The Case Files of J. Steel

by Ernmark (M_Moonshade)

Summary

A collection of one-shots

Notes

This one was an expansion of a fluffy headcanon I sent to TypeHere452, at their request
The Sitar in the Window

Chapter Summary

G, maybe T if you're particularly sensitive. Fluffy.

Juno takes an interest in the folk music of Brahma

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Juno first sees it in the window on his way back from the police station. It’s such an odd thing—peculiarly shaped, inlaid with translucent crystals. He’s only ever seen it once before: in Peter’s memories of New Kinshasa, strumming out those strange, haunting melodies. The label in the window calls it a Brahmese sitar.

Juno buys it on a whim, along with a ream of sheet music and instructional notes. That he pays for it in cash is a more calculated decision. He doesn’t want a receipt linking him to this purchase. You never know who might notice these things.

He feels saccharine and ridiculous when he tries to put it into words, so he doesn’t, but the long and short of it is this: Peter is gone. A lot. Not always, not forever, but long enough for Juno to wax poetic about the ache in his chest until the next time his thief shows up at his door. Having the sitar makes him feel a bit more connected to Peter. It’s so intimately tied to his past, the place he was born, the place he keeps trying to save every time he vanishes for who even knows how long. When he practices the sitar, he feels like he’s a little more tied to all of that. These are the songs Peter probably grew up hearing. This is the music that made his heart hurt.

It’s definitely the music that makes Juno’s heart hurt, too. Not missing Peter. Not even a little bit.

Peter arrives in Hyperion City a full week ahead of schedule. As it turns out, the most advanced security system in the galaxy is as good as an open door when you hand its keys to an incompetent intern. The heist was almost insultingly easy; he would be put out, if it didn’t mean the chance to see Juno a week earlier. Perhaps his detective has some interesting cases to keep him entertained. Alternatively, perhaps his detective could use a few distractions of his own during a stakeout. Perhaps Juno will already be out, and Peter can sneak in. Turn out the lights, arrange himself on a suitable piece of furniture, and wait for his detective to return.

Peter is already brainstorming the possibilities when he stumbles to a halt.

Music.


It doesn’t make sense. There’s no reason to hear it—not here in Hyperion City. Not now.

A trap? It would be an odd trap indeed. Is someone trying to taunt him? To send a message?

A note falls flat. The melody breaks off with a frustrated chord. An amateur player, then, as opposed
to a recording. It strikes him as more trustworthy. Genuine.

Perhaps an immigrant made it all the way to Mars? After all, Hyperion City is a fairly big place. It was really only a matter of time before he met a fellow expat from Brahma.

He follows the tune, careful to remain wary when it resonates so deeply in his soul. He always loved this music, for all the awful memories that accompanied it. It will forever remind him of home.

Nostalgia and apprehension wash over him like tides as he follows the source of the sound. It’s coming from Juno’s apartment building. Juno’s floor. He can hear the notes trickling through the crack under his front door.

The lock and hinges are oiled regularly, and the door opens without a sound. Peter creeps through the apartment with careful, silent footsteps, in case there’s someone else lying in wait.

For once, there isn’t.

It’s only Juno, a Brahmese sitar balanced on his lap, his shoulders folded around it, his brow knit in concentration. Warm, sweet notes fall from the instrument, hesitant when he plucks his way through the more difficult chords.

Peter’s helpless to do anything but watch as Juno plays. It has all the sweetness of nostalgia without the cold and hunger pains of the past. It’s peace and contentment and utter perfection, and it carries him away.

Juno isn’t sure how long he’s had an audience. All he knows is that when he looks up to grab a song, Peter’s standing there, looking like he’s been drugged. No, not drugged, because it’s not groggy or uncoordinated. He’s entranced.

Any other circumstances, and Juno would be flustered and irate at being caught playing. He tries to be now. Only, it’s hard to get mad when a man like Peter Nureyev is staring at you like that.

After a few moments of silence, the daze is starting to fade off Peter’s face, but there’s still an odd light in his eyes that sends chills down Juno’s spine.

He clears his throat. “It gets pretty stale without you here. I got so bored I picked up a new hobby.” It’s not his best one-liner, but it breaks the tension of the moment. The next thing Juno knows, Peter’s across the room, in front of him, leaning over the sitar and kissing him so thoroughly that Juno forgets how to breathe.

At some later point, Peter will purr lines to the tune of “you know, they say Sherlock Holmes found music to be quite helpful for solving cases” and “far be it for me to dissuade you of a hobby”. But that will come later, after he’s regained his composure and his clothes.

Besides, Juno thinks he gets the idea.

Chapter End Notes

An apology to anybody who gets bombarded with a whole bunch of these at once if you happen to be subscribed to me.
I make a habit of responding to two or three prompts at a time, then putting them in my tumblr queue so that it spits out one or two per day. Unfortunately, that makes it rather difficult to coordinate when a fic is going to be out so I can post it here at the same time.

Up until now, my answer to this was just not posting them at all, but at one reader's request I've decided to put them all here so they can be easily found. I'll be posting ten or so at a time, generally about once per week. That way, (if your email server is anything like mine, at least) the notifications can hit your inbox all at once and you can delete them all with a single click.
Chapter Summary

G, maybe T

Like almost everyone else, Juno has the name of his soulmate on his wrist. Unlike everyone else, that name changes almost as often as Juno washes his hands.

Chapter Notes

onegirlinthecorner requested:

I need a Juno/Peter Soulmate Au like I need air. (First words spoken, Names)

A couple more things to keep in mind:

A couple things on this one:

1) I totally did not feel like rewriting the entire first episode, so it jumps rather abruptly between scenes. It should still be fairly easy to follow along as long as you’ve listened to Murderous Mask recently.

2) My best friend actually joked with me about this exact situation all of three days ago, based on something she saw in a Sherlock fanfic ages upon ages ago. So I can’t take credit for the idea, just the application thereof.

My wrist itches.

Again.

There are some days when I fantasize about getting my hand shot off in a firefight, getting the whole goddamn thing replaced up to the elbow with a shiny new cybernetic. Of course, that assumes I would be able to afford anything better than a hook, or that the doctors wouldn’t take one look at my credit history and throw me out of the hospital entirely, or that I wouldn’t bleed out five seconds after getting shot.

Besides, that hand is very good at being a hand, even if the mark on his wrist can’t do its goddamn job.

The marks were originally a double-edged gift from the aliens of Alpha Centauri: some fourth-dimensional mumbo jumbo that reached through time and space to etch the name of your… well, the best translation was ‘soul mate’… your soul mate onto your wrist. The idea was that if they knew who in the world you were going to care about most, they could use that person as leverage. Needless to say, the Alpha Centaurians didn’t last long after that. Turns out humans don’t take kindly to people casually threatening our loved ones. Who knew? Only the first few explorers actually got the mark, but it spread like a plague. Fast forward a hundred years or so, and almost everyone in the...
galaxy had their future love life plastered onto their skin like a bad tattoo.

There are some exceptions, of course. Aromantics tend to have blank wrists, unless they’re just that well matched with a platonic life partner. Polyamorous people tend to get two or three, though there’s been a story of one person whose entire arm was covered in names. A person whose soulmate is transgender will have it change at some point through the transition.

And then there’s me.

I’ve kept my left wrist consistently bandaged since I was in my mid-twenties—partly to keep people from staring when it changed, and partly so I wouldn’t scratch the skin off my wrist every time it changed. Because it changed a lot. Sometimes the same name would stick around for all of a week. Sometimes I’d get two or three in one day. Every single time it itched like hell, and anybody who had the misfortune of seeing it would follow me around getting all sympathetic or asking awkward invasive questions.

How was I supposed to know what happened to my soulmate? I never met them—or hell, maybe I did, and I didn’t know it. Maybe they got close enough to take one look at me and then decided that they’d rather not, thank you very much. In all, a good thousand or so people over the course of twenty years. How the hell did I disappoint a thousand different people I hadn’t even met yet?

I tried not to look at them, but everybody’s got that moment of weakness. When I applied the bandage this morning, it said Christopher. A part of me wanted to know who I’d be disappointing today, but I forced myself not to look. Better to just apply the bandage and get on with the rest of my week not knowing. Better not to jump every time I heard someone mention a Chris, or a Duke, or whatever the hell was coming next. It wasn’t worth the trouble.

At least I managed to go without this bullshit as a teenager. Probably the only mercy I’d gotten during that period of my life: if my mother had found out I had this freakish thing wrong with me, then she might not have hesitated to kill me. But then, at least, the name had stayed consistent. It didn’t change at all until after I’d escaped Old Town—at the time, I’d been happy to see the name on my wrist go, just to be rid of one more reminder of where I came from. These days, I can’t even remember it properly. Pixel? Petra? Penny?

It doesn’t matter. That was a thousand names ago. A thousand names from now, I won’t remember Christopher any better.

I’m still rubbing at the bandage when Rita rings in Sasha Wire. Fifteen years without a word, and suddenly she hands me a new case and a new partner. Agent Rex Glass.

When he arrives, I notice the hallmark of Dark Matters agents everywhere: a black cuff around his wrist. He notices the bandage around mine at the same time. He seems to find it hilarious. “I’ll show you mine if you show me yours, detective.” It’s an empty come-on, the same as the rest of his ridiculous flirting.

Okay, so maybe his flirting isn’t all that ridiculous.

I need to find out where he gets that cologne.

The information on Fang’s phone is going to be valuable, but I’ll have to turn it over to Rita. The adrenaline is leaving my system and taking my reading comprehension and ability to focus with it on
the way out. At least we got the detail about the new leader of the Triad. That’s something, at least.

And I’d be able to do a whole lot more with it if I could stand straight anymore. I was getting dizzy. Weirdest thing.

I probably would have hit the ground if Rex hadn’t thrown my arm over his shoulder. “Juno, I’m no doctor, but I think you might actually have more blood outside your body than inside it at the moment.”

I shoot him a sidelong glance. “You don’t say.”

“I do, as a matter of fact. But just to be certain, I think I’ll get a second opinion from a medical professional.”

I’d like to argue with him. I’d like to point out that it’s a waste of time and money, that I’ve got plenty of bandages at my place. But right then, I’m a bit too busy staring at his wrist.

That box cutter must have hit him higher than expected, because there’s a burned slash on his wrist where the black cuff used to be. In its place is a single word that makes my head spin almost as much as the blood loss.

Juno.

I try to tear my eyes away from the letters on his skin, and somehow I wind up staring at the bandage on mine. But it must have been torn away sometime during the fight, because it’s gone, too. In its place, just three letters on bare skin.

Rex.

When he’s not looking, I smear blood across the letters and pray he doesn’t see.

I pour myself another glass.

Maybe if I drink enough, I won’t be able to remember that kiss.

Maybe if I drink enough, it’ll drown out the reek of his cologne.

Maybe if I drink enough, it’ll stop that godawful itching in my wrist. Or maybe it’ll numb it enough that I can just cut off the whole damn hand.

The note he left me is lying across my desk: crumpled, then smoothed out, and crumpled again.

And at the bottom of the note, a name.

My wrist keeps itching as the letters settle into their new arrangement. I think I already know what it says. The booze tells me that if I don’t look, it won’t be true. If I don’t look, then it’ll be something else tomorrow. Someone else.

The tiny piece of my mind that’s still sober argues that yeah, it’ll be a new name, but it’ll belong to the same man. They all belonged to the same man.

Because I recognize the name at the bottom of that note. The one signed lovingly as ‘your better half’. Because he knows. Goddamn it all, he knows.

Because the name on my wrist for those first eighteen years wasn’t Penny or Petra or Prince.
It was Peter.
The Changing Mark (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Juno confronts Peter about changing his name so many freakin’ times

Chapter Notes

catachrestic-catastrophe asked:
hello, could you do a follow up to the soulmate fic you wrote awhile ago? I just really want juno confronting nureyev about the itching tattoo. thanks!

It’s a long drive to the particular patch of desert that Nureyev’s driving him to. It would be a grueling trip on the best of days.

But his goddamn wrist won’t stop itching.

“Oh, come now, Juno,” Nureyev chides, like I’m the one being unreasonable. “There’s no need to pout. Relax. Enjoy the ride.”

My nails scrape against the fabric of my pants leg, but it doesn’t stop the sensation. Normally when it gets this bad I’m busy running from something, or getting into a fight, or taking out my frustrations on my speed bag. But trapped in this car, there’s nothing I can do except wait it out.

That never ends well.

Back when I was with the HCPD, you could always tell when I got assigned to a stakeout because by morning my wrist would be raw and bloody from scratching.

I need a distraction, so I get my mind off the goddamn thing the only way I can: I run my mouth.

“This is your fault,” I tell him.

“The are we really going over this again?” Nureyev sighs. “I know it’s late, Detective, but it’s not such a difficult concept to understand. You’re the one who called me~”

“Not that.” Not just that, anyway. Frustrated, I unravel the bandage from around my wrist. The damn thing needed changing anyway. “My skin feels like it’s going to crawl off my goddamn hand, and it’s your fault.”

“I don’t see what any of that has to do with me…” His voice trails off as I jerk my wrist into his face. It’s a good thing we’re driving through flat desert right now—there’s nothing for him to hit.

One hand leaves the wheel and wraps around mine, steadying my hand so he can read it more clearly. The unexpected touch doesn’t distract me for long, but those first couple of seconds after contact are such a relief I could cry.
The letters of my wrist are rearranging themselves, some of them fading, some appearing out of nowhere, and others crawling slowly across my skin. It’s been going on long enough that I can make out the new name from the jumble: Duke.

“Well,” he says after a long moment, letting go of my hand to take back the wheel. “At least we’ll be convincing.”

“Is that all you have to say about this?”

“I take it this isn’t the first time it’s changed.”


“I… see.” He frowns at the map readout on the dashboard and corrects our course slightly. “I had no idea that would happen.”

“Well, now you know, so cut it out.”

“Ah. Yes. Cut out an essential part of my profession. I’ll get right on that, shall I?” Apparently he’s not amused by expression, because he sighs. “Is there anything I can do to alleviate the symptoms?”

“You could cut it out,” I grumble.

“Besides that.”

Normally I would take this moment to be stubborn, but it might just be the only opportunity I get to actually do something about this.

“Bigger changes are the worst,” I say reluctantly. “Going from short names to long ones and back.” It took me days to get over the transition between ‘Ade’ and ‘Vercingetorix’.

“Duly noted. I’ll make sure to keep it consistent from now on, then. Anything else?”

“Just… help me get my mind off it, okay? I need a distraction.”

“Do you now?” he purrs.

And that might have been the wrong thing to say, because Nureyev leans over, suddenly pressing into my personal space, and all I can smell is his cologne.

It works, though. Suddenly the itching on my wrist is the last thing on my mind.
wearestarstuff618 asked:
Do you think you could do more of your soulmate Au? Something from Peter's perspective perhaps?

“I assure you, I can handle this case on my own.”

But Agent Wire won’t hear of it. “I’m sure you can, Agent Glass, but the Kanagawas aren’t having it. Either you go accompanied by a member of the Family, or not at all.”

“How charming.”

“It won’t be a complete wash. I’ve got a contact in Hyperion City who qualifies as liminal. Officially considered a member of the Family, but stays an outsider. He might even be able to help you out.”

“You don’t say.” I sigh. “Let me guess. An accountant who’s trying to quit the business?”

“A private eye, actually. Juno Steel. I’ve worked with him in the past; he can be difficult to work with, but he’s reliable.”

My mouth is suddenly dry. I’ve visited more than a hundred planets in the past twenty years, and never once have I come across someone who’s name matches the mark on my wrist. I force my voice under control. “Very well. Let’s just get this over with.”

I can only hope my eagerness sounds like impatience.

It takes me less than a second’s glance to fall in love with him. He’s stocky, built with the power and endurance of a boxer, with flashes of tattoos that have long since been rendered unrecognizable by cross-hatchings of scars. His eyes glint like obsidian as they dart all over me, taking in every detail. Including the cuff on my wrist.

I note a bandage over his. Oh, this will be fun. My eyes return to his face just as his return to mine, and I grin.

“I’ll show you mine if you show me yours, detective.”

“Not interested,” he says, and he means it. Of course he does. The name on his wrist is almost certainly ‘Peter’. He has no idea he’s looking at his soulmate. How poetic.

We exchange banter as we work. He shows off how clever he is, I flirt, he rebuffs me. He would be convincing, too, except for the slight way his expression twitches when he tries not to smile at my jokes.

We work well together—he’s quick-witted and observant, and loyal to a fault. He’s too concerned for my safety to let me out of his sight. Charming as that is, it does make sneaking off with the Mask rather difficult.
That’s perfectly alright, though. The more time I get to spend with Juno Steel, the better.

Oh, darling, look at him.

“Why, Juno,” I say. “You look positively snowy.” Who would have thought such a rugged man
would have such a weakness for gore? But I’m not about to wound his tender pride. After all, he was
still willing to handle the Mask long enough to give it to me, gray matter and all. Instead I
deflect. “Not afraid of a few gangsters, are you?”

There’s that flash of emotion again, before he regains his tough demeanor. Gratitude. “Course not.”

*Oh, I could wrap you up and take you home.*

I lean into his space and let my voice dip low. “Why don’t you prove it to me, then?” His lips are
parted. His eyes have gone still for the first time since we started talking. They’re wide and so very
dark… “Show me how brave you are.”

I’m almost disappointed when he doesn’t kiss me.

Ah, well. There’ll be other opportunities. “So! Where are we headed?”

At least he has the sense to stammer when he answers me. It seems the poor darling was just stunned.
I can fix that.

I accompany Juno into the emergency room, but I’m largely useless. For most of the visit I entertain
myself trying to get a closer glimpse of Juno’s wrist, but my view is obstructed first by the doctor and
then by the printed cast he fastens around Juno’s arm.

Of course he’s wearing my name– but my own conclusions aren’t enough for me anymore. That
punch might well have killed me if he hadn’t pushed me out of the way. The amount of blood he lost
afterward easily could have killed him. And I don’t want him to die.

I’ve only known this man for a few hours, but already the thought of him getting hurt again is
chilling. And I don’t know what to do about it.

A person like that is a walking, talking vulnerability. So long as I’m near him, I’ll never be safe. At
the same time, I know instinctively that I’ve never been safer than I am at his side. He won’t let
anything happen to me. He’d die first. He proved that barely an hour ago.

I’ve always been skeptical about the idea of soul mates, but Juno Steel makes me reconsider. I want
to see the galaxy with this man. I want to show him the mysteries of the universe and watch that line
form between his eyes as he tries to figure them all out. I want…

I touch the mark on my wrist and feel naked skin under my fingertips. My wrist cuff is gone, and the
place where it used to be is marked by a sharp burn. It must have come off when he nicked me with
that box cutter.

I tug my sleeve over the mark. Juno’s back is turned to me, but somehow I’m certain: he saw. He
knows.

