looked up and cheered at the sight of him. *That’s new*, Levi thought, not sure if he liked it or not.

They started with familiar songs, and began adding their new pieces as the night went on. Levi moved with his words, invigorated as he always was when he heard what Hange and Petra made with his writings. When his clothes were officially clinging to him with sweat, he glanced back and locked eyes with Petra, nodding again at Hange. He heard the echoing beat begin to play, quickly followed by a steady percussion and melody. Levi hummed into the microphone, and heard Hange’s foot step on her loop before he crooned another brief melody, hearing his own voice replay over the speakers.

“It’s you who I’ve been waiting to steal. You who I can’t reveal. Don’t you feel my hunger, can’t you…feel how you’ve undone me?”

Levi’s body bowed over, bobbing lithely with the music. He lifted the microphone to his lips again to give Hange another loop to layer into the song. It began to build as he sang, until a steady drum beat between his words, “*Is it not clear, my fear? I want to be the one you steal. I want to be the one you want, the one you hold up high. I want to be the one, your one, your entire sky—*”

The song reached its climax, and Levi opened his arms for the water that rained from the sprinklers over the stage. The crowd below erupted in screams and applause, but Levi didn’t hear them. The balls of his feet pivoted, twirling him across the stage gracefully as water poured over the sides. It sprayed off his limbs as he danced, singing for himself and no one else.

The song’s finish was like a spell being broken. The music faded, the water trickled to drops, and then nothing. Levi stood erect, palming a hand over his scalp, raking the tresses off his face. It was then that he heard the thunderous applause ricocheting around him. But his time as the performer was done, and he had to return to being a civilian. He flicked the switch of his microphone, set it on the console, and met Hange’s grin. She and Petra were underneath an awning to protect their equipment, but they both beamed at him.
Levi went to find which booth Pixis was stationed so they could get paid and leave, but he found Erwin and Mike first. He scolded himself for feeling his heart drop in his chest; he knew they were coming, there was no reason to feel ridiculous. As he came nearer to the booth they were hunched over, though, Levi began to feel that something was very, very wrong.

Mike’s head perked up, and he nudged Erwin’s shoulder. Erwin glanced at Levi and Pixis followed his gaze, gesturing for him to approach. Levi did, and found himself surrounded by alphas, even if one of them was sitting down. Pixis handed over two moneybags this time and murmured discretely, “Get home, and get home fast, boy.”

Levi remained still while his heart started beating double time. “Why?”

A gentle, warm hand slid over his shoulder, and Levi was able to smell Erwin in this place of sweat, alcohol, and perfume as if none of it existed.

“We have suspicion that the rival pack knows who killed Marie,” he said in Levi’s ear. “You’re not safe to go home alone.”

He shrugged Erwin off as discretely as he could since eyes were watching them. Pixis declared, “It’d be best if he didn’t go somewhere commonplace at all.”

“I have to go back,” Levi countered. “Isabel and Farlan—”

“I’ve already sent people to get them,” Erwin assured. “You’re moving in with me.”

Levi’s body shivered, but not because he was drenched. “Huh?”
Chapter Summary

Living in Erwin's house is proving to be just as ideal as it is dangerous to Levi's sanity.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Absolutely not!”

“Levi,” Erwin sighed, exasperated. “This is for your own protection. For Farlan, and Isabel. I have plenty of space, really.”

“I’m not concerned with how much space is in your mansion! I’m not staying in your house like a kept omega bitch!”

“It’s hardly a mansion,” Erwin refuted. “Although there are four bedrooms that need to be filled. Please, Levi. I insist you be my guest.”

Levi stiffened, hyper aware of Erwin’s hand on his shoulder as he was guided out of the Rose. That hand had inched its way closer to the crook of his neck, making him feel vulnerable and reluctantly pliant. Behind him, he could hear Hange squealing with glee.

“Slumber parties! Levi, what do you like for breakfast? Petra! We have to buy groceries!”

They finally emerged from the heat of the club at the same time Erwin’s phone went off. “Hello?” he answered kindly, despite the firm set of his jaw and cold steel of his eyes. Levi once again tried to shrug him off, to step away, but Erwin pulled him back. At this point, Levi was sure he wasn’t even consciously doing it.

Stupid, control-freak alphas, he growled to himself. He felt that hand relax somewhat as Erwin replied, “Excellent. They’re welcome to anything in the house.”

His phone disappeared inside his coal grey jeans and his eyes locked with Levi’s. “Your family’s safe. They’re already at my place, so stop your squirming. I think you’ll find it quite comfortable once you let yourself enjoy it.”

With that, Levi grabbed Erwin’s wrist and threw his hand off his shoulder. “Don’t fucking do that! Don’t manipulate me like she did to everyone else!”

Erwin gazed at him, stunned. Behind him, Mike, Petra, and Hange were equally statuesque. Mike uttered, “You’re feisty for an omega.”

Petra looked up at him and back at Levi. “Omega?”

Hange shrugged. “He just smells like a coffee god to me.”

“Hush,” Erwin ordered, and to their credit, even Hange’s jaw snapped shut. Erwin seemed genuinely apologetic as he said, “You’re right, Levi, and I’m sorry. When it comes to pack safety, I
don’t usually consider how others might be opposed to my arrangements.”

“We’re not pack,” Levi growled haughtily.

“You may as well be,” Petra snapped, taking both Levi and Erwin off guard.

The latter smiled guiltily. “She’s not wrong. I know you’re uncomfortable with this, but Isabel and Farlan are already at my house waiting for you. They’re probably just as startled as you are and I need you in a place I can trust until this matter is resolved. As of yet, you’re a wanted man for killing the mate of one of the most powerful alphas in the city…it just so happens not to be me.”

Levi processed that and then his shoulders slumped. “How the hell did you piss off Nile Dok enough for him to send his mate to spy on you?”

Erwin tipped his head, saying, “Nile’s just as greedy as Pixis but half as honorable. Come along, we can’t stand in the street all night.”

Levi tentatively followed beside Erwin back to his car. He felt a nudge on his right shoulder, causing his arm to tense before Mike leaned in to commend, “An omega in charge of two betas? You’re all right.”

Hange harrumphed. “We are what you call, a team, asshole. Look it up.”

“Love you too, sweet heart,” he chimed over his shoulder. “I smell coffee grinds on you. Where do you work? I’ll give you a lift tomorrow on my way to work. I’ll take a tall, double shot coffee as payment for the ride.”

Levi grimaced and folded himself into Erwin’s car. Mike rode with Hange and Petra as if he sensed Levi’s aversion to being locked in a steel box with two alphas. Erwin’s car purred to life and he smoothly steered into traffic. In the darkness of the vehicle, Levi examined Erwin out of the corner of his eye. The man was dimly illuminated by the electric indigo light lining his dash’s meters, but it set his eyes alight with blue fire. Levi scrutinized his sleek, black button-up shirt, rolled up to his elbows. The shirt, like his grey jeans, fit him loosely enough to be comfortable, but tight enough to accent his lean, strong figure.

Levi discretely leaned back in his seat to examine the obviously expensive leather oxfords on his feet, but his gaze returned to Erwin’s face. That gold hair was what countless people paid for from a bottle and still did not manage to achieve. Some might think his nose was too large, but really, it would look ridiculous otherwise since every other feature was equally as bold. His eyebrows were thicker than Levi’s but just as sleek over those striking blue eyes. His cheekbones were finely prominent but enough to cast a shadow on his cheeks, flanking a mouth that caused Levi’s body temperature to skyrocket and hastily look away. He reminded himself that Erwin was straight and immediately felt his heat fade. His gaze drifted over blurring shops and lights after that.

Before he knew it, Levi felt a familiar sway of his body and found them turning into Erwin’s neighborhood. The gatekeeper waved to Erwin and lifted the barrier Levi had once vaulted over. The car cruised deeper into the community than Levi had ever been, but he knew immediately which house was Erwin’s. “Not a mansion, my ass.”

Erwin chuckled. “It’s smaller on the inside.”

“I think you’re a liar,” Levi scoffed as he shut the car door behind him. The garage door made a racket as it slid down but Levi was keenly aware of how empty it was. Granted, he had not been in many garages before, but he’d ridden past several gaping ones that were packed with shelves,
gardening supplies, and other things. Erwin’s had his car and a rubbish bin, that was it.

The garage opened to the kitchen, which was similarly designed like Petra’s but twice as large. The quartz countertops were shiny from a recent cleaning along with the glass doors of the cabinets. There were two islands, one with an extra sink and an inlaid, wooden section for chopping things, while the other had chairs around it for dining. A bay window was off to the side, displaying the side yard garden.

Erwin led him though a short corridor that opened to the foyer and living room. A wide staircase crawled up the wall of the foyer, on which Isabel and Farlan were coming down. Farlan came down the stairs first, slamming into Levi with a hug but he kept an arm out for Isabel to tuck herself between him and Levi. The latter breathed them in, finding relief and calm in their familiar scents.

When they parted, another smell hit Levi’s nostrils that puzzled him. How long had Erwin been living in this house? It still smelled brand new. His alpha smell should have permeated the very dry wall of the place, and yet all Levi could smell were lingering odors of paint and fresh laundry.

“Is everything comfortable in your rooms?” Erwin inquired from afar, giving them space.

Farlan answered, “Uh, yeah, but we were taken from our place in a hurry. We haven’t any clothes here.”

“How are we getting to school in the morning?” Isabel agreed, still in Levi’s arms.

“I’ll drive you on my way into the city,” Erwin assured. “Or Mike’s offered to give Levi a ride to work. He has enough room in his car for you to join them. As for your clothes, I’ll have someone stop by your place and bring them here.”

Isabel stood by Farlan as she asked, “How long are we staying here?”

“I’m afraid I can’t answer that,” Erwin responded. “You are guests here, so you can leave whenever you wish, but I’d advise against it. Until I come to some sort of agreement with the pack giving us trouble, this is the safest place for you.”

“How long will that take?” Farlan interrogated.

Levi cut in, “Stop being ungrateful brats and get to bed. You have to be up in four hours. Go,” he added when his siblings looked rebellious.

Erwin smiled pleasantly as he watched them trudge up the stairs. He sat on the spine of the couch in the living room with his arms loosely crossed. “I thought you weren’t happy about this arrangement, either.”

Levi scratched his scalp, feeling the light dampness lingering in his hair. “They’ve got grades and shit to worry about. Not this.”

“At this time of the summer?” Erwin wondered.

“Summer courses,” he shrugged. “They want their degrees faster, and they get bored too easily.”

Erwin nodded his understanding, unfolding his arms to rest his hands by his hips on the couch. He peered at Levi closely. “You hardly seem older than they are. Was university not to your liking?”

Levi scowled, trying to seem like a decorative vase was more interesting than Erwin. “I’m older
than I look. How old are you?"

"Twenty-nine," he answered readily. "You?"

For some reason, Levi hesitated. "Twenty-four."

"Oh," Erwin blurted.

Levi glared at him. "What?"

"Nothing," he shook his head. "You just keep surprising me."

"What's surprising about my age?" Levi questioned, vase forgotten.

Erwin smiled, shaking his head. "Nothing. You're just interesting, is all. Here, I'll show you your room."

Up the stairs, Erwin informed him that Farlan and Isabel’s rooms shared a bathroom, while Levi and Erwin’s rooms had their own. The alpha opened the door for him, and Levi examined his new living space. The bed was full sized, just like his one back in Isabel and Farlan’s apartment, but in this room there was room enough for two of them, as well as a wide dresser that stretched the spans of the wall. The bathroom sink was shaped like a massive shell and the showerhead was directly over the tub, enabling a rain effect.

"There are some toiletries in the cabinet under the sink," Erwin informed, but Levi turned around and found a small pile of clothes being offered to him. He stared at them vacantly until he realized what Erwin was offering.

"I can't wear your clothes," he declined. He wasn't even sure where Erwin had gotten them so quickly, but Levi knew they would not only swallow him, but would also drown him in alpha scent.

"I don't have any of yours here yet," Erwin stated, pushing the raiment forward. "Toss your clothes out here before you shower. I'll stick them in the laundry for tomorrow. This is only for tonight," he said, taking a step forward so Levi had to accept the pile.

Something a lot like victory glinted in his eyes as he left the room. Levi swallowed his pride and dumped the clothes on the toilet seat, turning on the shower while he stripped down. Throwing his sodden garments into the hallway, he rummaged beneath the sink for the toiletries and bathed quickly. When it came time to pull on Erwin’s shirt, Levi held it up first, glaring at the size of it. The long sleeve’s fabric was soft against his skin, though, so he rolled up the sleeves and tightened the drawstring of the shorts.

"Levi."

He froze, watching the bedroom door as if it might explode.

"You don’t have to open the door, I just wanted to check to make sure you have everything you need."

Levi inhaled, and exhaled a sigh, softly padding to the door and opening it to look his host in the eye. "Yeah. I’m fine… Thank you…for this…"

Erwin was dressed in a white, V-neck for bed above pajama pants, that blond hair dusting over his forehead. It looked slightly disarrayed, like he’d recently carded a hand through it. Levi felt like he
was being x-rayed again as Erwin’s eyes wandered over his frame, observing his own clothes on Levi’s body before a slight curve lifted his lips into a smile.

“You’re very welcome. My room’s just around the corner. Don’t hesitate if you want anything. Sleep well. Oh, and Levi?” He hesitated as if to make sure he had Levi’s full attention, and then smiled warmly, “You were incredible tonight.”

Levi stiffly nodded and shut the door, shaking his head to alleviate the drugged feeling of having an alpha so close; but he couldn’t do anything about the heart threatening to leap out of his chest.

Before climbing into bed, he considered removing the shirt to be rid of Erwin’s scent around him, but he heard the air conditioning kick on and soon the house transformed into an arctic tundra, so he dove under the thick comforters fully clothed, burrowing deep under the covers.

The rich harmony of coffee, bacon, and something sweeter was what he awoke to, and Levi trudged down the stairs to find a pan sizzling on the stove, a waffle maker gently steaming as batter cooked, and not only a coffee maker gurgling, but a tea press. Erwin stood by the stove with his back to him, wearing a white button up and steel grey trousers while a matching suit jacket hung from one of the bar chairs.

“Morning, Levi!” Isabel chimed from the seat next to Erwin’s jacket.

The man himself rotated and smiled sleepily. Despite being dressed for work, he murmured huskily, clearly waiting on the coffee, “Good morning. How’d you sleep?”

Before he could answer, Farlan stumbled into the kitchen, barreling right into Levi’s backside. He was thrown forward whereas Farlan caught himself on the island. Levi didn’t have enough time to catch himself, so his body curled and pushed air from his lungs so they would feel less impact.

When the fall didn’t come, he opened his eyes to find a white clothed arm around his chest, and he felt another encompassing his waist. Erwin set him on his feet and ran a palm down his back. It was meant as a comforting, stabilizing gesture, but Levi’s spine rippled slightly, hyper aware of Erwin touching him.

“It’s too early for this,” he grumbled as he rubbed the sand from his eyes, mostly to hide the blush rising up his neck and cheeks. That hand remained on his spine, fingers splayed between his shoulder blades as Erwin ushered him to the tea press, where a mug awaited him.

“Sugar’s here,” he murmured, opening a cabinet and removing a jar of sugar cane cubes. “Milk’s in the fridge. I’ll get it.”

He gave Levi’s shoulder a barely noticeable squeeze, but Levi was certain he was closer than it was necessary to open a cabinet, set the milk on the counter, walking behind him to flip the bacon on the stove…

Levi took the tea, sugar, and milk to the island at which Isabel and Farlan sat and prepped his caffeine there. He shook his head slightly, rattling his thoughts back to the numb, groggy state of caffeine deprivation.

“Sorry about that,” Farlan apologized. He pulled out the chair beside him on the other side of the island and patted the counter. Levi accepted the offer and sat with his siblings the same moment a door opened somewhere in the house.

“Erwin!” Mike’s voice called. The man in question chose not to answer, since a second later Mike strolled into the kitchen, led by his nose. “Top o’the morning, all,” he smiled at the bar and then
plucked a strip of bacon right out of Erwin’s pan. He shook the excess grease out on the waiting paper towel before crunching contently.

After he’d finished and stolen another piece, he lifted his hips to sit on the counter in front of Isabel and Farlan. “I’m Mike. Erwin mentioned you two needing to get to school? What time’s your first class?”

While they arranged transportation, Erwin set plates loaded with bacon and waffles in front of each person. He also set out three choices of syrup: maple, pecan, and blackberry. Levi was less than stunned but more than impressed. “You take breakfast seriously.”

Erwin smiled, choosing to eat his meal on the other side of the island in front of him as opposed the far side of the island, where his jacket rested. “Best meal of the day.”

Levi was not accustomed to feeling so overwhelmed by food in the morning, so movement was slow going up the stairs and dressing. Before they all piled into Mike’s car, he noticed Erwin was not following them, presumably going on his own to whatever job he busied himself with.

“What do you do for work?” Levi ventured.

Blue eyes perked up and he answered, “A few things. Real estate, mostly. It helps to know this city inside-out… I’ve got a meeting with Pixis to finalize the property arrangements.”

Levi’s eyes widened slightly. “You bought property from him?”

The blonde flashed a smile. “Most of the neighborhood once belonged to him. By lunch time, I’ll be alpha to about a thousand acres.”

“How did you convince that avaricious bastard to sell you prime real estate?”

Erwin straightened his collar as he explained, “His interests changed… mostly from my convincing. He came to the realization that nightlife was not only exciting, but highly profitable.” The glimmer in his eyes was deviant and victorious. “Not to mention he gets a wide selection of alcohol in the process.”

“Levi! Double shot coffee!” Mike called from the car.

Erwin chuckled as Levi glared in Mike’s general direction. “I’ll—” he began, but Petra appeared in the doorway, out of breath and smiling both kindly and apologetically.

“Hi Erwin! Morning, Levi,” she kissed his cheek and held up his rucksack. “Sorry to keep you. You left this in my car.”

Levi shrugged the bag over his shoulder and scoffed congenially, “Took you long enough.”

As punishment, she kissed his cheek more forcefully and waved to Erwin as she dashed out the door. Levi peered upward to see Erwin gazing vacantly out the door. “You’ll what?” Levi prompted.

Those eyes shifted to him, but the glazed, rather intent stare did not vanish. “I’ll see you later.”

Levi’s nose wrinkled as he marched out the door. He didn’t know what he’d expected, but for some reason he thought the suave alpha would send him off with something better than see you later. Landing in the front seat of Mike’s car, he scolded himself for expecting such a thing. See you later was not only a perfectly acceptable send off, but it was also accurate. Levi groaned, realizing that
his disgruntlement was not because of Erwin’s lack of finesse, but because he wanted that to be their last parting. As much as Levi despised himself for this, he wanted something to miss. Not something to be dependent on. It suddenly hit him like a sack of clay that his time in Erwin’s house was essentially indefinite. That wide bed would be waiting for him, the shower which pressurized beautifully like a rain storm, and if Erwin cooked like that every morning…

Levi groaned again, eliciting a curious glance from Mike.

After sending the man off with his coffee, Levi proceeded with the rest of his day, lasting straight through lunch thanks to the fluffy waffles and bacon. The sky was ominously grey and leaking the first drops of a storm as he made his way to the library. He plopped a parcel of white chocolate chips between Farlan and Isabel’s elbows, causing them to jerk their chins up. “I expect the keys I give you in the future to not trade hands,” he growled.

Farlan smirked and Isabel gave him a displeased shake of her head. “We can read people just as well as you can. It’s not like you were in any danger. Besides, if your dumb ass can’t wake up for a date, then someone has to meddle.”

Levi blinked with surprise, but immediately refuted, “It wasn’t a date. That idiot alpha wants us to join his pack, and started the process with a gesture to make sure I knew the Marie fiasco was settled.”

“Not much of an idiot if he’s got you sleeping in his house,” Farlan pointed out, sipping one of the library’s iced coffees.

Isabel agreed, “You shouldn’t shoot him down to that extreme. He’s trying to help you; that doesn’t mean he’ll demand you swear whatever oath packs do. Why would he want you in his pack if you so clearly refuse to be?”

“He’s a real estate agent and a pack alpha,” Levi leaned over the table so their conversation remained private. “A larger pack means more viable claim to land, which means more sway in pack dealings and overall city management.”

Farlan’s gaze was deadpan. “If he runs the city like he makes breakfast, then I’ll sign up for pack membership right now.”

Isabel giggled, infuriating Levi because he’d been thinking along similar lines just hours previously. Changing the subject, he asked, “How are you getting back to his house?”

“Mike’s picking us up,” Farlan answered and then glanced at the massive clock hands on the glass wall. “In forty-five minutes actually, but do you want us to wait for your shift to end?”

“Don’t bother, I’ll be late tonight,” he replied, and then climbed the stairs to do his job. His time at the coffee shop seemed to breeze by compared to how the afternoon dragged. Levi caught himself staring out the windows at the bluish-grey storm and cityscape, not unlike the color of his eyes. When a voice purred over the intercom, announcing the library’s closing in fifteen minutes, Levi blissfully exited onto the library’s terrace. The flagstones were soaked and while usually the terrace was used for grilling meals for summer studying, right now it was the perfect platform to dive into the city.

Cinching his backpack tight on his shoulders, Levi took a running start, hopped onto the stone railing, and flew through the curtain of rain. Like a feline landing on a ledge, Levi bounded over the neighboring structure’s balcony, running along the rail and flipping horizontally to the plinth of some statue that was currently gone for renovation, and then he caught himself on the railing of a
parking garage. Hopping from level to level, Levi dropped until he could run through the concrete garage and leap out of the other side to where the buildings acted like a makeshift stairway toward the city’s park.

Levi’s heart drummed strongly as he landed in a roll over the grass, and used the green space as a massive shortcut across town. Some folks braved the storm to practice yoga or jiu jitsu on the lawn, but mostly he had only the cars and fountains to deal with. The park spread to the outskirts of the city, where the Smith pack claimed space for their neighborhood. Levi vaulted over the rustic, wooden fence and crossed the street, vaulting again over the car barrier.

The rain was absolutely pouring when his hand finally closed around the front door’s knob, but when Levi turned it, the interior mechanisms hit a blockage. Locked.

How the hell had Mike gotten in? Did he have a key or was the place locked down for the night? Levi turned, trotting down the stairs to try the garage or around back, or hell, even just climbing up to his window—

“Yeek!” Levi squawked indignantly when he was yanked backward by his rucksack. The front door shut before him and he was physically rotated to face Erwin’s fiery blue irises.

“Fucking hell, Levi, don’t you know you’re in danger?” he growled, and then his expression opened as he took in Levi’s appearance. “Did you run all the way here?”

Levi huffed peevishly, observing how he was soaking the welcome mat and hardwood beneath his feet. “Let go of me, you oaf. I’m ruining the floors!”

Erwin sighed as if he were exasperated. “I don’t care about my foyer, I care about—”

“Shut up and move,” Levi ordered, abruptly terrified how Erwin was going to finish that sentence and not wanting to hear it. However, he seemed to have triggered Erwin’s alpha instinct, because those large hands planted themselves on either side of him.

“You need to understand the situation,” Erwin declared darkly. At the moment, Levi was aware of his rucksack digging into his back, sandwiched between him and the door. “Nile Dok is rash and shrewd, but he isn’t a fool. I can’t tell if he knows who killed Marie or if the person is still anonymous, but I can’t risk you being out late and alone for him or other packs to find.”

Levi met his glare evenly. “I’ve dealt with Nile’s kind, plenty, and it’s not even an issue because the only tie between me and this pack is the fact that you’re housing me. If he figures out who I am, it’s easy to disconnect your pack from association, especially since you witnessed me killing her.”

Erwin’s expression altered, and if Levi didn’t know better, it was like Erwin had taken a personal affront to his words. “Do you really believe I would throw you out like that?”

Levi scowled. “I believe you’re paying too much attention to me when you should be working to figure out what Marie thought you had no idea about. You knew about the bank accounts, but if she was as smart as Nile credits, she would have snuck something else past you.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Erwin chided, and then his head shook and an odd smirk curved his mouth. “Although I am curious what you took to mean how I was not fucking interested.”

Something kindled in his memory, but he stared warily up at Erwin. The man finally eased off the front door so he could get the backpack off Levi’s shoulders. Levi protectively snatched the bag from him but pointedly kept his chin down as Erwin wondered, “What do you think she meant
when she said that?”

A frustrated sound escaped Levi’s throat as he shot back, “I don’t know, did her chili recipe fall short?”

A similar sound of frustration mixed with impatience burst from Erwin, and Levi gasped as he felt himself lifted and pressed against Erwin’s large body and the door. His mouth crashed into Levi’s, kissing him hungrily, demandingly, and the bag fell from his grasp. He wasn’t sure whether to kiss or not to kiss, but either way, Levi was having trouble just keeping up. He clutched at Erwin’s hard shoulders, one of his heels hitting the wooden door with a soft thunk.

Erwin released his mouth to whisper raggedly, “Do you know how hard it is to let you go after you fall into my arms?”

Levi’s mind was both sputtering and racing a million miles an hour, but before he could think of a response, Erwin’s lips found his once more. This time, Levi was ready. The instant their lips locked the way they were supposed to, the moment he registered just how soft Erwin’s lips were, he was lost. Erwin broke the kiss with a weak, wet sound and tilted his head while pushing Levi’s lips apart. The teasing tingle of Erwin’s tongue on his lips oddly sent Levi’s mind back toward clearer waters.

“B-But,” Levi stuttered, gasping as if his lungs couldn’t get enough air. “You were with her for three years.”

“You can imagine her frustration,” Erwin murmured deeply, making Levi’s eyes roll involuntarily as he nipped and tickled Levi’s ear. Erwin’s chest vibrated slightly against Levi’s, thrumming pleasantly when he spoke. “I doubt Nile was upset though.”

Levi could barely breathe let alone think. Had Erwin not had sex in three years? He said as much, or as much as he could with the man leaving open-mouthed kisses down his neck. “She wasn’t suspicious…of…three years of not…?”

“I’m not one to sleep with another man’s mate, Levi,” Erwin declared pointedly. He lifted his head to meet Levi’s hooded eyes. “Besides, I was distracted.”

“Wha-humph!” Levi exclaimed, which was meant to be, What the hell does that mean! before Erwin’s mouth took it away. With each kiss, Erwin’s tongue lavished the seam of Levi’s lips, making him shiver and tremble, which only caused a soft rumble to vibrate in the alpha’s chest. Levi would have sworn his tongue betrayed him by meeting Erwin’s the next time he licked, but then Levi’s mouth was flooded with the taste of Erwin, and he could only focus on breathing.

Just as soon as Erwin’s tongue was in his mouth, it was gone, instead intently licking and kissing Levi’s neck once more. Levi felt him pause and ask, “Levi, where’s your—ah…here…”

Levi realized what Erwin was searching for the moment one of his arms snaked up to turn Levi’s chin, exposing the scent gland behind his ear. His eyes went wide when Erwin’s tongue poked and stroked the sensitive membrane, causing Levi’s head to fall back and eyes to droop shut.

His cranium felt heavy, too leaden to hold up. Levi was hot, useless mush against Erwin’s torturous mouth on his gland, until a particularly hard press of his tongue woke Levi’s body up like a firecracker. His heels thunked against the door again before wrapping around Erwin’s waist. He gasped a moan as his groin rubbed against Erwin’s palpable erection straining in his pants.

Erwin growled loudly and rutted against Levi like he was barely holding himself together. His fist
slammed against the door beside Levi’s head, shocking him right into their present situation. He froze around Erwin, feeling like he’d just been thrown upside-down on the shore by lusty waves that were quickly receding.

Erwin felt the change in him and backed off. Levi swallowed at the sight of his moist, swollen lips and wanting gaze, but when Levi trembled, it wasn’t from desire. Erwin quickly set him down and read the frightened expression in Levi’s eyes. It was his turn to swallow thickly, and after a strenuous moment, he nodded curtly.

“Just so you know.”

Chapter End Notes

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Chapter Summary

Levi emotionally and physically prepares for another week of performances.

Chapter Notes

Just a heads up: I'm deviating a little bit from the traditional werewolf dynamic that A/B/O stories usually have. The characters are werewolf-ish, but not straight up werewolves...I explain in the story but let me know if it's still fuzzy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Levi beat his pillow into a different shape, but no matter what he did, he could not get comfortable. In the darkness of his room, he felt the ghost of Erwin’s lips across his, and imagined strong arms squeezing him just enough…

Just so you know.

He growled into his pillow to stifle his frustration and then promptly threw it across the room. It landed against the closet doors with a soft pootth sound.

I know you didn’t fuck Marie because you’re crooked as a fucking paperclip, and now I can’t sleep because of you, you asshole!

But another issue was in the forefront of his mind, and that was how Erwin said he’d been distracted. Levi felt his insides plummet at the notion that he might be what distracted Erwin, keeping him from falling for Marie…and then they flipped back up, thrilled that Erwin might have actually been distracted by him despite only interacting with him three times in as many years.

Levi sat up angrily, wide awake and certainly not getting a wink of sleep tonight. He lifted his backpack onto the bed and pulled out his notebooks and pens, and then found that he was not sure what to write. The pages taunted him, glowing emptily in the darkness. He propped the book on his knees, curling up with his back against the wall as he tried to banish Erwin from his thoughts, his body, his palette.

Even though he’d brushed his teeth for a good five minutes, he knew the taste of him like it had been branded into his memory. Levi’s lips parted as his mind fell into a haze, and those phantom lips molded to his or his scent gland tingled numbly and Levi had to shake his head roughly. He hadn’t been in this house for thirty hours and already he was more preoccupied with Erwin Smith instead of Nile Dok and everyone else who had a price on his omega head.