What happens if the person you’re destined for isn’t destined for you? If you aren’t your soulmate’s
soulmate?
It isn’t as if it doesn’t happen. Interview shows and dramas thrive on the subject matter, but it’s always been an abstraction. An extreme. Nobody really believes it could happen, not to them.

But it’s happening now, isn’t it? Or at least, Juno must think it is. That has to be why he’s so hesitant. Why he looks so broken up and vulnerable. If the mark on my wrist says Juno and the mark on his says Peter and the badge in my pocket says Rex–

But it doesn’t have to be that way. I can tell him the truth. I can give him my name. And then I can sweep him off his feet and off this planet, with all its mobsters and murderers. I can give him the galaxy.

But I start with a kiss.

His lips are chapped and hesitant against mine. His hands are callused, and he touches me so carefully, like he’s afraid I might break if he holds me too hard. His thumb brushes over his name on my wrist, so softly it’s almost a tickle. When he pulls back, his eyes are full of heartbreak and longing.

“If things were different,” he starts to say.

“There’s no reason they can’t be.”

And he wants to believe it. He wants it so very badly. “Rex…”

And I can give it to him. “Juno…”

He takes my hands in his, draws them to my sides, and sighs. His thumb is still brushing my wrist. “Has anyone ever told you…”

Click.

“That you’re under arrest?”

And he explains it to me: the compass, my little overconfidences, the reality of the case. It’s all well and good– I was careless, and he’s delightfully clever. But there’s one thing that catches me off guard.

“I’ve got to hand it to you,” he says icily. “Putting my name on your wrist– that was a ballsy move.” He looks hurt. Betrayed. “Who are you really?”

“Why don’t you tell me?” I challenge. “Surely you know it already.”

“No,” he snaps. “I’m done with you jerking me around.”

But I already know it’s a lost cause. His wrist has been bare in my presence; It doesn’t matter that I never saw it, even if I tell him the truth now, he’ll assume I’m trying to manipulate him.

So I let him keep thinking it. I spin him words full of drama and bravado, I flirt and I shrug him off, and all the while I pull a pen and paper out of my back pocket and write him a note.

It doesn’t matter that he doesn’t believe me now. I’ll win him over. I’ll make him believe me.

He’s my soulmate, after all.
Juno Steel is Not a Navy Man

Chapter Summary

G, maybe T

Pirate AU

Warnings for general skeeviness on the part of the Navy

Chapter Notes

BelaNekra requested a pirate AU, and I live to serve

Juno Steel is not a Navy man. His Majesty’s Royal Navy makes very sure that he never forgets this.

Never mind that he can hit a seagull’s eye at a hundred paces. Never mind that he’s caught and jailed more pirates for petty local crimes in Port Hyperion’s waters in the last five years than His Majesty’s officers have in the past twenty—and they’re catching them by the literal boatload.

No, he is not a Navy man. He lacks the discipline. He has trouble with orders. He’s ill-mannered. And most damningly to some of the men currently searching his ship, he’s Creole.

So he makes do on his own. His little sloop is a leaky collection of splinters held together with pine tar and good intentions, but it’s suitably fast and it can navigate the Caribbean islands in a pinch. His navigator may be a woman, but she can read stars and waves better than Juno can read the King’s English. And for all his problematic discipline, Juno has no problem sailing right into pirate bays to get what he’s after.

Which, according to His Majesty’s finest, is more than enough cause for them to search his ship. Apparently they’re chasing after a notorious pirate who’s been sighted in the area, and they think Juno’s just the type of man to aid and abet him.

Juno would be insulted if it wasn’t true. He wishes Peter would quit making faces at him from the other ship’s porthole, though. It’s damn distracting.

“So who is this man, even?” he asks Captain Kahn—the only member of the boarding party so far with an ounce of sympathy, and the only one keeping the rest from keelhauling him right then and there.

“We’ll figure that out when we get our hands on him,” Kahn mutters.

So they haven’t learned Peter’s name yet.

That admission gives Juno some satisfaction. It doesn’t prove his promise that he only gives it to someone special, but it certainly lends the claim more credence.
“So what business do you have in these waters?” Kahn continues. “You’re not smuggling, are you?”

Juno opens up the emptiest of his secret compartments to reveal a single half-empty crate of rum. “Only my own stash, Captain. I’m on other business right now.”

“Is that right?”

“Last week a woman came to me telling me her husband’s run off with another woman, and she wanted me to bring him back.”

Kahn narrows his eyes. “This woman have a name?”

It’s the perfect question for Juno to feign affront. “And ruin an innocent woman’s reputation by spreading her business all over the coast? Captain, she came to me in confidence.”

“Do I look like the kind of man who’d let this sort of information slip?”

Juno gives him a look. “The walls may not have ears, but your officers do. They’re the ones I’m worried about.”

Kahn looks like he’s tempted to challenge that, just out of pride, but he doesn’t. It would be too obvious a lie. The reminder of his own crew’s disciplinary failings prompts him to round them up again and shepherd them back onto his own ship. He hears a few growled warnings from Kahn that they better not have laid a hand on the navigator while his back was turned.

Juno finds it unlikely that they would have. Rita knows this ship better than anyone, and she has secret compartments of her own that couldn’t be found with an army of bloodhounds. And she’s not the only one who can disappear in a pinch.

The last of the boarding party leaves and the Navy vessel leaves them behind. Once they’re adequately out of sight, Juno heads below deck to check his inventory. Kahn’s officers left behind some vandalism and pocketed a few supplies on their way out, but Juno doesn’t let that get to him.

After all, it’s nothing compared to the haul waiting for him on his bed: fresh fruit and salted meat and spices, gold jewelry and new boots and maps in a now-familiar shorthand. The thief himself lounges at the head of the bed, all but fondling a bottle of Scotch.

“Did you make it out alright?” Juno asks. “Did anybody see you?”

“O ye of little faith,” the thief sighs dramatically, falling back against the pillows. “They won’t be missing any of it, either, not for a few weeks at least.”

“Good.”

“Though I must say, I’m charmed that you care.”

“If they realize you’re with me, half the armada will be after this ship,” Juno says. And he’s all too aware that if this ship stops being a safe place for Peter to hide, there won’t be any reason for him to stick around. “I don’t want that.”

“No. Of course not. But as much as I appreciate your worry, it’s high time to set them aside.” Peter raises the bottle of scotch and flashes his most vulpine smile. “Care to help me sample the spoils?”
A Terrible Patient

Chapter Summary

G - fluff
Juno is injured and Nureyev takes care of him

Chapter Notes

Another one prompted by TypeHere452:
I been craving fluffy Jupeter. Like Juno being a grumpy sick idfiot ( or being wounded) and Peter taking care of him.

Juno Steel is a terrible patient. Simply intolerable.

His is a near-pathological need for self-flagellation, paired with a stubbornness that would make black holes reconsider their pull. It’s a useful set of quirks in the midst of a fight, where he can shrug off a devastating blow and seize an opening in his opponent’s defenses. Without a doubt, that bloodthirsty tenacity has kept the detective alive in more than one tight spot.

Outside of a fight, it’s far less practical.

Now, for example: the case is closed, the murderer locked up in Hoosegow, and the stolen property has been returned to its rightful owner (sans a small handful of emeralds that somehow found their way into Peter’s pocket, which will be fenced off by this time tomorrow). Meanwhile, Juno is laid up with a knife wound in his chest and doctor’s orders not to move from his bed for a week at least.

Naturally, he was on his feet and planning his next case five minutes after the doctor left the room.

It might have been charming the first time Peter saw him do it. Cute, the second. But then he got reckless, his stitches popped and his wounds reopened, and Peter was left fearing for Juno’s life while the detective lost yet another pint of blood. This time, he’s putting his foot down.

Which is to say, he’s putting quite a lot of things down.

Juno, for one. The man can’t be bothered with bed rest unless physically restrained (and shackles and chains are unbearably crass), so Peter takes it upon himself to incapacitate his detective in more subtle ways.

The man won’t stand to be tucked into bed, but he will consent to Peter joining him. He won’t be held down, but he doesn’t argue when Peter’s head settles on his shoulder. He won’t take a blanket, but when Peter complains of cold, Juno allows him to cocoon the two of them together. All the while Peter’s fingers ghost across Juno’s face and chest, subtly checking his temperature, the tenderness of his bruises, the security of his stitches.

When Juno falls into a doze, Peter rises with a grace known only to master thieves, careful not to
wake him. He sets water and painkillers on the bedside table, orders takeout from the highest-end establishment Juno’s palate can stand, and begins sorting through the mail.

It’s no wonder Juno’s so eager to take another case. Too many of the papers are printed in red ink, a torrent of neglected debts. It seems the only bill Juno has managed to pay on a regular basis has been Rita’s salary. Once upon a time, his ties to the Kanagawas protected Juno from the most determined of the collectors, but now that tie is severed, and poor Juno is left to fight off the sharks alone.

Peter makes a mental note. The fenced emeralds should settle the worst of the debts. As for the rest, he’s sure the triad has a few trinkets lying around that they won’t miss. It isn’t such an ostentatious gesture that Juno might object.

His plans are interrupted as the detective stirs.

“What?” he asks groggily. “Sorry, I… I think I dozed off just now.”

“Well, that is what the doctor ordered.”

Juno shakes his head. “The guy was a quack and you know it. Anyway, I’ve got stuff to do.” He tries to sit up, but Peter pins him down with a single finger to Juno’s collarbone.

“I said rest, Juno.” There’s no weight or pressure behind the gesture, but Juno is weak from sleep and pain, and he doesn’t fight it. “Your work will still be there in the morning.”

He wants to rest. It’s written on his face, plain as day, right between the lines of guilt and anxiety that push him to keep moving. Perhaps one day Peter will be able to soften those lines. Perhaps, in a perfect world, he might erase them entirely.

For now, he will content himself to slip between the covers and wrap himself around his detective and distract him from his troubles for a few hours more.
Juno likes to think of himself less as a man and more like a constellation of scars held together with skin. He earned every single one—most of them during fights like this one.

The odds would be the kind that might make a betting man rich, if he was dumb enough to put money on Juno. The goons in the warehouse look smug enough about it, at least before Juno smears their smiles across his knuckles. But there are still close to a dozen of them, and only one of him.

By their count, anyway.

Because there’s something he knows that they don’t. Another body that blends so perfectly into the shadows that he might as well be invisible, emerging only to snatch another goon by the back of the neck and drag them into the shadows. The others don’t notice him. They’re too focused on Juno, his flying fists, and his acerbic wisecracks. Even Juno can’t see his partner until those long limbs wrap around the last mobster’s throat. The oaf grunts and gasps, clawing at Peter’s arm with his huge meaty hands. When the lack of oxygen finally catches up with him, he slumps to the floor, revealing Peter’s elegant form. The thief barely looks disheveled.

“Thanks for that,” Juno says, still breathing hard. “We should—we should get out of here. Before they wake up.”

Because they will wake up, preferably just after the cops arrive to take them in. Because death may be part of the job, but gore has always made Juno sick to his stomach, and so Peter has made a point of sparing their opponents when he can, even though they both know he could kill them with half the time and a tenth of the trouble.

They run for it, weaving between back alleys and side streets until even they don’t know where they are anymore, except that they’re in a back alley somewhere in the far reaches of Hyperion City. Juno’s legs are shorter, so it’s only natural that he’s out of breath and clutching at the wall while Peter is still perfectly composed. And the chill he feels when Peter reaches for his hand? That’s just sweat on his skin starting to evaporate.

“Oh, Juno. Those awful men didn’t hurt you, did they?” He presses his lips to a gash on Juno’s knuckle, and Juno’s throat goes dry.

“Just a… just a fight bite,” Juno rasps. “I’m fine. Perfect.” The adrenaline is coursing through him.
like a drug, and it makes everything bright and intense. Looming over him, Peter practically glows. His eyes are dark, and so intense they make Juno’s breath catch.

It’s not the only thing caught.

Long fingers wrap around his wrists as inflexibly as shackles. A moment later his shoulders hit the brick wall of the alley.

“Juno.” The word is exhaled into Juno’s ear, and his eyes roll back. “I already know you’re perfect. I’m asking you if.”

He presses a kiss into the corner of Juno’s jaw.

“They.”

A second kiss against his pulse point.

“Hurt.”

His lips skate down Juno’s throat.

“You.”

The last word is breathed into the dip of his collar bone. The sound Juno makes in reply is barely human.

“Is that a yes?”

It takes a moment to find the words. “That’s a please god don’t stop,” Juno gasps. His knee hooks around Peter’s thigh—would wrap around his waist if the other man wasn’t so goddamn tall, but it does the trick in a pinch. They’re pressed so tight against each other they might as well be vacuum sealed. And then Peter starts grinding against him.

The sweet friction turns Juno’s thoughts to static, every thought caught in a desperate loop of more and closer and please. One hand breaks Peter’s iron grip and wraps around the small of his back, slipping under his shirt. Peter’s skin is plasma-hot under his hands. The point of contact is so intoxicating that Juno almost doesn’t notice Peter’s free hand on his waistline until it’s moved on. The rhythm of their grinding never falters, not even when those long, clever fingers wrap around Juno’s length and draw him out into the open.

“God, Peter—!”

“Only if you want me to be.”

Juno’s nails are clawing down Peter’s back. His other hand is still pinned to the wall over his head, his fingers laced with the thief’s, and Peter’s pumping him.

There are no more words in Juno’s head. His vocabulary’s been reduced to a single name, and he moans it with lips that are dry from gasping.

He can’t take much more of this. Any more sensation—any more undiluted pleasure—and he swears he’ll explode.

And then a twist, a squeeze, a vulpine smile—and he does.
They’re alive.

By all rights, they shouldn’t be, but they’re alive.

But here they are, in an alley, reeking of burnt chemicals while sparks eat holes in their clothes and the wreckage of the warehouse billows oily smoke into the artificial atmosphere.

For a few moments they stand in silence, leaning against the fire-warmed bricks and trying to catch their breath while the debris settles.

And then Juno gasps. It’s a rasping, rhythmic sound, like he’s choking on a seizure, and Peter is on him in an instant.

“Juno? Juno, are you alright? Can you breathe?” His eyes are wide. He’s feeling at Juno’s throat, pawing open his shirt to look for signs of broken bones or ruptured organs.

There were so many chemical explosives scattered around the warehouse. Juno swore he knew how to disarm them—some trick he’d learned on another case—but there were too many. They only just managed to get out in time. Had they gotten out in time? Is Juno—

Juno only manages to spit out three words: “fucking table salt!” And then he collapses into the same choking sounds again. But as his lungs clear of dust and smoke, it becomes more recognizable.

He’s laughing.

It’s a rasping, choking laugh, utterly hysterical when it isn’t interrupted by coughing fits. Tears are running down his soot-covered face.

“Dammit, Juno,” Peter hisses, pulling him close. “Don’t scare me like that. I thought—with the shockwaves—”

“I know.” Juno pulls himself together with a gasp, but he’s still fighting back a giggle. “No, I—God, that was a close one. But—” The fight is over, and adrenaline-fueled giddiness wins out. “But how the—heck does Cecil expect to blow up the Triad—pfft!—when his explosives can be disarmed
with—"with table salt?" He would fall over laughing, if he weren’t pinned between a thief and a brick wall. “Peter, that’s their entire menu!”

“Yes, yes, that’s very funny,” Peter grumbles, and peels Juno off the wall. He doesn’t trust the brickwork after that explosion. “You’re incorrigible, Juno.”

His precious detective, still high on adrenaline, rises on his toes to give Peter a kiss on the cheek. “Glad you noticed.”
5 times Peter touched Juno and 1 time Juno touched him back

Chapter Summary

G - Fluff and some angst

Warnings for allusions to past abuse?

Juno is skittish and touch-starved, and Peter is physically affectionate.

Chapter Notes

Another prompt from TypeHere452:

a fluffy story as Juno’s reactions to Peter casual touches and casual intimacy through their relationship?

1.

It’s not being tied up back-to-back that bothers Juno. It’s not rooting through a relative stranger’s back pocket. It’s not even the buffet of fists they’re served before they’re seated, the knife in his thigh, or the spikes that nearly rip the flesh off his arm.

All of that is normal. After a lifetime of fighting for his life, he knows exactly how to tense and relax to lessen the impact of a beating. He knows how to be in uncomfortable positions with uncomfortable people. He knows how to focus on his situation and let little things like agony fall by the wayside.

But this? Juno doesn’t know how to deal with this.

The last chain has been cut, and Rex is free to go preen or wash the blood out of his suit or… or whatever he does. Instead, Rex reaches for him.

Juno tenses. He’s just demonstrated that he can take a punch as well as the next guy, but the laser cutter is still in Rex’s hand, and those things are illegal to civilian use for a reason. Adrenaline spikes. If he grabs Rex’s wrist, aims the weapon elsewhere, throws in a headbutt to stun him—

But Rex catches Junos’ wrist instead and tugs it around his shoulder. “Don’t worry, I’ve got you.”

Rex’s arm settles around Juno’s waist, taking some of the weight off his feet. It’s harder to balance this way, and Juno all but crashes into Rex’s side.

“What the hell are you doing?” Juno demands.

“Taking you to a hospital.”

“We don’t—”
“Juno, I’m no doctor, but I think you might actually have more blood outside your body than inside it at the moment.”

At the hospital, Rex is all nerves, and apparently the guy is one hell of a fidgeter. He practically gives Juno an exam right there in the waiting room: his fingers ghost over each one of the cuts and bruises, smoothing Juno’s hair when he isn’t plucking debris from the wounds.

One moment he gets a bit too close to the gash on his arm, and Juno bites back a hiss.

Instantly Rex’s hands go still. “Did I hurt you?”

He did, actually. And that’s strange. The only reason Juno even bothered acknowledging it is because he didn’t expect it. Nobody’s ever been this careful with him. Ever. And the way Rex is looking at him now makes it clear: if Juno says the word, then Rex will bury his hands in his overstuffed pockets and not touch him again.

Right now, that feels like a tragedy.

“I’m fine,” he mumbles under his breath, but Rex hears him anyway. “You don’t have to stop.”

2.

It’s apropos of nothing, really: they’re on their way to dinner, walking side by side, casual as anything, when Peter scoops his arm through the bend of Juno’s elbow.

And it’s so weird, so out of the red, that Juno immediately sweeps the crowd for anyone suspicious (which in Hyperion City is everyone).

When nobody stands out, he mutters under his breath: “Who are we watching out for?”

Peter looks puzzled. “What?”

“I’m having an off day, okay? Just tell me who you saw?”

“Saw…?” It takes a moment for him to understand. “Oh, you mean this?” He gives Juno’s arm an affectionate squeeze. “It’s not part of a cover, Juno.”

“So you’re doing that because…?”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

Juno can think of a thousand reasons why not, but none he wants to voice just yet. Still, he can feel Peter’s grip relaxing. If he wanted to, Juno could pull his arm away without much effort.

He doesn’t want to.

3.

Peter talks with his hands almost as much as he does with his mouth. Not just with gesticulations, either. Affectionately brushing his fingers over Juno’s stubble when he forgets to shave, trailing hands over Juno’s shoulders. One day, as he’s hunched forward to read a tabloid, he feels Peter absenty doodling over his back with one finger.
It’s unnerving at first, all the little casual touches, and it takes some concentration not to cringe away every time they happen. A few of the flinches must make it through anyway, because Peter starts regarding him with more care. The touches don’t stop, but they come lighter, more fleeting, always with the unspoken offer that he’ll retrieve his hands if they’re unwanted.

Gentleness has always been a scarce commodity in Juno’s life. He isn’t about to waste it now.

4.

“Juno, are you sure you’re not feeling ill?”

Right about now, Juno would like to tell Peter that for the last time, it’s just a cough, but he doesn’t get a chance. Peter’s already leaning in close, the back of his hand on Juno’s brow. It’s a soft touch. It’s… nice.

Which doesn’t make sense, because every other part of Juno hurts right now. He’s been sore and achey and hating the texture of his clothes all day.

But this, surprisingly, is okay.

Peter’s entirely too close and looking concerned. “Oh, you delicate flower, no wonder you aren’t yourself. You’re burning up.”

All at once the hand on his forehead has moved the small of his back, and he’s being ushered into bed, and a blanket is being expertly wrapped around him and tucked under his feet.

Peter rises to go, but Juno catches the hem of his jacket before he can escape.

“Actually…” It takes some courage to form the words. “Can you stay with me for a bit?”

“Of course, Juno.”

The fondness in Peter’s gaze is enough to break his heart. The kiss on his forehead is enough to break his brain.

5.

Juno isn’t comfortable in suits on the best of days. The cut of the fabric pulls him in all the wrong directions—it drags his posture out of his everyday slouch, forces his arms to lay demurely at his side when they should be ready to block a punch, and you can forget about digging your gun out of its holster.

So he’s not exactly thrilled when he sees the dress code to Valles Vicky’s big anniversary party.

Even less thrilled that Peter found the invitation before he had a chance to destroy it, and that he’s gone ahead and RSVP’d as Juno’s Plus One.

And of course, he’s bought Juno a tux. The fancy new kind that just came into fashion, with the weird overlapping laces and cords all over the place. On Peter, it’s breathtaking. On Juno, the straps wind up so twisted and out of sorts that he looks like he was involved in a formal parachuting accident.
Before Juno can suggest that they return the suit as defective, Peter steps in close. His fingers are so quick and nimble that Juno can’t follow their movements exactly. He just holds his breath and tries not to fidget as the laces are untangled and laid flat across his shoulders and chest.

He’s had his attire corrected before a few times, but the ones that stand out all came with an aura of frustrated disapproval and the unveiled threat of violence.

This is different. Peter’s fingers are gentle and pliant, and his smile is soft and cherubic as he makes the corrections. When the last swatch of fabric is in its proper place and Peter steps back to admire his work, Juno almost follows after him.

+1

Peter doesn’t keep a diary—they’re rather the antithesis of anonymity—but he still makes mental note of the date.

June third. A Tuesday. More than a year after the infamous robbery of the Utgard Express.

They’re walking side by side. Their fingers brush. And for the first time, without word or warning, Juno takes his hand.
Chapter Summary

G

One of Nureyev's accomplices is getting worried about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It’s not that Ceres actively pursues a life of crime—right now he doesn’t have much of a choice. With two kids at home, a third on the way, and protection money to the local crime families, his day job at the museum just isn’t going to cut it.

Fortunately, the same skills that let him restore ancient paintings are just as well suited for forging passports. And ID badges. And whatever else Mr. Sargon Key wants from him. Key even got him a side gig repairing damaged artifacts for Valles Vicky. It may be illegal, but it’s the best money Ceres has made in ages, and it’s not like anybody’s getting hurt.

So when Key starts acting strange, Ceres feels like he’s got reason to worry. Their relationship may be more professional than personal, but there’s still a certain camaraderie between them. But one day the guy shows up with a nasty burn on his hand, and he’s… different.

He doesn’t even seem to notice when Ceres wheels up to him, and that’s saying something—Ceres’ wheelchair is low on the list of things that needs to be repaired, and it squeaks something awful.

“Key, if it’s bothering you so much—” He doesn’t even notice when Ceres is talking to his face. “Key? Can you hear me?”

He has to snap his fingers in Key’s face a few times before the thief surfaces from his daze. “Hm?”

“Darn it, Key. If that burn is bothering you so much, go to the hospital already. There’s gotta be a painkiller or something they can give you.”

“Burn…?” He looks confused for a moment, then glances at his lap. His good hand has been tracing circles around the burn for the past hour. “Oh. That. No, that won’t be necessary. It’s healing quite well on its own.”

“Bull hockey,” Ceres mutters. He tried to say ‘bullshit’, but the mental image of his four-year-old’s shocked face keeps him from crossing that line. “Key, if that darn thing wasn’t infected already, it’s just a matter of time with the way you keep poking at it. Either take some painkillers for it now, or take an antibiotic later. But for the love of all that’s holy, stop picking at it.”

“I’m not picking at it.” That’s another thing—before he got that burn, Key would never be caught dead sounding this sullen.

“Something’s picking at you, then. Don’t bother pretending it isn’t.” Ceres leans forward, resting his elbows on the arms of his chair. “You know you can talk to me, right? Whatever’s going on. I’m not here to judge.”
“I think you might make an exception in this case,” Key says ruefully.

“Try me.”

Key’s long, slender fingers trace another circle around his burn. His gaze is distant. Wistful. If not for the next words out of his mouth, Ceres might even assume he was pining. “Does the name Juno Steel mean anything to you?”

All at once, Ceres’ blood runs cold. He sits up, trying to decompress his lungs, but it’s hard to breathe. The air feels unnaturally thick, but he gets the words out anyway:

“What does this have to do with my brother?”

Chapter End Notes

LilyWithABlackImpala prompted:

Maybe Juno’s brother is alive and he works with Peter but peter didn’t know who he was or something?

For Peter's name, I used the unofficial "Peter Nureyev name generator": take a first name that indicates nobility, use a surname that’s a random (often valued) object, and bam! You’ve got one of Peter Nureyev’s aliases.
Ceres (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Ceres reunites with his brother. Sorta.

Chapter Notes

There were several people who prompted this continuation, but primarily I'm giving credit to @belanekra

Ceres can’t pretend that his intentions are entirely pure.

Sure, he doesn’t have it out for Key or anything—he really does sympathize for the guy, and years of marriage have taught Ceres that talking out your problems can do wonders when it comes to unraveling some of the complicated emotions that caused them in the first place. But that doesn’t outweigh the fact that the subject of Key’s venting is Ceres’ big brother.

And right now, Ceres really doesn’t like what he’s hearing.


After all of that, Juno’s reaction doesn’t come as nearly as big a shock to Ceres as it did to Key. Of course he pretended to be alright until he broke down. Of course he went to ground the first time Key’s back was turned. Hell, it’s a wonder Juno’s secretary didn’t have to drag him out of the sewers, the way Ceres had to do when Juno would run away from home.

He hears Key out until the thief runs out of things to say. He’s sympathetic.

But when they’re done for the night, Ceres doesn’t go home to his wife and his kids. He gets in his car and he drives.

He can’t remember the last time he’s been to this side of Hyperion City, or if he ever has at all. It’s the biggest colony on Mars; a guy could sleep in a different building every night and die before he visited them all (and not just because some of these neighborhoods get damn shady at night). But the Steel Detective Agency has a website; it may be a bit bare bones, but at least it includes the office address.

By the time Ceres arrives, the building is nearly dark except for a few lonely windows. Maybe Juno’s already gone home for the night. But his brother always was a night-owl, especially when something was bothering him, and something tells Ceres that hasn’t changed.

He wants to go up there and talk to him. He does. More than anything.

Instead he stays put in the front seat of his car.
He tells himself it’s because the building isn’t wheelchair accessible (though the ramp and obvious elevator tell him otherwise). He tells himself it’s because it’s too late at night (he can see a silhouette pacing back and forth against the single brightly-lit window). He tells himself he’s not ready (he wasn’t ready for kids, either, but he managed to make that work).

The truth is, he’s terrified. He hasn’t seen his big brother in more than twenty years, and he’s terrified of what’ll happen. And the more he tries to talk himself into getting out of the car and going up there, the more scared he gets. Maybe this was a bad idea. Maybe he should just put it in drive and go. Maybe he—

His racing thoughts are interrupted by a tapping at his window.

“You gonna put some creds in the meter, or are you just gonna sit in there all night taking pictures?”

And there he is. It’s like seeing a childhood photo put through one of those weird novelty filters. It’s all there: the stocky frame, the tight curls piled on his head, the scar across his nose. But now there are more scars, and his body is stretched taller and broader than it was before, and flecks of gray in his hair catch the light of the street lamps and glint back like stars. Medical bandages cover his right eye—or the place where it used to be.

Ceres rolls down the window. “I… I wasn’t taking pictures.” Though suddenly he wishes he could.

“You want to tell me why you’ve spent the last four hours staring at my office?”

“I…” He glances up again, and suddenly notices the crick in his neck. “Has it really been that long? I thought it was more like twenty minutes, tops.”

Juno’s glare is flat and unyielding. “Four hours, twenty-two minutes, and…” He glances at his phone. “Forty-eight seconds. Since I started timing.” Ceres swallows. Juno remains unimpressed. “You have three seconds to start talking.”

Three seconds. It’s not a lot of time to get poetic, or even appropriate. So Ceres goes for honesty. “I wanted to make sure you were okay.”

Judging by the menacing curl of Juno’s shoulders, that was the wrong thing to say. “What’s it to you?”

In a sudden burst of clarity, Ceres knows: if he comes out and says it right here, right now, like this, the best case scenario is that Juno calls a truck to tow Ceres’ car back to the other side of Hyperion City.

So he makes a gamble. “Because I want to hire you.”

Juno hunches forward and his eyes narrow, but somehow the effect less intimidating than he was half a second before. “I’m listening.”

He’s already been cornered by intimacy, and he immediately fled. Springing a long-lost brother on him is just going to push him away. Stalking him in the dead of night didn’t help, either. So he grabs a pad of paper from the glove compartment and a scrap of charcoal from his pocket, and jots down a name.

*Ceres Malhotra.*

“I want you to find out everything you can about this person right here. You can reach me at this number.” He adds his number underneath his name. “Let me know when you find something worth
talking about.”

Juno takes the paper from his hand and frowns. The first name must ring a few bells, though the surname is bound to throw him off a little bit. Ceres took Laida’s name when he married her. “What exactly are you looking for? Infidelity? Conspiracy?”

“You’ll know it when you see it.”

Already Juno’s got his phone out. Seconds later, Ceres’ phone beeps with the arrival of an invoice. He glances at it, then immediately wishes he hadn’t. Who knew private investigators could be so expensive? But it’s for family. Laida will understand.

At least, that’s what he tells himself as he pays it.

“Good luck. I look forward to your call,” he says, and puts the car in drive. Before Juno can grunt back at him, he’s already racing away.
Ceres (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

Juno confronts Ceres

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
Can I please request a Pt3 to Juno’s brother is alive?
If this keeps up, I may wind up taking this set of stories out of the Case Files entirely and making them their own thing, just so they're easier to find.

The first voicemail is just a cry of “You–” and a bunch of frustrated grunting. It lasts two and a half seconds, then ends.

The second is a little more wordy: “Who do you think you–” before he hangs up.

Juno’s building himself up. Ceres knows this. The third: “I bet you think you’re real clever, don’t you?”

The fourth: “I swear, if this is some kind of– of prank, or trick, or– I swear, I’m going to–”

Ceres is starting to regret not answering the phone during dinner. He just hopes that Juno hasn’t given up on calling now that the plates are in the sink and he’s finally free to talk.

When the phone lights up for the fifth time, he picks up. “Hello?”

Juno gets right to the point: “You son of a bitch.”

“Well, you’re not wrong.” He puts in an earpiece and rolls himself out onto the back porch. This is probably not a conversation he wants the kids to overhear. “I take it you found something worth talking about.”

“Like hell I did,” Juno snaps. “What the hell is wrong with you? What kind of bastard tells someone like– like that?”

Ceres sighs. “Okay, so that probably wasn’t the best way to do it. I panicked.”

“Oh, did you?” Juno sneers.

“Tell me something.” He lowers his voice. “Be honest. If I’d just come up to you out of nowhere. Middle of the night like that– or even a phone call, out of the blue. If I’d just come up to you and told you I was alive, would you have believed me?”

Juno’s only reply is a grunt.
“If there was any chance I was lying to you, even the slightest hole in my story, you would have found it.”

“How do you know I didn’t?” Juno asks petulantly.

“Because if you did, we’d be having a very different phone call. You’re smart, Juno. You always did have an eye for details—and I sure hope that hasn’t changed, what with the rates you’re charging. Are all private investigators that expensive, or is it just you?”

“There’s nothing wrong with my rates.”

“I’m sure there isn’t,” Ceres says, and it feels surreal—like a bone that’s popped out of its joint falling abruptly back in. “Listen, Juno. I don’t know what all you found out about me—”

“I think I found plenty.” The churlish tone is replaced by something sharp. “Does your wife know you do work at Vicky’s?”

“She does, actually,” he says. “She’s dropped me off there a few times when she’s needed the car. It’s art restoration, nothing criminal.”

“It is when the art is being handed to you by a smuggler.”

Ceres sighs and scrubs his hand down his face. He only notices afterward that there’s still a bit of charcoal on the flat of his palm. “Is that what you’re upset about, Juno?”

“Upset?” He laughs. “Oh, I am way beyond upset. You let me think you were dead for twenty-five years.”

“I did.”

“Is that all you’ve got to fucking say about it?”

“What do you want me to tell you, Juno?” he asks. “I got out. It almost killed me, I’ll never walk again, but I got out. It felt like if I ever looked back, I’d just get sucked right back in. And I couldn’t do that, Juno. I couldn’t handle it.”

On the other line, Juno draws a breath so rough it might be a laugh. “So why the hell are you looking back now?”

*Because you’re hurt, and I want to be there for you.* No. Imply even for a second that he’s weak, and he’ll lash out and get defensive.

*Because I’d like my kids to know their uncle.* No. Juno never did take well to being valued. The first thing he does when people get intimate is push them away.

*Because I still believe you can be a better person than Mom was.* He wouldn’t listen to something like that.

So Ceres says the only thing he can think of that Juno might listen to.

“I want to thank you for saving Mars.”
Ceres (Part 4)

Chapter Summary

Juno and Ceres try to reconnect.

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
could I please request another installment/piece with junos brother? ur writing is so !!!
!!! !!!

I’m acknowledging here that canon Juno’s baby brother is named Ben, but this series was started before that, so I employ executive discretion.

“The person who told you about… about what happened,” Juno says, swirling his drink in his glass. “What did you say his name was?”

Actually, Ceres didn’t say a name at all. He didn’t even mention his source. It’s a thing of professional courtesy, really– the man’s done a lot for him and his family, and he’s not about to tell his secrets to anyone.

But this isn’t just anyone.

There were only two survivors of the Martian tomb, and one of them was Juno. There’s only one other person Ceres could possibly have heard it from.

“He calls himself Sargon. Sargon Key.”

Juno grates out a sigh. “Of course he does.”

Ceres, for his part, clears his throat. “So… you two… know each other?”

“You could say that.” And immediately he changes the subject. “So what about you? You’re married. Three kids, too. How did that happen?”

“Well, you see, when two or more people love each other very much…” Juno gives him a look, and for just a second it’s like one of the good days when they were kids. “In college I took an internship restoring art at the Hyperion Museum of Natural History. Laida was working in their geology department. We got lunch together sometimes. And things kind of just… happened. It’ll be our tenth anniversary next month.”

Juno whistles under his breath. “Ten years. How’d you get that to work?”

“Communication. Lots and lots of communication.”

“I’ll take your word on it.” Juno looks away, but before Ceres can ask about it, he starts talking
again. “So she knows…”

“It’s not like I was Hyperion City’s first teenage runaway. She knows about you. Sometimes she’d show me articles she found when you made the news.”

“Does she know about Key?”

He snorts. “Juno, even I don’t know about Key. Not really. But yes, she knows I have a mysterious coworker who lies to me about almost everything but you.”

“Yeah, that sounds about right.” An affectionate smile flickers across his face, but just as quickly it disappears. “And Ma?”

Ceres looks at their hands, both wrapped around their glasses. One set is cross-hatched with scars; the other is technicolored from pastel chalk that got into the creases of his fingers and refuse to wash out. One is clutching a tumbler of whiskey, the other a glass of pear soda. Both have had bones broken a few times, but it looks like Juno’s never stopped breaking.

He sighs. “I kind of panicked when I found out Laida was pregnant. I was so sure I was going turn out just like her. And the thought of— of doing that? To my kids? Juno, do you have any idea…”

One look gives him his answer: Yeah. Juno knows.

“So we… we talked about it. I keep an eye on myself, and Laida— she keeps an eye out for me. Keeps me grounded, so I don’t get…” He fumbles over the words. “There are still bad days. I slip up sometimes. But we work through it. It’s a process.”

Juno swirls the whiskey in his glass again. “It sounds like you’ve made a pretty good life for yourself.”

“Yeah. I’m pretty happy with the way things are.”

“Then why are you here?” Juno takes a swig. “Are you in that big a hurry to fuck it up?”

“I want you back in my life.”

“You sure about that? Because you might slip once in a while. I never actually got up in the first place. Trust me, Ceres, I’m not the kind of person you want around your family.”

“Maybe talk to Laida before you say that,” Ceres says dryly. “She’s already sworn to kick your ass halfway to Saturn if you hurt me.”

Juno tilts his head, grudgingly accepting the threat. “Still.”

“You don’t have to come over for holidays or whatever. This?” Ceres gestures to the corner bar and the table they’re sharing. “This is fine. I just don’t want to keep having to hear about you from strangers. I don’t want to keep having to worry about whether or not you’re okay.”

“I can save you the trouble there: in the balance of probability, I’m not going to be okay. Mystery solved.”

“Yeah, but at least I get to hear it from you. That’s all I want.” And because they’re getting maybe a little too sincere. “That, a wheelchair ramp, and a decent selection of soda.”

“Anybody ever tell you that you’ve got low standards?”
“A good selection of soda, then.”

“Fine.” Juno sighs. “We can probably do this sort of thing again sometime.” He means it to sound reluctant, but there’s something hopeful in it.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. Maybe I want to know you’re okay, too.”
Making Dinner

Chapter Summary

Juno makes Peter dinner

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
coming atcha with fluff prompts for a change of pace (by the way, it's really lovely to have you in this fandom- your writing is incredible and bless you for taking prompts!!)
What about one of them cooking the other an actual proper date night dinner?