The tip of Levi’s pen hovered over the page. His hand moved over his lips, shielding them from the memory of Erwin’s as he admitted what truly bothered him: he wanted Erwin, but he didn’t want to want Erwin. He’d been attracted to the alpha since the first moment he saw him, but not only did Levi never believe the alpha would be interested in him, he…
Levi started writing, the pen scrawling across the page, projecting his innermost concerns and fears, his brutal truths into the safe realm of music. It was both beautiful and cruel how music was the only safe environment for him to vent everything he was.

The sun was rising as he turned the page, still writing. He was so engrossed in writing, rewriting, crossing out, and writing again that he did not notice Erwin leave his room until smells began to rise from the kitchen. Levi’s head perked up warily, his stomach growling after eating only one meal the day before. He seriously considered just climbing out the window, retrieving his bike from Petra’s and having breakfast at the café, but he wasn’t a coward, nor did Erwin deserve that.

Levi readied for the day so all he would have to do was grab food and get to work, and by the way Erwin’s head popped up, eyes roaming over his raiment, he knew Levi’s intentions. “Good morning,” he said quietly.

“Hmm,” he responded gruffly, not trusting himself to speak. He gave Erwin a wide berth as he crossed behind him, grabbing the tea press and sitting beside Isabel at the bar. “Do you have a ride today?”

She gazed at him, reading him like a book but she was experienced enough to not voice her concerns aloud. “Yes. When will you be at the library?”

“Same time,” he assured her. “I’ll be at Petra’s tonight if you need me.”

Erwin glanced over his shoulder, eyeing the book beside Levi’s elbow. “When’s your next gig?”

Casually not meeting his eyes and pouring his tea, Levi responded, “Tomorrow. We have three this week.”

Considering tomorrow was Wednesday, Erwin was not unjustified in commenting, “Busy.”

Farlan observed the conversation and lifted a brow at Isabel, waving a butter knife in the air. “I can cut the tension better than the butter with this.”

Levi took that as his cue and gulped half the tea down before it scalded his throat. He was striding through the kitchen door when he heard Erwin say, “Excuse me,” to his siblings, polite as ever.

Don’t follow me. Don’t follow me, Levi begged internally, pleading with his instincts and his wants to be reasonable. Don’t touch me. Don’t push me against that door because I want it so fucking badly—

“Levi. I’m sorry.”

He froze, slowly turning around to find Erwin on the other side of the foyer. Levi’s grip was tight on his notebook, waiting for whatever hold Erwin had on him to release.

“I’m sorry about last night,” he explained. “I shouldn’t have been so forward with you. I want you to be comfortable here, I do. I don’t want you to run from me.”

Levi met his earnest stare for a moment before he had to look away. “You shouldn’t help me because…because you like me.”

Is this fucking grade school? Levi chided himself. ‘Like’ seemed like an understatement for what they would have gotten up to if that kiss had continued.
Erwin’s response was immediate. “I’m helping you because you’re innocent. I kissed you because I want you.”

Levi was frozen in place, with no defense against the hot blush rising up his body filling his neck and face. His throat was dry as he swallowed. A tiny voice in the back of his head commended how ‘want’ was a far better word than ‘like’, but he was having immense trouble squashing that voice as he watched Erwin venture a step forward. His eyes were soft, never leaving Levi’s as he slowly approached, giving Levi enough time to leave if he needed.

“I know you have your reasons to be wary of me,” he murmured, and Levi felt that voice slither through his bones like water. “I don’t know what those reasons are, but I won’t force you into anything you don’t want… I know you’re attracted to me too, Levi, but I don’t want you to let me in unless you can trust your secrets to me.”

Levi tried to meet his eyes, but what he was offering stymied him. Erwin stopped a couple feet away, giving him enough space while still being close. Levi swallowed, but his throat was dry.

“You won’t want me after you have my secrets.”

Erwin was silent, so Levi lifted his gaze and found those blue ones waiting as if he wanted Levi to see his sincerity as he said, “I doubt that. May I kiss your cheek before you go?”

Levi blinked, his mind jarring to a halt. He’s asking? An alpha’s asking? His swallow was audible, trying and failing to moisten his parched throat as he nodded.

Just as slowly as he approached, Erwin leaned down carefully, allowing Levi time to change his mind. But those lips touched his cheekbone, gently pressing closer, and Levi’s eyelashes fluttered shut.

His eyes opened as Erwin stepped back, and Levi was out the door. He placed his journal in Petra’s mailbox before retrieving his bike and swinging out the gate. Mike didn’t come in for coffee, so Levi managed to avoid an interrogation with him, but no sooner was he inside the library then Isabel cornered him between two shelves. “What was up with you this morning?”

“I don’t want to talk about it,” he grated, shoving a book back onto the shelf forcefully.

“Well I do,” she declared, leaning her elbow on the shelf next to him, blocking his exit and also forcing him to look at her. “You and Erwin are acting strangely. Are you regretting a one night stand or something?”

Levi grimaced and shrugged past her. “I have neither the spare income for condoms, nor the tolerance of questionable hygiene for one night stands.”

Isabel rolled her eyes, following him to the next section of books. “Erwin’s not a stranger, and I’m sure he’s completely clean. Even my human nose can tell how nice he smells.”

“The answer is no,” he curtailed.

“Why not?” she asked, as if she was actually mystified by his answer.

He turned to face her, pulling off annoyed, pissed off, and flustered like only Levi could. “Because we hadn’t exchanged ten words to one another and then I was carted off to breakfast and then shoved into his house!”

“No one shoved you,” she corrected in a deadpan tone. Levi felt a rumble in his chest as he growled but he wasn’t angry enough with his sister for it to be heard. She continued, “I know you like him,
and he is obviously nuts for you. He isn’t like the others, Levi.”

Her tone softened and she rubbed her hand along his arm. “You’re being an ass about this for no reason except you’re nervous. Fine, you don’t need to sleep with him, but cut the guy a break. It’s been, like, three days and he’s already done so much for us, and I think he would still be doing it even if you weren’t a panther in the sheets.”

Levi recoiled, “Say something like that again and I’ll cram a bar of soap in your mouth.”

Isabel giggled, stopping him from marching away by wrapping her arms around his waist from behind, resting her chin on his shoulder. “It’s okay to take things slow. Healthy, even. Just don’t run from him, okay? Or from yourself. I’ve got calculus to finish,” she concluded, giving his torso a squeeze before dashing down the stairs. She stopped and hollered back at him, “Petra’s invited us to dinner! See you there!”

Levi scrubbed a hand over his face. The current pit in his stomach was happiness, but it was so foreign to him that he stood there dumbly for several minutes. He wanted to believe what she said about Erwin being different, and now Petra was gracious enough to invite his obnoxious family for dinner…and here he was with a target on his back, a danger to everyone he cared about.

*Just another Tuesday,* he thought macabrely.

The storm from yesterday left residual clouds as he rode home, covering the moon and stars intermittently as the wind took them beneath the sky. Parking his bike against the garage so it was out of the way of cars, he strolled right into Petra’s house and dropped his bag on the couch.

Hange greeted him from the kitchen, where she was helping Petra chop peppers and pineapples for grilling. “Hey boyfriend, I got your journal out of the mailbox. I’ve got some tunes for you to listen to whenever you’re ready.”

“Later,” Levi answered stiffly, but not because he was annoyed. He reached his arms above his head, sighing relief as parts of his back and shoulders popped. He swung his arms like windmills until he held them out to catch himself in a plank position over the carpet. Tightening his core and breathing deeply into his lungs, he lowered himself down before arching his spine so he looked upwards. More vertebrae audibly snapped pleasantly before he bowed the other direction in a downward dog stance.

As he worked his body through yoga stretches, he heard the chopping of vegetables, the gurgle of wine being poured in a glass, and the jovial chatter of Hange, Petra, Isabel, and Farlan. Petra was currently berating Hange for changing the address of several of her mail senders.

“You have a house!” she scolded, although Levi could hear the annoyed amusement in her tone. “Get your mail sent there!”

“Why? I’m over here practically every night. The mailman knows me and already sticks my mail in your box anyways.”

“What about when I get married one day? My mate won’t take kindly to a promiscuous roommate!”

“You’re right, I won’t.” Hange agreed, and then her voice piped, “Married? I better start looking for a wedding dress, shouldn’t I? I didn’t know you wanted to get all ceremonial about it.”

The front door opened. “Who’s getting married?” Mike greeted. He glanced at Levi after Petra kissed him on the jaw and accepted his bottle of wine. “You’re looking bendy this evening, Levi.”
“Parkour requires nimble strength and flexibility,” came another voice that almost had Levi’s bridge pose collapse. He shot an upside-down glare at Isabel, who popped a grape tomato in her mouth with a cute smirk.

“Parkour?” Mike wondered. “You’ve got big balls for a little man.”

“More like he doesn’t mind getting his neck snapped on a building one day,” Petra rephrased sternly.

“A bird never falls unless you break its wings,” Erwin defended casually, accepting a glass of Mike’s wine. Levi closed his eyes and willed himself through the poses and ignoring the next several minutes of conversation. By the time his entire body was feeling loose and wobbly from exertion, dinner was almost ready and he was swallowing back a glass of water when Erwin murmured, “I had a meeting with Nile today.”

Levi sputtered on the water and looked up at him. “Why?”

“He and I go way back,” he explained, “and I was the one who returned Marie’s body to him, after all. We have a…unique, albeit strange friendship, if you can call it that. I know he’s scheming behind my back, he knows that I know, and yet we act like it’s a nonexistent chess game…”

He shook his head at the ludicrous nature of it and continued, “He’s upset, of course, and still mourning for her, but he oddly seems contrite about the event. He knows that Marie was prone to make rash decisions, like attacking you, but he blames himself for sending her to me in the first place. Plus, he’s dealing with his brother in law more than anything at the moment.”

Levi’s eyes narrowed. “Brother in law?”

“Nicholas,” Erwin nods. “He’s alpha to another pack—”

“I know who Nicholas is,” Levi interrupts. He looks into his glass like it might hold an escape from his next statement, “And Nicholas knows me.”

He can feel Erwin’s eyes on him, but instead of asking how Levi knew Nicholas, he assured, “He doesn’t know who killed his sister. And we’re going to keep it that way.”

“Then I might as well leave town,” Levi stated quietly so the others wouldn’t hear. His eyes were on Isabel and Farlan as he said, “Because he won’t leave until he finds someone to blame.”

He felt Erwin shift beside him but his voice was steady as he informed, “Nile’s a major pack alpha and police chief of the city. To appease his in law, he’s got every railway, motorway, port, and walking path being monitored.”

Levi’s exhale hissed through his teeth. “Like a fucking rat in a maze, except I won’t find cheese.”

Erwin chuckled and Levi’s breath caught in his throat as he felt Erwin’s arm behind him, carefully touching his left arm with light, comforting pressure. “Except you’ve got wolves protecting you.”

Levi’s chin jerked up, but Erwin was looking at everyone else in the room. Of course, their kind had always been associated with wolves due to the scent glands, sharp canines, heightened strength, speed, libido during the full moon, and in extreme cases, physical changes in times of distress or anger, but Levi suspected that Erwin’s meaning went beyond that. Wolves were a pack, a family, and he was surrounded by that pack right now in this very room. The detrimental reality that he could be responsible for harm coming to these people…
“Hey,” Erwin purred, his hand closing around Levi’s shoulder. “Whatever you’re thinking, stop. You’re the one with wings, remember? Stop putting weight on yourself.”

Levi scoffed, shaking his head and hiding his expression as he took a drink. “You’re an alpha dork.”

Erwin laughed and Levi’s attention was diverted to Mike telling a story about how they were playing football in the street one day and how the ball got stuck in Petra’s rain gutters. Petra choked on her wine and accused, “YOU’RE the reason I have a freaking blockage up there? Do you know the havoc that stupid ball has been doing? Why didn’t you tell me?”

Levi met Hange’s glance before she gracefully removed the wine glass from Petra’s hand the same time Levi started heading to the front door. Setting his glass on the table by the door, he strode halfway down the drive before turning and peering up at the roof. With a running start, he jumped and pressed a foot against the brick, using the push to drive himself upward and gripping the edge of the roof. Levi easily hoisted himself over the shingles and started sifting through the muck of leaves, mud, bird feces, and a leathery prune that turned out to be the football.

When he dropped the disgusting thing on the landing of the front door, he heard a squeak of terror, and then he landed and saw the small crowd inside the front door. He thrust it into Mike’s hands while they both grimaced; Levi for the state of his hands and Mike for the smell.

By the time Levi had finished scrubbing his hands and nails in the kitchen sink, the food was ready and they ate every morsel. Levi was helping a rather drunk Petra wash dishes as people started clearing out, leaving the three members of Anonymous to their work.

“Levi, could I have a moment?” Erwin said, poking his head around the small foyer. Petra took the plate from his hands and Hange was wrapped up in her headphones as he followed Erwin outside. Levi found him gazing up at the roof. “That was really nice of you to do that for her.”

He shrugged a shoulder carelessly. “You didn’t ask me out here to talk about cleaning gutters.”

Erwin smiled sheepishly. “No, I didn’t. I wanted to kiss you goodnight, but I thought you wouldn’t want an audience when I asked.”

Levi scratched his scalp. The man was not wrong about that… “Kiss me where?”

For a nocturnal setting, that smile was blinding. “On your cheek, of course. I’ll let you initiate anything else.”

He hugged his elbows, considering. “On the cheek.”

Erwin nodded and began to lean down; Levi felt him sneak a hand up to cradle his nape as his lips connected with his cheek. Then Erwin surprised Levi by crossing to the other side and kissing the other one. The fact that the man had to pass by his mouth and walk away was something Levi could not ignore. Other alphas would claim his mouth if they were that close, whether he wanted it or not.

“Where is your gig tomorrow?” Erwin asked as he backed away.

“The Rose.”

Erwin’s brows lifted, and then he realized, “Ah, ladies’ night. You’ll bring in quite a catch for Pixis. I’m afraid I won’t be able to make it, but I hope to see you tomorrow sometime. Goodnight, Levi.”
“Night,” he returned, trying not to be too obvious at watching the alpha stride down the street while he made his way back into Petra’s house.

When the time came to arrive at the club, Anonymous had two more songs on top of the fresh playlist they sprang on the crowd on Sunday. Climbing the tall stage was oddly like a homecoming at this point, and Levi gave a thumbs up to Hange to get the music going. The beat was strong but the melody started rather melancholy compared to a regular club song, however it built in intensity and pitch while still maintaining a good dance rhythm.

He crooned the opening, “You broke my holds...all the things you do... Your type of fun...it can’t be true...”

He started thrumming with the next added layer of the song, picking up the pace. “Oh, I...I remember being ‘lone—now all I see is gold. You’re getting me hooked on something, you have... got me reaching for you.”

Levi could feel the song climbing for the bridge, the climax of the song. His hips moved as he roamed the stage, dancing in every way his body demanded.

“Taste me and you’ll see how red I’m drenched, baby, my name is dread. I’m doing us favors, by calling this moot. You’ll never see me shine, my scars are damaged goods. I’ll only get you burned, see, let go of all of me.”

“LEVI!” Petra screamed.

He whirled around, just in time to see a large figure barreling over the stage, crashing the air from his lungs while locking Levi in an iron grip, and before Levi knew it, he was falling.

Chapter End Notes

I definitely meant for this chapter to be up sooner, but hey, life gets in the way. Like you really wanted to wait for a cliff hanger, right? muahahahaha
Unlike when Farlan knocked into him, Levi had time and distance to correct himself. His fingertips curled under the leather hoops at the base of his palm, and he tugged; his blade slipped through his sleeve and found its place in the assailant’s jugular. Levi twisted, forcing the man who reeked of alpha aggression beneath him before they crashed over the bar. The man’s ribcage crunched beneath Levi, who used him as a platform to flip over the bar, blade out and ready.

Pixis bellowed a command from the balcony, but Levi’s stance did not relax as his eyes estimated the number of alphas coming through the crowd. They were not of Pixis’ pack, and once they were off his land, they could do whatever they pleased with Levi.

If they got the chance.

They closed around him, but Levi struck the two nearest to him by leaping into the air, twisting horizontally so his legs locked around one man’s neck. From panic and strangulation as well as Levi’s momentum, they barreled into the second alpha, and Levi rose from the floor with fresh blood on his brace.

Someone lunged for him, but Levi used the alpha’s weight against him, simply plunging his blade into his chest so when he hit the floor, he was breathing his last breaths.

He barely dodged a blade hissing through the air. This attacker was quick, and moved with urgent need to either kill or maim Levi, and he wasn’t interested to find out which.

But he wasn’t expecting Levi’s speed. Omegas were bred for submission, not escape. The man’s jabs and swipes were blocked and dodged, but he could only stare dumbly as Levi moved on to the next attacker, unaware that his throat was slit before his knees hit the floor.

Once the next alpha fell, followed by another, Levi was given a second of reprieve to catch his breath…but his eyes widened at the sight of only more enemies approaching. In his peripheral, Levi could see Pixis gathering his pack to take hold of the situation, but they were either too few or too slow, and Levi took his chanced by ramming himself against the wall of panicked humans. They screamed but quickly figured out what he wanted, and parted like a sea toward the exit.

All too soon, he realized it was the most obvious escape, but he was already leaping into the air and crashing his feet against the door. He landed in a roll at the bouncer’s feet, and instantly
popped up to sprint for the nearest alleyway. Shadows of men emerged to block off the streets, so he spotted the nearest dumpster and ran for it. He pulled himself on top of it, leaped against for the high windowsill above it, and then he was hoisting himself onto the roof.

Alpha bellows and cries echoed behind him, but Levi was gone. His lungs filled with sharp night air as he sprinted over shingles, dived across alleyways to concrete ledges, and then landed on top of a massive delivery truck navigating through the midnight traffic. He rode it for a few blocks before grabbing the overhanging bar on which the stoplights were mounted, and swung himself to the sidewalk. The pedestrians startled and backed away from him, but he tucked his blade alongside the brace and let himself get swept with the crowd.

When he turned down an avenue and found it utterly empty of cars and people, though, he knew he’d made the wrong move.

Levi’s knees were kicked out from under him and he landed harshly before someone gripped his hair, dashing his skull against the asphalt. He prided himself on having the hardest skull known in existence, but his eyes still lolled and he saw spots as his hair was jerked off the ground. Before he could retaliate, his right arm was wrenched behind his back, threatening to break.

“Keep that mouth open, omega,” a cocky voice chimed when Levi yelled. His eyes opened to see a familiar alpha standing over him, undoing his pants. Levi’s teeth gnashed together. The others around him laughed gruffly at the sight of the alpha’s fat erection. “Alpha Nicholas will be glad to have his pet back. He needs the comfort while he searches for his sister’s killer. Until then, open that mouth, omega.”

Levi scoffed, but they did not know why. *Figures I’d be fucked over for being born wrong but not for killing the wrong alpha’s sister.*

His eyes bulged as angry panic began to set in as that cock came nearer. Levi felt his canine’s lengthen and cut into his gums as the head pressed against his lips. That hand remained in his hair, but others joined it, holding Levi’s head like a vice while his jaw was pried open.

“That’s it…” the alpha purred, and Levi gagged when it was pushed all the way to the back of his throat. Slick tears fell from his eyes, his gag reflex screaming while his lungs burned for air. The alpha’s pelvis thrust again, causing a cry to burst from Levi’s throat.

*Not again… Not again…* his instincts begged. More tears fell as the cock abused his throat.

Chuckles and grunts of arousal sounded around him. Levi heard another belt rattle open, the zip of jeans opening.

*Not again.*

Levi bit, and he bit hard. The alpha screamed above him and Levi coughed the shortened member out of his mouth. In the shock of the scream, the holds on him loosened, and with the taste of blood in his mouth, rage in his veins, Levi whirled around, arcing his blade and scattering the circle of men around him. Some tried to grab him again, but he was lost to his fury. With blade and nails alike, he tore at their throats, screaming into the night.

“O-Omegas d-don’t go feral!” one of them cried in disbelief.

Levi went for him next, relishing the taste of an alpha’s fear in the air. His bluish-grey eyes had gone silver, his fingers curled like claws and his skin tightened, making every bone jagged and offensive, every muscle hard and unrelenting. He launched himself at the alpha, and when his back hit the ground, Levi stood to stomp on his throat.
The street was sprayed with blood. The only alpha left was the one whimpering over his sabotaged penis. Levi didn’t spare him anything; he gripping his chin and jerked until he heard the telltale pop. Then he was dashing once more over rooftops, footfalls heavily chasing behind him.

A few hours later, Erwin entered his home, and froze, sniffing the air full of fear and worry. On the couch, Hange was ravaging her nails with her teeth and Petra’s shot to her feet. “A-Alpha!”

He dropped his soft leather brief case and his jacket, letting gravity place them where they fell, and approached. He strode forward, arms held out to reach for her, his instincts to comfort and protect guiding him.

But she held up a shaky hand, and Erwin knew what was wrong.

“Where is Levi?”

“THEY TOOK HIM!” Hange shrieked, flying off the couch to wander the room. “WE WERE ON STAGE—OUR FIRST FUCKING SONG! AND THEY TOOK HIM! THEY JU-JUST TACKLED HIM OFF THE STAGE!”

Erwin thought his eyes were going to leap right out of his skull. “He fell off the stage? The stage that is two stories high?” he growled measuredly, barely reigning in his tumultuously growing fury.

Hange and Petra knew they were not in danger but they cowered at the hot, almost feral scent roiling off of Erwin, his alpha instinct tearing at his insides, demanding to be freed. They sat on the couch once more, heads bowed, silently submitting and asking to speak.

“Tell me everything,” he ordered huskily, his voice no longer his own.

“It’s just as Hange said,” Petra exclaimed. “We had just started, and then an alpha ran onstage! The whole place was integrated with this foreign pack. Pixis was livid!”

Erwin growled so loudly they reared back into the couch cushions.

“Where are you going?” Petra ventured.

“To show Pixis real lividity,” Erwin declared, striding out the door.

“I don’t think—” Hange dared, but then the door slammed behind him. The two women peeked out the door to find Mike running up the street. They’d called him as well, but at the scent of Erwin on edge, he came sprinting. He immediately fell into step with his alpha and folded into the front seat of Erwin’s car.

“Keep the pack in the neighborhood until I return!” Erwin ordered as he reversed out of the driveway. Hange and Petra gave an affirmative wave before they turned and found Isabel and Farlan at the top of the stairs, having heard every word.

The Red Rose was locked down when Erwin and Mike arrived, parking right by the entrance. The whole team of bouncers—each a member of Pixis’ pack—was standing guard.

“Alpha Smith,” one of them stood in his way, “you can’t enter without—”

Then he smelled the rancid anger rolling off the alpha, and the bouncer couldn’t step out of the way fast enough.
“Mike,” he rasped, his voice betraying how undone he was.

“Got it,” his second assured, already sniffing everything when they made their way through the club. As always, Pixis was sitting in a booth upstairs. He was navigating across the screen of a tablet, his brow deeply furrowed when his eyes lifted sternly and then widened at Erwin gripping his silk tie and shoving his spine against the wall of the booth.

“What happened?”

Pixis’s eyes gleamed with fanatical interest, but he knew better than to laugh in the face of an alpha on the verge of going feral. He pivoted the screen, calmly informing, “It’d be better to show you.”

Erwin’s eyes darted to the screen, where it divided into two sections displaying dual security camera feeds. The halves alternated, showing different perspectives of the dance floor and stage as someone clearly darted right between Hange and Petra, aiming for Levi. Petra reacted quickly, and Levi turned, but he was already caught in the brute’s grip, hurtling over the edge of the stage.

Erwin clenched the sides of the screen, only slightly relieved that Levi managed to kill his attacker and land unharmed. He watched as the crowd of dancers scattered, leaving only Levi and a hoard of enemies. A surge of pride erupted in Erwin's chest at the sight of Levi defending himself, fighting with the grace and power he was so capable of…until there were simply too many, and he had to run. The camera changed to a view of the street outside, and the footage ended with Levi dashing up the side of a building and out of sight.

Erwin’s fiery blue eyes locked onto Pixis with renewed fury. “Why didn’t anyone help him?”

“Believe me,” Pixis responded, “I am just as disappointed as you are. My pack should have reacted much faster than they did, but Levi was already gone. You know whose pack came for him, don’t you? Only one is both stupid, and dare I say it, capable enough to sneak so many alphas into my domain.”

Erwin’s teeth ground together, and he had to pace unless he lashed out at something. “Call Nile. Tell him to get his ass over here and to put a leash on his brother in law, before I find him.”

“Oh?” Pixis hummed, intrigued. He pointed to one of his pack members, who already had a cell phone to her ear. “Something you’re not telling me?”

“You and Nile are about to get an earful,” Erwin grated, pacing up and down the length of several booths. “We’re wasting time while Levi’s out there undefended.”

Pixis’ eyes glinted when he glanced at the woman lowering the phone from her ear, nodding. “I think you’ll be pleasantly surprised by the speed at which an old man like me, and a supercilious git like Dok can move.”

Erwin whirled around as the door to the club opened, and Nile Dok scanned the area before lifting his gaze to the balcony. The alpha glanced briefly at Mike on the stage as he climbed the stairs. He approached Erwin with raised, defensive arms. “What the hell is the fuss about, Smith? Pixis called and warned me you’d be breaking down either mine or his door, and told me we might as well get in one place to make it easy on you. What—” his hand flew up to cover his nose “—what is making you smell fucking neurotic?”

Pixis spoke for him. “Your in law’s merry band of alpha twits stole something quite precious to Erwin, not to mention, someone very profitable to me.”

“You told me Nicholas was ignorant as to who murdered Marie,” Erwin growled, his tone warning
Nile what would happen to a liar.

The alpha winced at his deceased mate’s name, but he shook his head, “I spoke to him just this morning, and he was just as unreasonable as ever—” then his eyes narrowed, “Hold on, Smith. You told me you didn’t…actually you avoided the topic of the culprit altogether! So help me, Smith, if you’ve been keeping that vile murderer—”

Erwin roared, gripping Nile’s neck and slamming his back onto the nearest table. Nile’s alpha instincts bellowed in return, demanding control, but he was dominated by terror. His eyes were akin to saucers at the sight of Erwin hovering over him, Erwin’s already wide shoulders growing wider with taut muscle, his canines lengthening while other teeth sharpened, and his blue eyes shined.

“Your alpha bitch attacked him!” Erwin thundered. “This doesn’t concern Marie anymore! I want your entire police force out there searching for my omega!”

Nile’s adams apple bobbed against the claws around his neck. Erwin blinked and replayed what he’d just said inwardly. He released Nile and paced once more, dealing with the war tearing at his insides. Levi hated alpha control, that much had been obvious since day one, and Erwin did not want to dominate or suppress Levi in any means…but his head drummed with Mine. He’s mine. Mine, Levi, you’re mine, and that felt utterly right; the way things should be if this shit storm hadn’t erupted.

“Omega?” Nile huffed, rubbing his throat and slowly rising from his prone position on the table. “But Erwin…there hasn’t been an omega in…well, decades.”

“There’s one now,” Mike announced, striding forward to stand by his alpha. “I knew it the second I met him, but he’s not like what we’ve known omegas to be. He’s strong, and he’ll go down swinging as hard as an alpha. Thing is, we’ve got to get to him before your shit head of an in law does.”

Nile scowled. “Why are you blaming this on Nicholas?”

“Because he runs a pack of solely alphas,” Mike answered tranquilly. “Having that many together breeds a….distinctive odor, which is all over this club.”

The man frowned, scratching his trimmed facial hair uncertainly. Erwin, after reigning control of himself, questioned, “Did Nicholas see his sister’s body?”

“Of course he did! As her brother and former pack alpha, he had that right!”

Erwin looked at Mike. “Levi said Nicholas knew him. If he knew Levi well enough, one look at Marie’s wound would remind him of Levi’s blade under his sleeve.”

“I told you,” Nile huffed. “Nicholas doesn’t know. But if he knows this Levi person, then his alphas would have gone after the omega regardless.”

Erwin turned to where Pixis remained in his seat, watching the exchange with an intrigued expression. “Pixis, you have the most land in this city. How many of those properties have security feeds?”

“All of them,” he answered smugly, and guessing Erwin’s intentions, added, “I will keep a look out for any sightings.”

Blue eyes trained on Nile. “If your pack or your police force comes into contact with him, don’t
attack him, don’t try to restrain him, just hand him a phone with my number in it. Do you hear me?”

He could see it in Nile’s eyes, the desire to rebel, to assert his alpha position, but the man had the
good grace to nod and Erwin was striding past him without further discussion. In the car, he asked
Mike, “What else did you scent?”

“The locations those alphas frequent,” he informed. “If they’ve captured Levi and are keeping a
low profile about it, I’ll be able to find them.”

“Good,” Erwin was able to say, the last of his control fleeing him. It was a wonder he drove so
smoothly through the city, considering every building and every street could hold a clue as to
where Levi was.

Pulling into his driveway, Petra met him at the door with Isabel and Farlan right on her heels.
Erwin was grateful that his more benevolent instincts returned to him and he opened his arms to
comfort the anxious siblings.

“He’ll come back, won’t he?” Isabel hoped. Erwin’s morale swelled; if Isabel and Farlan believed
Levi was not likely to be captured, that was reason enough to hope.

Farlan agreed, “We just have to wait for that stubborn buffoon to come back.”

But Levi did not return. On the contrary, several days went by, and he had neither returned to the
café nor the library, let alone called anyone to let them know he wasn’t coming in case they were
being watched and could track his phone. He’d thrown his mobile into one of the park’s fountains
to avoid the matter altogether.

He’d thrown himself into that pond for a brief moment, to wash the feral stink from his skin so he
left less of a trail in his wake. He kept to the shadows or streets overly populated with pedestrians
to conceal his path to every corner of the massive city, checking to see just how guarded the exits
were. He found at least three policemen and women at every one, mobile devices and radios at the
ready. He could easily cut through them and be rid of this foul place, but one scream of distress
over their radio, and he would be tailed to where ever he went.

When his bodily hygiene became too much for him to bear, Levi ducked into a barbershop. His
hands snatched the nearest bottle of shampoo and turned one of the sink faucets on…

His head snapped up at the sound of a door closing. He left the water running, his hair dripping
with left over suds as shadows emerged from both sides of the shop. Levi kept his blade hidden, in
the off chance that he could surprise them.

“You’re a hard one to track down,” one of them crooned.

Levi immediately counted four of them. “You don’t have enough men,” he warned.

“Maybe not,” he shrugged, “but just we happened to see you dash in here and couldn’t miss the
chance to help our brothers out. Restrain him, lads.”

Levi twirled, blade out, and took down two of them, but out of nowhere came two more to fill their
place. Levi hadn’t eaten in days and his head swam from the exertion. Before he could fathom it,
he was being held down on the tile floor, hands holding him down on his side while they probed
his neck.

“Where the fuck are his glands?” one of them grated, struggling against Levi’s efforts to be free.
“Wait…are those…behind his ears! Fuck me, his glands are behind his ears! It’s like…oh fuck, what are they called—gills! You’ve got fucking gills, you omega shit!”

“No, the electric one,” their leader growled at someone. A weight left his body and he eagerly tried to kick out, but a second later it was back, threatening to make his leg crunch.

A sharp buzz filled the air, and Levi gasped, realizing what they intended.

“We can’t hold you for long,” the leader admitted, “but they’ll be able to smell you after this.”

The hair clippers buzzed like the angriest wasp in Levi’s ear, and he felt it growl up his nape before it passed over his gland.

Levi froze, eyes wide. The membrane was ultra sensitive and thin, and a brutish device designed for shredding hair just pressed over it, shredding the membrane apart.

“Mm! Hum!” he mewled against his will, jerking as they shaved an undercut, hitting the edges of his gland again. Then they forcefully turned him over to get the next one.

“You know, it’s a shame omega men can’t get pregnant like they do in our lore,” one of them mused. “It’d be fun to guess whose pups he birthed after we were done with him.”

“Woah, his eyes are going wild!” someone curtailed. Levi’s pupils were fluctuating between black orbs and pinpricks; the only blessing in this situation was that he was trembling so fiercely no one had the time or the hands to undo their pants. Levi could hardly breath for the pain erupting from his glands, spreading down his neck and body like thick, rough molten rock. Somewhere in the pain, he knew he needed to be free, but his limbs were held down, his blade…

Levi jerked his arm, not enough to get it free but in such a way that the alpha holding his arm retaliated by gripping his forearm and twisting. The blade shot free, stabbing the alpha’s hand and releasing Levi’s arm. He pivoted and thrust his blade into the chest of the man wielding the razor. Then he grabbed that abhorred device and screamed as he plunged it into the alpha’s eyes. The shop windows splashed with blood, and by the end of it, the cleanest thing in the place was the sink, still streaming with water.

A choked sob broke from Levi’s throat as he tried to rinse his neck but his glands were freely bleeding into his shirt, and he had to get out of here. He briefly considered taking to the rooftops, but whether he ran above the city or below it, he couldn’t continue like this.

He found a payphone, and dialed one of the few numbers he had memorized. “Petra?”

“LEVI?”

Erwin spun around from where he was looking over Pixis’ shoulder at all the camera feeds, observing the glimpses of Levi and the trail of bodies he’d left in his wake around the city.

“Is Erwin there?”

He took the phone from Petra. “I’m here.”

The line was silent for a tense moment before Erwin could make out Levi’s shaky breath. “I need help,” he said weakly. It sounded like his voice was hoarse.

“I’m coming to get you,” Erwin declared, striding out of the Rose with Petra’s phone. “Where are
Again, that pause. Levi looked around him, the phone booth he was in was smudged with grime and plastered with hooker advertisements.

“You’ll smell me.”

“What? LEVI!” Erwin bellowed, but then Levi hung up and left the booth. He couldn’t be in a tiny, confined space any longer, and he simply didn’t know what answer to give Erwin. His omega sweetness assaulted his senses alongside the metallic sourness of his blood. He found himself embarking down the street that he could always count on to cover his scent, or at least mask it somewhat.

Levi broke into the back of his coffee shop, and prepared to wait. He was too tired, too hungry to fight back anymore. Either Erwin came for him or the other alphas did, so he curled up behind the corner of the counter with one of the sharp knives used for chopping herbs for scones, waiting.
Wash It Away

Chapter Summary

Erwin goes after Levi.

Chapter Notes

I'm really sorry about the assault of last chapter, everyone, but that is the last of the sexual abuse and I plan to live up to this chapter's name.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Erwin sped into the city with all of the windows down. Mike had insisted on going with him, but Erwin ordered him to remain. He wanted his pack all together in one place, and as he delved deeper into the city, he was glad to have left Mike in charge. Traffic was proving to be one sided with pack members making their way into the city, whereas the streets should have been almost empty this late at night.

The cause reached Erwin’s nostrils, and he slammed on his brakes, parking his car halfway on the sidewalk, legality be damned. He could feel his shirt tightening around him as his muscles engorged, his stride became longer as he sprinted through the cloud of alpha curiosity and lust, following the thread of omega that could only be Levi. Non-human pedestrians were sniffing the air with varying amounts of intrigue, which instantaneously melted at the sight or scent of him. Erwin was not a small man, but now he was massive, a lean slab of agility and power that cut through the crowds until the tranquil smell of coffee and cinnamon lingered in the air.

Erwin knew where Levi was hiding. On the corner of the block, he recognized the oddly bitter scent of Nicholas’s pack that Mike had described. Putrid was a better word for it but Erwin gripped his nape and yanked him out of the alleyway. The man snarled but immediately quivered with terror at Erwin’s double canines.

“How many of you are there?” he growled softly.

“T-Too many…” he stammered, but by the way his eyes darted down the street, Erwin knew he was not only lying, but had also revealed where his pack members were waiting to ambush Levi.

Erwin didn’t waste time as he twisted the man’s head and found the next alpha on the other end of the alleyway. A group of them was trying to figure out how to pick the café’s lock while others were demanding on just breaking down the door. Erwin snarled as he killed one of them to alert the others’ attention. A third of them took one look and ran; the others bared their teeth defiantly and leaped at Erwin.

It was almost laughable how easily he flipped the first assailants over his shoulders, twisting their wrists so the pain was the only incentive they needed to run like the others. The few who were imbecilic enough to remain had their blood drip into the street’s gutter.
Erwin circled around the building just in time to stop a hoard of alphas running at the storefront window. He intercepted most of them but he and a couple others tumbled through the glass, scattering shards across the coffee tables and sidewalk. Erwin threw the men who’d fallen with him back onto the street, roaring his supremacy and warning them to run as far and fast as they could.

Yet for some reason, they still believed their numbers were worth the gamble with Erwin.

Levi listened to the streets on either side of the shop, hearing the tinkering of a lock, the gruff voices of alphas doing battle over him. When the front window shattered, Levi flinched terribly, watching gleaming pieces of glass soar over the counter and bounce off the coffee appliances. The stench of alpha pride and aggression polluted his sanctuary of sugar, nutmeg, and chocolate.

An enraged roar ripped through the air, causing all of his omega instincts to quake on high alert. Frightened tears slipped free of his eyes, mixing with the ones caused by the pain in his neck and body. Levi slumped between the walls of the counter, pressing himself as deeply as he could into the corner until he jerked at the sight of a feral alpha vaulting over the far end of the counter.

“Levi!”

His eyes widened, taking in the blond hair, those neon blue eyes. The alpha stood there as if transfixed, merely staring at Levi until he saw how roughly he trembled.

“Alpha…” he hiccuped. “Alpha please…”

Erwin lowered to his knees, approaching Levi on his level. “Shh, Levi, shhh…” He could see a separate knife between Levi’s hands, but he made a point of kissing Levi’s knee that was showing through his scraped jeans before reaching for it slowly. “You don’t need this now. I’m here, Levi.”

He saw Levi’s feral teeth when he grimaced between sobs, but they were visibly shrinking and the silver of his eyes was dimming. Setting the blade on the counter above their heads, Erwin leaned into Levi and noticed that something was different. He saw blood dripping over dried flakes on his neck and shirt, so he delicately grasped Levi’s jaw and turned.

“Oh…oh, Levi…” he uttered, aghast. The glands were torn open, oozing blood and scent down his bruised neck. Fingerprints bruised his jaw as well, and Levi looked as if he hadn’t eaten or slept in the week he’d been missing.

Erwin carefully touched Levi’s shoulder and pulled him into the safety of his wide chest. He took some prompting but as soon as Levi’s back lifted off the counter, he slumped against Erwin, clutching him as he cried into his bicep.

“I’m parked just a block down,” he assured, curling his other arm beneath Levi’s knees. “I’m taking you home.”

Erwin held him close as he stepped over the broken window’s frame and made his way to his vehicle. He scented alphas still in the area and caught the silhouettes or glimmers of eyes in side streets, but Erwin carried Levi all the way to his car, steered a sharp U-turn in the street, and drove home at nearly breakneck speeds.

Levi was shivering by the time they swung into Erwin’s driveway. As he was gathered in Erwin’s arms once more, his front door opened to reveal Mike, Isabel, Farlan, Petra, and Hange crowding in the foyer. Mike quickly shoved them aside to make room for Erwin’s enlarged feral form to enter, but as soon as he passed into his house, his body began shrinking to his normal size.

Mike had to leave, Levi’s scent was too strong, but Hange and Petra clamped hands over their
noses. Isabel and Farlan were speechless. They warily approached, looking for a way to comfort him, but Erwin kindly shook his head. “He’s in shock,” he informed. “I’m taking him for a hot bath and then right to sleep.”

They nodded their understanding and watching him ascend the stairs. Isabel was in Farlan's arms, but both hers and Petra's cheeks were shiny with tears while Hange comforted her.

Erwin took Levi to his room, where the master bathroom had a jacuzzi-sized tub. He toed his shoes off and sat on the edge of it, keeping Levi on his lap so he could adjust the water to a tolerable heat. When it was warmer than tepid but not quite steaming, he lowered them both into the water, clothes and all.

Levi jerked at the touch of the water, as it likely felt hotter with his chills. Erwin bent his knees and let his back slouch against the wall of the tub, causing Levi’s weight to fall against him. For a long while, they simply rested there, Levi growing warmer and Erwin letting the hot water pour to keep the temperature up.

“Erwin…” Levi said quietly. “I’m bleeding on you.”

“I don’t mind,” he crooned. Levi began to move as if he wanted to rise off him, but his head fell back on Erwin’s shoulder. “In your own time. We’ll get you clean and dressed in fresh clothes. There’s no rush.”

The last word came out in a hushed tone as he felt Levi’s nose brush the curve of his neck. His eyelids blinked heavily as Levi tickled his neck when he sniffed Erwin’s gland. “You don’t smell…”

Erwin waited but Levi’s pause stretched on. “I don’t smell like what?”

He patiently waited as Levi took tentative sniffs, and then one long draft before he nuzzled against Erwin. He shook his head. “You don’t smell like them.”

Erwin pressed his cheek to the top of his head. “I don’t want to hurt you. You belong to yourself, omega or otherwise.”

He was disappointed when Levi pushed off of him, but he kept it to himself and set Levi on the seat next to him. Levi reached down and removed his shoes and socks to set them on the corner between the wall and the tub. He pulled his shirt off his chest and fidgeted with the hem, but he ultimately rubbed his fingertips against the blood on his neck. “I can’t wash this on my own.”

“I’m here,” Erwin assured softly. “We can cut that off.”

A series of drawers rested off to the side beneath the sink, and out of them he retrieved a pair of scissors. Levi was glad to be rid of the soiled fabric once Erwin cut him out of it without having to pull it over his head. He also grabbed a washcloth which he dunked into the water. Erwin hesitated before reaching for Levi.

“This…will not be pleasant,” he warned.

Levi grimaced slightly but shook his head. “Get them off me, Erwin.”

So he set forward with his task, starting at Levi’s collarbone. The bleeding had mostly stopped, allowing Erwin to use soft, circular strokes of the cloth, cleaning gradually up the neck and nape. He kept the glands for last.
“If you need to hold something or bite me, that’s fine,” he offered.

“Just do it,” Levi ordered, but in a different tone added, “You don’t want my mouth on you.”

The washcloth hovered over Levi’s first gland, but Erwin stared at the bruises along his neck, his jaw. “Did they rape you?” he asked softly.

Levi gazed at the water’s surface and then gave a curt shake of his head. “No…although I suppose my mouth is easier to clean.”

The water trilled with Erwin’s movement to place his fingertips on Levi’s cheek, ushering but not forcing the man to look at him. Haggard, jaded grey eyes looked up into Erwin’s honest and earnest blue ones. “You’re not dirty to me, Levi. Nothing has changed between us, not for me.”

Levi removed his cheek from Erwin’s fingers as he looked away. “I can barely sit here in my own skin. Why are you…”

The muscle in his jaw ticked but Erwin leaned forward to kiss his temple. Levi began to tremble again, so Erwin began a trail of kisses from his cheekbone, up his temple, across his forehead, and to the center of his brows.

“Why are you treating me like your mate?” he sobbed anew.

“Oh Levi…” Erwin mewed, drawing Levi onto his lap once more. “I don’t blame you for any of it. I don’t see you any differently because of what malevolent or vile people have done. You’re not dirty to me. You’re an incredible brother to Isabel and Farlan and the friend Hange and Petra look up to most. Levi…”

Erwin hesitated before continuing. “On Petra’s couch was not the first time Mike interacted with you. When you first came to the community and met me out of courtesy, Mike was late to that meeting, but he was the man you walked past on your way out. His sense of smell is more magnified than anyone else’s I have ever met, and you…you still had a little of Nicholas’s odor lingering on you.”

Levi tensed in his arms, his sniffles coming to a halt. Erwin finished, “He left out that you were omega, but he knew that detail was irrelevant to me and to the pack. I might not have known the details, but I’ve always known what your situation was. That’s why I wanted you in my pack, but I tried to convince you in your own time. I’ve never thought less of you, and goodness knows I wouldn’t trade that kiss for the world.”

Something between a sob and a gasp broke from Levi’s throat, and for a split second Erwin feared he would try to get out of his reach. On the contrary, Levi lunged for his chest, and considering he was already on Erwin’s lap, the result was having the wind knocked out of him. Levi hugged him under his arms, crying with abandon. Erwin’s long arms encompassed him, holding him tight and close.

When Levi recovered, he reared off Erwin somewhat, his eyes puffy and red. “Go on, then,” Levi commanded, tilting his head so Erwin could see his gland. “Wash it away.”

Erwin soaked the cloth in the water, and Levi’s eyes closed as his hand lifted toward his scalp. Gathering the fabric in his fist, Erwin pressed it against Levi’s skull but not directly on the gland, letting the water fall over the wound.

“Oh!” Levi exclaimed, having expected something excruciating and instead got tingling pinpricks of pain.
“Breathe,” Erwin urged, squeezing another fist of water over the gland. Levi nodded jerkily and closed his eyes once more, focusing on doing just that. Erwin continued letting water run over his injury, occasionally tilting him so water could drip directly over it or slide from another angle. He was doing everything he could to avoid touching the gland directly, and after a reasonably short time, he announced it clean. Levi turned around for him and bared the next one. Giving this gland just as much delicate attention as the other, Erwin intently worked over him until it too was clean.

“I don’t want to bandage these,” he informed, setting the cloth aside, “but they will probably bleed during the night. Don’t worry about the pillows or sheets; they’re disposable. Can I do anything else for you here? Or I’ll go make you something to eat.”

He’d been busy putting away the scissors and throwing the destroyed shirt in a nearby wastebasket, but now he looked to Levi for an answer and found the man gazing at him. “What is it?” he asked, concerned.

Levi seemed to realize he was staring and shook his head. “I don’t have clothes.”

Erwin suspected there had been something else in his thoughts but he let it go. “Your wardrobe has been moved here, and…I hope you don’t mind, but I aborted the leases on yours and your siblings’ apartments. I don’t want anyone worrying about making payments and I’m more confident in your safety if you’re living here.”

Levi’s eyes widened at first, but he processed it relatively quickly and nodded. “Fine.”

“I’ll bring you some of your things,” he promised, rising from the tub.

Levi gave him pause with, “I don’t have any button shirts.”

Erwin understood his desire to not aggravate his glands further by pulling a shirt over his head. “I’ll give you one of mine.”

He then removed his own shirt, wringing it out over the tub in an attempt to keep the bathroom floor dry. Dumping the garment in the laundry basket between the tub and the shower, Erwin stepped out over a towel carpet and shucked his jeans. It was then he realized that he was wearing white underwear, but now was not the time for promiscuous thoughts. Erwin donned his towel robe and went to find Levi’s toothbrush and paste, but as he exited Levi’s bathroom, he noticed an almost ludicrously large towel hanging over the rack. Erwin grabbed it and went ahead and set the same pajama shirt and shorts he’d previously loaned him just inside his bathroom door before making his way downstairs. Mike had returned, and everyone was anxiously drinking tea or coffee, waiting for news.

“How is he?” Isabel asked eagerly.

“He’s doing fine,” Erwin nodded and then said, “Tomorrow morning, Hange, I want you to look over his scent glands. I’ve cleaned them but someone ran an electric razor over them, and I want your verdict.”

A collective hiss sounded as everyone sharply inhaled, but Hange nodded. Mike was shaking his head angrily. “I couldn’t smell too much over the rank of alpha on him. What else was done to him?”

Erwin sighed as he poured himself a tall glass of tea. “He wasn’t raped…but other things were forced upon him. I found him in a feral state.”

Mike, Hange, and Petra’s eyes widened, but Isabel and Farlan seemed puzzled. “What do you
mean, feral?” the latter questioned.

Petra supplied, “Omegas are usually female and meant for child bearing; for this reason, they’re often abused by the pack, passed around for pleasure or for conception. Male omegas are almost unheard of, and either way, an omega hasn’t even been seen in our lifetimes. Levi is a rarity. Typically only alphas go feral, in times of extreme anger or distress. Betas have achieved feral status on occasion, but omegas can’t…or at least it was believed they couldn’t. Even though male omegas can’t bear children, their nature still demands that they submit, not fight or go feral. Levi was either that afraid or is capable of more than we thought.”

Erwin had bacon left over from this morning in the refrigerator, so he scrambled some eggs with the bacon and told the others to get some sleep. When Erwin gently knocked on Levi’s door and received no response, he opened it to find the room empty. He quickly crossed back to his own room and found Levi on his bed, bound in the massive towel up by the pillows, sound asleep.

Erwin’s eyes softened as he approached the bed and silently placed the food on Levi’s side table. Erwin exchanged his wet underwear for his favorite grey, tribal print pajama pants and a navy V-neck before carefully climbing onto the bed. Levi had obviously crawled into the center of the bed and fainted involuntarily, but Erwin didn’t mind; he curled around Levi without disturbing him and realized just how tired he was. The stress and constant worry over the past week was alleviated all at once by having Levi back, in his bed after a thorough bath, with hot food nearby, with having Levi home.

Chapter End Notes

I've already discussed this in my comments, but in my story, omegas are traditional men, meaning they can't get pregnant and bear children. I'll answer any questions in the comments ;)
Welcome to the Pack

Chapter Summary

The Smith pack receives a visitor.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Psst. Boyfriend! Wake up!”

Levi’s eyelids felt like leaden shields as they opened to find Hange within an inch of his face. They opened wider and his head swiveled to realize he’d passed out in Erwin’s room, the man himself slumbering deeply beside him.

At the shift of Levi’s weight on the mattress, though, along with his sharp intake of breath, Erwin’s eyes opened, and glared at Hange. “I said in the morning.”

The woman rolled her eyes, still hunched over Levi’s side of the bed. “It’s two in the afternoon, Erwin. Don’t bother getting up, Mike already called you out of work.”

Levi glanced between them and noticed that he and Erwin had fallen asleep on top of the comforter, and Levi’s towel was still bound around his legs. He let it pool around his hips when he noticed the plate of cold breakfast and glass of water on the small bureau of drawers beside him. Draining the glass, Levi dived into the meal. When he stopped for breath halfway through, he ordered, “Tell Petra she needs to make her parmesan zucchini and that mango kale salad later.”

Hange’s brows reached for her hairline. “Well it’s nice to hear you’re as bossy as ever.”

Erwin smiled guiltily as he rose to sit back on the pillows. “I’m afraid I haven’t been the most diligent with vegetables.”

Levi startled when Hange’s fingers raked through his hair, exposing his gland. The food on his lap would have been strewn across the comforter if he were not so determined to put it in his belly.

“Calm down, I’m paid to do this,” she chided, inspecting the injury but not touching it.

“What, make your patients uncomfortable?” he quipped dryly.

“That’s only a perk,” she returned, causing him to grimace as she folded his ear out of the way for a better view. “I hope you killed the bastards who did this.”

His scowl faded. “Is it that bad?”

Hange scoffed, “No, it’s not bad, it’s just fucking cruel. Who cares if you smell like vanilla cocaine? It’s no excuse to abuse a person. Anyway, you’ll be fine. This one’s stopped bleeding, and the only annoying thing about the healing process will be the scab. You’ll feel like you’re suffocating half the time, but leave it alone and it will be gone in no time. Show me the other one.”

Levi rotated so he faced the headboard while Hange examine his other side. She audibly grimaced.
“Eeugh…I can’t tell if this one’s worse, but it’s not bleeding, either. Don’t you dare pick at the scabs or you’ll make it worse and I’ll skin you alive.”

“Try not to sound so enthusiastic,” Levi scolded mildly.

Hange raised a dramatic brow but her expression quickly melted as she brushed her hand through his hair again. Then she did something that was out of character for her: she leaned in and kissed his forehead.

Levi’s heart felt like it was bruised but he japed, “You’ve lived with Petra for too long.”

The spell broke and Hange mussed his hair. “Shut up, boyfriend, and listen to your doctor. I want you eating all the food groups for the next forty-eight hours, and…” she flipped his wrists over, inspecting the turquoise and violet veins underneath the pale skin, “…drinking at least two liters of water a day. Got that?”

“Aye, captain,” he returned haughtily. When she shoved his head playfully, he jabbed, “I’m injured here!”

“Yeah, you’re so vulnerable, dingus,” she waved a hand theatrically. “Not like you’ve been the captain of this ship since you breezed into this neighborhood.”

That gave Levi pause and he glanced at Erwin for input, but the alpha merely laid there with an arm curled under his head, gazing back at him tranquilly. Levi peered back at Hange strolling toward the door. “What do you mean by that?”

“I mean you think too much,” she responded, opening the door. She turned and flashed him a grin. “It makes for good music, though. Clean those glands twice a day, and don’t be afraid to blow off some steam,” she winked and was out the door.

Against her judgment, Levi’s mind was trying to process her cryptic meaning until Erwin cut through his trains of thought. “I do have some green things in the fridge. Do you want a vegetable omelet? Or at least something hot?”

Levi stared at him dumbly before he realized just how bad cold eggs felt in his mouth. He nodded and Erwin took the plate from him. “Let’s clean you first.”

Levi gulped and followed Erwin to the bathroom, glancing over his shoulder at the smears of browning blood on the pillows. He must have made a sound of displeasure, because Erwin turned and followed his line of sight. He smiled kindly, “I told you, don’t worry about it. They’re replaceable. You’re not. Come here.”

Levi felt himself tugged forward by a towel draped around his neck. Erwin already had the sink on and a clean washcloth at the ready. “Would you mind if I used soap this time?”

He shook his head, but readied himself for the sting of it. Erwin lathered a bar of soap in the puddle made in the sink, and filled the cloth with the soapy water. He squeezed most of it out, but let the rest fall over Levi’s gland, soaking into the towel on his shoulder. Levi winced as needles tickled into his skull, but as Erwin used a different cloth to rinse fresh, cool water over it, the pain dulled considerably.

Erwin gently tilted Levi’s head for the other gland and repeated the process. By the time he’d finished, Erwin was holding Levi close as he carefully dried the area around his glands. Levi’s mind had drifted into a haze until he felt Erwin smelling his hair. “You smell really nice, you know that?”
Levi rolled his eyes and leaned away. “It’s been my problem my entire life.”

To his surprise, Erwin smiled. “I don’t mean the vanilla cocaine. I mean you. With the scabs over your glands, the omega is less potent, but you still smell quite nice without it.”

Levi wasn’t sure how to take that, and Erwin seemed to notice because he pecked Levi’s lips and said, “It’s a compliment, I promise.”

The kiss was so sudden and brief that Levi did not even realize he’d kissed back until they were on their way to the stairs. He touched his lips with the pads of his fingers, but he merely felt his own hands, not the ghost of Erwin’s lips, the kiss had been so light. Levi was glad he was behind Erwin as his face heated and he felt the suffocation Hange had mentioned in his neck. He wanted to remember Erwin’s lips, and his body was annoyingly requesting likewise.

The arousal quickly faded when Levi saw that Erwin’s kitchen was full. He vaguely remembered seeing everyone in the foyer last night, but clearly instead of leaving, they had set up camp where the food was. Levi felt the air rush out of his lungs as Isabel collided with him, hugging him fiercely and leaning her head away from his neck; and then Farlan crashed into the other side, equally considerate of his injured gland. Levi felt tears threatening to bud in his eyes, but the lack of air kept them at bay. “I can’t breathe, you idiots.”

“Let us love you,” Farlan whined, eliciting a groan from Levi.

Isabel giggled and she gave Levi one more squeeze before breaking the group hug. “Are you okay?” she asked quietly.

He nodded wearily, wanting to reassure her but also just wanting to eat something and go back to bed. Erwin was in the process of piling everything green he had on the counter, which consisted of artichoke hearts, romaine lettuce, and broccoli. He frowned at the options and then reached back in the refrigerator for what appeared to be homemade Italian dressing. He set a grill pan on the stove alongside a pot of water to boil pasta and began chopping the vegetables for grilling for a pasta salad.

Erwin paused when Levi reached for the bowl of produce and selected a red onion and bell pepper, taking the initiative of cutting them himself. A small smile graced Erwin’s lips, but he said nothing as they cooked together.

His head perked up at the quiet chime of his mobile charging by the toaster. He read the name on the screen and knew it was the gatekeeper. He hit the speaker setting and greeted, “Good afternoon, Eld, what is it?”

“There’s an Alpha Lobov here to see you, Alpha.”

Both Levi’s and Erwin’s hands stilled on the wooden counter. Erwin looked at Mike, who nodded, and came around the island to turn off the stove while Erwin went to get dressed. “I’ll be there momentarily, Eld. Don’t let him past the gate.”

“Understood, Alpha.”

Erwin dressed in casual jeans but a crisp button-up shirt of cool grey material. When he came down the stairs he found Mike, Hange, and Petra waiting…along with a fully dressed Levi.

“You don’t need to do this,” Erwin declared.

Levi lifted a skeptical brow. “He’s here because of me.” His eyes fell on Isabel and Farlan. “Stay
Farlan scowled. “Why can’t we see the jackass causing all this trouble?”

Levi stepped right into Farlan’s space, growling, “Because if that jackass sees you, you’ll be the next target just to spite me. *Stay in the fucking house.* Is that clear?”

Levi’s eyes flashed silver, and Farlan gulped. “Fine…fine, we’ll stay in the house.”

Farlan gripped Isabel’s arm just in case she was about to broach an argument, but then Levi commanded, “Petra, stay here with them.”

She nodded briskly and went to stand beside his siblings. When Farlan and Isabel peered at her, as if to gauge how capable she was of keeping them in the house, she smiled sweetly, eyes flashing gold.

Erwin was still not totally convinced it was the best course to bring Levi along, but it was his choice, so they set off through the neighborhood with Mike and Hange trailing behind. They seemed to stride faster the closer they came to the gate, and then they turned the curve in the road, and there stood a reasonably tall man leaning back on his black car. He had a full head of hair that was brushed down to his collarbone and was silver at the temples. He had a light scruff of hair as if he’d neglected his morning shave.

“Nicholas,” Erwin greeted bluntly.

The man smiled, eyes on Levi, but he replied, “Alpha Smith, it is a pleasure. We should have met sooner, considering your friendship with my brother in law and history with my sister. Hello, omega.”

Levi remained silent as he stood beside Erwin. Nicholas didn’t seem to mind. “I apologize for my pack interrupting your inspiring performance. If I’d known you had such a voice, I would have let you sing for me.”

“Enough,” Erwin declared softly, keeping his anger in check. “What is it you want, Lobov?”

The man lifted his brows and scratched at his jaw as if contemplating that. “As of late, I want two things: my sister’s killer and that little omega right there. He used to be with my pack, but he then one day he vanished. Crafty, he is.”

“With the way you and your alphas treated him, I’m glad for it,” Erwin announced openly.