I don’t know if it’s a Millenial thing, but I find food a very intimate thing. Cooking together, eating together, bringing someone food when they’re down, sending someone care-packages, making them tea when they're upset– food is how we show others we love them.

The kitchen is cramped, but somehow it doesn’t impede Juno in the slightest. He darts from refrigerator to cutting board to pantry to stovetop with a controlled chaos so elegant that it seems almost like a waltz.

Peter watches him, transfixed by the beauty of it. The precision of Juno’s movements, the sizzle and snap of cooking food, the aroma that fills the air and leaves his mouth watering. There’s an intimacy here he doesn’t recognize. As a child, his meals were found in dumpsters or shoplifted from the grocery aisle. As an adult, they were purchased with stolen money and sheer charisma. The kitchen never factored into the equation.

“Really, Juno,” he hums. “I had no idea you could cook.”

“That’s because I usually don’t,” Juno says, slicing the onions thin with an old-fashioned steel chef’s knife. “I used to cook for my brother. Back when we were kids. Don’t do it so much anymore. See, cooking for one is miserable. Cooking for two is much better.”

“Is it?” It’s not meant as a challenge or an attempt at irony. Peter’s honestly curious. “Why, though?”

Juno tips the chopped onions into the frying pan, and the oil pops and crackles in reply. “Because all that stuff that makes food taste good—the fresh vegetables, the spices, the sauce, the little extra touches—those all take time and preparation and effort. And when you’re doing it alone, it feels like the end product is giving you anywhere near as much as you put into it. Because you’ll be just as full without the sauce as with, and that’s one less pan to wash. And you can live without the spices, and that’s one less shopping trip in your future. And who needs vegetables when you’ve got good old-fashioned vitamin pills? And hey, why bother with the stove and dishes at all when you can cope with take-out and scotch?”

Thin-sliced carrots join the onions in the pan, and he takes a moment to stir them. When he begins
slicing cloned beef into thin slivers, it’s with a thoughtful slowness.

“We’re just different. The meal isn’t just protein and vitamins and oils that are all going to the same place anyway. It’s…”

It’s hard to hear him over the sizzling vegetables. Peter glides forward, closer to his detective. He reaches for a slumped shoulder, but Juno jerks his head at the frying pan. “Stir that for me?”

Oh. “Of course, Juno.” He frowns at the pan, but picks up the spatula Juno had used. He’s posed as a chef before, and faked his way convincingly enough through a kitchen—specifically, walking through it. He didn’t actually touch any of the utensils at the time. Still, he can imitate Juno’s movements well enough that his detective doesn’t complain. “You were saying?”

Juno’s eye is focused on the cloned beef. “When you eat with someone else, you’re not just eating to exist. You’re sharing time. Space. Company. And when you make a meal for someone else, you don’t just leave things out, because they deserve better. They deserve the freshness and the spices and the texture and the taste. And so you’ve got to make it good. You’ve got to make it well.” He tips the strips of beef into the frying pan, and deposits the cutting board into the sink. For a moment he’s silent as he washes his hands. “And if you’re tired? Well, they’ve still got to eat. So you suck it up and do it anyway.”

Perhaps it’s unfair that Peter approaches him from his blind side, but his advance is signaled by soft (if now somewhat oily) hands touching Juno on the shoulder and cheek and tugging him close for a kiss.

“If you’re tired,” he corrects him, “Then I hope you’ll tell me, and I can try my hand at making dinner. Because you deserve a good meal as much as you deserve to rest.”

And he kisses Juno as thoroughly as he can without causing a fire hazard. Which, in this case, is not quite as long as he would prefer.

Still, Juno is flushed and breathless when he pulls away to take the pan off the heat.

“Jeez, Peter. I…” He takes a moment to catch his breath and choose his words. “I didn’t know you cook.”

“That’s because I don’t. But for you, I would be delighted to learn.”
Preening

Chapter Summary

This one's a wingfic

Chapter Notes

stormybisexual asked:
for a fluff prompt: maybe junopeter winged au with preening?

It’s just a twinge. Not painful, per se. Just… irritating.

Juno refuses to look. Nope. He’s not going to do that. Not at all. Even if one of his feathers is twisted around at just the worst angle.

Because it’s not enough that this feather is all out of alignment—oh no, it has to be on his blind side. Which means he can’t just find it and tuck it back into place with the others, he’s got to twist around and paw at his wing and by the time he dealt with a minor little inconvenience, he’ll have pulled at least three muscles in all the worst places.

And he’s not going to do that. Nope. Not again.

“Why, Juno.” Peter makes a point of sweeping around on Juno’s good side. “You look positively puffed. What’s bothering you?”

Juno discreetly checks his wings. “I’m not all that ruffled.” A little puffy, maybe, but nothing you would notice from a distance unless you were Peter Nureyev.

“What is it?” Peter asks again, and Juno knows what’s coming. He could probably avoid the whole thing by just stepping backward, but he doesn’t. Peter leans into Juno’s space. His arms drape over Juno’s shoulders, his fingers trailing just barely into the soft fuzz of feathers at the nape of Juno’s neck in a way that feels nicer than it really should. Peter’s long, elegant wings spread around him, cocooning the two of them together in the shared space. From anyone else, the gesture might come across as intimidating, but not with Peter. His wings are like a shield, protective and secure.

He sighs into the thin space between them. “It’s nothing. Really. Just a twisted feather.”

Peter hums sympathetically. “One of those hard to reach places?” Because he gets it. Of course he does. When Juno nods, he grins. “May I?”

Juno hesitates. Not because he doesn’t trust Peter—he does—but there’s something oddly intimate about another man touching his wings. Even now, with Peter’s wings folded around them, there’s a careful distance between his feathers and Juno’s flesh.

But the hesitation is momentary. “Sure, I guess. If you want.”
He tries not to think too hard about it when it comes, but it’s just such a weird feeling. Peter’s fingers smooth down his blind wing with delicate care. The touch is so light on his pinions that it makes Juno shiver, and his wing stretches out to give Peter more room. The twisted feather is found and set flat, but Juno barely notices the lack of irritation. Tension and agitation is draining from him like water through a sieve.

“My brave detective,” Peter murmurs. “How you kept your sanity is beyond me. This many feathers out of alignment and I would have lost my mind long ago.”

“Well, there’s your problem. You’ve actually got a mind to lose.” It’s supposed to be quick-witted and sly, but it comes out as a blissful drone. Juno would swoon into his arms right now, except then Peter would have to stop.

“And yet I always seem to misplace it when I’m with you.” Peter’s finishing up with Juno’s blind side, getting those hard-to-reach places close to his back, and it’s heavenly. “You’ve got such beautiful wings, Juno. They’re positively hypnotic.”

“Careful, Nureyev. You keep talking like that, and I’ll have you do this for me every day.”

“I’d be delighted, if you’ll let me.”

And for all Juno’s bliss, that catches him off guard. He turns to catch Peter in his peripheral vision. “You mean that?”

Peter answers him with a soft kiss on his cheek. “But of course.”
Molting (Wingfic Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Wingfic: Molting is not a pleasant time for things with wings.

Chapter Notes

@typehere452 requested a follow-up to my wingfic: “imagine if it was molting time, how annoying that must be”

Apparently molting season changes depending on the kind of bird you’re dealing with; I’m borrowing from ducks and chickens for Peter, with something closer to a parrot’s patterns for Juno. As much as I can tell, anyway.

Rated PG

“I’m not going offworld,” Peter assures Juno. “There’s just something I need to take care of. I’ll only be gone a few weeks. Nothing to worry about.”

Like hell Juno isn’t going to worry. Peter has barely eaten in a week, and the sound of his growling stomach is giving Juno sympathy pains. He refuses to go outside without so many layers on that Juno can barely see his bare hands, let alone the rest of him. He’s tired. He’s listless. Even his normally glorious wings look ragged and frayed. And now he wants to just up and leave for who even knows how long?

Not going to happen.

“Let me come with you,” Juno insists. “I can help.”

“I won’t need any help.”

“Then I can keep you company.” The more Peter tries to fight him on this, the harder he digs in his heels. He’s not taking no for an answer. Whatever’s going to happen to him, he’s not going to face it alone.

Peter sighs. “Stubborn as a child in a supermarket.”

“So it’s decided, then. We go together.”

“No. It simply means I won’t go at all.”

It’s spoken like a concession, but Juno’s wary. All that means is that Peter will wait until his guard’s down and slip away when he can’t be followed.

“Where were you planning on going, then?” He’s already preparing to sift the half-truth from the lies.
“A motel.” Peter sighs, like he’s admitting to a bad bowel movement. “I told you, it’s nothing to be concerned with. I’m only molting.”

He can’t be serious. “Molting.” It takes a concerted effort not to glance again at Peter’s wings. Yes, okay, the feathers are pretty worn. But still. “You need a motel to molt?”

“It’s a time when I’m not exactly at my best.” Peter says shortly. “I would rather spare you having to put up with me, but you aren’t leaving me much of a choice.”

Juno loses so many feathers over the course of the year due to everyday brawling that he barely notices his own molt when it happens. Sure, he’s slightly more irritable during that time than the rest of the year, but he’s surly enough on his best days that even Rita doesn’t notice the difference.

Rita does take time off during hers, though. But it’s Rita– she’ll take any excuse not to come in to the office.

“It can’t be all that bad.”

Peter gives him a look so flat you could use it as a straight edge. “I’ll let you be the judge of that.”

Even if Peter did have a regular cycle as a kid, twenty years of flitting between worlds has screwed it up beyond comprehension. After a few too many jeopardized heists and awkward situations, he started taking it into his own hands: starvation and lack of sunlight trigger enough of a hormonal shift to force the molt to start, and then he can stay in hiding until it passes. Normally his hiding spot is a safehouse or out-of-the-way motel.

Or in this case, Juno’s apartment.

Peter spends most of his time sleeping, cocooned in a pile of pillows and blankets. When he ventures out to eat, he keeps a blanket thrown over his wings– partly for warmth, partly to help him keep his hands off them, and partly so Juno won’t get a good look at him. Almost a dozen of his primary flight feathers are missing, along with as many secondary ones. In their place are the thin little blood feathers, which would be bad enough aesthetically, but they itch like a motherfucker and every time he tries to scratch he winds up breaking one, and then he has to pull it out and it hurts, damn it. And then the damn feather has to be replaced again by another one, and the process takes even longer.

The entire experience is pure misery. He’s exhausted, he’s itchy, he feels hideous, and he’s hungry all the fucking time. It would be absolutely unbearable if not for Juno.

Honestly, Peter doesn’t know how Juno can cope with him right now. He knows exactly how moody he’s being, even if he can’t help it, but Juno doesn’t seem to mind.

He makes breakfast every morning and dinner every night, and stops in from the office during lunch with enough takeout to feed a small army. When Peter’s asleep, he tucks pillows under his wings so they won’t get stiff and tucks the edges of the blankets underneath him so his feet won’t get cold; when Peter’s awake, they sit together and watch Rita’s latest recommendations, Juno running his hands down Peter’s wings to scratch that infernal itch. When Peter does break a blood feather, Juno helps him pull it out and cleans up the blood without a word about the mess.

“I don’t mind.” Juno admits on a long afternoon, straddling Peter’s back. “I like being able to help you.”

Help is a bit of an understatement. The last hour could be better described as pampering: first a back massage, and now his hands are carding through Peter’s wings, catching the mature pin feathers
between his fingertips and coaxing them to unfurl. The sensation is absolutely heavenly. It’s the closest to bliss he’s been during this molt—during any molt, really, as long as he can remember.

“And I want you to know you can trust me with this,” Juno continues. “You don’t have to go through all this on your own.”

“It’s not that I don’t trust you, love,” Peter says softly. “I would just rather not subject you to the worst of me.”

“Why not?” Juno smooths the feathers with loving care. “You’ve seen the worst of me plenty of times. And from where I’m standing, yours isn’t all that bad.”
“Where’d you put the scissors?”

Juno isn’t spying on Peter or anything. It’s more a miscommunication.

“Aren’t they in the drawer?” Peter calls from the other room, not looking up from his paperwork.

“There’s a whole lot of drawers in here.” Juno’s already pulling half of them open and rifling through them, but no luck so far.

“The knife drawer?” He isn’t even paying attention, or he would have heard from the rattling of flatware that Juno already checked the knife drawer… unless…

He slides his hand to the back of the drawer and pulls open the false bottom. He makes a point of not looking in there, just because that space is Peter’s, and Peter deserves some privacy. But Peter told him to look, didn’t he?

So he tips back the false bottom and he looks.

There are no scissors in there, but there are several half-finished ID badges, a passport, and a single spaceship ticket for Neptune.

Juno’s wings sag past his shoulders. Nureyev is leaving? He hasn’t said anything about it. But then, why would he? It’s not like they talk much about Nureyev’s job.

Being in a relationship with a detective hasn’t actually ended Peter’s career as a thief. Peter assures him that it’s the kind of stuff that Juno wouldn’t give a shit about one way or another— mostly swiping overpriced artwork for upper-crust assholes with deep pockets— but he doesn’t volunteer information beyond that, and Juno doesn’t ask. That’s the best way to keep his conscience clear.

But this is different.

This isn’t a quick trip to Valles Marineris or Olympus Mons. With most of his heists recently, Peter’s usually back by morning— and when he isn’t, he always comms ahead to let Juno not to wait up. But a flight to Neptune is going to take more than a day on its own. The kind of heist that would be worth that kind of trip won’t be small, and it won’t be short.

“Have you found the scissors?” Peter asks, breaking Juno out of his thoughts.

“What?” Quickly he replaces the false bottom in the knife drawer. “No, they aren’t in here.”

“Are you sure— oh, wait. That’s right. I think I left them in my coat pocket. Try checking in there.”
That is where the scissors wind up being—tucked into the lining of Peter’s sleeve, along with a sewing kit and four pens.

“Found it.” Juno tries to keep his voice light. “This should’ve been the first place I looked.”

“Quite possibly.” Peter must have finally looked up from his book, because he sounds concerned. “Juno, are you alright?”

“What?” Juno quickly straightens his wings. “Yeah. Don’t worry about it.”

Peter tilts his head and returns to his book, apparently taking it to heart.

Juno only wishes he could do the same.

Over the next couple of days, he starts noticing the other little tells—the way Peter looks over his clothes, making silent decisions about what he’ll take with him and what he’ll leave behind; the little odds and ends that disappear into the pockets of Peter’s coat, just in case they wind up being useful; the nights together, long and drawn out and intense, like Peter’s savoring every moment. And still, not a word.

The first notice Juno gets is a quick courtesy.

“If you’ll be needing the bathroom, I suggest you use it now,” Peter tells him. “I need to take care of something, and I’m afraid it will take a while.”

And that could mean anything, if not for the bag he’s got under his arm. He’s got enough bottles in there to open his own beauty parlor.

So Juno takes a chance. “Could you use a hand with that?”

Peter quirks an eyebrow, amused. “If you like. It’s more tedious than difficult, really.”

“Even better. What we doing?”

“Nothing terribly complicated. Just dyeing my wings.”

Juno feels a jolt. He’s not unfamiliar with the process—hell, he tried bleaching his own wings once, chasing a fad in high school; another time he woke up from a drinking binge with Cas with his feathers electric pink. It happens sometimes.

But Peter’s wings are beautiful—magpie’s wings, ink black and snow white and that shade of iridescent blue-green that cosmetic companies spend billions trying to bottle but never quite get right. Those dyes are always a little bit wrong—too flat, too dull, too gritty and abrasive to be real. It’s almost criminal to cover something so perfect with something so flawed.

But Peter is a criminal, isn’t he?

And Juno volunteered for this, so he’s going to do it, dammit. “Just tell me what you want me to do.”

Okay, so maybe—maybe—Juno entertained some fantasies like this after he first met Peter. Sure, those fantasies didn’t usually involve rubber gloves or the sharp chemical smell of feather dye, but still.

As long as they’ve been together, there’s still something coquettish about the way Peter slips out of
his clothes.

“I happen to like this outfit,” he tells Juno, as if he needs to make an excuse. “I wouldn’t want to ruin it. The dye gets everywhere.”

It’s the same reason why he has Juno slather Vaseline on his shoulders and back– so the dye can’t seep into his skin and give him away.

“If you wanted me to oil you up, you just had to say so,” Juno murmurs into his ear while he works. It’s new for him– even after months together, Juno isn’t great at flirting– but it’s worth it when he hears that delighted laugh.

“Careful, Juno,” Peter chides. “I wouldn’t want to make a mess.”

“You sure about that?” But he’s stalling and he knows it. “So what do we do first?”

Peter wasn’t kidding about the process being tedious. It’s bad enough when people dye their wings the old-fashioned way, working the color into the wings as a whole. But a missed spot or an uneven dye job could give Peter away, and so he’s meticulous. They work the tarry black dye into each individual feather by hand, Peter getting the front while Juno does the hard-to-reach spots on his back. Even with the two of them, the process takes forever. Peter doesn’t just dye the white and iridescent feathers, but the black ones, too– for consistency, he insists.

Then comes the waiting– a long hour of almost nothing as the color sets into the feathers. Peter can barely move during that time, not without the risk of getting dye all over himself and the bathroom. Juno, on the other hand, has quite a bit more mobility, and he makes sure to use it. Sure, a bit of dye manages to get smeared on the walls anyway, but as many times as this apartment has been shot up, Juno isn’t getting the deposit back one way or another. At least they find an entertaining way to pass the time.

When Peter steps out of the shower, his once-white primaries and scapulars are almost indistinguishable from the rest– a dark charcoal against the inky black.

“Raven is a good look for you,” Juno admits.

Peter hums cheerfully. “It is, isn’t it? A little less on-the-nose than magpie. But I’m hoping for something a little less ostentatious.” And he reaches into the bag for yet another bottle.

“Wait,” Juno starts. “You’re going to go through all that again?”

“I did say this was a tedious process, didn’t I? I understand if you’d rather stop here–”

“No, it’s fine,” Juno says quickly. “It’s fine. I just don’t get why you didn’t do all of this at once. It could have saved some time.”

“Perhaps so, but it would have been far more obvious in the end. You would be amazed by how many con artists are given away by an inconsistent base coat.”

The process is much the same as it was before– the layer of Vaseline on Peter’s skin, the careful application of dye to the feathers. This time it’s a pale beige, worked into everything but the very tip of each feather.

“The beige won’t show up very well on top of the black,” Juno says as he works.

“It isn’t meant to,” Peter says. “The two shades blend together quite nicely.”
“For what, gray? What are you even going for, a pigeon?” It’s meant to be ridiculous, but Juno recognizes the markings at the same time that Peter says “Naturally.”

“You can’t be serious,” Juno says. “You can pull off a lot of looks, Peter, but pigeon? Really?”

“I’m afraid so. The last time I visited Neptune, I was able to be a touch more ostentatious. If I’m going to avoid being recognized, I’ll have to blend into the crowd.”