Nicholas unnerved them by chuckling. “Good god, man, do you think I chained him to a post and let my entire pack fuck him? No one ever touched him. I wouldn’t soil such a unique creature.”

“No, you only put me in a cage,” Levi growled softly.

Behind him, he heard Hange whisper to Mike, “Does this mean Levi’s a virgin?”

He shot her a glare under an arched brow. She responded with a pouted lip and a flip of her hand as if to say *What? It’s a legitimate question.*

Thankfully, Nicholas had not heard. “It was for your own good. An omega surrounded by alphas…” he shuddered theatrically. “I couldn’t bare anyone touching you.”

“You were fine with throwing me in a room to test new recruits,” Levi scoffed.
The alpha only shrugged. “If they don’t show a semblance of control, how can I be alpha to them? You took care of the unworthy ones well enough. With all the body bags gathering on my doorstep, I know your killing skills have not atrophied one bit.”

Erwin scoffed, “That doesn’t make you alpha at all. It makes you a coward. How would you fare if a real alpha challenged you?”

Nicholas’s expression became steely. “Be careful what you say, Smith. In our age, your methods are…old fashioned.”

“Compared to your barbaric ones, I’m not concerned,” Erwin stated. “I cannot help you with either of your desires. I advise that you return to your pack.”

The faux joviality returned to Nicholas’s visage. “Can’t say I have much of a pack to return to. My little omega eliminated a fourth of them before you finished off another quarter.”

Erwin stepped in front of Levi, his gaze becoming blue fire. “His name is Levi, and he was never yours. You should have dropped to your knees for him, not shoved him beneath your boot. Get off of my property, Lobov. If you or any of your pack make advances against mine own, my pack has total consent to defend themselves.”

Nicholas stared back coolly, his mind tumbling Erwin’s threats in his mind. He murmured an acknowledgement and said, “All right, Smith, but take my council to heart: you might accuse me of being barbaric, but you have a feral monster standing behind you. I had to bury one of my comrades in two boxes. One for his body, and one significantly smaller.”

Levi scoffed in a way that resembled pride. “He shouldn’t have shoved it down my throat.”

A high pitched yip sliced through the air and all eyes turned to Hange, who was desperately clamping a hand over her mouth, failing to conceal her maniacal laughter. Nicholas’s façade faded to reveal boiling anger and his eyes shined a murky gold color as he folded back into his car and drove off.

Hange unleashed her laughter while Erwin confronted Mike. “I didn’t smell anyone else in the area,” his second informed without prompting.

“Call Pixis and Dok. Lobov will make a move and they should be warned.”

Mike nodded and had his cell phone ready. Erwin waved at Eld in the gatekeeper’s cubicle and rotated to head back to the house to finish cooking, but Hange dragged Levi into a painful hug, still laughing.

“You sick bastard, I think I might love you! You’re as good as in our pack, now!” she practically sang to the sky.

“Hange, if that’s what you consider a good prerequisite, then I’ll start wearing a cup around you,” Mike jibed as he waited between dial tones. Hange released Levi to lift her glasses and wipe tears from her eyes, and Mike poked him in the back to get his attention. “But seriously, I respect anyone who doesn’t take that shit. Welcome to the pack.”

Again, Levi was not sure if he was being commended or discretely shoved under a hot spot light, but Erwin took his hand and drew him back toward the house. Levi glanced up at him and could have sworn there was a curve to his lips.

When they entered the house, Petra, Isabel, and Farlan hopped off the couch and Hange filled them
in. Levi was in the kitchen when he heard Isabel shriek with laughter. He ceased chopping and scrubbed a hand over his eyes, only peeking through his fingers when Farlan came in with a grim expression pointed at Levi.

“I can’t tell if you’re setting a bad example or if Isabel was always this twisted.”

Erwin whirled around, thinking Levi was injured, but after a tense moment, he realized Levi was laughing. A goofy smile broke out across his face at the sound and the sight of Levi’s cheeks turning rosy from guffawing. Erwin looked at Farlan to find soft eyes and a relieved smile; Erwin had never heard Levi laugh, but apparently it had been a long time for Farlan as well. The brother shook his head with fake disappointment and turned his eyes on Erwin.

“Welcome to the family. We’re all a little unhinged, but enjoy your stay,” he said and Erwin could only grin like a fool.

They filled up on pasta salad and Erwin worked with Hange, Petra, and Mike to set up precautionary procedures for any sort of attack, whether it was physical or monetary. Pixis and Nile were informed and made their own preparations that coincided with Erwin’s network; the latter of which had to swear to secrecy regarding his brother in law before Erwin guaranteed extensions of safety for Nile’s pack should an attack occur en mass.

Erwin quickly made some calls regarding his day job before coming upstairs to find his bed made up with fresh bedclothes. Levi had found his navy blue pillowcases and was currently stuffing his down cushions into them.

“Who dresses their bed entirely in white?” he growled into his work. Erwin knew Levi was not actually angry with his choice of bedding because he peeked under the plush white comforter to see that Levi had washed but not switched out the white sheets.

“They’re my softest sheets,” Erwin commented with a sideways glance before going to the bathroom to brush his teeth. “Come here, I’ll wash you.”

“You don’t have to do it every time,” Levi scolded, but nonetheless entered the bathroom. He brushed his teeth in the other sink and draped a towel around his neck for Erwin to clean his glands as Hange prescribed.

He peeked at the towel hanging over one of the French doors. “Why did you choose such a large towel?”

Levi winced slightly at the tingle of soap, but it already hurt less than this morning. He inhaled deeply and replied, “My hand brushed it in the store. I just… wanted it.”

“Hmm, I know the feeling,” Erwin hummed, washing clean water over the gland and switching sides. One of his hands was on Levi’s nape, the other squeezing water behind his ear. He switched to the clean cloth and rinsed the soap from Levi’s neck before setting them aside for the morning. Erwin noticed Levi had retrieved his pajamas and left them folded on the counter. He reached for them, handing the raiment to Levi before letting him have the bathroom to change.

Erwin found his own sleepwear right as Levi was exiting the bathroom. He paused with his hand on the door when Erwin leaned down to kiss his cheek. Levi felt the lips touch and then pull away, but he turned his head, and captured Erwin’s lips with his own.

The kiss was short and clumsy due to Levi’s abrupt decision and Erwin’s surprise, but as soon as it broke, Erwin tilted his head to the other side and curled his arm around Levi’s waist, pulling him
flush against him. Levi hummed at the yank on his body but eagerly reached for Erwin’s face. The pajamas dropped to the floor as Erwin encompassed Levi in his arms, loving the feeling of Levi’s fingers reaching for his hair, tangling there and tugging slightly. He gasped for air but kissed Levi again like he was the source. Levi swayed onto his toes, the better to reach him, and exclaimed when Erwin’s hands landed heavily on his ass, kneading and rocking him up higher.

Levi’s nails dug into Erwin’s nape as he broke away for breath, to mewl, “Erwin…” hungrily.

The next moment, Levi’s back hit the bed, his head falling back on the comforter as Erwin growled deep in his chest, kissing and licking Levi’s jaw, his neck. Erwin was deftly undoing his buttons and leaving a trail along his collarbone, down his sternum, and then he nipped at Levi’s nipple.

“Ah! Hahh…” he squirmed. His knees were bent over the edge of the bed and he wasn’t sure what to do with his legs, so he was rubbing his calves along Erwin’s hips. He was breathing heavily, both from what Erwin was doing to him and from the stifling pressure in his glands. His body wanted to release his scent, to tell Erwin just how much he was affecting him.

Levi’s eyes lolled in their sockets when he felt large hands on his hips, fingers curling into the meat of his buttocks while Erwin’s thumbs pressed into the cradle of his hip bones, making him squirm anew. He realized Erwin’s mouth had drifted down his stomach and was now licking and nipping along the hem of his shorts.

“Levi…may I?”

His gaze jerked down at his blatant erection underneath the fabric and Erwin’s waiting gaze. “Y-You want…?” he inquired with disbelief.

“Yes,” Erwin breathed, and then shocked Levi by nuzzling his groin through the soft fabric. Hot, electric energy thrummed up his body, and then he couldn’t stop the weak cries from escaping his lips as Erwin nipped from the base of his shaft to the tip with firm lips, occasionally letting his teeth graze through the cotton. “I want.”

His fingertips were already curling inside the waistband. He asked again, “May I?”

Levi’s exhale came out in a rush as he nodded frantically. He knew the drawstring was pulled when he felt the shorts instantly loosen and then they were tugged down to slide past his toes. His head perked up to see Erwin’s hungry, husky gaze on him, his lips parted expectantly.

Suddenly, those blue eyes lifted to lock with Levi’s as Erwin’s tongue licked from his base to the tip of his head. Levi had to break contact, his head falling back as he gasped for air against the blissful abuse to his urethra and bud of nerves under the head.

And then his whole body rippled upward at the feeling of Erwin’s mouth around him. His knees hovered uselessly in the air, but Erwin gripped Levi’s waist and moved him further up on the bed, eliciting a thrilled whimper from him. He then hooked his hands beneath Levi’s knees, directing the calves to hang over his shoulders while he lay on his stomach and returned his mouth to Levi’s cock.

Levi’s hands flew to Erwin’s hair, wanting to grip something, to hold him, but his touch was light for fear of hurting him by pulling his hair out. Levi’s hips were beginning to buck against Erwin’s ministrations, urging and begging for more. He felt his pelvis lift off the bed when Erwin rose with Levi’s legs on his shoulders. Levi opened his eyes to see the alpha gazing down at him, a hand caressing his hairline by his temple.
“It’s okay,” he hushed, turning his head to kiss Levi’s thigh. “I’ve got you.”

“Erwin,” he reached for him, and felt his legs drop so Erwin could lunge down for his kiss. Levi’s arms wrapped around his neck, his hands making a thorough mess of Erwin’s hair. His legs enveloped Erwin’s hips, pulling him closer so their groins rubbed together. They both hissed at the coarse feeling of denim separating them.


Erwin grinned guiltily. “I’m afraid if I do there will be nothing stopping me from entering you.”

Levi groaned wantonly. "You're the only alpha who's ever asked to wait."

Erwin growled against his throat, and Levi felt it from their chests pressed together as well as from Erwin’s lips kissing the column of his neck.

“I want to be able to throw you around this bed without fear of hurting you,” he cooed into Levi’s ear, making his eyes roll again from grazing his teeth around the pinna. “Let me take you in my mouth tonight.”

He began to lower back down Levi’s body, but he countered, “What about you?”

Erwin’s next grin was almost devilish. “I’ll get my dues, don’t worry.”

His saliva on Levi’s shaft had cooled, but with the return of Erwin’s hot mouth, all of the blood rushed from Levi’s cranium, and he was lost in Erwin’s mouth, his hands, his warm scent threaded with sultry alpine freshness. Levi began squirming limply as Erwin paused to take his testicles in his mouth, massaging them with his lips, stroking the flesh underneath with pressing licks.

Levi felt his body tensing, his limbs becoming uselessly numb, like all of his nerves had gathered in his pelvis. He felt like something was going to snap or shatter, and then it was like his nerves forgot how to work for a split second before sizzling water engulfed him, racing through his veins to the rest of his body.

He slowly came down from his high as Erwin retraced his path of kisses back up his abdomen, planting soft kisses along his sensitive neck and adams apple. He propped himself on his elbows and gazed down at him, carding the black tresses away from his face. Those blue eyes glimmered serenely as a soft grin curved his lips. He hardly seemed out of breath yet he’d done all of the work, whereas Levi’s chest still heaved with his slow, even breaths. The sight of Levi’s hooded eyes and reddened, swollen lips parted from his orgasm was everything Erwin wanted.

“Beautiful,” he whispered to himself, lowering to kiss Levi lightly, but thoroughly. His tongue licked against Levi’s before he rose off the bed and placed the shorts on the bed for him. “Get comfortable under the covers,” he ushered. “I plan to hold you as I fall asleep this time.”

He changed in the bathroom and once again found Levi nestled in the center of the bed. Erwin opened the covers and climbed in, sliding a strong arm around Levi’s waist and nuzzling his shoulder and neck, breathing him in so the soft, clean, and slightly sweet scent of Levi drifted in his dreams.

Chapter End Notes
I made Nicholas Lobov younger than he appears in the anime to avoid pedophiliac undertones in regards to his interaction with Levi. He's just a possessive douche, plain and simple.
A breakfast date goes awry.

Levi was conscious enough to feel that it was just after dawn. The room was still dark but the time of day wasn’t his problem. He whipped the covers off in a huff and rolled onto his stomach, half hanging off the bed since everywhere on the damn thing was covered by a human furnace. It was a large mattress, capable of holding two Erwins, but somehow the alpha had managed to stretch across all of it.

One of those heavy arms unconsciously reached for Levi, but he moaned and swatted it away. “No! I want to sleep with a man, not a fire demon.”

Erwin mumbled something that might have been his name as he rolled across the mattress, still seeking Levi. Erwin’s skin was warm to the touch, and Levi’s shirt had already ridden up to his nipples as he felt the man’s chest press to his back.

Levi sat up with another harsh exhalation, and shoved Erwin off him by his round shoulders. “It’s too fucking hot! What the hell happened to your air conditioner? It’s usually Icelandic in here!”

“Sorry,” he grinned sleepily, like he wasn’t sorry at all. “The moon’s waxing.”

Levi didn’t even care what that implied, he was so heated. He felt like Erwin was climbing toward a thousand degrees, causing Levi’s pajamas to cling to his skin, whereas the ridiculous blonde looked as cool as an ocean breeze.

He smelled like one too.

“I need to get out of this bed,” Levi declared, swinging his legs over the side. He marched his way to the bathroom and cranked the shower on while shedding his sticky garments. He jumped slightly at the rush of cold water on his flesh, but he adjusted it and just leaned against the wall, relishing the heat oozing out of him. He was finally feeling relief when the shower door spontaneously opened, and Erwin stepped inside the octagonal cubicle.

As if Levi wasn’t even there, he ducked his head under the water pouring from the showerhead in the ceiling like rain, raking his hands through the gold tresses. “What are you doing?” he exclaimed.

Erwin gazed at him vacantly. “Bathing.”

“I want a shower, not a steam room!” he shot back, throwing the door open. “Get out!”

“You know, I’m beginning to think you’re not a morning person.”

He shut the door again and reached for his spongy loofah. Drizzling some form of soap on it, he began lathering his neck, shoulders, and torso. Levi felt his back against the wall as his senses were bombarded with the salty freshness of the sea and alpine spice that so inhabited Erwin’s natural scent. Levi felt like chucking the bottle out of the shower in the attempt that Erwin would go fetch
it and leave him be.

Levi realized that Erwin’s eyes were on him. “Turn. I’ll wash you.”

Before he could respond, Levi felt his shoulders pivoted and he was staring at the wall as Erwin rubbed sudsy circles across his shoulders and down his back. As he went, Erwin massaged the soap and fragrance into Levi’s skin, working away the years of tension in the cords of his neck and back so Levi had to grip the wall as he felt himself swaying.

“This isn’t fair.”

“What isn’t?” Erwin wondered.

“You…your stupid scent…and those stupidly big hands of yours.”

Erwin chuckled close to him and planted a wet kiss on his neck. “Is it so wrong that I want to take care of you?”

Levi’s forehead touched the misty tiles of the wall and he admitted quietly, “It’s not what I’m used to.”

“I know,” Erwin murmured deeply, resting his chin on Levi’s shoulder, “but get used to it. The full moon’s coming, and I won’t be able to keep my stupidly big hands off of you.”

Part of Levi’s body melted while others tensed, causing him to be a rigid mess when Erwin pulled him back against his body. “Levi, what’s wrong?”

Levi couldn’t help notice that he made a point to bring Levi’s ass against his hip instead of directly against his groin. Erwin was so considerate of Levi’s anxieties that he could barely stand it. “The full moon…isn’t a good time for me.”

“It will be this time,” he assured quietly, leaning over Levi’s shoulder to touch his cheek with his own. “You know, my grandmother was omega.”

Levi turned his head to peer at him. “No I didn’t.”

Erwin nodded. “She was a gentle woman, but she had fire in her soul, like you. She came from a time and place where omegas and alphas worked together to manage the pack. My grandfather worshiped her like a queen. Even in their medieval age, they could rattle the rooftops with their arguments, but they taught me what it means to have someone so precious. They were each other’s alpha and omega, the beginning and end to one another. Nicholas knew the potential you had to control alphas, but he implemented it all wrong.”

Erwin had recommenced washing Levi’s chest and arms, taking the opportunity to lace their fingers together. Levi realized Erwin was blushing as he finished, “What I’m saying is, you might complain about my hands, but I’m wrapped around your fingers.”

Levi swallowed as he processed that. In the end he could only say, “I don’t know why you’re associating me with fire. I could cook eggs on you.”

Erwin gave him a blank look and then guffawed. Levi relinquished a smile, observing how water droplets bounced off the man’s wide frame and toned muscles. “And you keep surprising me, which I like.”

“Well I would say you’re damn easy to please,” Levi teased, “but then you go full alpha on me and
drag me to breakfast dates.”

Suddenly, a mischievous glimmer bloomed in Erwin’s eyes. “Mmm…that doesn’t sound too bad, actually. I’m due for another mimosa anyway.”

Levi rolled his eyes and bared his neck. “Clean my glands first, alpha, since you’re so insistent on treating me.”

Erwin smiled, “Certainly,” and grabbed a bar of soap that would be gentler than the scented body wash. As he cleaned, he noted, “You’re healing quickly. The moon’s likely the reason. How do you feel?”

“It doesn’t hurt as much anymore,” Levi agreed, “but Hange was right about feeling like I’m suffocating. My glands need air. The scabs are like deadweights on them.”

“They’re beginning to flake off,” Erwin assured. “Just a few more days, probably—no, I’ll do that.”

Levi sighed, handing over the shampoo. “You have a servant complex or something.”

“I don’t want the chemicals to burn in your glands,” he defended, “and it is better to use the same soap so close to the glands anyways.”

Levi crossed his arms, letting Erwin lather his hands with the bar of soap before massaging his scalp. Levi would have been annoyed longer if Erwin’s fingers didn’t make his head fall back on the alpha’s shoulder. He felt a soft kiss on his temple as the soap was combed from his hair, and then fingertips tilted his chin, and Levi felt those lips on his own. As much as Levi’s independence winced, his eyes were closed, relishing the feeling of his alpha nurturing him, pampering him—

His eyes flew open and Erwin broke the kiss, sensing Levi’s change in mood. *My alpha...* his mind rasped. The sentiment was so foreign that Levi felt an odd pit in his stomach which could only be happiness, but as he tumbled the notion over and over in his head, that pit jarringly sprouted and bloomed into something all consuming.

“What?” Erwin wondered, watching him carefully.

“Put those hands on me,” he breathed, suddenly feeling his own temperature skyrocket. Technically, Erwin was already holding him, but one hand lifted to hold his nape with the other palmed his ass. His mouth hovered over Levi’s, ready to claim and explore, but then the hand on his nape curled around so his fingertips were on Levi’s collarbone, guiding them to the shower floor.

Erwin had been half-hard during the entire shower, but when he pulled Levi down to straddle his lap, their genitals pressed together, causing them both to gasp as their erections stood tall. Levi moaned and weakly rutted against him before he intently latched his mouth onto Erwin’s gland. His blue eyes shot wide before drooping huskily, holding onto Levi for support as his tongue tickled and pressed hard into the delicate membrane. It swirled over the gland, creating a spiral of pressure that deepened the tighter the circle became before lightening as the circle widened again. The constant torment was bliss and agony for Erwin, causing him to want more while also wishing to just sit here and enjoy it.

When Levi’s teeth grazed the flesh, though, and a hot breath rushed over the hypersensitive area, Erwin’s hips jerked upward. Levi exclaimed, breaking contact with his neck so his forehead fell onto Erwin’s shoulder. “Do that again…” he ushered breathlessly.
Erwin closed a hand around their cocks and held Levi’s ass with the other, slipping a finger into his crevasse to massage his entrance. “Oh!” he murmured at the contact, and then exhaled, “Oh-hhhoh…” as Erwin thrust upward again.

“Move with me,” he prompted, and that was all Levi needed. He snapped his hips forward, eliciting a throaty cry from Erwin, who kept a firm hold on their cocks while Levi moved his hips again. Erwin felt his fingers gripping his shoulders until Levi threw his arms around his neck, pumping his hips against Erwin with abandon. His lips crashed against Levi’s, needing to taste him and demanding the contact of his tongue. Levi moaned and responded in kind, pinning Erwin against the wall as he tugged on his bottom lip with his teeth.

“Ah, fuck! Levi…” Erwin gasped. He was right on the edge, just a little further….

Levi released a weak cry, shuddering and hugging him close as he haphazardly tried to keep going even while his orgasm wrecked through his body. Erwin snapped his hips once more, and enclosed Levi with a tight arm, holding him still as they both rode the titanic wave of pleasure to its shores.

Even though Erwin was still somewhere in the haze of his orgasm, he began kissing Levi’s neck, barely pressing around the scab of his gland. He knew it was a moot action until the membrane was healed, but Erwin wanted to be close to him and that special, vulnerable part of him.

Levi lifted his head from Erwin’s shoulder and gazed at him with heavy lidded eyes. “It’s still hot.”

Erwin smiled and pulled his nape for a long, soft kiss. “Let’s go get breakfast.”

Once they dried off, Erwin revealed that he’d moved Levi’s raiment to an entire rack and pillar of shelves in the walk-in closet. Levi wasn’t sure which gave him pause: for a wealthy man, Erwin had a such small number of clothes that he was able to move them to one side of the closet, but Levi had obviously so few garments that even the space he was given was not entirely filled.

Erwin snuck a kiss on his neck, breaking through Levi’s reverie so he could carefully pull a shirt over his head and jump into a clean pair of jeans. It was only as they left the closet that Levi realized this meant he was not only staying in Erwin’s house, but he was living with Erwin.

“Whatever you’re thinking, stop thinking it,” the alpha chided, holding his bedroom door open for him and examining his features keenly.

Levi opened his mouth to make some retort, but Isabel popped into view and warned, “You have to be careful about his face. It sticks sometimes, and always in the worst expressions.”

His mouth twisted in a scowl and she frowned at him. “Like that.”

“I have a right to my own mind and facial contortions,” he snapped. Erwin placed a gently hand on his back to usher him out of the room, and just that touch cooled his boil down to a simmer.

“Of course you do,” Isabel agreed. “And as your sister, I retain the right to call you out on it. What’s the breakfast plan, Erwin?”

The alpha grinned. “We’re going out. Tell Farlan to be ready in five minutes.”

“Let me find my pants!” the brother in question shouted from the other end of the hall.

While they waited downstairs, Erwin murmured, “What were you thinking about?”

Levi’s arms were crossed as he revealed, “That I’m…we…that we’re really living together.”
He peeked up to gauge Erwin’s expression and received a puzzled look before it dawned on him. “Oh! Ah…I should have asked before I moved your things. Does it bother you?”

Levi pondered that for a long minute before saying, “No…it doesn’t…but that’s what bothers me.”

Erwin chuckled with a shake of his head. “If it’s not broken, don’t fix it, and if it’s fixed, don’t break it. It sounds like you’re going out of your way to find something wrong.”

Levi’s brow furrowed. Maybe he was right…he simply wasn’t used to everything aligning so well in his life. Perhaps he just needed to lie back and smell the figurative roses…or Erwin. Erwin would do.

They made it to the familiar restaurant, and it was early enough so they did not require a reservation. Levi and Erwin sat on one end of the booth, while Isabel and Farlan claimed the other. Erwin went ahead and ordered two mimosas for him and Levi, while Farlan requested an iced coffee and Isabel had a vanilla cappuccino.

In the meantime, Farlan inquired, “Levi, what are you going to do about work? I mean, the café’s closed for reconstruction, but are you going back to the library?”

In truth, Levi hadn’t thought about returning to work, and he said as much. “Over a week without a word, I figured I was fired.”

“Pixis owns the library,” Erwin provided. “You won’t have any trouble there.”

“Of course he does,” Levi scoffed. Isabel then announced that she had to use the bathroom, and hopped out of the booth. Levi’s gaze darted downward, where Erwin’s hand was sliding over his leg so his fingers rested along his inner thigh. The man himself was gazing around the restaurant, though, patiently awaiting his food. Levi reckoned the man had an innate need to touch people, especially Levi, since he was subconsciously reaching for him all the time. Levi was rather charmed by that, as if he hadn’t realized how much he wanted Erwin to touch him all these years. He involuntarily hummed deep in his chest, causing Erwin’s head to swivel around towards him. Those blue eyes lit up with understanding and a goofy smile curved his lips, making Levi look away in the direction of a massive, yet functional, decorative clock on the wall.

He frowned. Isabel should have been back three minutes ago. Call it a strange talent, but she was simply the fastest pisser alive; Farlan had timed her once, and she’d managed to empty an entire bladder of mai tais within thirty-eight seconds.

Dislodging Erwin’s hand, Levi slid from the booth, striding to where the bathrooms were. He knocked on the women’s door, and opened it a crack. “Isabel?”

No response. Levi walked right in and found every stall empty. He checked the men’s room even though it was unlikely there had been a line three minutes ago that would have compelled her to use the men’s bathroom.

Nothing.

Returning to the female’s bathroom, he threw the bowl of potpourri into the garbage and inhaled deeply. He vaguely scented Isabel’s light, familiar warmth, like summer peaches, and lemons. But something tickled his nostrils, something bitterly tangy, foreign…yet familiar.

For a split second, he stared at his silver eyes in the mirror before bursting out of the bathroom and colliding with Erwin’s chest.
“Oof! L-Levi?” he stammered. Levi was already dashing around him, but Erwin saw he was nearly feral and caught his elbow in an iron grip.

“Call Mike!” he snarled. “They have Isabel!”

Erwin meant to yank Levi back, but a jab to the hillock of muscle in his forearm as well as a pinch to the pressure point in his elbow caused him to let go. Levi was out of the restaurant by the time he caught up and all but tackled him to the pavement.

“Levi! Calm down!”

“Don’t tell me to calm DOWN!” he snarled. “THEY HAVE MY SISTER!”

“What the fuck’s happening?” Farlan exclaimed, emerging from the restaurant.

Despite Levi’s fierce struggles, Erwin’s arms did not relent. His tone was contrarily calm as he informed, “Isabel’s been kidnapped.”

The blood visibly drained from Farlan’s face, and within seconds he looked ready to topple over. Meanwhile, Levi was still thrashing. “I’LL KILL THE—ehh!”

His words strangled in his throat when Erwin’s arms tightened, restricting his air and threatening to break his ribs. “Levi,” he growled over his ear. “What do you plan to do? Walk in and hope Nicholas will trade? Kill them all? Nicholas would only keep both of you and there are too many of them to take down by yourself. Be smart, Levi. You’re not saving anyone by just running after her.”

He could feel Levi weakening even though his body still felt tense, ready to flee. “Erwin…the moon…” he warned, and then it came out in a panicked gasp, “The full moon! They’ll…it doesn’t matter if she’s human. They’ll…”

He finally slumped against Erwin, who loosened his hold to allow Levi’s lungs to expand rapidly, gulping down air. Erwin half-dragged, half-walked Levi over to where Farlan stood, just as shocked as Levi was panicked and angry. Curling his other arm around Farlan, he hushed, “Sshhh, I know, Levi. But that won’t happen. We will get her back before the peak of the moon's cycle, and if they’ve so much as placed an untoward finger on her, we will destroy the whole fucking pack.”

Levi’s gaze jerked up, his body eerily tranquil all of a sudden. But his eyes were deep, multifaceted silver.
Levi’s knees bounced impatiently on the carpet, waiting for Erwin to emerge from Nile’s stupidly large house. Hange had told him more than once that he was shaking the whole car, and he’d promptly told her to fuck off.

Finally, Mike emerged out of the front door, followed by Erwin, and the pair strode across the front lawn to resume their places in the front seats. Erwin informed, “Nile says that Nicholas’s pack has gone quiet, which only means that they are being held tight in their section of town. They’re being discrete with keeping Isabel prisoner, but they’re waiting for us to make a move.”

“Nile’s clean,” Mike proffered. “He hasn’t visited the Lobov pack in a long time, and the man reeks when he lies. I didn’t smell anything on him.”

“So what, we have to draw them out?” Levi responded haughtily. If he had it his way, he’d run into the Lobov pack and take down every alpha he met until he found Isabel, and Erwin knew it. Those blue eyes met his in the rearview mirror.

“No, they will be expecting something from us. We have to catch them unaware, and obliterate them when we do.”

Levi liked the sound of that, and apparently Hange did too. She giggled menacingly, “Excellent. Some members of the pack have been itching for a fight.”

“This needs to be discrete,” Erwin quickly curtailed. “I don’t want word of this spreading throughout the pack just yet, is that understood?”

“Yes, Alpha,” she nodded obediently. “But don’t put me in charge of looking after Farlan or this git.” She jabbed a thumb in Levi’s direction. He growled deep in his chest but Erwin replied calmly as he navigated through the city.

“Of course not. You will assist me in planning a break in; I need both you and Petra when we take down this pack. Eld and Gunther will be charged with Farlan’s care.”

Mike’s attention was piqued. “Obliterate? You plan to exterminate every alpha? Other packs will react to this and it may cause you to be an enemy throughout the city.”
“There will be a contingent plan,” Erwin assured. “I am aware that several alphas were either forced to join Lobov or will take very little convincing to leave. If anyone surrenders, they will go free. All who fight back, however, will die.”

“How can you know those who surrender will not regroup later on or feed slander to other packs?” Mike challenged, not threateningly, but it was a justified concern.

“You’re overestimating them, Erwin,” Levi agreed. “It takes a certain type of person to join Nicholas’s community. I should know…I let them in.”

“Nonetheless,” Erwin said with finality, “We’re already erasing a pack off the map, and Pixis and I are ready to reclaim the real estate once they are gone; as many casualties as there will be, there will also be survivors, and the first order of business will be to give them back their homes, to establish peace as quickly as possible but still keep them under our order. I can’t plan for a short term battle without considering the long after effects.”

“That’s fine,” Mike assured, “You just have a habit of being idealistic in a realistic situation. Plan for the worst, but salvage the best.”

Erwin was contemplative for the rest of the drive. Mike and Hange were chatty but he and Levi remained silent. The latter stared out the window, hating this city for chewing him up and then spitting all over his family. Isabel had her moments, but she didn’t deserve anything like this.

Farlan was still as pale as Erwin’s sheets when Levi walked through the door. His brother glanced hopefully, but Levi’s gaze landed on the man next to him, who smiled peacefully. “Good evening, Levi,” Pixis greeted.

“Pixis,” Erwin acknowledged. “This must be urgent for you to leave the Rose.”

The man sat tranquilly on the couch, but Erwin noticed his eyes seemed brighter than normal. Levi must have seen it also, because he went to sit on the arm of the couch, placing his arm around Farlan’s shoulders.

“I decided to give you some input,” he declared, “because I can feel the moon waxing, and I can see its effect on the visitors to my establishments. I reckon you have two days to get this girl back, before she is tortured beyond recognition or killed.”

Farlan’s complexion dropped another shade even though he tried to keep steel in his eyes. Levi’s fingers clawed into the fabric of his brother’s shoulder.

Pixis continued, “The Lobov pack is a parasite on this entire city, and you’re going to need assistance wiping it out. I know you visited Nile this evening, and I suggest you visit him again to kick a sturdy foot in his ass. My pack is ready. The three of us should attack tomorrow morning. We’ll be done by lunch.”

Levi knew he was not the only person staring at him, dumbfounded. He knew Pixis was serious, but his suggestion was both clever and suicidal. The notion of getting Isabel back so soon was overwhelming, however, and he looked to Erwin.

“Nile will want no part in this,” Erwin countered. “What we are prepared to do is murder. It’s his job to put murderers in prison.”

Pixis’ eyes glimmered. “You and I both know that the mayor of this city is alpha, and humans are a minority. The city is run by human legislation for show, while pack law rules. Most of the men and women Nile puts behind bars are alphas incorporated in Lobov’s pack. He would be foolish not to
assist us in this. As I said: we could be done by lunch time tomorrow.”

Erwin looked at the clock on his wall. “There’s hardly enough time to plan.” He spoke as if it was just another complication, not a deterrent.

Pixis tipped his head at that. “That’s why someone should drag Nile out by the hair and put him to work. I foolishly sold Nicholas the land for his pack decades ago, but I have resources doing reconnaissance as we speak. From what they’ve given me so far, the man has hardly changed the landscape. I know it without a map.”

He abruptly turned to Levi and stated, “People are complaining at the club. I want you singing next weekend.”

“We’ll talk about it over lunch,” Levi returned. Pixis smiled and looked to Erwin for confirmation. The alpha seemed to be thinking deeply, and after a long moment, silently turned to Mike, who simply smiled and walked out the door. For some reason, Levi suspected Mike was anticipating dragging Nile out of his posh house with menacing glee.

Levi pulled Farlan off the couch, then, and guided him to the kitchen while Erwin and Pixis continued discussing plans for the morning. “Can you do it?” Farlan inquired hopefully, but also warily. “It sounds reckless.”

“That’s because it is,” he confirmed, searching through Erwin’s cabinets until he found what he wanted: nighttime medicine and alcohol. Levi pulled out the blender, piled in ice and poured a good amount of medicine in with the vodka and whatever fruit juice Erwin had. After a couple minutes, he poured the toxic slushy into a glass and handed it to Farlan. “This will help you sleep.”

Actually, it would knock him the fuck out until they had Isabel back, but Levi didn’t want Farlan worrying, or even trying to join them in the rescue. He slurped down two gulps before he reared back from the beverage. “This is foul.”

“I’m a barista, not a bartender. Just keep drinking,” Levi commanded. Farlan reluctantly returned to the glass until he was drinking from it regularly, buzzed enough to no longer care how it tasted. When he finished two glasses, Levi called it quits. “All right, you’re done. I’m trying to make you pass out, not get alcohol poisoning.”

Farlan hiccupped and let himself be guided up the stairs. Levi helped remove his shoes and worn jeans so Farlan could starfish comfortably in his bed. He was snoring within minutes.

Levi met Erwin in the hall, the latter informing, “Pixis left to help Mike with Nile and finish planning.”

Frowning, Levi said, “Shouldn’t you be a part of that? Shouldn’t we both be a part of that?”

“We are the cavalry of the plan,” Erwin murmured. “Our job is simple: kill everyone between us and Isabel. Nile will be securing the neighborhood as well as several square miles so the rest of the city isn’t alerted to the goings on, and Pixis will be guarding the parameters of the community, catching any runaways or blocking any calls for aid.”

Levi knew that between Erwin’s ability to plan and maneuver, Pixis’ greed for real estate and his surplus of technology, and Nile’s resources as police chief, their chances for saving Isabel were high, but he still hoped it was enough.

He startled slightly when Erwin’s palm touched his cheek, not realizing he’d been staring off into space, but then he felt himself lean into it, seeking the comfort of the alpha. “We’ll get her back,
Levi,” he purred.

Levi was not sure what would happen if they didn’t. Erwin was planning leagues ahead into the future, and Levi was realizing that he also had to take into concern all of the possibilities. If Isabel…well, he and Farlan had each other, but Isabel was an integral piece to their puzzle. They certainly had the support of Erwin and his pack, but then there was the issue of how they may not come back in the morning. Farlan could wake up to a hangover and a phone call telling him the worst had happened…

“Sshhh…” Erwin hushed, leaning down to kiss between Levi’s eyes. “Stop thinking. I need your wings to be strong tomorrow. We should try and get some sleep. Is there any of that concoction left?”

Levi nodded and they brought up the blending glass to their room, sipping between them until it was all gone and their breaths reeked of cough syrup. Erwin didn’t make advances toward Levi, nor vice versa. Both men were too preoccupied for lusty thoughts, let alone sex, but Levi let Erwin pull him against his side, and he curled around Erwin, snuggling into his warmth, using it as an anchor in his nightmares.

Even with the medical smoothie, though, Levi slept as if he were waiting for something; semi-conscious enough to hear the air conditioning kick on, shut off, start again, and how the air currents wandered the corridors, whispering as they crept beneath the doors. Erwin slept like the grave, the only clues that he was alive being the rise and fall of his chest, the occasional hand reaching for some part of Levi.

Levi wondered when that had really begun, when had Erwin inserted Levi so deeply in his subconscious that he desired him even in his sleep. It must have been quite a day when Marie figured out that Erwin not only knew she was a spy, but her attentions were for naught.

Levi’s eyes opened, staring at the ceiling but not seeing it. He was watching Marie in the shadows between two houses again, arguing and complaining into a cell phone.

He’s not fucking interested! she’d said. Strange, how she would be so undone by Erwin’s unwillingness to sleep with her when she had a mate waiting at home.

Oh please…the blonde has no idea about that, let alone how the banks are running dry. What do you take me for? He’s too busy coddling his neighbors.

No idea about what? There was something there Levi was missing, something he’d arrived too late to hear, or departed too soon to gather. Now that he thought about it, Marie was just as odd as Nile; the man loses his mate, stops searching for her killer in order to help wipe out his brother in law’s entire pack? The pack Marie originated…from…

Levi shot up in bed, his mind tumbling everything he’d seen and heard over in his brain, all the pieces sliding into place.

Erwin doesn’t know she was spying for Nicholas, not Nile…

With Marie latched to Nile, Nicholas would have indirect sway over the entire police force, a connection which had to have been severed when Marie died; not to mention eyes and ears in Erwin’s pack—one of the top three communities in the entire city. Without Marie, Nicholas was just another alpha, and a desperate one. Taking Isabel was a rash move, but she was the thread that unraveled Levi, then Erwin, then Nile, and even Pixis, whom Nicholas had only managed to purchase land from, but not actually hold sway over.
Levi glanced back at Erwin still asleep. The man had rolled over when Levi shot up, loosely wrapping his arms around Levi’s pelvis, but he still slept soundly. He was not the only one who could be thinking well into the future, and as Levi realized their situation, his heart began to sink and sink somewhere beneath the bed.

Nicholas knows he’s outnumbered and is letting us walk into a trap. The pack will be demolished but the blame will be on us. Three packs will be discredited and punished, while that bastard will rise to power. Isabel’s not there.

Levi berated himself for not figuring this out sooner. Erwin’s problem wasn’t that he was overestimating the Lobov pack, but underestimating Nicholas. Nicholas would not keep someone so innocent and fragile somewhere his alphas could reach her, at least if he was smart, he wouldn’t. Isabel was a bartering token. Levi had been with him long enough to know how he operated.

Carefully rising from the bed, Levi made sure Erwin continued to sleep while he descended the stairs and stepped outside. He listened carefully as he circled the house to make sure he had complete privacy before he scrolled through his telephone contact list. He’d placed a Z before the man’s name, just to make sure it was at the bottom and out of sight, but now Levi selected Nicholas’s name, and waited.

It barely rang at all before he heard, “Hello, Levi.”

He scowled. “How did you know?”

The alpha’s voice was tranquil, almost charming, if Levi had not felt like vomiting just from hearing it. “Because I made you remember my number, once upon a time. I know you’re smarter than all of them. Would you like to speak to her?”

Levi hesitated. What test would Levi fail if he admitted he wanted to speak with his sister? In the end, it didn’t matter. “Yes.”

The air was static for a brief moment, and then a hesitant, “Hello? Levi?”

“You,” he breathed with relief. She sounded as defiant as ever, not frightened or struggling.

“When the fuck are you coming to get me? This dude’s a total perv: he only has shitty toothpaste for me to use, the air reeks of fucking sulfur and charcoal, and I don’t care what he says, the place is fucking haunted.”

Levi almost grinned as she began to complain some more when the phone was taken away from her. That’s my girl.

“As you can tell, we’re having a lovely time,” Nicholas sighed, like he was jaded from babysitting. “But she misses you. That makes two of us. You recall where I live, don’t you, Levi?”

You lying piece of shit, I know where you are. “Yes, I’ll see you in a few hours, in fact.”

“I look forward to your company as ever, little omega.”

Nicholas likely hung up right then, but Levi beat him to it and immediately opened up his texts. He made a point to have Erwin’s number in the new mobile his warranty allowed, and typed quickly before placing the device in the pocket he’d sewn a zipper into, and then made his way down the drive. He couldn’t go through the gate: Eld would alert Erwin immediately. Levi took a running head start toward the end of the street, using a car and a SUV like a staircase onto the roof of a
house, and then he was clear over the community wall. He landed softly in a roll on the other side, but kept his momentum up as he vaulted over the gate to the park, and sprinted across the city, using the clues Isabel had given him as his guide.

When Erwin awoke with the first light of dawn, he rolled over and inhaled the scent of Levi on the pillow…and then perked his head up to see if a light was on in the bathroom. Erwin sat up like an electric shock had cours ed through him. He immediately grabbed his cellphone on the bedside dresser. He had a series of messages from Pixis and Nile regarding the plans in an hour, as well as emails from work, but most recently was one from Levi:

*It’s a trap. Isabel’s not there. Do nothing until you hear from me.*

His blue irises roiled like fire in the dawn darkness. “LEVI!” he roared, bursting out of the room.

Chapter End Notes

PLEASE READ: don’t fret, I will be completing this fic, but afterward I will be taking a break to explore another fanfic genre. Until then, please please please vote in the comments of my work titled *Upcoming Eruri*. You can find it on my page, and what it is, is a short list of settings for Erwin, Levi, and the gang, but you get to choose what alternate universe I write them in next! Please subscribe to either that fic, or directly to me so you can keep up to date as to when I begin writing new projects :) Love you all and thanks so much for reading, kudos, and comments!
Alpha and Omega

Chapter Summary

Levi confronts Nicholas.

Chapter Notes

:) Check out Upcoming Eruri please!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Pixis chuckled while Nile’s eyes seemed to be doing their best to leap out of his skull. “Who did what?”


“He’s the one we’re risking our necks and reputations for isn’t he?” Nile demanded. “How could you let him just leave?”

Erwin inhaled deeply and exhaled slowly for patience. “He has a mind of his own, but I did not anticipate him to move forward without telling me.”

Honestly, Erwin was livid and, frankly, deeply insulted. Levi left him with nothing but a cryptic message and had not even bothered waking him up to at least tell him in person what he was going, let alone explaining his reasoning.

“Mike is tracking him as we speak, but I want our plan to be put in place as if nothing is wrong. As rash as Levi is being, we must act like everything is controlled, but we will not attack until he contacts me…or Mike drags him back by the hair.”

He growled the last bit to himself, but Pixis was close enough so that he smirked. “Afterward, when should I expect an invitation to your nuptials?”

The question walloped him so hard from left field that Erwin’s expression mirrored Nile’s. His mouth opened but he wound up gaping like a fish while Hange cut into their discussion. “Did I hear something about a wedding? The kind with champagne? Cake? Otherwise don’t bother inviting me.”

Petra’s attention jerked their way and she declared, “For the last time, Hange! We’re not getting married!”

Hange shot back. “Not us—although I’ve already chosen a venue, you’ll love it! I was talking about Erwin and Levi!”

“HOLD ON,” Erwin announced, holding his palms out defensively. “There is no wedding happening until this godforsaken morning is finished. Hange, keep your mouth shut when we get Levi back. He’s only been comfortable with any of this for a short time, weddings are out of the
question. And you,” he glared at Pixis, “where did that even come from?”

“Well of course I’d give you a deal on the Rose for the reception,” the man offered. “Only a deaf, dumb, and blind man would think the pair of you weren’t mates. Just because you lack the ceremony of it doesn’t mean you haven’t established yourselves.”

If Pixis’ goal was for Erwin to momentarily forget their strenuous situation, he’d succeeded. Erwin had never even thought about a wedding of all things because he was too busy just keeping Levi in the same room with him, then making sure he was comfortable in the same bed. Yes, he’d anticipated mating Levi, but not after the two weeks or so of them really knowing one another, and he did not expect Levi to be one for ceremony…Then again, he was a performer…

But he had to get Levi back first, and that boiled his blood all over again. The alpha in him felt like throttling something until Levi returned, and then promptly shoving him into a bed to mark him as his own. Of course, Levi would not tolerate that in the least, and that fight instinct was one of the reasons Erwin adored him. He just hoped that instinct held out long enough.

“Ah, fuck the gods!” he cursed with relief when his phone chimed in his pocket. Hange and Pixis shared a look while Erwin growled, “Yes?”

“Got him,” Mike reported. “He’s on the northwest side of town. Little fucker is fast and damn hard to track. You’re lucky I’m not afraid of heights, Alpha.”

“Where is he?” Erwin demanded.

“Penthouse in the Marie Sinatlas Hotel…literally, he just flew over the alley and broke through the window.”

“Secure the building but don’t send up an alert,” Erwin ordered, and then he grabbed Nile’s keys right out of his hand. “I’m borrowing your car.”

Before a retort or complaint could be heard, Erwin had the hidden flashers of the sports car glittering and he shot into traffic.

Levi had examined the windows and their living rooms or bedroom beyond before he noticed that the topmost one seemed to lack any occupants. Levi climbed higher on the structure he was using as a vantage point and crouched next to a stone gargoyle. Below, he could see the streets lined with cheap convenience stores that sold shitty toothpaste, and to his far right, was the river that reeked of sulfur and coal since it was polluted by embargo ships transporting goods.

There. Nicholas flashed into view, crossing from the living room to the kitchen. Levi knew the distance between his perch and the notoriously haunted hotel was short, and luckily, his belief in superstition was nil since he’d experienced enough bad luck for a lifetime. Since Nicholas had the penthouse apartment with the awful view of an alleyway, the luck seemed to be in his favor.

Levi stretched his legs briefly, and stepped back onto the balcony for a running start. This was a one-shot deal; he had to get it right. He felt the familiar acidity of adrenaline running through his system, causing his hair to stand on end, gooseflesh to ripple on his skin. He blocked the world out so he only saw the window, the rectangular parameter that was his gateway.

He ran, he stepped and jumped, and he flew. Levi’s forearms braced over his head for impact. The glass bent and shattered against his arms and he had a split second to tilt his body and land in a roll across the creamy carpet.

Then he was on his feet, leaping again to vault over the bar acting as a wall to the kitchen. Nicholas
was coming out the door to meet the commotion, so Levi gripped the edge of the sink and swung so his legs kicked the alpha into the living room. Nicholas lurched forward, but his reaction was immediate. He spun around, arm swinging, which Levi narrowly reared back to dodge before he felt himself being driven back toward the kitchen.

He couldn’t be confined in a small space, so he ducked and barreled right into Nicholas’s pelvis. It was not the most graceful of maneuvers, but it did the job. The alpha acted as if to catch him, underestimating Levi’s strength and had the air knocked out of him when his spine hit the floor.

“Levi!” Isabel exclaimed, bursting from the bedroom. Levi spared a second to see that she was fully clothed and appeared unharmed.

The second was all Nicholas needed, though. Levi coughed a snarl as the muscular arm cuffed under his chin, strangling him. Isabel screamed something and ran forward, but Levi used gravity and strength to force Nicholas to tumble over his head. The alpha kept his hold, and the two of them rolled several times before Levi slammed his elbow into the man’s diaphragm.

They burst apart, both men gasping for air. Levi yelled, “Isabel, stay in the bedroom!”

“But—” she protested, but his fangs were out, his eyes silver.

“NOW!”

She scurried obediently inside, while Nicholas chuckled. “Where’s your alpha?”

“Where’s yours?” Levi threw in his face. Nicholas grimaced as if he were about to laugh off the insult, but then Levi purred, “Oh right…I killed her.”

The alpha’s expression fell into a blank stare, but his eyes glowed. “You’re good, but you’re not good enough for that.”

Levi’s grin was wolfish and malicious. “That’s what I thought when she tried to come up behind me for listening to your phone call.”

Nicholas was on his feet so quickly Levi took a punch near his eye before he blocked the furious blows pelting his way. He’d succeeded in getting Nicholas livid, which made him predictable, albeit inescapably strong and fast.

Levi’s left eye watered to the point that tears slid down his cheek, and he could feel his cheekbone throbbing up to his temple, but he met Nicholas’s blows with parries and counterattacks of his own. He felt his knuckles split against the alpha’s mouth, but blood flowed down his chin and Nicholas spat out teeth. Levi felt his hair sticking to his sweaty temples and brow; Nicholas’s was plastered against his neck, which caused Levi to smirk.

“Age over beauty,” he taunted when they reached a momentary stalemate, arms braced against each other. By this point, Nicholas’s steam had simmered down, and he relinquished a bloody smile.

“Hate me all you like, little one, but I taught you well.”

Levi’s smirk faded and his eyes glimmered brighter than ever, but before he could retort or retaliate in some way, the front door broke down and some colossal mass slammed between them. Levi barely managed to disengage so his arms weren’t broken, but he stared dazedly from the floor at the alphas colliding with such force that human bones would have snapped.
Levi rose to his feet, tackling Erwin out of the way and recommencing his attack on Nicholas, but his opponent knew better than to go against a feral alpha and an abnormal omega. Levi’s claws tried to catch on Nicholas’s shirt as he ran, but he leaped out of the same window Levi had come in from, and Levi did not hesitate in following.

His fingertips gripped the concrete ledge before hoisting himself beside the gargoyles. He only vaguely registered that this was a different experience in free running for him. Usually Levi ran out of fear, running from something…now he ran toward, determination spurring him forward.

To his credit, Nicholas was balanced and agile despite his age, but he did not know this city from the sky’s view as Levi did. He hopped down the levels of a familiar parking garage, leapt off a statue’s plinth, and tackled Nicholas right through the door of the library’s balcony. Their momentum was such that a hard wooden bookcase toppled along with another made of metal rails. Levi’s lungs were full of air, roaring as he drove Nicholas against the glass wall. At the last second, Nicholas gained the upper hand, and they twisted so Levi’s shoulder blades broke through the glass.

Levi’s eyes shut against the torrent of glass, but he felt himself torn from Nicholas and his body was surrounded by another. He realized the scent of Erwin as gravity took them and they landed harshly on the staircase below. Erwin took the damage but they rolled down to the next landing. Levi broke from his grasp but teetered on his feet until the world righted itself.

Nicholas was in the same uneven state, but he was halfway across the study area. Levi sprinted and leaped over the tables like lily pads until he landed in a handstand on the spine of a chair. He curled his body over so his feet hit the tabletop, but his hands clenched the chair, and it arced through the air. The piece of furniture broke against Nicholas’s back, causing him to land face first on the floor. Within a moment, Nicholas was half-risen to his knees and Levi stood over him.

A low snarl rumbled in Nicholas’s chest. “My pack will never bend.”

“Then it will break,” Levi rasped, his chest heaving for air as the first rays of golden light shined through the library.

Nicholas’s eyes wandered over Levi, and he murmured, “We could be invincible, you and I. I did teach you well.”

Levi snarled, gripping Nicholas’s chin so the man’s neck craned to see Levi’s silver gaze. “I taught you how to be alpha.”

His arm moved, but only just enough, so Nicholas reacted by gripping his wrist, twisting the blade free, and Levi pushed it into his heart. The alpha’s eyes widen with perplexity, and Levi’s fingers curled inside his collar to pull him forward, making sure he had his last moments of attention. “Tell Marie I’m sorry she has a shit head for a brother.”

He jerked his blade free, and Nicholas slumped on the floor, blood gushing in steady spurts from his chest, growing slower and weaker until his glowing irises faded.

A large hand closed around the front of Levi’s shirt, and he felt himself yanked to the side, facing a livid Erwin.

“God damn it, Erwin!” Levi bellowed, gripping the man’s arm while his feet dangled. “You weren’t supposed to be here!”

“NEITHER WERE YOU!” he stormed. “If you feel like insulting me, do it to my face next time
before you run off!”

“This was my fight!” Levi rebuked.

“You should have trusted in your companions, in the pack!”

“I did! I trusted you to control the situation while I was gone! I trusted you to trust me, you bullheaded alpha!”

That gave Erwin pause. “Did you just associate me with an animal that chews cud?”

Levi glared defiantly. “If the horns fit.”

The muscle in Erwin’s jaw ticked. “Do you understand how fucking terrified you made me?”

“Are you aware that you’re holding me a foot above the floor?” Levi glared pointedly in the direction he wished to be.

His chest slammed against Erwin’s when his arms swallowed Levi in a fierce hug. Levi’s chin rested on Erwin’s shoulder as lips tickled his neck. “I know you’re the strongest of us, Levi, but you don’t have to be all the time.”

In that moment, Levi felt his muscles finally relax. He let Erwin hold him, his head nuzzling Erwin’s neck and shoulder before it settled like the muscle was his pillow. His eyes flicked up to inspect the damage they’d done to the upper floor: glass and books were scattered everywhere, but what astounded Levi most was something else. “Did you follow me out that window?”

“Yes,” Erwin purred, inhaling at Levi’s gland.

“You never said you practiced parkour.”

“Because I didn’t,” he affirmed, “but I understand what you meant about being truly afraid.”

Levi’s innards abruptly felt like they had swelled thrice in size and he had difficulty breathing because of it. “Erwin…” he stammered.

“Hm?”

He managed an inhalation and asked, “When did you start loving me?”

Erwin ceased nuzzling his neck and slowly lowered Levi to his feet, but he did not loosen their hug. The elephant that seemed to always be in the room was now staring them both in the face.

“I don’t know when it started,” Erwin admitted. “But I knew it after I heard you sing. No one else has arrested every part of me like you have. You’ve ruined me, Levi.”

“Well someone had to,” Levi scoffed, “you blond oaf.”

Erwin chuckled and finally stood erect. His thumb gingerly grazed over the swollen crescent along Levi’s cheekbone and temple. “Is that your way of telling me I’m handsome?”

“I didn’t say that,” he snapped. “Your head’s big enough—”

Erwin’s eyes dropped to his mouth and as if a thread connected them, his mouth followed, capturing Levi’s lips. Levi felt at mercy to his kiss as Erwin’s hands clutched the back of his head, cradling his cranium and jaw. Erwin’s kiss was ravenous yet gentle, pushing Levi’s lips open
before closing to create a soft *smooch* sound and never teasing with his tongue, which may have been the greatest tease of all.

Levi gasped an exclamation when a hand tugged on his hair, craning his head to the side as Erwin’s nose and mouth nuzzled his scent gland behind the base of his ear. Instead of pain, his eyelashes fluttered groggily at the intense pleasure that came from the pressure on the membrane.

“You’ve healed,” Erwin growled huskily.

Levi’s eyes rolled but he muttered, “Erwin, there’s a dead body here. That’s not romantic.”

Erwin chuckled. “No, it certainly isn’t. We’ll leave it for Nile to deal with. Mike has likely picked up Isabel by now.”

They separated and Levi moved as if to head back upstairs to the terrace. “Levi,” Erwin caught his shoulder. “Let’s take the stairs.”

They exited the library the same moment a sleek car pulled up to the sidewalk. Isabel burst out and was caught in Levi’s hug. Mike tossed Erwin the keys. “Thanks for taking Nile’s car. It rides like a dream. You should check your mobile, by the way.”

Erwin extracted a wiry net of plastic, metal, and glass chips that used to be his cell phone. “I suppose a broken phone is better than a broken hip. What do I need to know?”

Mike shook his head, mirth shining in his eyes as he informed, “The Lobov pack was waiting for a call from Nicholas, and when they didn’t get it, they attacked ours and Pixis’ guards around their perimeter. It’s no big deal. Nile’s already tranquilized those who initiated the attack and the rest are under Pixis’ quarantine. Pixis also said to tell you and Levi to be at his barbecue restaurant in an hour for brunch.

“Brunch?” Levi said curiously. “We weren’t supposed to be done until lunch. How anticlimactic.”

Erwin guffawed a mirthless laugh. “Yes, incredibly boring. It’s not like I’ve had ten years of my life scared out of me.”

“All right, drama king,” Isabel patted his brawny shoulder. “Personally, I haven’t eaten a proper meal since the dinner before I was taken from our breakfast date yesterday. Let’s go before I take a piece out of one of you.”

Pixis was already knuckles deep inside his pulled pork by the time they arrived. Petra looked up from her deviled egg sandwich to wave, whereas Hange leapt from her seat and tackled Levi into the booth behind him.

“Aww, boyfriend! We match!” she pointed to her black eye. She climbed out of the booth and pulled him out. “Things were as exciting on your end, obviously?”

“Riveting,” Levi grumbled, annoyed at being knocked around so much in one morning and staring hungrily at the baskets of food on the table. He fell into a chair and grabbed the first thing he touched, which happened to be a pulled chicken sandwich with pineapple sauce. His eyelids drooped while he ate, solely devoted to eating whereas Hange somehow managed to eat and chatter simultaneously.

Pixis was gracious enough to allow Levi a couple sandwiches and a pile of fruit before he began, “So Levi, how does a permanent occupation sound?”
He, Hange, and Petra stared at Pixis with full cheeks. Hange managed to swallow first. “You mean a gig every night? Won’t people get tired of us?”

“Hardly,” Pixis countered smugly. “My customers like the, well…the anonymity of Anonymous and her three members.”

“Four,” Mike piped up, eliciting stunned looks. “I play the drums,” he explained. “That opens up your options for percussion sound.”

“Certainly,” Pixis’ eyes glimmered. “And with four imaginative heads, I have no fears of my people growing bored.”

Hange and Petra turned to Levi for his leadership. “Levi?” the latter prompted.

He shrugged. “Fine, but I’m not starting until Friday. Between the full moon and bruises, I don’t have the stamina or the motivation to deal with drunken idiots.”

Pixis chuckled, “I will allow that concession. You will get nights off, naturally, and you will not be performing the entire night.”

“But you want us checking in before we go to other venues,” Levi deduced.

“On the contrary,” Pixis corrected jovially, “other venues will be paying me to borrow your talents.”

Erwin cut in gracefully, “We will settle on management payment later, once everyone is rested. These are members of my pack, after all.”

“I’d be foolish to forget it, Smith,” Pixis assured, popping a piece of melon into his mouth.

They finished their meal and packed up several boxes to bring home for later and for Farlan since he should be awake right about now. Erwin and Levi were dragging their feet by the time they reached the front stoop and unlocked the door—

“JENGA!” Farlan bellowed as a mountainous pile of pillows toppled. Gunther groaned in defeat while Farlan ran around the living room with his arms in the air.

Levi, Erwin, and Isabel stared dumbly at him until Eld chimed, “Morning, Alpha!” with a smile.

Isabel strode into the room, reclaimed her two pillows, and batted them against Farlan’s head. “Give me back my pillows, dingus,” and then she was marching up the stairs. Her brother sprinted after her, demanding hugs and details of her time away.

Levi filled his arms with a pair of cushions as well and doggedly trudged up the stairs, where he dumped the pillows on the bed and stripped for a shower. After he was soaked, he dared a touch on his glands. Flakes of scab rubbed off at the slight touches, and he blissfully massaged the area, closing his eyes as he relished the air on the membranes and the clean sensation spreading throughout his body.