It’s the closest he’s come to volunteering information about the heist, but he leaves it there.

And finally Juno can’t put off asking anymore. He’s managed to avoid it for hours– hell, he’s managed to avoid it for days– but they’ve run out of small talk and veered away from this point of conversation too many times, and every time the absence becomes more conspicuous.

So he gives in.

“How long does this kind of color usually last, anyway?”

“A month or so, usually.”

“Yeah?” Juno’s heart sinks in his chest. “So are you going to dye it back to normal when you get back, or…”

“I suppose that depends on whether it’s faded on its own by then.”

“You think you’re going to be gone that long?”

“It’s difficult to say. These things can’t always be counted on to go according to plan.” His voice is soft, almost apologetic. “I don’t want to make you any promises I can’t keep, Juno.”

So you decided not to mention it at all?

But Juno doesn’t say that. It wouldn’t be fair– if Peter wanted to hide this from him, he could have. Juno’s the one who decided not to ask.

He sighs, the tips of his wings drooping to sweep the floor. “Just promise you’ll come back, okay?”

“Always, love.”

Juno feels the weight of a decision on his shoulders, as thick and heavy as the sludge on Peter’s wings. He can spend the next few weeks or months or whatever in the dark, brooding over the things he doesn’t know and the answers he’s not going to get. Or he can at least know what the hell he’s brooding about.

He leans in and presses a kiss to the nape of Peter’s neck. “So what’s this big heist about, anyway?”
Lunch with Rita

whoopsiedaisiedoo asked:
fluffy prompt: Juno and Rita go out for lunch on a slow day at the office?

Rita’s always on his right side. Always. She never brings it up, never draws attention to it, but she’s always there. Always.

And it’s okay that he can’t track her movements in his peripheral vision, because she chatters about everything and anything, and he can hear her just fine. Nobody else can sneak up on him from that side, either, not without Rita shrieking “Hey, I’m walkin’ here!” at the top of her lungs, and whoever it might have been beats a hasty retreat to the other side of the street. With Rita at his side, there are no sudden surprises. There are stares, sure, but those are usually fixed on the dame gushing at top volume about her favorite soaps, not on the dame with the eyepatch.

And that’s… nice.

She doesn’t say anything about helping him get used to his new field of vision, or about fresh air or exercise or any of the other things that her therapist friend Frannie has probably been filling her head with. When she drags him out of the prison sanctuary that is his office, it’s with tips of a new café that she’s just got to try out, and it’s just no fun to go to these kinds of places alone, and you know better than anyone that the streets just aren’t safe for casual walking anymore, and when’s the last time you ate anything, anyway?

And somehow it works. Not always—sometimes the world is too big for him, too mean—and on those days he finds his favorite cloned beef on rye waiting for him when he dares to open the door.

Today is… well, it’s not one of the bad days. And he supposes that makes it okay. Rita’s book club recommended one of those weird alcohol-free dive bars, and the food is actually not horrible. Pretty good, even. Maybe it has to be, without booze to make up for the flavor. Rita’s beside him, telegraphing her presence with the summary of last night’s episode of Once Upon a Spaceport that he couldn’t follow if he tried. And while her excitement washes over him, he lets his mind wander over the details of his most recent case. Rita’s got a point (though he might keep that to himself): getting some real food in him does wonders for his concentration.

And… yeah. Maybe he could get used to this.
Rita to the Rescue

Chapter Summary

After Juno's distressing phone call in Train From Nowhere, Rita comes to rescue him. Her timing is a bit off.

Chapter Notes

This one's unprompted.

Juno watched Nureyev sleep for hours, silently arguing himself into circles. He wanted to go with Nureyev, but he knew where that usually led him.

His own cynicism was in the process of winning when he heard a sound at the door. An odd, mechanical clicking, interspersed with whispered swears. Maybe this was the moment when the other shoe dropped.

He sat up and fumbled for his gun. His aim wasn’t fantastic anymore, but an intruder shooting into a dark room wouldn’t be much better off.

He slipped out of bed and into his discarded pants, creeping into the deepest shadows of the hotel room just as the door burst open.

“All right, you creeps!” shrieked a familiar voice. “You let Mista Steel go right this instant!”

In the bed, Nureyev bolted upright, hand emerging form under his pillow with a knife.

The man slept with a knife under his pillow. Good to know.

Before Nureyev could dive for cover, the figure at the door charged into the room, brandishing a laser she didn’t actually know how to use.

“And I swear, if he’s got so much as a finger missing, I’m gonna blast you so full of holes that my momma’s gonna use your skin to drain her pasta, you hear me?”

Maybe staying hidden wasn’t the best idea right about now. He stepped into view and flicked on the light. “Rita?”

She uttered something between a gasp and a wail. “Mista Steel, your eye! What did they do to you? Did he do it?” Her gun was once again aimed at Peter, who had chosen a more defensible position on the far side of the bed, the sheet wrapped around him like a toga.

Goddamn it, he could even make a bedsheets toga look good.

“No, he didn’t,” Juno said, his hands raised. “Yeah, I got hurt, but he wasn’t the one who did it, okay? Just calm down and give me the gun.” He inched forward to ease the Neo-Derringer Personal
Artillery out of her hands, but she kept her grip tight.

“But he’s working with them, Mista Steel,” she pleaded. “When you didn’t come in to the office I figured you were just sick, but then you sent that voicemail and you sounded so upset, so I checked to see where you were going, but your car was out on some resort, and that didn’t sound like you, and then I checked the security camera in the alley by your window, and I know you never lock the window because you keep telling me how the office is so stuffy—”

“Rita—”

“—but then I saw that Agent Glass was sneaking around in the middle of the night, only he never left, and then there was another camera that caught him in your car! And then I asked my friend Maude—you know her, she works at the police station?—to put out a bulletin on you in case your DNA showed up in any hospitals, and they did, but then you checked out, and I followed the cameras here, and the entire time you were with him—”

“Rita—”

“—and Mista Steel, it was just like that time with the Prince of Mars, you remember? Where the kidnappers kept driving Tony DiMaggio around and makin’ him make all those phone calls? Only he wound up dead, and I ain’t gonna let nothing like that happen to you, Mista Steel, do you hear me? Nothing!”

She said it all in a single breath—all except the last word, which she punctuated by brandishing the gun at Nureyev again. Maybe it was oxygen deprivation, or maybe she just had something in her eye, but there were tears on her cheeks.

Juno’s hand wrapped around her wrist and eased it down. Hopefully nobody was sleeping in the room below them, because one stray shot would probably take a chunk out of their ceiling and part of their bed.

“Rita,” he said more softly this time. “I’m fine.”

“You don’t look fine,” she said defensively.

“Well, I wasn’t. Things got hairy for a while there, but… Agent Glass here, he got me out of it. We’re okay now.”

“Well, why didn’t you say something?” Rita demanded. “You didn’t call or nothing, and I was worried sick while you two were… were…”

Juno didn’t need to read her mind to see the pieces sliding into place: Nureyev’s bedsheets toga, the distinct smell and humidity of the room, the slacks hanging half off Juno’s hips, the shirt dangling from the lamp, the condoms and lube spilled across the bedside table.

Her eyes went wide. Her mouth stretched into a long ‘oh.’ Her cheeks flushed.

“Mista Steel!”

“This is why we knock before barging into hotel rooms,” he said flatly.

“You gotta put a sock over the door or something!”

“I believe that was the purpose of the ‘do not disturb’ sign,” Nureyev supplied. “And the lock.”
“Well, who pays attention to those?” she asked.

“Rita, it’s four in the morning,” Juno said. “I’m safe, you’ve saved me, and I’m very grateful. Can we just… handle this tomorrow?”

She frowned. “Tomorrow as in today tomorrow, or as in tomorrow tomorrow?”

Juno sighed. “Ten hours.”

He glanced at Nureyev, who gave him an odd look. By that point they should be on a spaceship to the Outer Rim, according to the original plan. Rita must have noticed it, too, because she twisted around before he could shepherd her out the door.

“And you two better not elope or nothin’. I’ve waited too long to be the maid of honor at Mista Steel’s wedding, you hear me? Too long!” If her wail didn’t wake half the floor, Juno slamming the door behind her probably did.

When he turned around, Nureyev was right behind him, still draped in a bedsheets. His grin was remarkably sly for a man who’d just survived yet another brush with death.

“Well. That was exciting.”

“That’s Rita for you.”

“Quite the detective in her own right, really.”

“You know if we go offworld without telling her, she’s just going to track us down again.”

“That could pose a problem.”

And there were solutions: Juno could tell her he was going with Nureyev—or tell Nureyev he was staying here. Or they could bring her along with them. Or… or something. It was getting hard to focus on anything while Nureyev was kissing him like that.

“But it’s a problem for the morning,” Nureyev whispered into his ear, nipping the skin there between his sharp teeth. “Ten hours, did you say?”

Juno shivered pleasantly and let Peter tug him back to the bed.
Come in with the rain

Chapter Summary

Juno waits for Peter to come home

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
Jupeter fic promt "I won't be your sometimes" and/or "come in with the rain" happy ending.

He knows.

He doesn’t know how he knows. Maybe there are little remnants of Martian mindreading hiding in the folds of his brain. Maybe that old Venusian folktale was right, and lovers have a sixth sense about each other. Maybe it’s just a lucky guess. Whatever the reason, he just knows: Peter’s going to be here soon.

The first real sign is the groan of the fire escape as it contemplates just how badly it wants to remain attached to the side of this building. It creaks and shifts with what might be wind, if the city’s simwind ever got to be that strong on this side of town.

The window is already unlocked, and oiled so expertly that it doesn’t make a sound as it opens, completely lost in the swell of traffic and sirens and distant shouting that make up the soundtrack of Hyperion City. It’s raining outside, the exhaled precipitation of five million people collecting as clouds in the artificial atmosphere, then raining back down over them. Juno’s sure there’s something poetic in that, but he doesn’t dwell on it. The window is sliding shut. Careful feet pad across the rain-damp floor.

A floral aroma fills the air moments before a floral arrangement fills an empty scotch bottle on the counter: a single lily. Juno knows it without looking. It’s the reason why he filled the bottle with water before heading to bed.

A short cascade of water droplets hit the floor as a wet coat is stripped away and hung over a chair to dry. Shoes and a belt are similarly discarded: so deliberately that they barely register as noise. Shirt and slacks will follow after them, and then Peter will slide under the covers beside Juno, and in the morning they’ll wake up folded together as if they’ve spent every morning this way since the day they met.

But Peter’s taking too long, being too careful to be silent. Maybe he doesn’t notice Juno creeping out of bed until it’s too late.

A towel drapes across Peter’s shoulders, still warm from hanging over the heater. The terrycloth is threadbare, but as soft as it ever was—Rita was really on to something when she suggested pouring vinegar in with the wash.
“Juno?” Peter’s voice is hoarse, but gentle. “Did I wake you?”

“Haven’t been sleeping much.” He pulls Peter close; the other man is clammy and cold. How he expected to sneak into bed without waking his partner is anybody’s guess. “I heard about what happened on Brahma.”

“Funny. I didn’t think it would reach this far.”

“Only if you’re already looking.” He rises onto tiptoes to meet Peter. His thief’s lips, normally so very soft, are cracked and chapped. “Are you alright?”

“I’m not hurt.” It’s not what Juno’s asking, and he knows it. “I didn’t think it would happen this way. I didn’t think it would happen at all.”

But it has: New Kinshasa hangs in the air, impotent and undefended. A hundred thousand acts of crime, both petty and brutal, are suddenly unchecked. The people of Brahma are on the streets, openly dissenting for the first time in decades. After all that time, all that unrest boiling quietly beneath the surface, violence was inevitable.

Juno kisses him again. “The riots will burn themselves out. Those people have had their first taste of freedom in decades and they’re getting drunk off it. But soon enough they’re gonna wake up hungover and realize they’ve still got a planet to run. They might even do a good job of it. Or maybe it’ll take them a few tries. But at least now they’ve got a chance to find out.”

He wants to continue, but the words hesitate on his tongue. A relationship with Peter Nureyev has instilled him with faith and trust and even courage that he didn’t have before. A hundred cases of trial and error have taught him that Peter will always be willing to stick around and figure things out with him, so long as Juno can put his concerns into words.

It doesn’t keep him from being scared to say it, but it does help him get the words out: “Will you be going back to help them run it?”

“Oh, Juno.” Their foreheads touch. Juno’s glad for the dark, because he can’t make out his thief’s expression. “I don’t know what I would do with myself there. I’ve never been much for the tedium of politics.”

“Is middle management too depressing for you?”

“Naturally.” Juno doesn’t need to see Peter to know he’s making a face. But it settles, along with his tone. “But I don’t think I’d be much good there. I’ve done my duty to Brahma. I think it’s time for me to come home.”
It takes Juno until they’re halfway through the soup before he’ll admit to himself that something is amiss. When he does, it’s with his patented brand of subtlety.

“So which one is it?” he asks.

Peter raises an eyebrow. “Which one is what?”

“The person we’re watching. Or waiting for. Which one is it? I know you like surprises when it comes to details, but if I’m going to be much help on this case, I’m going to need something to work with.”

If that eyebrow goes any higher, it’ll disappear into Peter’s hairline. “Juno, darling? This isn’t a case.”

But that doesn’t make any sense. Their meetings come in two varieties: either they start on a case and end up in bed, or they start in bed and end up on a case. But there’s always a case involved. Always.

“So if it’s not a case, what is it?”

Peter is, still, nonplussed. “It’s a date.”

He sifts his memory for the conversations leading up to this moment—“come out to dinner with me and I’ll show you a good time”, “I propose a different kind of investigation”—all the usual innuendo-laced doublespeak. Which… actually, Peter never did say the word “case”, did he?

But that can’t be right. It’s not an actual date. It’s just an elaborate cover, right? The flowers, the kiss at the door, the fancy taxi (was the driver the one they’re trying to fool?)—the intimate conversation, the fancy dinner. It’s all a staged performance of what other people’s dates are supposed to look like. Because this sort of thing doesn’t happen to Juno. Beautiful people don’t take him out on the town like this.

Juno reaches blindly. Because after all this time, he trusts Peter enough to know that his questions will always be met with an answer. Not necessarily one he can understand, but still an answer.

“Why, though?”

Peter takes a long sip of his wine. He looks like he’s going to need it. “It isn’t a case because I’m not investigating a case at the moment. Why? Are you?”

“Then why go to all this trouble?”

“Is it trouble, though?” He gazes at Juno over the rim of the glass. “The wine selection is impressive, the company enjoyable, the atmosphere is lovely, the food is delectable—though not quite so much as the view.” He takes another long sip while Juno tries to collect himself. Peter claims he got him
this suit as a kind of camouflage in high-society settings. Juno would have an easier time believing him if Peter didn’t keep looking at him like that while he’s wearing it. He continues: “As difficult as it may be for you to believe it some days, I enjoy the time we spend together. Cherish it, even. And I think that’s worth a bit of extra effort on my part, don’t you?”
Nothing quite like a dame in a suit

Chapter Summary

Peter REALLY likes Juno in a suit. A lot.
(NSFW)

Chapter Notes

This one's short but explicit.

Juno needs to wear tuxedos more often. The thought crosses his mind a few dozen times that night, every time when he catches Peter’s eyes tracking up and down his body like it’s a work of art—beautiful, rare, and just ripe for the taking. It crosses his mind again, more decisively, when his back is to a wall in one of the dozen spare bedrooms in an Uptown mansion. His fingers are digging into the fancy wallpaper to keep from mussing Peter’s perfectly coiffed hair. His head is thrown back and the product in his hair is probably going to leave stains on the wall, and he doesn’t fucking care. Peter’s on his knees, his hands fisted in the silk around Juno’s thighs and pulling them closer, his mouth—

Oh god, his mouth—

That clever tongue is sliding and pushing and curling around him. Those sharp teeth are grazing Juno’s skin just lightly enough to make themselves known, tiny pinpricks of pain like starlight against the void of all-consuming pleasure.

The sensation is so overwhelming it might kill him, but what a way to die.

He keeps his mouth clamped shut, because even in a place this big someone’s bound to hear him, and right now he’s too turned around to even remember what name he should be screaming.

Don’t stop—Peter Nureyev don’t you dare stop—

Like that, Duke, yes, please, just like that, please keep going, please—

Rex Rex Rex Rex Rex—

Orgasm hits so hard that Juno’s knees almost buckle, but Peter’s right there to catch him, to brace him back against the wall, to pin him in place with his own weight. Peter’s kisses are ravenous, and Juno can taste himself in each one.

That taste lingers in his mouth while Peter dusts himself off and rights the disheveled lines of both their outfits. A few pats and tugs, and they emerge from the room and return back to the party, looking like they only left for an innocent conversation. The only evidence to the contrary is the lust darkness of Peter’s eyes and the lingering taste in Juno’s mouth.
"We're not keeping the rabbit."

Chapter Summary

Juno helps out an old friend.

Chapter Notes

whoopsiedaisiedoo asked:
you're killing me with the jupeter so here's a prompt: jupeter + 'we're not keeping the rabbit'

Rabbits are good people—or about as close as you can get without being legally classified as ‘people’. Back when I was a kid and running away from home twice a week, the rabbits in the sewer system would more often than not take pity on me. Sure, some of them tried to rough me up, but never as much as I got back home, and the rest would give me a safe place to sleep for a few hours, or get me something not-entirely-rotten to eat.

And the way I see it, that puts me in a kind of debt to them. Not a very harshly enforced one—it’s not like they can read a ledger, let alone an I.O.U.—but it’s one I still keep in the back of my mind.

Which is why when a rabbit showed up on my doorstep, half dead and torn to hell, I brought him inside.

I’ve done enough first aid on myself over the years that I got the basics down—shaved the matted fur around the wounds, set and wrapped the broken ribs, stitched the worst of the cuts, and slathered pretty much the whole thing in antibiotic ointment.

After that’s where my expertise falls apart. See, for the past fifteen years or so, my only attachment was my secretary, and Rita’s good about not asking questions.

My boyfriend? Not so much.

I didn’t even think it would be a problem. He was off world, doing… something for one of his wealthy/powerful/dangerous/interesting/insert-adjective-here friends. The way I saw it, before he got back, I could have this rabbit patched up and on his way, bleach every surface in my apartment, burn the bed, and get a new one at the local thrift shop, and Peter would be none the wiser.

But thinking like that requires time and luck to be on my side, and neither one was taking my phone calls.

Which is how I got here: lying half-asleep on the couch, being fondled awake by a boyfriend who’s lit only by the light of a plasma cutter and looks halfway between terrified and ready to commit murder.

I blink groggily at him, but it’s still too dark to see. “Peter…? What’s…?”
“Juno?” he hisses, so low I can barely hear him. His roving hands pause to clutch mine. “Are you bleeding? How long have you been unconscious? Did it hurt you?”