He was too relaxed to care when Erwin entered the shower. His body was bumped between Erwin’s frame and the wall when the alpha leaned in close to smell between Levi’s massaging fingers. “You smell delicious.”

“Don’t get ideas,” Levi ordered flatly, not even bothering to open his eyes. “Wash my hair.”
Erwin chuckled and squeezed shampoo into his palm. “Sit with me, sweet heart.”

Levi let Erwin pull him onto his lap before his head tipped back into Erwin’s attentive hands. He only slightly reacted to the sensation of Erwin’s fingers digging into his hips before he melted against those fingers on his scalp. He knelt behind Erwin to do the same for him, and then they quickly lathered with soap before exiting the shower.

Levi was bound in his towel and drying his hair with one of the corners when Erwin spun him around and picked him up. Levi’s back hit the plush bedding as Erwin’s mouth dusted open kisses from his jaw, down his throat, and opened the towel to kiss across his chest.

“God, I want to ravish you.”

Levi’s eyelashes fluttered, but he managed to scoff, “You did not say ‘ravish.'”

“I did. And I meant it,” Erwin growled, nipping at Levi’s flesh.

“Erwin…”

“Hm?”

“I’m fucking exhausted.”

“Oh thank god,” Erwin sighed gratefully, flopping onto his stomach, half on top of Levi. “I’ll ravish you later.”

Levi’s chest heaved with his giggles, and Erwin’s mouth crooked into a smile before they clambered the last mile to get under the covers and they both fell deeply into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Empty Horizon
Levi opened his eyes to see that it was dark in the room. They had returned after brunch and fallen asleep so deeply that they must have slept the entire day. Beside him, Erwin breathed evenly on his side, facing Levi. It did not bother him when he rose to relieve his bladder that they had gone to bed without dressing, but before Levi descended the stairs to the kitchen, he donned one of Erwin’s V-necks and his own pair of shorts.

Levi was ruffling his bed-head hair when he noticed a piece of paper was folded like a tent on the kitchen counter:

Farlan and I are at Petra and Hange’s for a full moon video game-a-thon! Call or swing by if you need us! <3

Levi opened the fridge and poured from a pitcher of water with slices of cucumber and lemon drifting with ice while he contemplated what he wanted to eat. He wound up munching on the cucumbers, enjoying the crisp freshness of the water.

The glass clattered on the quartz countertop when Levi startled. His chest heaved against Erwin’s arms around his torso, hugging him from behind.

“I’m sorry,” he chuckled guiltily. “I didn’t mean to frighten you.”

Levi scrubbed a hand over his face, choosing to regulate his breathing before responding. Erwin gave him his space by leaning the bases of his palms against the countertop, framing Levi’s hips so Levi had room to breathe but they were still close.

“I like you wearing my shirts,” Erwin commented, kissing his shoulder through the soft fabric.

“They swallow me,” Levi rebuked. He felt the heat of Erwin’s deep chested laugh behind him.

“Would you call me a pervert if I said I like your size?”

“Probably.”

Levi could hear the smile in Erwin’s voice as he said, “Well I like your size. You’re easy to handle but you still fill my arms.”
He wasn’t sure how to process that, and Erwin must have sensed it because he leaned away, asking, “Too much?”

“I…” Levi began but he took another moment before finishing, “I don’t know what to think of that.”

Erwin was silent for his own moment before he kissed Levi’s shoulder again, making a lazy trail toward his neck. “Could it be because you don’t believe it?”

Levi’s brow furrowed and he turned his head to meet those blue eyes. “What do you mean?”

Erwin’s chin rested on his shoulder, not enough to be heavy, but enough for casual, intimate proximity. “Am I your first real relationship, Levi?”

For some reason, he felt like he was being scrutinized by Hange all of a sudden, and Erwin gave a small smile to appease his discomfort. “I just mean that maybe you’re not used to being given so much affection, especially over something as basic as your stature.”

Levi swallowed. “Understatement…”

Erwin reared back and withdrew a glass from the cabinet to pour his own water. “Let’s go on a date.”

Levi felt like he was experiencing conversational whiplash. “What?”

“It’s barely nine o’clock,” Erwin explained. “Let’s go somewhere. I know a place that’s open until midnight and brews its own lagers. There’s a tea garden on the roof, as well.”

Levi frowned dubiously. “A tea garden?”

Erwin nodded, “They grow their own tea leaves. Oddly enough, their tea is the most expensive thing on the menu, but it’s quite good. My treat,” he assured, setting his emptied glass in the sink. Then, he peered at Levi somewhat guiltily. “The only thing is…it’s slightly upscale.”

“Meaning…?” Levi inquired.

“Meaning they only let people in who are dressed accordingly,” Erwin admitted.

“I don’t own a tux,” Levi said, deadpan.

Erwin guffawed. “No, no, not to that extreme. You have a pair of slacks for the café, right? You mentioned once that you don’t have any button-ups, but an ironed shirt or something would be fine… Unless, you don’t want to go. It’s not the only restaurant in town—”

Levi realized, then, that he might not be accustomed to receiving such unwarranted affection, but Erwin was not used to bestowing it. Sure, he had the pack, but not this, not Levi. Taking care of his pack members fulfilled Erwin’s alpha nature, but Erwin the man was severely wanting in a personal companion. That made Levi feel…smug.

“I’ll go,” he proclaimed, taking Erwin by surprise. “But all I have is a sweater. I don’t have a blazer or nonsense like that.”

“That’s all right, if you’re sure,” Erwin tested warily.

Of course, Erwin did have a blazer, which he wore over the cool grey shirt he’d worn when he saw Levi sing at the Red Rose. Levi’s sweater was a simple black V-neck, but it was soft and deceptively elegant. Erwin leant him a silver, rectangular belt buckle, which split his black-on-black ensemble while giving an air of prestige for the highbrow restaurant. Levi noticed how the host keenly gave them the once over with his eyes before piling a small stack of menus on his forearm and leading them to their table.

On the terrace, they were seated in a booth that overlooked the river on this clean side of town; multicolored lights glittering over the surface. Levi peered at the assortment of menus in front of him: the food menu, the drink menu sans beers and teas, which were separated into the brewery’s list of ales, lagers, etc., and the tea menu. Levi moved the beer list out of the way to see the dessert menu as well.

“Why can’t they put everything in one damn booklet?” he wondered peevishly.

Erwin chortled, his eyes flicking up from his menu to Levi. “I suppose dealing with the menus forces you to notice what is on them. Have you looked over the teas, yet?”

Levi resigned himself to reading over the list of teas before he admitted that there were at least three he wanted to try. He was chewing his lip when noticed at the bottom of the page there was an option for a tea tasting. When he voiced this, Erwin simply smiled and said, “You choose.”

Levi glanced up at glazed eyes when the waiter took their tea and appetizer order, but when the long tray of small teapots and ceramic cups was placed between him and Erwin, Levi felt those eyes lingering on him. He looked up and found brightly glowing eyes as turquoise as the sea.

For a moment, he thought the waiter was far too young to be showing such powerful feral eyes, but then he realized, “You’re her…mika’s boyfriend. I’ve seen you at the café. Annoyingly often.”

The greenish eyes blinked and faded somewhat with a puzzled look. “Mikasa?” and then he nodded eagerly, “Yes! Um well, no, her brother, I mean, but I didn’t think you’d noticed me…um, is it true you’re the reason for the, uh, that is, if you don’t mind me asking! But, you know, the coffee shop had camera security…”

Just what Levi needed: blackmail. “Then you know that he broke the window.”

The boy did a double take on Erwin as if just realizing he was there. “Alpha Smith! Oh, it’s an honor, sir!”

He promptly turned back to Levi. “The rumor is that you’re omega. You’re practically a—well, you are a legend, but one in the flesh, right?”

Levi spared a narrow glance at Erwin, commending his alpha for not throttling the kid for his impolite behavior and basic insolence. “Yes, I am, and you’re an idiot alpha, just like the rest of them.”

The boy’s expression deflated. “N-No, sir! I’ve just seen you running across town, and you’re just incredible. Sublime, really. Why are there no other omegas?”

“Because sublimity only strikes once in a century,” Levi snapped as politely as he could. He flicked silver eyes up at the boy, causing him to gasp both with awe and fear. “Scram, runt. I’m on a date.”

And then the waiter actually looked between Levi and Erwin thrice before the light bulb illuminated above his thick head. His turquoise eyes reflexively flashed at the threat of another alpha in the presence of an omega, but they immediately dimmed at the acknowledgement of a
He’s an alpha idiot but at least he’s mostly civilized. Levi commended inwardly before he gave his food request. Erwin gave his order tranquilly, but at the tiny shake of the waiter’s hands, Erwin’s irises glimmered with their customary blue flames while a wolfish grin curved his lips. The waiter made a point to give new meaning to the word ‘scram.’

“Sublime,” Erwin reiterated, as if he was rolling it around, tasting it in his mouth. “He was quite taken with you.”

“Who isn’t,” Levi returned, lazily perusing the dessert menu. The statement was not exactly a question but not as loaded with sarcasm as it could have been.

“He was staring at you since we came onto the terrace.”

Levi’s eyes swooped up from the menu. “You’re jealous of a kid who hasn’t finished puberty?”

Erwin shrugged but Levi could tell something was truly bothering him. “It is in my nature to answer an alpha’s threat, voiced or not.”

“Yeah, well it’s in mine to stick my foot in an alpha’s ass on occasion. I don’t care if the kid stares, but if I have to remind you that this is not only a date but your idea, while you’re concerned with a mid-pubescent child, I’ll just meet you at home.”

Erwin’s expression was statuesque, shocked by Levi’s abrupt declaration. He observed Levi’s countenance and carefully reached a hand over the table, where Levi was fidgeting with his tasting cup, rapidly rotating it over the tablecloth. “Of course not,” he purred quietly. “You’re worried about the cameras?”

Levi’s teeth ground together, put out by how easily Erwin guessed the true source of his vexation. “I have some pride to maintain.”

Erwin withdrew his phone from his interior breast pocket, which reflected on his face as he typed a quick message before sliding it back into his blazer. “Eld is beta and off duty tonight, not to mention he is irreplaceable regarding electronic matters. He will keep a clear head and take care of it immediately.”

He met Levi’s stunned, vacant stare and proffered a soft smile. Erwin gently shoved the cup aside so he could play with Levi’s fingers, lacing theirs together. Levi appeared to be debating whether or not to be dubious or trustworthy, so Erwin made the decision for him. “The rumors will die soon enough. Only I get to see you in any form of vulnerability. I gave Eld specific instructions to destroy the footage and all copies of it. Can we enjoy tonight? Everything is as right in the world as it could possibly be, and I actually enjoyed watching another alpha’s reaction at knowing you are mine, teenager or otherwise.”

He flipped Levi’s hand over so his palm was up, and with his laced fingers he drew the hand across the table to meet his lips. Erwin kissed the center of Levi’s palm and felt a slight twitch in his fingers from how sensitive he was from having his fingers stretched back. Erwin pressed soft kisses on each mound where the bases of Levi’s fingers were, and grazed his lips up to kiss the base of his palm, the net of veins on his wrist.

Erwin could tell Levi felt like squirming and flicked his eyes up to find a prominent, rosy hue on Levi’s cheeks and neck. Per usual, he called upon sarcasm to his defense, “You just enjoyed watching an alpha get scolded by an omega, didn’t you?”
Erwin smiled and placed their hands back on the table. He traced Levi’s veins with his fingertips as he said, “Maybe a little. I mostly enjoyed your blunt insistence that I am the only alpha you tolerate.”

The corner of Levi’s mouth curved. “‘Tolerate.’ That’s appropriate.”

Erwin laughed as the tension finally broke. Their food arrived and their waiter scampered away, only returning to take the empty plates and the dessert order: chocolate cake with vanilla brandy lava. The gooey interior of the cake pooled around the chocolate mound the moment Erwin’s spoon pierced through it, and Levi’s tongue lavished his own to get every crumb and sweetness from it.

Erwin gave the waiter a tip almost as large as their bill, and left the restaurant with Levi’s hand clasped in his. It was just after eleven o’clock when the key turned in the car’s ignition, and those indigo lights became the only things illuminating the car’s interior. A warm hand slid over Levi’s thigh, resting mostly on his inner leg while Erwin’s thumb unconsciously stroked along the sensitive muscle. Levi glanced over, expecting to see those blue eyes focused on the road; he felt nailed to his seat when he found them locked on him instead.

Levi barely paid attention to the rest of the drive. Erwin looked away and suddenly they were pulling through the neighborhood gate. Levi turned to reach for the door handle but then felt himself pushed back in his seat before Erwin’s hand closed around his knee and pulled him across the car to sit astride Erwin’s lap. The seat abruptly lowered, jarring Levi’s chest flush with Erwin’s, whose hands were freely roaming Levi’s body. He became immediately aware of the alpha’s body temperature through his clothing.

“Fuck, Erwin! Have you felt this way all night?”

Erwin’s response was grasping Levi’s nape to position him for a hot kiss. He hadn’t noticed Erwin’s spike in temperature because the tea heated his lips, but now the tea was gone, and Erwin was still boiling. Levi could taste traces of tea and vanilla brandy on his lips; when Levi instinctively nibbled on the taste there, licking and plumping Erwin’s lips, fingertips clawed down his back, causing Levi to shiver.

“Erwin…Isabel and Farlan are at Petra’s.”

The alpha froze, and suddenly the car door was open, car and house keys jingling in Erwin’s hand as Levi got out. He ran a hand through his black hair, taking a calming breath while Erwin almost lazily unlocked the house and held the door open for him.

The door all but slammed and Levi yelped when Erwin’s hands grabbed his hips, lifting him right up the majority of the staircase before Levi reached for the banister, the wall, something for panicked stability. His feet touched down on the landing, but he lurched against the corner of the wall, gripping it as Erwin’s hand dived right under the belt and palmed his groin. Levi gasped but the air caught in his throat as Erwin’s mouth locked onto his scent gland, his nose tickling Levi’s ear.

Erwin already had the belt undone and was stroking Levi’s erection and gently fondling his balls while he ushered the rapidly melting omega into his bedroom. “Erwin! Ah…” he complained, barely able to walk while he was being tortured this way. They made it to the doorway but Levi had to grab it for a moment of stability and to breathe. Erwin had planted kisses all across his neck and moved to his other gland, relishing how Levi could not control the rotation of his hips into Erwin’s touch.
He couldn’t tell if the rumble in Erwin’s chest was a growl or a chuckle, and frankly, Levi didn’t even care if he came right now, it felt so good. But then he felt the hand leave his trousers before he was thrown onto the bed. He rose off his stomach to crawl further over the bedding but a second later Erwin was atop him, his teeth grazing along Levi’s pinna and over the gland behind it. Levi shivered and felt his ass rise and rub against Erwin’s straining cock. The black sweater was pushed up to Levi’s collarbone as Erwin openly kissed up his spine and a hand circled under to feel Levi’s chest, to play with his nipples. Every time Levi jerked at the flick of a nail across his rising peaks, his back pressed against Erwin’s lips, his hips rutted against Erwin’s groin.

He felt a moist kiss on the base of his neck before the trail descended back down his spine. Levi lethargically hauled the bunched up sweater over his head as he felt strong fingers curl under the hem of his trousers and underwear. Erwin’s fingertips clawed into the flesh of his cheeks as he slowly drew them down and lower over Levi’s thighs, all the while kissing along the base of his spine. The intent pressure on his flesh made Levi squirm and mewl wantonly.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Erwin’s blazer get tossed somewhere in the room, but a surprisingly cool, wet sensation slithered through the crevasse of his backside, and Levi felt like time had stopped and restarted when Erwin’s fingers touched his entrance.

“Are you all right?” Erwin rasped, his voice barely recognizable, but god, Levi liked the sound of it. He could barely make a sound of approval when those fingers insistently massaged his hole, occasionally sliding up to press into the delicate flesh under his balls. Levi tried to nod and felt Erwin’s lips along the back of his neck once more. “I didn’t even ask if you wanted this arrangement,” he added apologetically.

Levi’s eyes popped wide open and he turned his face to meet Erwin’s hungry gaze and soft smile. “Would you have let it be otherwise?”

“Oh yes,” he purred, kissing Levi’s shoulder and temple. “It is hardly fair for you to have all the fun back here.”

Levi’s jaw dropped when Erwin’s littlest finger slipped inside him. The stretch was utterly foreign but not painful. Levi exhaled deeply, feeling Erwin’s finger push forward as his entrance relaxed. Erwin’s breath came out in a similar rush as his finger swirled slowly, carefully opening the delicate lining. “That’s it…you’re so good, Levi.”

He planted a hot kiss on Levi’s tailbone and Levi’s breath became heavy when the hand returned to his cock, slow pulls keeping his lust on edge. Erwin switched to his next finger, patiently getting Levi ready while keeping him focused on the pleasure instead of the dull ache. That slick feeling slithered between his cheeks again, and Levi didn’t realize Erwin had switched to his forefinger until he exclaimed at the sensation of a second finger joining the one already inside him.

“All right?” Erwin asked immediately.

“Slow…yes, just…slow…” Levi breathed, focusing on relaxing his ass in exchange for clenching the plump, white comforter in his hands. Lubricant drenched Erwin’s fingers again as he ever so carefully pushed that second finger inside, giving Levi time to accustom to it.

“All right?” Erwin asked immediately.

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“Certainly,” he cooed, kissing Levi’s hip. “If you ever want to stop, tell me.”

“I’m fine,” Levi snapped, not unkindly, just lost in his focus on breathing. Of all the things to do in that moment, he felt Erwin’s other hand slipping the shoes off his feet, along with tugging his
socks off. The small gesture surprisingly relaxed him anew, both from knowing that his alpha was taking care of him but also the light air on the soles of his feet cooling his tension.

“Here’s another,” Erwin whispered, poising a third fingertip at Levi’s entrance. “After this, you’ll be ready, love.”

A finger swirled over Levi’s urethra, sending tingling waves of pleasure through him while the final finger slid inside him. He felt stretched to his maximum capacity, but he accidentally moved on his own when Erwin’s nail flicked over the head of his penis, and the fingertips inside of him found a hyper sensitive part of him.

Levi froze, unsure if the cry that erupted from him was imagined or real. Erwin was still behind him, watching and waiting for a response of some kind. “Levi?”

When nothing came, he experimentally curled his fingers, finding that ultra soft yet firm place, stroking it like a tickling feather. Levi’s cry was certainly real this time, shakily exhaling from his throat as he trembled against the unbearable pleasure that Erwin teased from him.

“Levi,” Erwin ushered. “I need to know how you're feeling.”

“I…” he gasped and swallowed. “I can’t last…”

The fingers left him, and Levi was not sure if he missed them or not, but he heard the soft tear that must have been a condom wrapper before he felt a different appendage pressing against his hole. Levi inhaled deeply and exhaled, knowing Erwin was entering him in time with his breaths. He exhaled again, but raggedly as Erwin’s erection went deeper than his fingers could, gliding right along his prostate and stretching him anew. He felt Erwin’s hips flush against his ass and the alpha crawled over Levi to kiss and tease his gland, but Levi mewled with complaint. He managed to twist and limply clasp at Erwin’s shirt.

“Your chest…” he huffed, “I want to feel your skin.”

He could tell in Erwin’s heavily hooded eyes that he was almost at his limit, but he reared back slowly, taking the moment to give Levi the visual of him undoing the buttons of his shirt that went so well with his eyes and opening it to reveal his sculpted chest.

Levi faced the bed once more and arched his back when he felt that chest press over him. Erwin carefully pulled out of him so only his tip remained, and just as slowly pushed back in. Levi moaned deep in his chest, stretching his back and pressing into the bed so he pushed back into Erwin. “Do that again.”

So he did, just as agonizingly slow as before. For a long while, they moved together like that, slowly, lavishing the feel of each other until Erwin’s hand found Levi’s cock again and Levi’s hips slammed back into Erwin’s, eliciting a loud alpha growl from him.

“Aahh! Fuck,” Levi exclaimed when Erwin bucked into him. Levi’s body began to get pummeled into the bed and he wanted to open his legs wider but they were constrained by his trousers around his knees. Erwin’s teeth bit into the column of his neck, not enough to draw blood, but enough to make Levi’s eyes loll and his body to sink lower in the bed so Erwin only had just enough room to pump his cock.

And then Erwin pressed directly into Levi’s prostate, and Levi was lost. His pelvis jerked and trembled before rutting fervently against Erwin as his orgasm thrashed through him over and over and over. Levi saw only the white of the comforter, spotted with shadows since they’d never
bothered with lights, and then he only saw the spots, and then he saw nothing. He felt like he was drowning, but he couldn’t tell if he was in an ocean or rolling among storm clouds.

His consciousness arose from the waters to meet a soft sensation stroking over his eyebrow. His eyes opened to slits and blinked the blurry visage above him into the clarity of Erwin’s blindingly gorgeous smile above him, that blond hair mussed spectacularly. Levi wondered when he’d reached for it to make it so messy, but he rather preferred it that way.

His gazed drifted downward, noticing that the condom had since been disposed of, and Erwin had graciously undressed them both fully. He was on his side, poised on his elbow to gaze down at Levi as he delicately stroked his brow and hairline. “Have I ruined you, yet?” his eyes twinkled in the silver moonlight shining through the French windows.

Levi did not answer right away, instead rolling into the safety of Erwin’s chest and leaning up enough to inhale his scent and lick his gland. It was Erwin's turn to tremble when the flat of Levi’s teeth pressed against the membrane. Erwin sighed deeply, leaning down and taking Levi in his arms; his hand caressed Levi’s thigh when he placed it over Erwin’s leg.

After Levi finished tasting Erwin, he slumped against the alpha’s body, letting the omega urges that he'd so long suppressed resurface fully so he clung to Erwin, trusting his alpha to take care of him as Erwin had always proved so excellent with. He was already half asleep when he murmured, “Obviously.”

Chapter End Notes

Empty Horizon
Chapter Summary

Levi thinks he is finally comfortable with Erwin when a new challenge catches him off guard.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Levi became aware of limbs and slippery heat before he finally forced his eyes to open and saw that he and Erwin were tightly bundled in the white comforter. They’d crawled over the wide width of the bed and had apparently remained there, curling the bedding around them instead of getting under it.

He cursed nature for making Erwin impervious to heat, whereas Levi was slick with sweat. He broke out of the stifling burrito they’d created only to cringe in the daylight. Rolling away from the heat source, Levi dropped a leg over the edge of the bed only to bite back a whimper and replace his leg on the bed.

A warm hand touched his hip. “Are you sore?” Erwin asked.

Levi did his best to glare through his groggy eyes. “As soon as my ass stops aching, I’m going to sleep with the air conditioner.”

His face burned a few extra degrees at the sound of Erwin’s throaty laugh. Levi scowled as Erwin slipped his arms around him and dragged him back into the crescent of his body, taking care to lift his pelvis to not harm Levi’s sore condition. His chin nestled in the crook of Levi’s neck and shoulder, where he murmured sleepily, “I love you, but you’re not sleeping in a bed I’m not in.”

Levi became instantaneously aware of his ass cradled in the curve of Erwin’s hips, the long arms holding him close, the way the alpha turned his head ever so slightly to breathe Levi’s scent better, and just how good it all felt…and that scared the hell out of him.

“There’s going to have to be an ice barrier between us next month,” he sassed.

Erwin chuckled. “That will make the bed quite soggy, don’t you think?”

“I’m soggy now!”

He felt the tickle of Erwin’s lips kissing his neck once before the man whispered, “Just because I’ve said it out loud doesn’t mean you have to. Don’t do or say anything before you’re ready.”

Levi was quiet for a long time before he grumbled, “Stop doing that.”

“What?”

Levi huffed a sigh. “Reading me like a fucking billboard. Hahh!”

Erwin’s tongue languidly pressed along his scent gland, immediately relaxing him and curtailing
his words. Levi felt like mercury or some other thick liquid was seeping through the veins of his legs, making him tingly, limp and useless. Levi’s head slumped over Erwin’s bicep, his nape bared for Erwin’s mouth. Levi mewed an exclamation when the tongue poked with more pressure, sending blood straight for his groin.

“Huhm! Huhh… not… fair…”

“What isn’t?” Erwin purred, not bothered in the least as he continued licking and teasing the gland. At this point, he was hovering partially over Levi, nipping at his neck or grazing his teeth over Levi’s ear before returning to the throbbing membrane.

Levi’s erection was straining over the plump comforter, the tiny well on his tip filling with precum. With every inhale, he consumed Erwin’s scent, stronger now with his lust and the moon. “I smell you everywhere… the way you affect me…”

“Oh Levi,” Erwin kissed his collarbone, his shoulder. “Haven’t you witnessed what you’ve done to me? I fear the damage may be permanent.”

Levi swallowed, preparing to say what really plagued his mind. “I feel like I’m losing myself.”

Erwin stopped immediately, and Levi pressed himself into the bed as far as physics would allow him under that blue gaze. “I disagree,” Erwin uttered softly, combing Levi’s hair off his face. “I think I’ve unlocked the best pieces of you, and you’re still surprising me with more.”

“Guh!” Levi growled, crossing his arms with a pout in his lip. “You’re so fucking proud.”

Erwin’s laugh filled his face, crinkling the corners of his eyes but not ruining the view of Levi curiously peeking at him. The laughter faded and a different expression surfaced as Erwin opened Levi’s arms and splayed them across the bed, pinning them in place. Levi’s lips parted at the sensation of Erwin’s hard and ready cock rutting lightly against his own. His breath escalated, demanding pressure, not the light taunting he was experiencing.

“How can I not be proud,” Erwin challenged, “when you’re hard and wanting, even wet for me?”

Levi’s hands flexed, stretching and eager to reach Erwin. “Where’s that lube?” he huffed, out of breath.

Erwin smirked, “Why do you a-aah!”

Levi had snaked his hand out from his grasp and shocked Erwin by gripping his balls, spiraling his fingertips underneath and coming teasingly close to Erwin’s entrance. “I’m too sore for this,” Levi murmured, “but the moon is still full when the sun and you are up—”

Without further ado, Erwin rolled off him toward the top of the bed, where he withdrew the lubricant from underneath the pillows. Observing just how eager the alpha was for this had Levi momentarily dazed. He climbed to his hands and knees to crouch between Erwin’s knees, accepting the bottle from him. Levi ventured a peek at the pillows, wondering if there was anything else hidden under there. “Condoms?”

Sure enough, Erwin plucked a single package and held it out to Levi, who set it beside his hip for later.

Then, another reason gave Levi pause: as he held the open bottle over his hand, droplets of lube slowly falling onto his palm, the sight of Erwin bathed in the soft, golden light of morning was mesmerizing. Levi had never been one to admit that anything was breathtaking, but here he was,
his lungs empty and burning. That disarrayed blond hair glistening with fractals of stark gold and warm honey, splayed over the bed as well as dusting over his brow and those luminous blue, blue eyes…

“Levi?”

He heard his name but Levi’s bluish-grey eyes drifted out of his mesmerized state as if he was stuck there, and happy to be so because Erwin had propped himself up on his elbow, causing his pectoral and abdominal muscles to clench in all the right places, dancing with that light to create shadows… His other arm reached forward to graze his fingertips through Levi’s hairline, gently bringing him back to the present.

“You’re drooling, darling.”

Levi snapped his mouth shut and his eyes glinted with determined fire. “Just wait, alpha.”

Erwin’s lips curved in a smirk but he accepted the challenge, leaning down on his back and lifting a brow when he watched Levi lubricate both of his hands. His muscles jerked slightly when Levi’s hands gripped his length and balls unashamedly, massaging the latter with the pads of his thumbs until Erwin was a relaxed heap of long muscle. His thighs fell wide open and sweat began to glisten on his collarbone and forehead as Levi moved upward, gently grinding his fingertips along the veins of his erection. The head of Erwin’s cock bobbed with his heartbeat and with Levi’s movements; each time it connected with his abdomen, a thread of precum stretched between his flesh.

“Levi,” Erwin swallowed thickly, his eyes hooded and voice husky, “Levi…this is agony.”

Levi smirked, because he knew. An alpha in heat was meant to plough himself into a partner until the moon waned. This slow, slow ministration that brought him to his peak but not over the edge, as well as being against his power, was torturous against Erwin’s biology. The fact that he was willing to surrender it to Levi was tantamount to being mated.

Levi’s fingers lazily wandered over Erwin’s erection as his eyes once again stared at the man breathing heavily beneath him. I am so fucked, Levi realized, because the notion of having Erwin under him for many more moons did not actually frighten or daunt him…it excited him.

Erwin gasped as Levi slipped a finger inside him, and shakily exhaled in gratitude. His hips swiveled slightly, as if trying to ease Levi deeper. A second finger joined the first, and Erwin jerked slightly, reminded that this needed time and preparation. Levi took as much care with his interior as his other hand continued to stroke and massage Erwin’s exterior. Levi was half inclined to abandon the venture to use his tongue on Erwin’s cock and to bite those strong thighs…but this mattered to Erwin and they had all day and another night to play under the moon.

A third finger entered him, and Erwin’s jaw opened, his lips supple and his eyes watching Levi like he held every last drop of freshwater on earth. “Now, Levi…please.”

He removed his fingers and took a moment to climb over Erwin and tilted his head to take Erwin’s mouth with soft, repetitive kisses that smooched audibly. The alpha released a sound deep in his chest, something between a growl and a mewl that made Levi’s tongue slide between his lips, wanting to taste his alpha.