“Bleeding? Why would I be…” I’m starting to come out of my doze. “You mind turning on a light?”

“Keep your voice down, love,” he whispers. “It’s still here—it’s sleeping in the bed.”

“The…” Comprehension dawns on me. “You mean the rabbit?”

Peter’s glasses slide down his face by a fraction of an inch. “You’re aware.”

“Well, yeah. He was hurt, so I brought him in here. He’s a friend of mine.” I sit up and turn on the lamp on the end table. In the light, I can see tear tracks on Peter’s unnaturally pale cheeks. “Are you okay?”

“Okay?” His voice still doesn’t rise above a whisper, even though he sounds like he’d like to shout. “I came in here and you were just lying there, and—and the smell—“

“Sorry about that. I tried some of those scented candles you got me, but rabbits live in the sewer most of the time, and Betelgeuse Breeze can only cover up so much.”

“I thought you’d been eviscerated, Juno. I thought…” He’s shaking so hard he can barely get the words out.

“But I’m not. I’m right here, and I’m fine.” I turn off the plasma cutter and pull him into the couch beside me, wrapping my arms around him. “I’m fine, Peter. Everything’s going to be okay.”

As a thief and a con, he’s learned to bury his emotions, put aside the things he feels so he can do what needs to be done. He can compartmentalize like none other, but the fact that he isn’t right now speaks volumes.

He feels safe around me—safe enough to feel everything else, too, because he knows I’ll be right here to hold him until he calms down.
Waltzing on Rooftops

Chapter Summary

Juno helps Peter learn how to dance

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic and wendy-comet both asked for dancing fics

It’s an act of love that Juno is on the roof at all. The simwind blows harder up here than anywhere on the ground level, but it’s mostly blocked off by a pair of billboards. The two remaining sides offer an unobstructed view of Hyperion City that stretches almost as far as the eye can see. It might be beautiful, if it weren’t so goddamn high.

But Peter needs a wide open space, a willing partner, and a lack of interruptions, and dammit if Juno won’t give that to him. Even if the best place for it is twenty-seven stories off the ground.

The dance is simple enough in theory: it’s an old Earth folk dance called a waltz. According to the anthropological streams they found, the dance doesn’t seem all that complicated: one of the dancers acts like a spaceship, using the other’s gravity to slingshot forward, and then the other does the same. Simple enough.

If only it wasn’t so goddamn fast.

Hurtling around a rooftop in shared orbit like a pair of twin stars isn’t Juno’s idea of a fun Saturday night, but if there’s anyone he’ll do it with, it’s Peter Nureyev. And somehow, that makes it okay.

The music is so fast and the steps so complicated that he doesn’t have time to focus on anything else. Just the rhythm, his body, and Peter. It’s almost transcendent, like getting in a really good fistfight, but without any threat of bleeding out when it’s all over.

If he had the words to describe it, he might try explaining that to Peter. Every burst of steps is interrupted when Peter’s long, willowy legs get tangled up in each other. A few times Juno has to catch his partner before he hits the floor, and at one point, the slip happens all too close to the edge of the rooftop.

They decide to take a break for a while after that: huddled together at the center of the floor, far away from any ledges. Juno wouldn’t say it out loud, but it’s nice not being the only one feeling queasy about heights right this minute.

“So why the new hobby?” he asks, mostly to distract them both. “I didn’t think folk dancing would be very useful in your line of work.”

“Ordinarily it isn’t,” Peter admits, curling closer around Juno. “But I’m hoping to make a contact offworld, and rumor has it she has rather an obsession with old Earth ballroom dance.”
“Does she?” Juno tries to keep the pang out of his voice. He must not succeed, because Peter chuckles.

“Don’t tell me you’re jealous, Juno.”

“Of course not.” Okay, so maybe he sounds a little sullen. He knows Peter doesn’t have any interest in women, but plenty of his aliases do, and he can play the part well enough to convince anyone.

“You’re so cute like this, Juno.” He pacifies Juno somewhat with a kiss on his cheek. “I assure you, there’s no need to worry. Dancing aside, Miss Gear will be profoundly uninterested in my company.”

That gives him some hope. “A lesbian?”

“Asexual, actually.”

“Oh. Okay, then.” But she could still fall in love with him. And how much easier would it make things if he pretended to reciprocate? Or actually fell in love with her? And if not with her, what about his dozens of contacts he’s got scattered across the galaxy?

Peter rises to his feet and helps Juno up after him. “Shall we try again?”

They dance slower this time, ignoring the manic rhythm while they regain their footing. Peter seems to be getting more confident with his steps, because he’s the one to initiate the conversation.

“As much as I appreciate your concern, I promise you, it’s unnecessary.”

“Worry? Who’s worried?”

A slight shift, and they’re moving in the opposite direction. “I won’t deny that seduction is an… effective way to get what I want, but it’s not a method I employ often. Hardly ever, since I met you.”

“Gets you in too much trouble?”

“It just doesn’t feel right anymore. And a cover is useless to me if it’s prohibitively uncomfortable.” His gaze is deep and dark, and Juno would stumble if he wasn’t so caught in the rhythm of the dance. “You’re the one I want, Juno. And you’re the one I’ll always come home to. Always.” He speeds their pace until they match the stuttering pulse of the music. And they’re whirling across the rooftop again: a pair of binary stars, forever caught in each other’s orbit.
If this is the closest Juno will ever come to perfection, then he’ll be able to die happy. Because this. Is. Perfect.

He’s stretched across his office desk, wide open and clinging to the edge for dear life. Nureyev is balls-deep inside of him, pounding him so hard he’s seeing stars, and every beat against that sweet spot inside him is bringing Juno closer to the edge. He can feel orgasm coming, and when it does, he knows it’s going to blow him away.

So he’s understandably miffed when that incredible rhythm suddenly stops short.

“Peter, please don’t stop,” he begs, tugging at Peter’s thighs like that’ll make him start moving again. “Peter—Jesus, Peter, I’m so close.”

His partner is still excruciatingly stony. His eyes are fixed on the door. And if Juno wasn’t right on the edge of release, he might be a little quicker on the uptake.

Things being what they are, he doesn’t figure it out until he hears Rita call out on the other side of the door.

“Mista Steel? Did you want somethin’, or are you getting’ in another fight up there? Because if there’s another fight, whoever else is in there better know that I got a laser and I’m not a bad shot, and I’m also not really sure which one of these buttons is for the stun setting. You hear me in there?”

That’s all the warning they get before Rita throws open the door.

The mood is long gone. Unfortunately, so are Juno’s pants.
The trouble with dogs

Chapter Summary

Peter isn't great with dogs

Chapter Notes

junonureyev asked:
You're a super amazing writer! Since you're taking prompts, what about something where Juno's totally in his comfort zone but Peter's out of his. (Since usually Peter's comfortable everywhere, and I kind of want to see him thrown into a situation he needs to learn to adapt to)

Peter hears a distant snarling, and his blood runs cold. Nails scrape on tile as a four legged monstrosity bounds toward them, lines of drool already seeping from its open mouth.

He freezes.

There’s a reason why he carefully plans all his heists to avoid such creatures. Dogs aren’t like people. He can’t read their hopes and fears off their faces. He can’t get inside their heads. He can’t charm them with pretty words. He can’t even disguise himself. He smells like blood and gunpowder and distant lands—in short, like a stranger—and that marks him as an enemy, and no amount of cologne can persuade them otherwise.

He can run, but it will run faster. He looks up: if there’s a drop ceiling he can slip into, if there’s a foothold or handhold, anything to keep himself out of reach of its jaws, he might stand a chance.

Nothing. They’re trapped. There’s nothing to it but to fight.

He might be able to kill them—but his proficiency with a gun isn’t nearly what it is with a knife, and if he misses with either, the dog might take a chunk out of him before he can put it down. In his line of work, he can afford to be either handsome or nondescript—disfigured by dog bites doesn’t work with either aesthetic.

He reaches for his laser cutter, one arm already up to protect his face. And then he looks at Juno. His detective is crouched low, a strip of jerky in his outstretched hand.

“Here pochoy pochoy,” he coos, raising one hand to rub the dog’s head as it comes closer. “That’s it. Got a nice treat for you. There’s a good boy.”

The snarls fade into happy panting, and the stub of the dog’s tail starts to wag as it takes the treat from him. While it’s distracted, he carefully checks to make sure his gun is on stun and blasts it in the chest. The dog goes rigid for a moment, then collapses into a heap of muscle and fur.

For a moment, Peter allows himself to sink under a wave of relief before he reapplys his cool
professional demeanor. It’s just a moment of weakness, but apparently it’s long enough for Juno to notice.

“Something wrong?”

“Nothing at all. Though I would have appreciated some warning about guard dogs in the security system.”

“I didn’t know either,” Juno said. “Otherwise I would have brought a few steaks instead of throwing it my lunch.”

“Those dogs eat better than you do,” Peter mutters, and steps around the animal. A very long way around, all but hugging the wall, just in case it forgets to be stunned.

Juno looks at the dog and back to him, an eyebrow rising toward his hairline. “You aren’t afraid of that old pooch, are you?”

“Attack dogs aren’t my favorite security measure,” Peter says tightly.

“That little old thing? She’s just a pit bull. Those are practically harmless. It’s the quadruple Cerberuses that you need to watch out for.”

Peter elects not to tell him that he can’t really tell members of the species apart beyond “big dog” and “little dog”. And, as the one lying on the floor could not feasibly fit inside a fashionable purse, it doesn’t qualify as the latter.

This would be ample opportunity for Juno to get smug. Instead he walks beside Rex, keeping between him and the beast. His hand hangs loosely at his side, and on impulse Peter takes it in his.

“Dogs like these react to what they see. If you act scared, they’ll get scary. You get aggressive, and they’ll fight. So the best thing to do is come at them like you’re their best friend in the world. That should be easy enough for you—you seem to do it with everyone else.”

And yet it’s primarily dogs who see through him. “And if that doesn’t work?”

“Bribe them with food. It never fails.”

“Is that why you took me to dinner during our first case together? Trying to win me over?”

Juno raises Peter’s hand to his lips and kisses it, almost like an afterthought. “Like I said: it never fails.”
Thanksgiving on Mars

Chapter Summary

Rita arranges for Juno and company to celebrate an old Earth tradition

Chapter Notes

equestrianfangirlswag asked:
Jupiter prompt: It's thanksgiving on Mars and neither of them has much experience with celebrating it
Rated G

Juno isn’t sure whether he wants to thank Rita or strangle her. Because really, it is a good idea. Thanksgiving is a tradition on Mars, brought over by some of the first colonists. Nobody actually remembers what it was about originally—Mick insisted that it was meant to build up strength for the violent days of shopping that followed—but the sentiment seems to have stayed the same: families coming together to eat ungodly amounts of food around a shared table.

Which is nice in theory. In reality, Juno spent most of his childhood hungry, he was lucky to survive the trainwreck that was his home life, and holidays that focused on smiling happy families touched all sorts of nerves in all the wrong ways. Rita knew that—or rather, she knew him well enough not to ask—and so she usually doesn’t invite him to her celebration more than once each November.

This year, though, she’s persistent.

“Oh, come on, boss. I bet he misses his family.”

Juno highly doubts that. What Rita doesn’t know is that Peter’s birth father is a lie, the man who raised him is dead, and Peter spent as much of his childhood hungry as Juno did.

“Besides, we’re his family now, too.”

That’s the note that sticks with him.

They’re his family. Not just the brother he failed and the mother who wanted to kill him.

In the end, not one of them has any idea what they’re doing. But between Rita’s enthusiasm, Mick’s imagination, and Julian’s flare for the dramatic, it actually turns out… not half bad. Sure, they wind up with a charcoal briquette where the cloned turkey used to be, and he’s pretty sure mashed potatoes aren’t supposed to be powder when you eat them, but that’s what takeout is for.

The important thing is that here, tonight, they’ve all got each other.
The first time I saw you

Chapter Summary

Juno looks a little bit too familiar

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
Jupeter "first time I saw you I couldn't get over how beautiful you were" hint of reincarnation Au.(Maybe if you want)

The secretary is shouting for me to stop and fill out paperwork, but I can hardly hear her.

Behind the office door is a desk, behind the desk is a chair, and in the chair, looking up from a com
screen, is the most beautiful man I’ve ever laid eyes on.

Except he isn’t. His face and hands are scarred; a yellowing bruise mars the corner of his jaw. His
broad shoulders slope from years of hunching them against cold and rain, and his head hangs low
between them. His brow is drawn low, and he peers out from under it like it’s the brim of a hat.
Objectively, he should be intimidating—off-putting, at least.

And yet it all fits together just so, and the imperfect angles and planes of him form a whole that is
stunning in its perfection.

It takes all my years of experience to suppress the feeling before it can show on my face. Even so,
I’m forced to make last-minute changes to my planned persona. Agent Rex Glass is charming,
certainly, but in the presence of Juno Steel, he becomes flirtatious. Seductive. It’s easier than trying to
resist the gravity of his presence. Because my every absent glance falls on him. When my hands
aren’t stuffed in my pockets, they reach toward him.

By all means, he should take my breath away. With that unbridled perfection, my heart should race
every time he glances my way.

Instead, he makes everything slow down. Under his gaze, I feel safe. Calm. Centered. Like this is
where I belong. My heart aches when I look at him—in ways that it hasn’t since I last heard the
music of New Kinshasa.

I barely know this man, and already he feels like home.
“Talk to me, Juno.”

And he does.

It takes months of coaxing, of sudden outbursts followed by long stretches of silence, but finally Juno starts talking to him. Really talking to him.

That isn’t to say that Peter likes most of what he hears. Or much of any of it, really. He could go the rest of his life without knowing the intimate details of Juno’s abuse, the gore of his little brother’s body, the despicable things he thinks about himself, the myriad ways that Juno fantasizes about bleaching the stain of his existence from the fabric of the universe.

But knowing all of this—every grizzly, awful detail—is a small price to pay. Because Juno is finally talking to him. Yes, each conversation is about as pleasant as pulling teeth, but with every one, he understands his detective a little better: the patterns of Juno’s self-loathing, the insecurities that send him into a self-destructive spiral, the fears that trigger panic, the touches that will bring haunted memories dancing across his vision. And with every one, he learns the right words to soothe his hatred, the right touches to pull him back into the present.

With every conversation, Juno plucks more tenaciously at the tangled mess of his own mind. The more he tries to put his thoughts into words, the better he can understand them. With each conversation, the talking gets easier, until one day Juno approaches him. His shoulders are slumped, his head hanging low, and he pleads with his eyes before he says a word.

“Hey. Can I… can we just…?”

He gestures vaguely, but Peter knows him well by now. He scoots over and pats the stretch of cushion beside him. Gratefully Juno climbs onto the couch and curls up there, his head in Peter’s lap, his eyes squeezed shut against the world.

“Would you like to talk about it?” Peter asks softly.

Juno’s brow furrows. After what seems like immense consideration, he replies, “…no. Not yet.”
“That’s alright.” He runs his hands into Juno’s tight curls, tugging at them just hard enough to provide some sensation.

“Could you…?”

“Hm?”

“Talk.”

“What about?”

“I don’t know. I don’t care. I just like hearing your voice.”

And so Peter picks up the book he’d been working on and begins reading aloud. It’s hardly thrilling literature—just the owner’s manual for a supposedly uncrackable safe—but slowly the tension starts to drain from Juno’s body.

It doesn’t fix him, of course. Juno’s problems aren’t the kind that can be fixed with words and touches, no matter how sincere. But Peter’s already seeing a difference. When they met, Juno would get swept away by the tides of his own trauma and brain chemistry, so exhausted from swimming that he would rather drown. Those tides hadn’t gone away, they hadn’t lost their intensity, but now at least he has an armful of flotsam to hold onto until he recovers the strength to tread water on his own.

And Peter, safe on shore, will make sure he’s always got something to keep him afloat.
Family visit

Chapter Summary

Peter has a daughter. Who knew?

Chapter Notes

ongirlintheback asked:
Peter tells Juno that he adopted a kid years ago and Kid is coming to Mars from their Boarding School to visit for the holidays.

“It’s funny,” Peter says cautiously. “I assumed you’d be a bit more shocked by this news. Was that something you saw in my head, back when…”

“No.” In fact, Juno didn’t even think to check Peter’s mind for that particular detail. “No, I’m definitely surprised.” But Peter’s right. Maybe the biggest shock is how little the news actually surprises Juno. It makes sense, really. Peter was orphaned twice over, and he knew better than anyone how hard it could be as a kid on the streets. Why wouldn’t he want to save some other kid from having to live through that? “But I’ve never heard you talk about her.”

Peter fidgets. In case the situation isn’t serious enough on its own, that proves it: Peter never fidgets. “I’m afraid Yifan and I aren’t particularly… close.” He flounders in silence for a few moments. “She spends most of her time at a boarding school offworld. I make sure all her needs are provided for, that she gets a good education. I’ve pulled a few strings to get her an internship on a station near Wolf 359 that she had her heart set on. I have a private server that we use to contact each other on a somewhat regular basis.”

It’s not a small thing—it’s a hell of a lot more than Juno’s mother ever did for him. So he doesn’t understand why all of that sounds like Peter’s defending himself.

“But you may have noticed, I’m not exactly parental. Taking her in seemed like a good idea at the time, but I had no idea what to do with her. I could play the role of a father well enough for a few weeks, but no persona can last very long before it starts to fall apart. And I couldn’t take her with me on my heists, not that I didn’t try. After all, Mag always took me with him. But that’s the problem. Every time I tried bringing her along, I couldn’t stop thinking about him. About how he was raising me to murder a city full of people. And I kept wondering if I was doing that to her, too, without even thinking about it. It was driving me insane, Juno. I couldn’t sleep, I couldn’t eat, I was losing focus, I was getting short with her— it was only a matter of time before I made a mistake I couldn’t recover from, and she might be the one to pay for it. So I sent her away to school. And… and that seems to be going well for her.”

Carefully Juno wraps an arm around Peter’s shoulder. “For what it’s worth, the fact that you care enough to worry about fucking her up? That’s a good sign.”

Peter meets him with a miserable smile. Juno shrugs.
“I spent most of my childhood running away from home. Yifan actually wants to come stay with you over break, so you’ve got to have been doing something right.”

“It’s much easier to do things right from several hundred lightyears away,” Peter admits. “When I have the time to properly compose my emails before I send them.”

“Then Rita and I can run interference for you while you properly compose yourself.” He sighs and leans into his boyfriend’s side. “My mother wasn’t exactly a shining example of parenthood either, so I’m about as lost as you are with all this. But we can figure it out together, okay? Or we can convincingly fake it for a few weeks before she goes back to school, and she won’t know the difference.”
Waking up

Chapter Summary

Juno and Peter wake up in bed together for the first time.

Rated T

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
and a happy one: juno and peter waking up in bed together for the first time
Well, I got the actual content of the request down, if not the 'happy' part...

It’s funny. Juno didn’t think there would be a problem.

Not with the way they fell into bed last night. Not when Peter was so eager to touch every last inch of him. The man wasn’t just incredible, he was insatiable—a few more nights like that one, and Juno would either die of exertion or dehydration, but at least he’d die happy.

After all of that, Juno couldn’t have left the bed if he wanted to. And he didn’t want to. Never again. Tangled up in Peter’s limbs and still high on his last orgasm of the night, he swore that he was never letting his beautiful, ridiculous, amazing thief out of his sight as long as he lived.

The sounds of morning rush hour were as familiar and comforting as birdsongs in the window that morning, and he felt uncharacteristically fond of the strangers who were honking and swearing at each other outside. At some point in the night they’d shifted so that Peter was wrapped around him—and was this that spooning thing he heard people talk about? Because it was nice. Safe and cozy and comfortable. It would have been absolutely perfect, if Peter’s long, slender leg wasn’t arranged perfectly over Juno’s bladder.

He stayed wrapped up in the Peter’s limbs for as long as he could stand, then carefully slipped out from between the sheets and padded toward the bathroom.

When he returned, something had changed.

He couldn’t put his finger on it at first. Somehow, in the few minutes he’d been gone, all the cozy warmth from before had drained away. The entire room felt like it was holding its breath, bracing for something horrible to happen.

Maybe he was still groggy, but it took him entirely too long to realize that it wasn’t the room that was bracing itself.

It was Peter.

His breathing had fallen out of the soft murmurs of sleep and taken on an odd mechanical rhythm.
His arms, previously wrapped around Juno, were now curled around his own chest like he was in pain. For all the effort he’d put into keeping his face relaxed, his shoulders were bunched together into knots of anxiety.

A thousand possible explanations opened up in Juno’s mind, but he forced them aside before they could take root. He’d promised himself he was going to stop jumping to conclusions with Peter. And he was going to do that, dammit.

He leaned over the bed and reached out a hand. The moment his fingertips brushed Peter’s cheek, his thief’s eyes snapped open. They were red and wide and haunted, like he hadn’t slept at all during the night.

Was he hurt? Had he pulled a muscle or something last night? Was it something about yesterday’s case? Poison or blackmail or some horrific detail they’d overlooked?

Stop stop stop don’t do this to yourself don’t do this to him you’ve been over this—fucking talk to him, Juno.

“Peter?” he whispered.

Peter slowly looked his way, like he was afraid of what he might see. “Did I nod off again?” His words slurred together; he sounded delirious with exhaustion. “Are you really here, or is this the dream?”

Dread pooled in Juno’s gut, but he kept his expression calm. “I’m really here.” He leaned down and kissed Peter’s forehead. “Did you have a nightmare?”

“I thought you left again. Stayed up all night so I could stop you leaving, and then I fell asleep for one second and you were gone.”

Dread curdled into shame. Waves of revulsion washed over him. Was that why Peter had fucked him like there wouldn’t be a tomorrow? Because as far as Peter knew, he’d be gone and they’d never see each other again? One last good memory for the road?

Jesus, why would Peter even get into bed with a man he knew was going to hurt him like that?

He wanted to walk out of here, to get far away where he couldn’t hurt Peter again—but that would hurt him even worse, wouldn’t it?

He forced his smile to stay gentle, swallowed his bile, and slipped back under the covers. “I didn’t go any further than the bathroom, Peter. I’m right here.”

As soon as he was in reach, Peter wrapped both arms around Juno’s chest and pulled him close, burying his face in Juno’s neck. The angle was awkward, but Juno had no intention of fixing it.

“Shhh,” he whispered, smoothing his thief’s disheveled hair. “You can sleep now. I’m not going anywhere.”

He’d done enough damage to Peter already; leaving now would only twist the knife. His thoughts went elsewhere—punishing himself with drink, with hard cases, with fist fights. But in every scenario that played out in his head, Peter was always the one who got hurt.

So while Peter dozed in his arms, Juno devised a different form of punishment.

He’d try to be better. He’d force himself to be more careful. More considerate. He’d force himself to
become the kind of man that Peter could sleep beside and know he’d still be there in the morning. The process would be annoying and awful, but that was the point, wasn’t it? It didn’t count as self-flagellation if it was something he’d willingly do on his own.

But for Peter—for the beautiful man now snoring into his shoulder—he’d do it.
Distractions

Chapter Summary

Juno tests Peter's ability to compartmentalize.

Rated T-M, depending on how you feel.

Chapter Notes

Jupeter "Can you stop looking at me that? I'm having a hard time forming sentences when you look at me like that." Bonus points if it's Peter saying it.

Peter prides himself in his ability to compartmentalize. It’s an important skill for a man of his vocation—nigh essential.

It was perhaps less necessary to tell Juno about it. Because his sweet detective seems to have taken it as some kind of challenge. Now he’s determined to test the limits of Peter’s ability to separate himself from what he’s feeling.

It’s a simple test, really. Laughably easy. He’s to hold a conversation with Rita at the front desk of the office. Meanwhile Juno, seated on his desk on the other side of an open door, will attempt to distract him.

And he’s cheating.

Peter isn’t sure what he expected—ridiculous faces, juggling, a full tap-dancing routine—but Juno only sits there and watches him. Intently.

His expression is laser-focused. An asymmetrical smolder rakes over every inch of Peter’s body, and Peter can almost feel Juno mentally peeling away his clothes and leaving them scattered across his headspace.

Peter tries to take the feelings that stare inspires and tuck it into a box in the back of his mind. He’ll make use of it later, preferably while utilizing excessive quantities of lubricant. For now, though, he’s trying to remember the next plot point in the movie he and Rita were discussing.

Over Rita’s shoulder, he sees Juno cross his knees. His seat on the edge of the desk shows off his legs, sheathed in a pants so formfitting that the cut has been outlawed on a handful of planets. Peter’s surprised Juno owns a pair. But of course the style looks ravishing on him.

Ravishing. Perhaps the wrong choice of words… But then, perhaps not…

Peter’s losing track of the conversation. The harder he tries to focus, the harder it gets. The harder he gets.

Juno leans forward just so, and the gleam in his eye darkens. It’s like a black hole, that eye, and Peter
can feel himself dragged inexorably in by its gravity. Already he can feel time slowing down around him, his body stretching toward it…

He’s only (unwillingly) rescued again by the sensation of Rita tapping at his forehead.


Peter blinks, and suddenly he’s back in the present moment. He clears his throat. “Pardon me, Rita. I just remembered something I needed to discuss with Juno. Shall we continue this conversation later?”

Rita looks over her shoulder at Juno, who is innocently sorting papers on top of his desk. When she glances back at Peter, her expression is as humorless as the desert wastes. “You know what? I think it’s time for my lunch anyway.”
“How’s this one, Pete? Better than the last one? Or worse? Better? Or worse?”

He’s going to keep doing that for every single pair, isn’t he? Oh, save me. “About the same.”

“That one, too?” I barely have a chance to take off this pair before he thrusts another one into my hands. “Try that one, then. Better? Or worse?”

And here we have the great flaw of a con man: Mag can perfectly capture the speech patterns and language of an optometrist, but he still lacks the basic skills that come with the job. Which is why he failed to realize that every single pair he’s handed to me is a display frame.

I squint at him through the unaltered glass. “That one’s a bit worse, actually.”

I can only just make out the wobbling shapes of his face as it changes expression. “Fantastic! Now we’re getting somewhere!”

“Mostly because it’s so badly smudged. I’m sorry, Mag, but I don’t think this is going to work.” I take off the latest dud and replace it with my old glasses. The screw in the corner is still missing, and the glass is one sharp nod away from tumbling out of the cheap plastic, but at least I can see reasonably well. “You stole these from the display wall, didn’t you?”

He throws his arms up dramatically. “I swear I was framed!”

I roll my eyes at the joke. “I tried that, too, when I was younger. But those frames don’t have proper lenses in them. They’re very pretty, but not very useful.”

“Ah, well.” There’s a flash of disappointment on his face, but it vanishes in the time it takes to don a pair of glasses on his own. “You know, these might make for a halfway decent disguise. What do you think? Or am I making a—”

I’m already groaning. “Stop!”
“–spectacle of myself?”

I cover my face with my hands, being careful so as not to dislodge the broken lens.

“Don’t you worry about a thing, Pete. First thing in the morning, I’m going to see about fabricating ourselves some insurance. Though I can’t say it’ll be eye-deal.”

“Are these puns going to continue? Because I’m starting to think I’d rather just not see.”

“Oh– that reminds me–” Mag is already hooting with laughter. This does not bode well. “What do you call a dinosaur with bad vision?”

“Ugh.”

“Do-you-think-he-saurus!”

The awful jokes keep coming until well into my appointment the next day. By then, he’s started repeating some of them, but the optometrist doesn’t complain– and she’s too busy alternating between guffaws and groans to look closely at our papers. By the time the insurance fails to go through, we’ll be long gone.
The new teacher in school

Chapter Summary

Because what fandom is complete without a Harry Potter crossover?

Chapter Notes

luthientheasexualdragon asked:
Your writing is fantastic and has brought so much joy to my life in the past three weeks (which have otherwise kind of sucked). I’d absolutely love to see your take on a Jupeter Hogwarts AU, because obviously this fandom needs some magic :)

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry has always had questionable hiring practices. Just in the last ten years, the faculty has included a pathological identity thief, half-giant dropout, a werewolf, the world’s most hit-and-miss medium, multiple death eaters, and a man with Voldemort himself literally living on the back of his head. And sure, you could say that the late great Albus Dumbledore was quirky that way, but you’d think his successor would consider raising the bar a little bit.

You’d think that, wouldn’t you?

Instead, she goes off and hires me. Juno Steel: ex-auror, private eye, and now on-site security for a school full of magical teenagers. Apparently all the Ministry’s actual aurors are off hunting down the last of the death eaters, so she’ll settle for one of their castoffs. That by itself is a bad sign, but business has been bad lately, and I’m too deep in debt to turn down a steady job.

Besides, I can’t say it hasn’t been interesting. It seems like a good quarter of the older students were part of a guerrilla army, and they’ve picked up some dangerous skills along the way. Combat-grade hexes are all well and good when your school is being run by the Dark Lord himself, but times change and the hexes don’t. I’ve lost count of the number of times I’ve had to stop students from almost killing each other over romantic flings, or pull a cowering Slytherin out of reach of potentially deadly bullies. At least I can say I’ve been earning my keep.

But it’s not just the students that need watching. Two weeks ago, Professor Flitwick had to take a mid-semester sabbatical for his health, and was replaced by Professor Rex Glass. He’s a capable wizard, vouched for multiple times over by the Ministry of Magic, and his background check came back without a problem. But something about him strikes me as… off.

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Maybe it’s this goddamn school’s history. One of the previous teachers was a serial killer who kept the actual teacher locked in a trunk for most of the school year. That kind of thing makes a guy paranoid. And it doesn’t help that he keeps flirting with me. Oh, sure, it’s always innocent enough when there’s kids around—usually he’s asking me for help navigating the staircases, or wanting me to assist him with organizing the storage room, or inviting me to trips to Hogsmeade. But the kids leave, and suddenly he’s in my space, fondling his wand and making the kind of innuendos that make Peeves blush and flee the scene.
I would report him to McGonagall for workplace harassment if I didn’t like it so goddamn much.

And it’s getting bad. Really bad. The other day I walked into a classroom and smelled that cologne of his—I was halfway through greeting him when I realized it wasn’t him at all, just a bunch of idiot teenagers with a bottle of amortentia. Of course I confiscated it and dragged their asses to McGonagall—that shit’s all kinds of dangerous—but I kept the bottle.

Not to use it or anything. Just to keep it around. Just so I could smell that cologne a little longer.
Hello, Listeners

Chapter Summary

A WTNV AU

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
A WTNV inspired fic where Peter is Cecil. And Juno is "Juno the Detective" who brings Rita with him.

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This was an interesting challenge, just because of how vastly different these two sets of characters really are. Peter might be as effusive as Cecil is, but Peter’s defining trait is that he’s constantly drifting from place to place and picking up new identities everywhere he goes, while Cecil is so intrinsically bound to his town that there are literally hundreds of fanfics where he is the anthropomorphic manifestation of the town itself.

Juno has more in common with Cecil in that he’s bound to Hyperion City by his own depression (and genre) and waxes poetic at times, but he’s more tightlipped about sharing his feelings and just plain doesn’t like people. Like, at all.

And neither of them really fit into the adorable workoholic goofball mold that Carlos embodies.

He keeps asking me questions. Oh, that’s adorable.

For a detective, he assumes entirely too much: that I’m actually employed by this radio station, for one. That I didn’t just walk in here and sit down a few hours before he arrived. That I actually intend to tell him the truth about any of this.

I don’t actually know very much about Night Vale, but I know this: it is alive, and it is aware, and it is predatory. If you let your confidence lapse, if you admit even for a moment that you are unsure of your place in its cosmos, then it will eat you alive.

I mean that literally. I haven’t even been here twenty-four hours, and I have already seen the earth open up and swallow a mail carrier halfway through her route. I’ve seen a multicolored glowing cloud drop a dead aardvark on a passerby. I’ve caught a faceless old woman staring at me from the corner of my eye, only to vanish when I turn to look at her (how did I know she was staring? She didn’t have eyes.) I’ve run from puppies.

Honestly, I don’t know why I ran from the puppies– they didn’t look particularly menacing, but there was another person fleeing from them and shrieking about an infestation, and I didn’t think it wise to
take chances. So I took shelter here, inside the confines of this radio station.

There may be something worth stealing in this fascinating little town, but first I’ll have to find out which little trinkets will try to murder me when I’m not looking.

Oh, but the detective is still asking me questions. What is he even talking about?

No matter. I lean in close and coo over how lovely his hair looks and how straight his teeth are– and is he doing anything later tonight?

It works like a charm. Suddenly he’s flustered and distracted, staring down at his phone while it chirps like a nest full of baby birds, his questions forgotten.

He rushes out, the darling, and I count myself successful. At least, until something enormous and tentacled crosses the hallway. A moment later, a red envelope shoots under my door at such speed that it impales itself on the far wall.

Inside is a note in elegant calligraphy:

If you’re going to sit in that chair, you’re going to do a show. If not, you will be devoured.

The script is on the desk.

–Station Management

As a man who enjoys remaining uneaten, I’m not about to argue with that. I read over the script before me and toy with the audio equipment until I figure out how to turn on the microphone.

I clear my throat. The light goes on.

“A friendly desert community where the sun is hot, the moon is beautiful, and mysterious lights pass overhead while we all pretend to sleep. Welcome to Night Vale.”
For those who can't catch 'em all

Chapter Summary

A Pokemon AU

Chapter Notes

wearestarstuff618 asked:
Have you ever thought about A Pokémon Au? Because I think about it all the time.

---

Be warned, this doesn’t have any of the optimism and sweetness that I’m used to seeing in the Pokémon games. I tried going for an actual cohesive narrative, and instead wound up poking at a lot of the themes of class divisions that keep showing up in the Penumbra Podcast. It’s about as pleasant as it sounds.

If you *do* want a light note, though, I have decided that Peter Nureyev would 100% get himself a Liepard. Rita would likely have a Porygon. Both would be adorable.

When I was a kid, they told us that Pokémon were the great equalizer of the human race. Anyone, if they trained hard and gave it their all, could go out and make something of themselves.

My name is Juno Steel, and I know for a fact that that’s a load of crap.

Sure, everyone technically has the option of taking their starter and going on an adventure when they’re eleven years old. But that adventure is a whole lot easier for the kids from Uptown, who leave home with a Dratini or a Torchic, plus daddy’s platinum credit card for expenses.

Kids from Oldtown don’t have that luxury. Around here, you were more likely to leave home with a Rattata or a Spinarak, maybe a Bunnelby if you were brave enough to wander into the sewer to look for one. But that’s if you took the offer at all. Adopting a Pokémon meant you had another mouth to feed, when most of us didn’t see regular meals ourselves. Sure, you could earn cash if you won a fight against another trainer, but there was just as big a chance they’d clean you out instead, especially if they were Uptown kids who wanted easy opponents to practice on. And around here, Pokémon centers were as rare as they were overcrowded. A lot of Pokémon never got treatment after they lost a fight. A lot of them didn’t make it.

Kids tried to do something about it. Tried to improve their chances by banding together and attacking the Uptown brats as a group. It worked well enough that Team Rocket and Team Galactic regularly sent agents in to recruit new members.

Sasha Wire, she was a special one. Most of us thought she was out of her damn mind, spending all her savings on a Magicarp. She showed us, though. She trained that stupid fish night and day. Never gave up for a second. When it evolved, it leveled a goddamned building. It made the news, got Dark
Matters’ attention, and got her a one-way ticket out of Old Town for good.

Mick Mercury started with a Poochyena that he called Wilco. Didn’t last very long. I don’t know where he found the next one, only that it gave me the creeps, always making weird noises from underneath a painted sheet. Not much good for fighting, but it did add some great special effects to Mick’s stories. He loved the creepy little thing. Still does. But that’s Mick for you.

Me, I tried my hand at the game. Hell, I’d try anything to get out of Oldtown. My starter went the way they all do, courtesy of my mother. I found another in an old warehouse, probably being kept there to sell to a collector in another part of the city. I stole the little guy, kept him secret in the sewers until he could keep his head in a fight. After that I took him around Oldtown with me. He was my backup, clubbing grunts and goons who tried to get a jump on me. Never did take him back to my house, though. Not until I got an apartment of my own, and Oldtown was far behind me.

It didn’t matter how well I trained him, you see. He wouldn’t survive a confrontation with my mother. She’d take one look at the little guy and take it personally. And maybe it was a little bit personal at first.

After all, my Cubone didn’t exactly get along with his mother, either.
Cuddling and confusion

Chapter Summary

Juno doesn't understand physical intimacy

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
it's gotten to the point where I see that you've answered my ask, get really excited about reading it, and then immediately think of three more prompts, so here's one: what happens if peter is a really cuddly guy but juno is absolutely not used to being cuddled? (aka let the poor touch-starved lady get some love)

Rated PG?

What is he doing?

Really. What is he doing?

Why is he rubbing up against me like that? We’re in a public place. There are children here, for Christ’s sake. They can see us. I don’t say this often, but think of the children.

Okay. I just won’t react. That’s all. I’ll be the gatekeeper here. I can do that.

“Juno? Is something wrong?”

Yes. I do not consent to public sex within spitting distance of a fucking playground. But I don’t want to put him off entirely. This kind of thing is fine… at home. Or in a car. Or a hotel. Or a back alley. Or anywhere else where people can’t just watch.

Unless he likes to be watched? Is that a kink for him?

I mean, I can go along with it. It might take some getting used to, but then, so does he. But if we’re going to go in for the voyeurism thing, let’s at least make sure the person watching us actually knows what they’re getting into. Jesus.