“If you ever hold this against me, I’ll torture you worse than this,” Levi murmured, causing Erwin to stare up at him with wide, puzzled eyes. Levi unrolled the condom and leaned back to position his cock against Erwin’s entrance. “I love you too.”
Something flashed in Erwin’s gaze but it vanished when his head fell back as Levi pushed into him. He held one of his freshly lubed hands around his cock, slicking it as he simultaneously thrust his hips forward and tried to breathe evenly despite the tightness encompassing him. When he was halfway in, he lowered his pelvis so he was thrusting upward, searching for—

“Ah! Aahh…!” Erwin gasped as Levi’s hips became flush with his ass. The alpha swallowed, keeping his eyes firmly closed. “Again.”

Levi slowly drew out, and did not pause to slide back in, firmly grazing along Erwin’s prostate. His eyes popped open, glisteningly blue. Levi’s palms splayed over Erwin’s torso, gripping him for leverage as he began pumping his cock inside his alpha. Erwin’s hands overlapped his, encouraging and urging him to move faster. Levi’s eyes closed, losing himself in the feeling of hot, powerful, and comforting Erwin around him. He could feel his glands tingling and releasing his scent, telling Erwin just how he was feeling as he heard the alpha’s answering growl.

Levi began to shudder, his steady rhythm faltering. “E-Erwin,” he gasped.

“Levi.”

He opened his eyes but his vision blurred as he bucked his hips once more, and he unraveled inside Erwin. Large hands dug into the meat of his ass and pulled him into one more thrust before every cord of muscle in Erwin tensed and his body quaked with Levi’s.

His head hung over Erwin until the alpha pulled him up alongside him, holding each other as they caught their breath. Erwin was gracious enough to remove the condom and tie it off for disposal before he declared, “Let’s take a bath.”

Levi couldn’t agree more but he didn’t move. “Carry me.”

Erwin guffawed, the life suddenly returned to him and Levi exclaimed as he was scooped off the bed. The bathtub filled within minutes and the long mirror fogged while the scent of Erwin’s body wash filled the air. The man barely scrubbed himself before he was sitting beside Levi, tickling his scalp with his fingertips.

“I need room,” Levi commanded pointedly, but Erwin only leaned in to suck kisses behind his ear and along his neck. Erwin assumed the task of cleaning Levi’s scent glands with great care, leaving Levi resigned to his pampered fate.

“Would you ever let me…here,” he whispered. Levi was not sure what he meant until one of his wet fingers slid along the edge of his gland.

“Are you asking?” Levi wondered, his voice unrecognizable.

“Not now,” Erwin assured, “but eventually…would you?”

Levi’s mind felt like the inner mechanisms had ground to a halt. He faltered, “Th-That’s permanent…”

“Does that frighten you?” Erwin asked gently, stroking his fingers over the gland and liking the way Levi’s scent mixed well with the clean odor of soap. He kneeled in front of Levi so his other hand could work on the opposite gland, causing Levi’s eyelids to hang groggily.

“Isn’t it…soon?” Levi asked, buying time before he had to give a real answer.

Erwin chuckled as he cupped water over the glands to wash them clean. “We’re taking longer than
most, I think. But I’m not basing our relationship on others’. You and I can work at our own paces.”

Levi forced his eyes open to face Erwin’s tranquil ones. “I barely know you.”

That surprised him. “What do you mean?”

“I don’t know your favorite color. I don’t know why you love breakfast so much. I don’t know how you became pack alpha. I don’t know what broke inside your head to make you want me,” Levi explained.

A slow, goofy smile bloomed on Erwin’s face, causing Levi to flush with embarrassment. “If I had to pick a color,” he uttered softly as he swiped the pad of his thumb beneath Levi’s eye, “it’d be blue. I love breakfast because my metabolism is so high that I’m ravenous after a night’s sleep. I joined this pack when a man named Keith Shadis was alpha, and he was a dear friend of mine, but also an old man. When an outsider came and murdered him, I returned the gesture and became this pack’s alpha. I wouldn’t say anything broke inside me, but rather, something became fixed after meeting you. My attraction to you has always been similar to you and that gargantuan towel.”

He cast a glance at the fluffy cloth hanging over one of the French doors. “You found it, and wanted it. You found me, and I wanted you. You’re not worse or better off with it, but we are all the happier with each other.”

The water rustled as Levi shifted away from him and crossed his arms. “I can’t talk to you if you’re going to become poetically philosophical about a damn towel.”

He startled when Erwin swooped in to nuzzled his neck, leaving kisses on the vulnerable column of his throat beneath his chin. Levi felt himself slumping involuntarily against the wall of the tub. “Do you know you’re adorable when you pout?”

Levi scoffed indignantly. “I don’t pout. I scowl in a manly fashion.”

Erwin snorted and the effect was a loud raspberry blown against Levi’s skin. Before he could make a retort about Erwin’s lack of finesse, he was yanked atop the alpha’s lap so his knees were on either side of his hips. His hands naturally fell on Erwin’s collarbone as fingertips pressed deep circles into the base of Levi’s spine. The fact that Erwin knew how to rile and calm him with the simplest of touches made Levi’s heart do strange somersaults in his chest.

As if reading his thoughts, Erwin declared, “Pout in any form you like, but that doesn’t change the fact that you and I know each other intimately, and I don’t mean with sex. Some people never establish whatever it is that we have. Am I wrong in wanting to mark you as mine? To show the world how much hubris I have in sharing my body and mind with you?”

Levi played with the blond tresses at the base of his neck as he said, “Some people will criticize you for your choice; they’ll say you’re whipped and leashed by an omega.”

Erwin’s brow furrowed slightly. “Is that what bothers you? How people will react to me?”

Levi shrugged. “I know what they’ll say about me…but I guess that’s how deep I’m in this mess with you. I care about your reputation more than my own.”

One of Erwin’s hands combed his dark hair away from his face. “You’re kinder than you give yourself credit for. That’s one of the reasons I’ve always respected you, but I simply don’t care. I love you. The only two people who matter are you and me…well, and Isabel and Farlan, but I’m mostly certain they are okay with us being together. No one else has to understand what we have.
I’m not asking to mark you as my mate now, but I want you to know where I stand.”

Levi realized his answer was already available: “As long as you know I’ll demand the same privilege.”

Erwin’s grin beamed and he leaned forward, ready to take Levi’s lips. “The privilege is mine. Mark me anywhere you like.”

“Pervert,” Levi managed to growl before his voice was silenced by Erwin’s kiss. Their long make out turned into their cocks rubbing against each other, water splashing and coating the floor. Erwin’s hand gripped their erections tightly together, his other hand holding Levi’s ass as they moved together. His teeth lightly gnawed on Levi’s neck and tugged on his earlobe, but he kept his distance from the gland. Levi directly clamped his teeth into Erwin’s shoulder when he climaxed, the thrill of it sending a guttural rumble into Erwin’s chest as his orgasm joined Levi’s.

When they finally emerged from the bath, both of their cellphones held messages from Hange and Petra, inviting them over for a grilled lunch. Hange’s message was more colorful, ordering Levi to ‘Take a break from the sheets and nourish thine self with watermelon, steak, and Mario Cart.’

Erwin dressed in his sexy black button-up and the grey jeans as he walked with a hand in Levi’s back pocket. Levi told himself his own black jeans and blue V-neck ensemble was not because of Erwin’s favorite color, but either way, he breezed right into Petra’s house only to meet a putridly sweet fragrance of female sex. Isabel and Farlan grinned at him from the couches, seemingly oblivious to it, whereas Levi’s spine bumped Erwin’s chest as they both halted at the smell.

“Hey, boyfriend,” Hange purred groggily, sauntering up and giving a very Petra-like kiss to his cheek. “Victory is sweet.”

“Congratulations,” he answered warily, peeking over Hange’s shoulder to see a blushing Petra hiding in the fridge.

“Mmm…you too,” she leaned in deeper to sniff his neck and stroked a finger over the love bites left by Erwin. “Took long enough, yeah?”

“Hange, turn the grill on!” Petra piped, obviously just trying to get her newly established lover to stop talking.

“Oh it’s on,” she winked at Erwin before sliding the patio door open to obey her kindred beta’s command. Levi moistened a paper towel under the sink faucet to clean his cheek since he didn’t know whether Hange had showered between her romps with Petra and the kiss on his face.

The front door opened a few minutes later to reveal a disgruntled Mike warily peering into the living room and around the corner to the kitchen. Without a word, he proceeded to open all the windows and doors to air out the odors of coupling. He accepted his plate of steak and watermelon and left the house while Hange shook her head. “Single and thirsty. Poor man.”

Petra giggled. “He took two plates.”

Her eyes threatened to open wider than her glasses. “WHO?”

Petra shook her head. “It’s his business…although he always stays close to his blond neighbor during potlucks…”

Hange chewed around a large bite of meat as she flipped through a magazine and displayed a farmhouse on the rural cliff side of a frothy, turquoise beach. “At this rate, we could have a triple
wedding!”

Diiinnng!

The sound of a fork dropping and ringing through the air created a silence that had everyone peering at Levi, who rapidly calculated whom the three couples Hange was referring to were. Hange’s gaze became apologetic as she met Erwin’s accusatory one. “Oh fuck.”

Levi was out of his patio chair and in the house before Erwin caught up to him. “Levi! Levi, wait and just calm down. She didn’t mean anything—”

“How long have you been thinking about this?” Levi rounded, eyes furious and equally panicked.

“I haven’t,” Erwin assured measuredly. “Hange wants a wedding, that’s all. I wouldn’t push something like that on you if you didn’t want it or before you were ready—”

“Shut the fuck up, Erwin! Do you know what a wedding is? It’s me, standing in front of people I don’t like and tearing my heart out for them to examine.”

Erwin’s face softened, heartbroken that Levi would equate a wedding to such a display. “That’s not it at all, Levi…”

But he wasn’t hearing it. “Well! You better have a fucking marvelous plan of asking me properly because Hange is not a third wheel in this! You said as much earlier!”

Erwin blinked. “Wait, what?”

“And don’t you dare try to put some gaudy fucking thing on my finger! A thin, silver band is just fine! Don’t you dare spend extra hundreds of dollars on some tacky shit!”

Levi stormed out of the house, leaving a bewildered Erwin in his wake. The alpha stood flabbergasted until he turned and saw the others blatantly watching through the glass patio doors.

Hange shrugged encouragingly. “He didn’t say no!”

Erwin finished eating and spent the afternoon walking the neighborhood. Most of its inhabitants were at work or staying home with their mates. Eld called Erwin to confirm that all the evidence regarding Levi’s feral week was now nonexistent. Some pack members who took advantage of the fresh air and greeted him in passing, but as evening fell and the moon joined the stars in the sky, Erwin hoped Levi’d had enough time to cool down.

He smelled the omega’s presence the moment he stepped into his house, and that pleased him greatly. Removing his shoes and ascending the stairs, Erwin opened his bedroom door to find Levi already asleep under the masses of bedclothes.

Shedding down to his underwear, Erwin opened the covers to climb in, but he kept his distance from Levi. While his body yearned for the omega’s touch, he knew Levi was exhausted physically and emotionally, so he kept his fever on his side of the bed.

When he awoke in the dark hours of the morning, though, he found Levi cuddled around him. The alpha’s fever had broken as the moon began to wane, and Levi had sought him for warmth in the frigid temperature of the room. Erwin pivoted to hold Levi the better, and he realized he was also awake.

“A beach wedding…” he mumbled.
Erwin did not say anything, waiting for Levi’s conclusion. He sighed in a huff. “She has good taste, at least.”

Erwin felt like his lungs were exploding with air as he breathed relief. He nuzzled Levi’s hair, hiding the moisture forming in his eyes. He hadn’t realized how badly he wanted a wedding until the prospect of calling Levi his mate as well as his 'husband' looked more like a reality.

Chapter End Notes
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

One year later...

Chapter Notes

THANK YOU everyone who has been a part of this journey with me! :) I've enjoyed writing this story immensely and while I will be taking a break to explore another genre of fanfiction, I am super excited for my next Eruri adventure.

Read 'til the end for a special gift ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

One year later.

Levi ground his teeth together, glaring at his reflection and undoing the mess that was his cravat for the sixth time. Hange was peering at him from across the bed and breakfast’s living room. “Having issues?”

He glared at her and the perfectly tied satin white bowtie of her open backed gown. Hange had proudly taken the part of husband in this whole affair and had custom designed her dress to be a gown with lapels, like a confused tuxedo. On Hange it worked, though, whereas Levi was ready strangle himself with his own cravat.

“Do you know how to tie a fucking cravat?” he finally growled in defeat.

Hange snorted. “No. I thought you did.”

“I did when I tailored this fucking thing!” he exclaimed, throwing the cloth across the room and smoothing his lapels. “Get Erwin.”

“No!” Hange exclaimed. “Not beforehand! That’s bad luck!”

“It’ll be bad luck if someone’s neck gets wrung with the fucking thing,” he combatted. “Go get Erwin.”

Hange groaned but slipped into her reception flats to trek across the cliff side to the farmhouse where the other halves of their party were getting ready. Outside beneath a massive magnolia tree, Erwin was pacing leisurely, already dressed and ready. His eyes alighted on Hange and he smiled. “You look wonderful.”

“Naturally,” she thanked, tossing her primped hair over her shoulder. “How’s Petra coming along?”

“Stunning,” he assured. “She’s just finishing with the buttons of her dress.”
“Wonderful,” Hange said, rocking on the balls of her feet; the only sign that she was remotely nervous. “Levi’s freaking out.”

Erwin’s eyes widened. “Freaking out?”

Hange realized her mistake and quickly amended, “Not like that! I mean he’s super excited but also super nervous and his body doesn’t know how to cope.”

Those blue eyes examined her as if to gauge her sincerity before a slow grin formed on his face. “Can I see him?”

“No!” Hange piped. “That’s breaking the rules!”

“I need to see him, Hange,” Erwin all but begged. “To calm both our nerves.”

She blinked, the notion that Erwin was nervous never even occurring to her. “Oh! Well, okay—but NO peeking! Got that?”

“Yes, ma’am,” he smiled knowingly and followed her to the back of the bed and breakfast.

“Levi! Get over here!” she called while keeping Erwin around the side of the house. The moment Levi exited, Erwin could smell him on the breeze; clean, wonderful Levi. He fidgeted eagerly.

“Erwin give me your hand,” Hange commanded, to which he reached around the corner of the house. “Close your eyes,” she added, and when he did he felt Levi’s hand over his own. Erwin's lips curved as he slid his fingers forward, underneath the cuff of Levi's shirt.

He heard Hange tread over the steps to go into the house, sending a final command their way: “If anyone has to look, make it be Levi! Keep those closed, Alpha!”

He chuckled but waited for her to disappear before he pulled Levi around the corner to him. His large hand found the side of Levi’s head from memory and he cradled it while keeping his eyes closed. He heard Levi gasp slightly and asked, “How are you?”

Levi blinked vacantly, staring at his fiancé in the cool grayish-blue shirt Levi had always loved, his white vest and crisp black dinner jacket. He’d insisted on wearing a god awful bolo tie of all things, but he’d jibed that it was simultaneously something old and blue since it was once Keith Shadis’s. His blond hair was combed loosely back and to the side, his jaw shaved expertly so the man appeared crisp, cut, and gloriously dapper.


Erwin grinned, enjoying their inside joke as he always did, but also knowing Levi meant it entirely. “I wish I could see you, but I can’t let Hange attack me before the wedding.”

When Levi did not chuckle, Erwin became worried. “What is it, Levi?”

He sighed. “I can’t tie my cravat.”

“Oh!” Erwin blurted. “Is that all?”

Levi huffed a sigh. “Tell me this is going to be okay.”

Erwin used his hold on Levi to step closer, and leaned down to kiss his lips. “It will be more than okay, I promise. As soon as it’s over, we’ll dive into the sea and thoroughly ruin these tuxedos…”
and then I’ll ravish you out of it.”

He felt Levi’s smile against his lips and desperately wanted to look into his eyes, but some part of him liked the anonymity of his fiancé’s appearance, the mystery, even though beneath the suit there wasn’t a millimeter of Levi’s body that Erwin had not thoroughly explored.

“Give me your cravat,” he ushered. “The sooner we’re ready, the sooner we can eat the banquet.”

He felt the soft material in his hand and blindly measured its length before draping it around Levi’s nape. While he felt his way through tying the knot, Levi gazed at the man in all of his handsome glory. Just five months prior, Erwin had gotten Levi’s attention with a snowball to the back of his skull before chasing him in the park across from their neighborhood. It was somewhere around three in the morning and Levi had angrily pelted the man with snowballs until he was tackled into the three feet of snow. The pair of them had tumbled, clearing a space beneath the waxing moon. Somewhere a rebellious bird was singing with the early hour of the morning, and that was when Erwin had knelt before Levi, a silver ring glinting in the starlight.

Levi had stared terrifyingly at it, lost for words. It was a thin band, just larger than a paperclip, with tiny diamonds embedded in the surface. He had not yet stood from the snow, so he was kneeling as well, making the ring be that much closer.

“I don’t have a marvelous plan,” Erwin admitted bashfully, “but I adore you, Levi. I’d tear this city to the ground if you but asked me. I’ll understand if you say no... I may be subject to the moon, but you’re my entire sky, Levi. You’ve stolen me, and god, I want to be kept forever.”

Emotion struck Levi like a sledgehammer and his hand smacked over his mouth, willing and failing to suppress the effect his own lyrics that he’d sung months previously were having on him. Erwin had remembered, and now Levi was struggling not to whimper as tears slithered out of his eyes like it was a race. He coughed a sob, using both hands to cover his face until it was no use.

He lowered his hands back to his mouth and then to his chest. He met Erwin’s anxious gaze and nodded.

Erwin’s features twitched, as if waiting for permission to shatter into a smile. “Really?”

“GUH!” Levi bellowed through the tears, punching his chest. “I just said yes to your tacky ring and you’re doubting me?”

Erwin piped an ecstatic laugh and tackled him again, kissing away his tears before Levi threatened to punch him again, and then he captured his fiancé’s mouth. Erwin kissed him long after their lips were swollen and chapped before rising just enough to gaze down upon Levi’s face. One of Erwin’s arms was acting as Levi’s pillow, so together they removed Levi’s glove, and Erwin slid the ring over his finger. It was the thin circlet that Levi had wanted, and it glittered pleasantly with the snow.

“It’s not that tacky, is it?” Erwin had asked warily. Levi gave him a look and then pulled him down for another kiss.

Now here they were, nearly ready to walk on the beach where their nuptials would take place.

“What made you choose that ring?” Levi wondered. The ring, along with the one he’d chosen for Erwin, was currently being held by Mike: their marriage officiate and ring bearer.

Erwin’s attention perked up as he smoothed out the tied cravat. Levi peeked at their reflection on the window, and of course Erwin had managed to tie it perfectly with his eyes closed. “You told
me what kind of ring you wanted,” he reminded.

“I didn’t say anything about diamonds,” Levi countered.

At this point, Erwin knew Levi did not mind the diamonds. They had a silent agreement that Erwin would not say anything when he caught Levi admiring the ring in the proper lighting.

He explained, “It’s not actually silver. It’s made from an alloy that is debatably harder than diamonds but shines brighter than silver. Since you insist on traveling the way you do, you need a ring that can withstand the abuse. Therefore you’re wearing the two hardest substances on this planet, fit for my stubborn mate.”

Levi gaped at him. “How much did that cost?”

Erwin laughed. “You don’t want to know.”

His glare was lost on the man with his eyes closed; although it was a token of trust on Erwin’s part for counting on Levi not to hit him. “Yes I do. If I’m going to be wearing it, I should know how much I’m carrying.”

Erwin dropped his chin bashfully, but Levi realized he was smug after he said, “Not a cent. A friend of mine owed me a favor, so I demanded the ring.”

Levi stared at him blankly, and then heaved with laughter. Erwin had to place a hand over his eyes to keep from peeking at the sight. He always liked Levi’s laugh, rare as it was. When his laughter began to fade, Erwin reached out and felt Levi’s chest, lifting his hand to gently grasp his chin. “Save more of that for after the wedding. I like seeing you laugh.”

His chuckled faded and Levi removed Erwin’s hand to kiss his palm. “God, how did I end up with a romantic?”

“Careful,” Erwin warned as those lips trailed to his wrist. “It’s contagious.”

“Like a fucking rash,” Levi scoffed the moment Hange strode out of the bed and breakfast.

“IT’S HAPPENING! Mike just texted me and said Petra’s ready! Erwin! Get your ass back to the house and escort my woman to the beach!”

Levi’s hand was wrenched from him and Erwin felt it was safe to open his eyes when his shoulders were forcibly rotated so he was marching back to the farmhouse. Levi watched him cross the spans until Hange yanked him in the direction of the stairs built into the cliff face leading down to the beach.

Despite their attire, their feet were barefoot in the tawny sand as they approached the far off dot that was Mike. Behind him stood his blond mate, Nanaba, with whom he had decided they did not want a wedding of their own, so he eagerly agreed to oversee the wedding. Also behind him, stood Isabel and Farlan, obviously wearing their brightly colored bathing suits beneath their linen dress and suit jacket.

The bright morning light that slashed through the heavy clouds illuminated Erwin and Petra approaching from the other end of the beach. Petra wore an airy, white gown that tapered off around her knees. By the way Hange paradoxically tensed and relaxed on his arm, he knew she was just as nervous as he was but also just as smitten with her mate.

Levi averted his gaze to Erwin, and felt the air halt in his throat. The man was gazing at him with
wide, shocked eyes, and Levi wasn’t sure whether to blush or blanch. His white cravat hung over his waist coat that was the same material as Erwin’s silvery shirt, but whereas Erwin’s made his blue eyes and blond hair pop, Levi’s made his eyes appear just as blue and silver as the sky above them.

Somehow, they managed to stop on either side of Mike at the same time. Hange ditched Levi’s arm to grasp Petra’s hands, littering them with kisses. Mike cleared his throat and reminded, “Kissing at the end, if you please.”

Isabel and Farlan laughed quietly, whereas Levi was gathering the courage to look Erwin in the eyes again. It had been Levi’s suggestion to wear matching colors, but he never considered if he wouldn’t look good in it. He’d also figured that with Erwin’s bolo tie, his cravat wouldn’t be utterly out of place...but for a beach wedding? Maybe he was ludicrous in thinking any of his suggestions had been good ideas. He was a singer and lyricist, for god sake, not an expert on wedding attire. His hand lifted to comb his hair to one side, the ends fluttering in the slight breeze. He hadn't even thought about using gel, or wax, or mousse, or whatever the hell people used in their hair.

But then Erwin’s hands entered his vision, reaching for him. They grasped his waist and tugged him forward, forcing him to look up.

I love you, he mouthed as a single tear slipped free of his eyelid.

Levi unconsciously reached up to wipe it away, and it was the only tear that fell from Erwin as Mike proceeded to open the wedding. Levi barely even listened to Mike as he processed what was really happening: he was openly declaring his affection for Erwin and sharing the day with his best friends. He was not skewering his heart for anyone, nor was there anyone here that he even remotely disliked—Erwin had made sure of that. He had stood by and patiently allowed Hange to plan whatever she liked, only using his alpha advantage when insisting on Levi’s requirements. Erwin already had Levi all to himself; he just wanted the day to celebrate it, but he would only do so if Levi was comfortable with every aspect.

Levi realized it was time for his vows. He’d tried writing something for months, but nothing ever came, so he ultimately just stopped thinking about it until this very moment.

He swallowed and licked his parted lips, only speaking to Erwin. “I promise only to insult you when necessary—”

Hange snorted but kept her laughter in check. Erwin smiled serenely, waiting for Levi to continue.

“—but I also promise to protect you against any one else’s insults, verbal or otherwise. That’s my privilege, no one else’s. I promise to stay in bed even if you’re burning hot enough to melt glass, but to also keep you warm in your tundra of a house. I promise to listen to you before I tell you you’re wrong, and I promise to let you be my alpha when you’re right. I promise everything I am…is yours,” he swallowed, wondering if he should have just gone without the suffocating cravat. “Because even though it took my head a while to catch up, my heart was stolen, and as annoyingly tall as my oaf is, he always manages to catch me, and I promise to rely on him to continue doing so.”

Petra sniffled, tears silently falling down her cheeks. Hange leaned in to whisper, “Thanks for making my vows sound bad. My wife is crying more for you than me.”

Levi cast her a glare that guaranteed she’d get a face full of cake later, but it was Erwin’s turn for vows. Levi’s heart shuddered in his chest and he was suddenly glad Erwin had not released his
waist since they began. Levi’s hands fidgeted with the button on Erwin's jacket, waiting for whatever was to come.

His alpha smiled and piled Levi’s hands with his steady, strong ones as he uttered, “I promise to uphold all of your privileges, as they are my own. I promise to give you your space when you need it, even if I am a thousand degrees above or below zero. I promise to listen to every word you tell me, but I also vow to remind you of who you are when you forget beneath your mistakes and your hardships. I promise to be your alpha under every storm the sky brings us, and I promise to always value you as more than my omega. I vow to adore you as my mate, by greatest friend, to protect you as such, and I most certainly promise to spoil and relish you as my omega whether you… scowl…or not.”

“Ooh!” Hange leaked, garnering a strange look from Levi as she clamped a hand over her mouth, her own tears fogging her glasses.

Erwin gave her a reassuring smile and finished, “Levi, I promise to protect everything you are, and I entrust everything I am to you. I’ve seen you run amongst the stars, and I promise to chase you through them so I might catch you when you need me.”

Hange’s bouquet of lilies, peonies, and coral branches rustled loudly as she buried her face in it, shaking her head as if to deny any accusations that she was bawling her eyes out.

Mike rolled his eyes. “Christ, people it’s a wedding and I’m starving. Put your rings on.”

He opened his palm to reveal four rings, and they each took their mate’s rings. Erwin slid Levi’s ring onto his finger for the second time, and Levi pushed a slightly thicker, albeit matching diamond band over Erwin’s finger.

“And kiss,” Mike prompted.

Levi and Erwin’s peony bud and coral boutonnieres crunched between them as Levi reached for Erwin’s face, circling his arms around his husband’s neck as their lips met. Erwin’s arms enveloped behind Levi’s lower back and lifted him off the sand, kissing him eagerly while Petra squealed when Hange dipped her for their kiss.

After Levi’s hands sufficiently tangled in Erwin’s immaculate hair, they separated, their breaths mixing in the inch of space between their faces.

“I love you,” Levi returned in a rasp.

A soft yet wolfish grin curved Erwin’s lips. “I know, sweet heart.”

Then, his eyes flashed and Levi had a second to frown before Erwin took off for the water with Levi in his arms. Erwin ran so he was knee deep in the water before he threw Levi into the shallow waves, diving after him.

Levi breached the surface to hear Hange screaming like a maniac as she frolicked in the waves with her giggling wife. Isabel slammed into Levi’s chest, her dress left on the beach along with Farlan’s suit jacket. His siblings gathered him in a hug and Farlan undid the cravat for him before stuffing it in the jacket’s interior pocket. Mike and Nanaba tackled their alpha back under the water before they joined Hange, Petra, Isabel, and Farlan in a game of chicken.

Erwin drew Levi against him, their boutonnieres miraculously still pinned to their lapels. He rotated languidly in the water with his husband held close, kissing him and tasting salt.
“I’m incredibly happy,” Erwin told him, nibbling on his lip and nuzzling his neck in a long hug. “Almost indecently so.”

Levi reached between them and palmed Erwin’s half erect member. He bit Erwin’s earlobe a little harder than necessary. “Later. The moon isn’t full until tonight, and I haven’t eaten all morning.”

Erwin grinned and let him pull him out of the sea to trudge across the sand to where bamboo mats were laid out as a makeshift floor for the banquet tables. A grill was already oozing heat as Mike grilled his special ahi tuna filets. Gunther and Eld shook the husbands’ hands and hugged the wives before leading them to Gunther’s assorted aperitifs alongside Eld’s various pasta dishes. Levi had since been dragged to multiple potluck block parties, and knew to wait for Mike’s tuna and which fettuccine to go for.

A mound of chocolate cake, courtesy of the Erwin and Levi’s go-to date restaurant oozed with vanilla brandy when the core broke, of which Levi smashed a hearty portion in Hange’s face. She responded by cramming a slice of her blueberry and raspberry cake into his pants.

Erwin took it upon himself to clean Levi thoroughly after the wedding. They had rented out the entire bed and breakfast while Hange and Petra had the farmhouse all to themselves. Erwin was pulling the tucked shirt from Levi’s waist as they climbed the cliff stairs to the bed and breakfast. The moon was officially up and full and Erwin didn’t let Levi get to the porch before he had his hands inside Levi’s trousers. Levi gripped the railing of the patio, both loving and despising the full moon peeking down at them through the orange haze of sunset. Erwin was already making him sway into his touch but Levi wanted to get inside the house, under a steady stream of water, and let Erwin disrobe him there.

“Ah! Oh god, Erwin…” he moaned, gripping the rail as his hips began to rock fervently. “Erwin please…there’s cake in my crotch and I’m sticky.”

He shuddered as Erwin’s teeth grazed over his gland. As much as Levi’s body wanted to come right here, under the sky and in sight of anyone with binoculars, he wanted to tumble with Erwin in a clean bed where the only stickiness was their own.

Levi growled and carefully wrenched Erwin’s hands off of him, spinning around to face the equally annoyed alpha, eager for his mate’s touch. Levi reached up and gripped his chin, making sure those luminescent eyes focused on him. “You can fuck me against the shower wall, but not while there are raspberry seeds rubbing me in the wrong places.”

Erwin rumbled a laugh and picked Levi up by his hips. “Alright, husband.”

They kicked off their shoes inside the threshold and Erwin dashed with Levi up the stairs. Jackets flew to hang on the backs of chairs; belts, trousers, and underwear littered the floor. Levi’s waistcoat and shirt were pushed off of one shoulder so Erwin could lick, kiss, and nip his way from the shoulder joint to Levi’s neck. Under the torrent of shower spray, Levi sighted Erwin’s nipples beneath his soaked white shirt, and lunged for them. Erwin gasped at the friction of fabric and Levi’s tongue, fingers, and teeth on his nipples.

“Come here,” he breathed, pulling Levi’s hips forward so he could sufficiently clean Levi of cake, icing, and fruity bits with those greedy fingers. Levi already had small bottle of lubricant at the ready in strategic locations throughout the bed and breakfast, and when Erwin saw the one standing on the soap ledge, he warned, “Levi, I can’t wait.”

They managed to move slightly out of the line of the spray, and Levi clumsily soaked Erwin’s fingers with lube. He sat astride him while his fingers went to work, easing and stretching Levi into
readiness.

“Oh fuck…” Levi rasped. “Hurry.”

“This is mostly based on you,” Erwin chuckled, but slid a third finger inside him. “Are you sure about no condoms?”

They had adamantly used condoms ever since they had started having sex, but when they were officially to be mated and married, Levi suggested not using them as often. “Yes,” he exhaled. “I trust you.”

Of course both of them were clean, but it was the meaning behind it, being entirely unadulterated to each other’s touch, and Levi was biting back pleas to have Erwin bare inside him.

He felt Erwin’s hot tip between his legs, then pressing at his entrance. Levi gripped Erwin’s shoulders as he eased himself over Erwin, his nails biting into flesh when his prostate reacted.

The moment Levi sat flush over Erwin, he gripped his husband’s face, demanding his attention. Erwin met his gaze with lusty, hooded eyes. “I want to mark you,” Levi informed bluntly.

Those eyes blinked wide and Levi winced as Erwin expanded just slightly more inside him. His arm encircled Levi’s waist and he drove his pelvis upward. “When you’re coming, do it,” he ushered. “I won’t last if you do beforehand.”

Levi began moving with him, holding onto Erwin and the soap ledge for leverage and stability as they found their steady, but powerful, rhythm. Levi was already riled from Erwin’s strokes outside, and now he hugged desperately to his alpha, his husband, as he began to unravel quicker than he intended.

“Erwin!” he warned.

“Do it,” he ordered huskily, on the edge himself.

Levi turned his chin so Erwin’s gland was bared for him and grazed a hot, heavy tongue over the membrane which was beating in time with Erwin’s heart. Levi crossed his ankles behind Erwin, anchoring them both to the shower floor, and bit through the membrane.

Levi had been expecting a scream, a mumbled cry, something…not the statuesque silence that engulfed Erwin. They were moving together, sounding like they were running across sand, and then suddenly the sound of the shower was thunderous in Levi’s ears. He nearly released Erwin except a hand cradled the back Levi’s head, holding him in place.

“Don’t stop, I…I can feel it changing…”

Levi moved his teeth just slightly, and his mouth filled with the taste of Erwin. His lips locked over the gland, licking and nipping at the membrane until he smelled and tasted Erwin’s scent change. The more it mixed with his saliva, the more Erwin’s body became linked with Levi’s, permanently marked as his mate.

Finally, when Levi removed his mouth, Erwin shuddered as he held Levi tightly. When Levi pushed him far enough to gauge his facial expression, he asked, “Was it…all right?”

Erwin looked strangely drunk and wide awake at the same time. “It was extraordinary.”

Levi appeared dubious. “Really? Seemed anticlimactic on this end.”
Erwin laughed, and it was a giddy sound that was happier than Levi had ever heard him be. “Give me a minute and you’ll understand.”

They exited the shower, but before Levi could reach for one of the towels, Erwin thrust a box he’d hidden under the sink in his direction. Levi frowned at it. “Uh…can it wait?”

Erwin shrugged. “It’s my wedding gift to you, and it’s appropriate for this moment.”

Levi’s wet fingerprints absorbed in the cardstock box as he revealed a neatly folded, sapphire blue towel. It was soft to the touch, and when Levi grasped a corner to let the box fall from it, the towel proved to be just as large as his white one. He hugged it to the front of his body, smelling Erwin’s detergent.

He chuckled and smiled at his mate. “You even got the lint out of it.” Erwin returned the expression, glad that Levi liked it. “We can’t keep up this matching game, though.”

Erwin peered at him as he tied a towel around his hips. “What do you mean?”

Levi disappeared into the closet and recovered a similarly shaped box. “You need the large towels more than I do,” he retorted as Erwin opened the forest green towel. “We have too much blue and white in the house,” Levi explained for the color.

“I like it,” Erwin assured, swinging the towel around his shoulders like a cape. He rubbed the material in his fist and inhaled the scent of detergent. “Flawless to detail, as ever.”

“I’m not fucking a lint monster,” Levi responded.

“How about fucking me, then?”

Levi paused in drying his hair and peeked from under the towel. “It’s barely been two minutes.”

“So?” Erwin opened the door to the bedroom. “It’s our wedding night.”

“And this is why you wanted it on the full moon,” Levi scoffed.

Erwin rolled a shoulder in a shrug. “I enjoy sex with my husband. Sue me.”

“We have joint bank accounts, dumbass,” he returned, although in truth Levi felt a thrill in his chest every time Erwin called him ‘mate’ or ‘husband.’

Levi remained in the bathroom to finish drying and pulled on a clean pair of boxer briefs. He opened the cabinet under the sink for a fresh washcloth in the morning, when his attention paused on a box of cards.

Twenty or so minutes later: “You prick!”

Erwin was clutching his torso as laughter poured from him, whereas Levi was glaring at the three Draw Four cards he’d been slammed with since he got down to one card. He had never played Uno before, but he’d thought he was doing quite well until Erwin turned traitorous.

“Is this what the rest of our marriage is going to be like?” he demanded.

“What? Me feeling ecstatic and you having a foul mouth? Probably.”

“Don’t be so fucking smug,” Levi shot a card at Erwin’s bare chest. The man was still wearing the two towels he’d exited from the bathroom.
Erwin chuckled as he scratched along the corner of his jaw. “You should know I have two more killer cards. This game will not end well for you.”

Levi splayed his legs wide on either side of the cards lying on the floor between them, wiggling his toes contemplatively as he strategized a plan with his cards. “Fine. Show me what you’ve got mother—Erwin?”

Erwin’s gaze perked up and saw that Levi had gone from competitive to concerned instantly. He was rubbing the gland Levi had bitten, stimulating the membrane so he could smell the chemical change. “I smell more like you.”

“Is that…okay?” Levi wondered.

Erwin gave him one of those warm looks that always nailed Levi in place before he uncrossed his legs and crawled toward Levi. “It is not okay,” he murmured, removing the cards from Levi’s hands. He saw some of the light leave Levi’s eyes and Erwin couldn’t help smiling at that fragile part of his mate.

“It’s not okay because you haven’t bitten my other gland, and I haven’t marked you, yet. It’s not okay, because we’re not finished.”

He pressed kiss on Levi’s collarbone and worked his way down his torso as he felt Levi shudder a sigh of relief. Erwin gently pressed against his sternum, silently ushering him to lie back. He kissed beneath the belly button and his thumbs pressed into the dip of his hipbones. “There is so much more I want to do with you tonight.”

Levi’s body shook lightly as he huffed a mirthless laugh. “Check scaring the shit out of me off the list.”

“I’m sorry,” Erwin apologized, his hot breath seeping through the fabric of Levi’s underwear. He moved past the growing erection to kiss and nip the tender interior of Levi’s thighs. Erwin had since learned that these stretches of muscle were Levi’s most sensitive areas other than his neck. Erwin felt the tiniest muscles flexing with his ministrations as he worked his attention all the way to Levi’s knees.

Levi began to squirm and Erwin reached a hand up to palm his groin, at which Levi released a deep-chested moan. Erwin rubbed him through his garment and observed, “You’re hard already.”

“I didn’t come before,” he admitted.

Erwin’s stunned gaze jerked up. “Why didn’t you tell me?” he breathed, curling his fingers into the elastic band of the raiment and freeing Levi’s cock.

“I didn’t know if you were all right when I bit—it—hmm…” Levi’s words tapered off as Erwin’s tongue found all the places that made Levi feel like the warm goo inside his wedding cake.

His pelvis lifted into Erwin’s mouth and shuddered back to the floor, but not before Erwin had slipped his underwear down to his knees and had a palm firmly cupped around a cheek. Levi opened his eyes to see him returning with the lubricant bottle from the bedside table; he was already stretched from the first time and Erwin was soon thrusting slow, measured strokes inside him. The pace was blissful agony and Levi bucked his hips up to meet Erwin as his orgasm began to slowly build and topple over the edge in time of those thrusts.

His pelvis began to tremble and Levi’s head fell to the side, baring his gland for Erwin. Lowering himself onto his elbows, Erwin nuzzled the area before his teeth latched onto the flesh he’d wanted
to mark for months as his hips pivoted firmly against Levi.

“Aaaahhah!” Levi shuddered, his chest rising with his frantically deep breaths. His voice was a mechanism of its own as he cried and mewedled with each nip of Erwin’s teeth and lick of his tongue. Levi felt the telltale, burning tingle that was his gland reacting with Erwin’s saliva. The sensation seeped deeper into his neck, creating a strange ache in his skull and an awareness in his entire body.

When his mind cleared, he felt Erwin licking his gland and kissing his neck fondly. “I like my scent on you.”

“And if you didn’t?” Levi challenged, slipping his arms around Erwin’s shoulders.

“It is a plus,” Erwin countered. “I’ve smelled mates who were like goat sweat and asparagus piss with one another.”

Levi stared bluntly at him before he erupted in a fit of giggles. Erwin laughed with him, loving the way his husband’s eyes crinkled almost to the point of closing.

They both startled at the sound of a door slamming. “ERWIN! LEVI!” Hange barked. “This is an emergency! I forgot to pack lube! I know you have so—never mind! Toodles!”

The door slammed again and Erwin cast a curious look at Levi. “What did she just take?”

“Probably the bottle from the kitchen,” Levi guessed.

Erwin’s brow rose. “You put lube in the kitchen?”

Levi merely peered back unashamedly. “I like to be prepared. Sue me.”

Erwin growled satisfactorily and they resumed their plans on the bed. Underneath all the reasons he already had to be happy, Erwin secretly liked that the last time Levi had mentioned preparation, he was explaining why he always wore the brace on his forearm, even in bed. Levi had unconsciously stopped wearing it in Erwin’s presence a long time ago, but the alpha stopped himself from voicing his observation aloud, not wanting to draw Levi’s attention to it.

So Levi thought nothing of how Erwin lavished that arm with kisses, glad that the brace was nowhere to be found on their wedding day or their honeymoon, because Levi no longer needed the blade nor the placebo security it once offered him. An alpha and his pack were far more lethal.

Chapter End Notes

Surprise! You all responded so well to my Upcoming Eruri poll that I went ahead and wrote the first chapter of the pirate!au, and you can get it here: Empty Horizon

Rest easy, though, because you guys demanded the demon!au with as much gusto, so I'll be giving you the first chapter of that soon. The demon!au will be titled Soot, so subscribe to me or Empty Horizon to be aware of when that comes :) 

The only downside is that updates will come more slowly as I will be juggling three stories haha Read on and prosper! :D
Also, if you happen to like BBC's *Merlin* you should be clicking [here](#).
Bonus Chapter: Broken Ring

Chapter Summary

For my Anonymous readers and everyone who's supported and been so patient with me, here's a bonus treat! Happy October!

Chapter Notes

Sorry this is late, I jumped on the Erwin Appreciation/Birthday Week bandwagon at the last minute haha

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Erwin groaned deep in his chest against the sensation in his left ribs. It was an oddly ticklish yet painful nudging…

“Get up, blondie. I need to talk to you.”

“Hmuh?” he uttered, barely awake. His blue eyes cracked open to see Levi’s dark silvery ones cast in a halo of morning light. It took a long moment before he realized that he was holding something in front of him to see.

“You should disown that friend who got you this,” he was saying, although Erwin felt like his ears were the last parts of his body to wake up.

“Hmuh?” he exhaled again. “Why?”

“Because it’s broken, dingus,” Levi retorted and placed the familiar metal band in his husband’s hand. “Special metal, my ass.”

“Mmm,” Erwin hummed for different reasons than Levi intended, but he cast his attention to the wedding band…which was clearly broken like a bent chain link. Some of the tiny diamonds around the break were lost. His blond brows furrowed as he rapidly calculated the situation. He had only laid down for a nap, but now it was the first light of a new day… “What did you do to it? Are you just now getting in?”

Levi’s eyes rolled from where he sat on his knees beside him. Erwin kept his smirk to himself at the sight of his small husband perched on the massive bed; he reckoned marriage did not limit Levi’s punching his nose for poking fun at his size.

“I’m serious, whoever the bastard is, he’s a lying cheat. This thing snapped with barely any pressure on a concrete ledge.”

“Or your grip was unsteady,” Erwin reiterated sternly. Despite all the times he had seen Levi sprint and curve acrobatically from building to building in his preferred transportation method, he still held a lingering disdain for parkour, especially when his beloved came home with scrapes and
bruises across his hips or ribs.

The corner of Levi’s upper lip lifting in a grimace. “Shut up, I’m not so careless.”

“Why are you in so late…or early,” Erwin asked again, finally rising to be on Levi’s level.

“Because I had errands to run,” he responded tersely, causing Erwin to frown enough that his head tipped to the side.

“Levi, nothing is important enough—what could possibly take so long to do?”

Those paradoxically dark yet bright eyes rolled again before Levi leaned back. Erwin’s furrow lifted in a puzzled expression as his husband’s ass fell into view while Levi reached toward the floor for something. “Jesus christ, I was at Petra’s working but you have to show up early to get the good stuff. Do all alphas complain on their birthday?”

A brown bag with twine handles crumpled onto the bed and Levi straightened with an expression Erwin had only seen once: when he was saying his vows. It was an intimate combination of embarrassment and pride, and Erwin knew why as he read the name of his favorite bakery on the bag. He realized now how the room was adrift with scents of chocolate, almond, and rhubarb.

“You’ve been up all night waiting for the bakery to open?” he wondered, splitting the bag apart to unveil the chocolate muffins, almond croissants, and rhubarb tarts.

“I haven’t slept if that’s what you’re asking,” Levi answered indifferently, but the strange reply brought Erwin’s attention back up.

“Were you planning something for me? I don’t want a grand ordeal, Levi. I’d like to just spend the day quietly.”

A sleek, dark brow lifted. “With Hange in the pack, how do you expect that to ever happen? I could take you across the world and she’d be waiting for us at the hotel.”

Erwin could not help but laugh, and he did not fail to notice the blush on Levi’s cheeks from the sound. “I suppose you’re right. Shall we eat, then?”

He was already biting into the powdered sugar dusted over a tart when Levi scowled and loudly yanked the bag off the bed. “Not here! I don’t want to sleep or fuck on crumbs!”

He was already up and striding out the door and all Erwin could do was watch pathetically with a tart in his mouth as his birthday breakfast left him. Sometimes it was hard to tell who the alpha was in this house.

His limbs were stiff with sleep and from lying too long in his slacks and button up but he raked a hand through his bedhead and made his way downstairs. Entering the kitchen, he found the pastries set upon a platter while Levi was extracting ingredients from the fridge; two skillets were already on the stove. “What are you making?” Erwin asked quizzically. Levi often helped him cook, but never on his own.

The dark hair turned to reveal an innocent face which answered, deadpan: “Nothing. I can’t cook. You are.”

Erwin blinked and then coughed a laugh. He did not mind cooking, and he rather liked that Levi was just as pushy and unforgiving despite it being his birthday. No sooner had he reached for the carton of eggs, though, then he heard the front door burst open. On instinct, Erwin grabbed Levi’s
bicep and yanked the man behind him, but a second later Hange pranced into the kitchen with an embarrassed and apologetic Petra in tow. A step behind them was a tranquil looking Mike, who locked onto the pastries immediately.

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ALPHA!” Hange sang, hopping with her arms spread for a hug. There was really no choice but to catch or go down with her.

Erwin felt Levi take his arm back as he returned Hange’s embrace. Meanwhile, he crossed the room and smacked the muffin out of Mike’s hands. The larger man merely smirked while Petra shook her head with a blend of disapproval and amusement. “Don’t be a sourpuss, Mr. Insomniac, and Mike, you ought to know better after all the all-nighters by now.”

Erwin had managed to open the eggs but his attention once again lifted. “How many nights is that?”

The answer came in the form of the sink sponge being hurled at his head. “Make breakfast, already. I’m starving,” Levi declared.

Too many, then Erwin deduced. He had been working late nights himself over the past few weeks, which was why he had taken a nap yesterday so he and Levi would have time together when the latter came home; he had not been around to know how much Pixis had scheduled *Anonymous* for his nightclub. He filed a reminder in his mind to tell Pixis to ease up.

While breakfast cooked, Isabelle soon emerged and stood on her toes to kiss Erwin’s cheek while Farlan trailed after her, summoned by the aromas coming from the stove. Both of them gave Levi a wide berth with hardly a glance to determine his state of mind. Erwin stole peeks at him as he set down plates for everyone to share; in the light he could see better how the skin around Levi’s eyes was sunken and slightly indigo, his mouth pursed into a small bow as it was when he was deeply concentrating—in this case, the act of staying awake.

While the others were invested in a debate between marshmallow-peanut butter sandwiches versus classic peanut butter and jelly, Erwin pressed his soft lips to Levi’s temple and said, “Go get some rest. I’ll wake you when things start to happen.”

“It’s no big deal. I’m fine,” Levi declined.

But he was already finished eating, and Erwin could tell by the way his eyes seemed to vacantly lock onto random objects that Levi was practically sleeping with his eyes open. He kissed Levi’s shoulder through the fabric of his shirt. “You’re right: it’s no big deal. Get some sleep, baby.”

It was a testament to Levi’s fatigue that he did not frown or send a glare at the endearment. Erwin knew his time spent with too many alphas had given Levi a tough shell, which included no endearments or overly sweet moments while in the company of others. Although he also considered this to be the fault of Hange and Petra’s cooing every time Erwin let slip a *sweet heart* or called Levi simply *handsome*, which he did so now in a whisper.

“I’ll come get you, handsome. I promise.”

When Levi’s head sagged to lean on Erwin’s, the latter wanted nothing more than to scoop him into his arms and dive into bed for a late morning and long day of cuddles, pastries, and coy touches usually reserved for anxious teens. But he let Levi slide off the stool and silently march from the room. Not a second after he had disappeared, Erwin rounded on Mike, Hange, and Petra. “Exactly how long have you four been pulling all-nighters? I’ve only seen him this exhausted once.”
And he had promised himself and Levi that he would never reach that state again.

Petra appeared ashamed while Mike seemed mildly apologetic. Hange blew a raspberry. “What are you blaming us for? Your husband’s the work-a-holic. Berate him about it later. He’s the one who asked Pixis for more hours.”

The furrow in Erwin’s brow opened. “Why would he do that?”

Hange leaned across the counter for the muffin Mike had been denied earlier. “He’s your short stack. You tell me. In the meantime, you might as well keep your front door open for the pack to give their regards.”

Erwin groaned inwardly. Of course the pack knew his birthday but some part of him always hoped at the last minute that they had forgotten it. He couldn’t tell if he was getting antisocial in his extra year of age or if he was just missing his husband this much. He could practically feel Levi’s body softening to his while he slept, the gentle musk of fresh laundry, soap, and the citrus conditioner Levi did not tell anybody about already filling Erwin’s nostrils.

Then there was a knock on the door, and Erwin knew the day had officially begun. He had no idea it was due to Hange emailing everyone about a birthday block party, although he could not say he was surprised.

Some people already had the orange orbs of pumpkins adorning their front stoops as he was ushered outside and the cold glass of a champagne bottle was pressed to his palm. Erwin admired the devotion Hange had put into Petra’s yard so early in October: comical skeletons were halfway out of the grass while others were playing shuffleboard in the driveway. He also realized at one point that his own garage had been strung with dangly orange and purple lights.

“What? I had stuff to spare,” Hange said innocently as she popped the cork off another champagne bottle. Erwin chuckled and thought about how Levi would react when he saw—

“Levi,” he realized, turning on a dime toward the front door.

“Let the omega sleep,” Mike uttered softly in passing. Hange seconded it with, “Let the little fucker stay unconscious! The earth shakes when he’s awake--he’s not the only one who’s worked to the bone!”

Erwin was already leaving the midafternoon light behind him as he ascended the stairs three at a time. Their bedroom door was closed but opened on silent hinges. The only clues a person inhabited the bed were Levi’s dark hair splashed across a pillow and the slight mound created underneath the plush comforter. Erwin rounded the bed so his shadow fell across the slumbering form to delicately brush his palm across the scalp. When Levi shifted in his sleep Erwin ventured a kiss on his forehead.

“Levi,” he called quietly, but the man slept on. Erwin’s fingertips continued to tease his sensitive hairline with long strokes before the comforter slipped along Levi’s shoulder, revealing bare skin.

“Hmm,” he purred deeply and kissed the flesh there. Levi was warm to the touch, inducing Erwin’s lips to fall deeper into the tight crook of his neck and shoulder.

“Huh?” Levi exhaled groggily.

“There’s a block party outside,” Erwin informed quietly, trailing kisses along Levi’s ear.

“Huh,” he replied again as if he could vaguely acknowledge Erwin’s voice along the edge of his
dreams.

“Are you naked under there, Levi?” Erwin murmured against his temple.

“I’m tired,” he complained softly. Erwin’s heart swelled for reasons he could not explain. Levi spent so much time being an alpha that it was quite endearing when he let himself be an omega, be himself.

“Then sleep, husband. I’ll ravish you later.”

“Okay…” he mumbled, never having opened his eyes before his breathing became deep once more.

And sleep he did. Erwin returned to the party, had his cake, opened his presents, and accepted everyone’s good wishes before he locked the door behind him with an orange, harvest half-moon in the night sky. Levi was in a similar position he had first been found in, but this time Erwin undressed and slipped under the covers in order to kiss his way up Levi’s flaccid penis to his abdomen. He worked his way up his sternum, and by the time Erwin was pecking soft kisses to his jaw, Levi was rousing.

“Levi…” he purred, taking his cock in hand and gently massaging it into attention. Levi was half hard when his eyes opened, his pelvis squirming under Erwin’s skilled grip. When the thin foreskin was swept back for his thumb to circle around the delicate head, Levi gasped and fumbled at Erwin’s shoulders.

“You said you’d wake me up.”

“I did,” he returned, moving toward his mouth. “Or tried to.”

“Not hard enough,” Levi whined, but at this point he could have meant it in regards to being woken up or Erwin’s ministrations between his legs. “You smell like cheap champagne.”

Erwin chuckled and licked Levi’s bottom lip, earning a sleepy grimace. “You taste like it too—oh.” The pumping and twisting on his cock was suddenly warmer and slick. He had decided to stop questioning how Erwin’s long arms managed to find lube or condoms or toys without his noticing.

“I may have indulged on my own birthday shopping,” Erwin revealed as the self-heating lubricant grew warmer, almost to the point of hot. Levi panted when the warmth seeped into his hole as a fingertip swirled over it. He tried to lift his legs but Erwin was straddling his thighs.

“Erwin,” he complained. “It’s been awhile. I won’t last long like this.”

“You won’t have to,” the other replied, and Levi opened his heavy lids before they shot wide at the sight of Erwin positioning Levi’s glistening head beneath his entrance.

Levi’s hands immediately fumbled at his abdomen and ribs. “What—you’re not ready!”

Erwin intercepted his criticisms with a hot, open mouthed kiss. Levi’s hands paused on his torso before coming up to cradle his face, his fingers dusting across Erwin’s neck and jaw, unconsciously ruffling the back of his hair. When was the last time they had sex? Levi did not care to think about it. All he knew was that Erwin’s lips were water in an oasis and he was ready to drown. It was a pleasant shock how soft his lips were, and disregarding the alcohol on his tongue, Levi missed its pursuit of his mouth, the way his alpha wanted to claim his mouth before dominating his body.
Levi’s lips broke away in a gasp at the tight feeling of his cock being pushed into Erwin’s ass. Already he could feel his own heartbeat pulsing against Erwin’s walls, and the answering beat around him. He hissed through his teeth, “It’s tight.”

A guilty smirk curved Erwin’s swollen lips. “Yeah.”

Levi swallowed audibly, his cheeks and neck blushing as red as his cock when Erwin bottomed out. “Does it hurt?”

“I want this too much for it to hurt,” he returned, swiveling his hips slightly for adjustment. When Levi opened his mouth to say more, Erwin covered those lips with his fingers. “It’s my birthday. Let me be selfish with you.”

He rose up and descended back down, creating a shudder through Levi’s frame. “Y-You’re always selfish,” he retorted, but his hands were now on Erwin’s strong thighs, coaxing him for more.

Erwin’s laugh was a mixture of chuckles and breathy shudders as he began to find his rhythm, gently rocking the bed. “I have to be when my husband does such things as break diamond-hard metal.”

“I told you I—I—haahh…”

Erwin’s husky eyes never left him as he continued, “Really, what did you do to break it?”

“I…” Levi began, but suddenly his brow furrowed between eyes that were…ashamed?

Erwin’s pace faltered. “What?”

Levi looked away. “No. It’s humiliating.”

Erwin’s concern somewhat lessened but his curiosity didn’t. “What could it possibly be? I’m more likely to congratulate you on breaking it than how—”

“I broke it because it…got caught,” he answered quickly.

Erwin stopped altogether. “On what?”

Levi’s shoulders hunched near his ears. “On the sex store.”

His eyes avoided Erwin’s until he had no choice but to meet the blunt stare. “The what?”

Levi huffed and cross his arms over his chest. “It’s not my fault the place has hook-things to prohibit suicidal skate boarders from being on the roof. I nearly dislocated my shoulder getting hooked on the damn things.”

Erwin’s gaze wandered the room as if the curtains or walls might tell him how to respond to this. “Your own suicidal parkour aside…did you manage to purchase anything?”

A sharp exhale came from his nose again. “No…it took too long to break the ring.”

Erwin’s brows reached for his hairline. “How did you not break your finger in the process?”

Levi groaned, and before he knew what had happened Erwin found his gaze directed toward the ceiling with Levi leaning over him. “Just get me a new one, all right? I feel fucking naked without it.”
A slow smile bloomed across his husband's face and Erwin brushed aside the ebony locks from Levi's eyes. “I like my omega as selfish as me—ah!”

Levi had thrust up into him without warning, right into his prostate. “Shut it, old man. You’ll get a hernia or something.”

“Or something,” he guffawed, but his mirth was cut short by Levi’s adamant follow through. His hands gripped Erwin’s waist and hips as he rolled his pelvis into him, thrusting and grinding until Erwin’s own palms found his ass and his fingertips clawed into the soft mounds of Levi’s flesh. Levi’s spine stretched forward for his tongue to flick a nipple, but the bite that followed jerked Erwin’s orgasm hard from him, causing translucent cum to spurt between Levi’s attentive fingers. A couple thrusts later, and Levi’s forehead fell onto his breastbone while his body quaked with each spasm of seed inside.

When Levi pulled out, he crawled over Erwin and settled on his chest within the safe cavern between Erwin’s collarbone and jaw. “I missed this.”

Erwin’s forearms settled in their customary places in the slender curves of Levi’s waist. “I missed you too. Work should ease up now on my end, but why have you been wanting more nights at the club?”

Levi sighed. “Hange was supposed to keep her mouth shut.”

“She didn’t say why,” Erwin assured, more curious than ever.

“Good,” he answered curtly, “because she shouldn’t know. I actually outsmarted her at something. It’s probably killing her.”

Erwin sighed and ignored Levi’s pleasure at making Hange twitch. “I should know why my omega’s over working himself. What is so important that you need extra hours?”

He could feel the short bursts of breath on his chest from Levi’s annoyance but he answered, “Flights are expensive.”

Erwin frowned at the ceiling and lowered his gaze to the soft hair against his stubble. “Are you going somewhere?”

“Yeah, a second honeymoon, this time without the beta in shitty glasses or my siblings barging in all the time.”

Levi had said it so casually it took Erwin a moment to process what he’d said, but when he crawled over to the bedside drawer for an envelope, it hit Erwin what he was being presented with. He read over the plane tickets once, twice, and a third time more before he tackled Levi against the pillows, raining kisses over his lips and chest.

“You know I have the money,” he uttered when he rose to meet Levi’s eyes. “Our accounts are one and the same; I wouldn’t mind if you took what you needed from it.”

“That’s not the point,” Levi said quietly, almost a whisper. That embarrassed look shadowed his face again.

Erwin smiled softly, pushing Levi’s lips open for a shallow, intimate kiss. “I know. I love you too.”

By the time morning dawned, Levi was too weary to care that Erwin brought the pastries onto the
bed, or how powdered sugar inconspicuously fell over the white comforter while he munched on his almond croissants.

Chapter End Notes

Happy birthday to our favorite Commander :) and a special thanks to Hajime Isayama for creating him!

End Notes

All feedback/kudos is incredibly appreciated :D

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