“Does this… get you into the mood?” It’s supposed to be an easy question. At least a little bit straightforward. He doesn’t need to look at me like I’ve started speaking gibberish.

“What?”

“You know… this.” I wave vaguely at absolutely nothing, and he looks about as lost as I am. “I don’t actually know, okay? But you seem like you’re ready to go, and I just want to know why.”

“Ready to…” He clears his throat. “As delighted as I am by your advances, Juno, there are children present.”
Well, that’s a relief. “So what’s with all the foreplay?”

“The what?”

“That! The hand-holding, the nuzzling up against me, getting in my space.”

His head is cocked to one side at an absolutely adorable angle, and it distracts me in all the most confusing ways. “You mean cuddling?”

No, cuddling is what happens after sex. Foreplay happens before. At least, I’m pretty sure. Mostly. Seventy percent sure, at least.

“Is that what you call it?”

Peter giggles– that low bubbling chuckle that makes my insides melt. “Oh, Juno. When I’m ready for sex, you’ll know it.”
Movie Night

Chapter Summary

Rita hosts a movie marathon

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
"You. Me. Movie Marathon. Grab all the snacks you can carry." Jupeter marathon the major book to movie series of their time (in the same vein of Harry Potter and the Hobbit/LoTR series)

Rated G

It wasn’t Peter’s fault. He didn’t know exactly what he was getting himself into. At the time, all he knew was that Rita’s birthday was coming up, and it was only natural to let her arrange the day’s schedule to her liking. Juno wasn’t around at the time to stop him—or to explain that her plans for disarming a bomb had been to have it delivered to his office. They spent the next week compiling emergency funds, weapons, medical supplies, and lists of people who owed them favors, just in case.

But here’s the thing about playing a figurative game of Mercurian Roulette: sometimes you put the laser to your head and it’s only set to stun. This time, they got lucky. Of all the things Rita could have picked for her big birthday blowout, she chose a twenty-six hour marathon of her latest obsession.

Which was how they found themselves packed into Rita’s apartment with her book club, her aunt, and half of HCPD’s support staff. Bowls of snacks migrated from lap to lap before they returned to the kitchen for refills. Juno had lost count of how many varieties of alcohol had made the rounds; all he knew was that he’d sampled most of them, and he still wasn’t drunk enough to follow the plot of this show.

He’d spent the last hour with his head pillowed on Peter’s lap, offering insightful-sounding hums whenever Peter started analyzing the motivations of the characters. Personally, Juno didn’t think the actors were really skilled enough to intend all the things Peter gleaned from the little flicks of their eyes and the slight fidgeting of their hands. But he seemed to be enjoying it, and so far his interpretations had blown Rita’s mind two or three times per episode, so she was definitely having fun.

Juno couldn’t remember the last time he’d been around so many people who knew his name and actually had a good time. All they wanted was for him to pass along the snack bowl and tissue boxes when they came his way. And that was it. No expectations. No blame. No way to possibly fail them. Just a good time to be had by all. They didn’t even mind when he and Peter disappeared into the kitchen and wound up making out on the counter; one of the HCPD receptionists walked in on them, but she only giggled, winked, and retreated back to the couch without further interference.
By morning, a half dozen secretaries were spooning under a mound of blankets. Four more were draped over the couch in the kind of repose that you only ever see in renaissance paintings. Juno was sandwiched between Peter on one side and Rita on the other, both of them hugging him so tightly you might think they were fighting over him, if you didn’t notice the popcorn bowl tipped over Rita’s head like a helmet, or the line of drool escaping the corner of Peter’s mouth.

It was kind of funny: half-delirious and half-drunk, Juno was finally starting to catch on to the convoluted plot of the show. And now that he could figure it out, it wasn’t half bad.

Maybe they could get together and pick up where they’d left off, and do this all again sometime.
“Your shirt,” he says.

To which I counter, “Your pants.”

“As much as I admire your ambition, Juno, I’m afraid that would cut to the chase entirely too quickly. Pass.”

It’s infamously the most complicated game in the galaxy, which means it’s inevitably going to come up again sometime in my line of work. So it only makes sense to have Peter teach me how to play Rangian Street Poker.

It’s not just the cards or the rules (god, all the rules). Half the game revolves around questions. And there may be a lot of things I want to know about Peter, but a card game isn’t the way a lady should learn his partner’s secrets.

So we’re changing the rules a bit.

“Alright,” I say. “Take off your tie.”

“Your left sock,” he counters.

“That sounds fair. I accept.”

The table is stacked with hundreds of cards— not the thousands that should be played in a real game, but I’m still learning. The cards create a map, or they would, if there was any sense of order to them. It’s up to the players to create that order from the chaos. Water can only flow northward, plants can only grow south and east, and playing certain cards allow the player to change the direction of the map.

The goal is to play as much as you can until you run out of legal moves. The fewer cards in your hand at the end, the higher your score. Or… something like that.

Honestly, there are so many rules that I can’t keep any of them straight, but that doesn’t stop Peter from trying.
“No, that’s illegal. Water can only flow north.”
“Another illegal move. You need to have plants in an adjacent space before you can introduce herbivores.”
“Reveal– and now you let me see your hand. Not a bad hand, in fact. Unfortunately, mine is better. Your sock, if you would.”

It’s frustrating as hell, but I’m starting to catch on.

“Play another round?” I ask.

“Alright. This time, how about…” He pretends to think hard. “Your right sock.”

“Fine. Your ear cuff.”

“Then let’s play.”

It goes on

“Very good, Juno– now with that card, you can change the orientation of the map.”
“Ah ah! Plants can only grow south or east.”
“A predator! An excellent move, Juno.”

And off comes his ear cuff.

Next comes my jacket. His vest. My suspenders. I go out of my way to make him take off his socks before his shoes, just to be cute.

The rounds are moving faster now that there’s less need of explanations, but it’s still taking us forever. We started this game early in the afternoon, and it’s well past midnight.

“You want to call it a night?” I ask.

His expression is sly. “Why? You aren’t afraid you’ll lose, are you?”

Fine. “Your pants.”

“Your shirt,” he counters delicately. But something’s changed. He plays more aggressively, stops calling out my bad moves and sticks to just the illegal ones. He still goes slowly enough that I can understand the hows and whys of his moves, but not enough that I can counter them. With every hand, I slough off my holster, my garters, my belt, my slacks, until I’m sitting there, wearing nothing at all except my boxers and my eyepatch, watching him tear yet another hand in half.

“Your win,” I say, but I don’t have to. There’s a glee in his eyes. “You know, winning is great and all, but I’m still just a beginner. It’s not all that exciting that you beat me.”

“On the contrary,” he purrs, sidling around the table to sit beside me. “I’d say there’s plenty to be excited about. Now that I’ve won, I intend to claim my prize.”
The many exes of Peter Nureyev

Chapter Summary

A sampling of the people Nureyev has loved before he met Juno

Chapter Notes

junonureyev asked:
Prompt: what are Peter's exes like? Did he tell them his real name, too?

--
Each of the exes corresponds to a constellation in the Greek zodiac. But I was tired and had a very long day of work the next day, so I left two constellations out. Can you guess who's who, and who's not here?
--

Rated T

Juno isn’t the first person Peter has pursued. He’s a romantic at heart. Also, people are just so much more eager to please when they’re in love with him.

Life is so much easier when you’re charming.

He met Okul on the cloud city of Deneb Three: an enforcer for the Broken Horn who dreamed of running the syndicate himself someday. Peter stole trinkets and information to help him get ahead, and staged prominent failures to discredit the people standing in his way. The sex was excellent, if terrifying– even tied to the bed, Okul always seemed just a hair’s breadth from losing control, and all the ropes and chains on Deneb Three couldn’t convince Peter that he would be safe if that happened.

On the day Okul killed the leader of the Broken Horn and took his place, Peter left and never looked back. Stored in Peter’s luggage were artifacts that were the artifacts he’d come to steal, but they were worthless now. No museum would buy something covered in so much blood.

He met Yu-Lin in the Ancha system, less than a year after leaving Brahma, and to this day he swears the boy was the most beautiful human being he’s ever met. He possessed the kind of radiance that the rich and powerful can only hope to imitate, and moved with a fluid grace that made the rest of the world seem to grind to a halt around him.

Being with him was like staring at the sun: so bright and brilliant you’ll go blind if you don’t look away. So Peter looked away, and he never looked back.
Pierre was a ship’s captain on the churning seas of Al Rischa. The two of them spent a season together on that ship. During the day, Peter explored ancient shipwrecks on the sea bed; during the night, he did his explorations in the captain’s bed.

On the planet Mulapin, under the watchful eyes of the Mesarthim stars, there are dozens of paintings of Peter Nureyev. You wouldn’t know it, looking at them. In each of them, his head is turned away or his face is obscured.

“Oh, please, Hamal, humor me. You’ll go down in history for your talent with a brush. But me? I won’t be able to buy groceries without someone pointing out that they’ve seen me naked.”

But two men know. Exactly two. The artist and his model.

When Peter robbed the art gallery where Hamal held his exhibition, he made sure to leave those paintings behind (all but one– a souvenir of their time together).

He sailed across the whole of the Pleiades trying to escape Officer Ishtar Lascaux. He’s not sure which offended the good officer more– the fact that he stole the Star of Dendera, or because he stood him up on a second date to do it.

A tip to the unwise: before you sleep with a man, always make sure you know whether he has a twin.

Before you sleep with him again, make sure you have the right one.

Varro was a mortician on a ship navigating Praesepe, and a man after Peter’s own heart– he appreciated art, shared Peter’s sense of humor, and he could pick a fine wine like no man Peter had ever met before or since.

They might have had something, if Peter hadn’t been caught first. Varro helped him fake his death and smuggled him to an escape pod. Peter was the one who asked Varro to join him. He almost begged him to come along.

Maybe he should have begged. Or stayed behind to face his sentence. Or… something.

Sometimes he still lies awake and thinks about what might have been.

Aryo was born in the Rasalas system, and that’s where he died.

He was a proud man. Proud of his planet, and all the wonderful things they created. Proud of his unit, and how they could never be divided. Proud of himself.

The night before he deployed, he told Peter not to worry. He was unbeatable, his aim impeccable, his body armor impenetrable.

He was wrong on all counts.

Icarius loved his daughter more than anything. Only once in his life had Peter met another father even half as proud of his kid.
And Peter had murdered him.

Their breakup was supposed to be standard “it’s not you, it’s me” fare—instead, it ended with Peter babbling that he was a murderer and a thief, that the whole relationship had been one elaborate con to get the other man’s security access, that he was using him.

And maybe it wouldn’t have hurt so much if Icarius hadn’t taken him into his arms when it was all over and kissed his forehead.

“It’s alright,” he said. “I forgive you.”

But forgiving is not the same as forgetting. And no matter how much Icarius loved him, he loved his daughter more—too much to let her sleep in the same house as a killer.

Manetho Serpens was one of the few Shamash on Zubenelgenubi who could be bribed with sex in exchange for a lesser sentence.

Unfortunately, that meant he never had to bother with trifles like being attentive or interesting during sex— or even halfway decent.

Prison would have been less embarrassing.
Juno treasures the little trinkets Peter leaves behind.

whoopsiedaisiedoo asked:
fluff prompt for jupiter + wearing each other's clothes

- I picture Juno and Peter as having some pretty dramatically different body types, so most of the clothes they could potentially share probably wouldn’t fit comfortably on the other. I imagine a shirt that would fit Juno would be way too wide and too short for Peter, and Peter wouldn’t dream of wearing clothes that weren’t custom tailored, so good luck having them fit anyone else.

This was the result of that thought process.
-

Rated G

It’s bound to happen, really. Peter’s never really on Mars long enough to justify getting an apartment of his own, and Juno points out that there’s no point in getting a hotel room when he’s got an apartment with a bed big enough for two. So it’s decided: when Peter’s in Hyperion City, he lives in Juno’s apartment and sleeps in Juno’s bed.

The periods between his visits feel a little surreal at first. One minute Peter’s presence can be felt in every facet of his life; the next, he’s on a spaceship to the next beautiful world, leaving behind so few traces that Juno has to wonder if he dreamed those few sweet days with his thief.

Then come the socks.

Juno puts them on without thinking one morning. By the time he arrives at the office, he has the feeling something’s off. By lunch, he’s narrowed it down to his socks. By the time he trudges home at night, he’s figured it out: they feel wrong because they’re not the rough synth-wool he always buys, but a fine genetically engineered cotton blend that’s so comfortable on his feet that it’s almost unnerving. He would never spend money on socks like that.

Peter, though…

He makes sure to wash them carefully and attempts to fold them nicely three or four times before he gives up. He clears out a junk drawer from his dresser— one of several in his apartment with a false bottom— and sets the socks inside. And when he starts doubting that the love of his life was just an elaborate fantasy, he goes back to that drawer and touches those socks, just to remind himself that
Peter Nureyev is real.

He gives them back, of course, the next time that Peter comes to Mars. But when Peter leaves again a week later, he doesn’t leave the drawer empty. In its place are a compass, a handful of passports, a sweater that he claims is perfectly suited to the Martian climate, and an ear cuff with a dangling chain that’s so very Peter that it makes his heart hurt.

Juno wears that ear cuff to work more than a few times, though he leaves it behind when he thinks he’s going to do anything dangerous. He wouldn’t dream of damaging it.

The next time Peter comes back, he leaves behind little trinkets from resorts on Eris and Io. Juno cleans up the dusty bookshelves, just to give the little novelties a place to be.

Not long after that, Juno finds an elegant suit lurking in the corner of his closet, too tall and slender for Juno to have ever bought it for himself. Wrapped in its dry cleaners’ plastic, it still smells of Peter’s cologne. On dark nights when Juno feels loneliness pushing in on him from all sides, he sneaks into the closet and lets himself breathe in that cologne and pretend his thief isn’t all those lightyears away.
Take my coat

Chapter Summary

It's awfully hard moving through a crowd in a nice neighborhood when you're covered in blood.

Chapter Notes

This is a second fill for WhoopsieDaisieDoo's "wearing each other's clothes" prompt.

Rated PG (T for blood?)

You know the nice thing about guns? When you’ve got aim like mine, you don’t have to get very close to make them effective. No blood splatter, no gore, no inconvenient burn marks. Even when somebody does get in close enough to rough me up, it’s no skin off my nose— not usually, anyway. Most of my clothes come out of thrift shops and bargain bins, so they look better with a few stains and tears in them. And if they’re past saving, I can throw them out and not be out more than a few creds, tops.

Peter’s not like that, though. See, he’s a tailor’s wet dream and a dry-cleaner’s nightmare. Because he doesn’t get rough, baggy clothes meant for a brawl. Oh no, he has the nice stuff, all imported materials and hand-stitched trim. And of course, his weapon of choice is a knife.

I suppose you could get messier if you really tried at it, but ball peen hammers have pretty much fallen out of style in Hyperion City.

All of this might not even be a problem (except maybe for the next dry cleaner who has to figure out how to get blood and gray matter out of a three-piece suit), except we’re in Uptown, a private school fair seems to have materialized in the city block around my car, and Peter’s clothes are currently splattered with enough blood to fill three bodies. Any other part of the city, most people would have kept their heads down and not said anything, but I can spot at least four police chiefs at this event, and they won’t want anyone obviously guilty of manslaughter within spitting distance of their kids.

I tug Peter aside into what passes for an alley in this side of town— though unlike the ones where I’m from, it’s got a fancy cast-iron arch over its entrance and a some decorative shrubs on either side, rather than the standard dumpster and drunks.

Without another word, I whip off my coat and hand it to Peter. “Put this on, will you?”

It’s a stab-resistant duster, just about as effective for keeping off unfriendly fists and knives as it is for rain and sand. On me, it almost brushes the ground; on Peter, it only goes halfway down his shins, and it’s too broad for him in the shoulder. But the coat is meant to look bulky on anybody, so most people won’t notice unless they look closely, unlike the blood stains it’ll be covering up.

Really, did he have to wear white today?
When he puts it on, he looks… actually, he looks a little bit ridiculous. I don’t think I’ve ever seen him wearing something that wasn’t custom tailored, let alone something that fits so very badly. But awkwardly wrapped up in that coat, with his perfect hair all disheveled, he looks so deceptively helpless that my heart just about melts. He’s my knight in stolen armor, but I can’t help but remember the boy he was on Brahma, small and gangly and bright-eyed despite everything he’s seen.

He tilts his head, intrigued. “Juno?”

“Just checking for blood,” I say quickly. An obvious lie, and one he won’t forget by the time we get back to the office. “We should be fine. Come on, let’s get to the car already.”
Peter isn’t too proud to admit he’s a bit miffed to find Juno gone. After all, he did cross half the galaxy to see his Detective. The least he could do is be here.

Still, he supposes it isn’t entirely Juno’s fault. He did drop in without calling ahead, after all. And according to Rita, he had a good reason to be out.

“He’s out on a case with another private eye friend of his,” she told him. “Alessandra Strong. She said it was an emergency—something about the guy who does the weather. But he’s got his coms on him. You want I should call him?”

“Thank you, but that won’t be necessary, Rita.” He does love the look on Juno’s face when he’s caught by surprise. And besides, an emergency case sounds like it might be exciting. “But tell me, you wouldn’t happen to know where he is right now?”

Well.

He’s found Juno.

The woman he’s with is broad-shouldered, well-muscled, and walks with a confidence that would make lesser mortals either swoon or stand at attention. Or both, if you happen to have a weakness for heroic types.

And Peter can’t think of any scrappy Detectives who might count heroism among their turn-ons, can he? Second only to danger?

At least he has the decency to be coy about it. Her gaze lingers on him more than his does on her. When she takes his hand, he always pulls away quickly, albeit reluctantly. But the banter they share is too comfortable to be… well, comfortable.

It’s the two of them against a throng of animatronic puppets; they’ve got it handled for the time being, and so Peter watches them from an adjacent rooftop.
They work well together. Fight well together. She’s well-trained in combat (military, he could spot it from a mile away), and her fists pack more of a punch, but Juno never ceases to impress him with his marksmanship.

A particularly good shot drops an awning on top of the last three puppets, and they flail for a moment, their sensors in disarray, before Strong (and Juno has the gall to call his names unsubtle!) knocks them off their feet and smashes their circuits.

Juno laughs triumphantly. He’s high on adrenaline, his eye bright, his face flushed with exertion, grinning even when he slips on a scrap of awning and stumbles right into Strong.

It’s like a scene from one of Rita’s dramas: she catches him and eases him back onto his feet, her hands linger on his shoulders, they gaze into each other’s eyes. And then Strong leans in for a kiss.

Peter’s off the roof in a heartbeat. He doesn’t even know what he’s going to do to Strong, only that it’s going to start with getting her off Juno and end with leaving her in a ditch somewhere, and then–

“I guess you were right,” she sighs, stepping back again.

“I told you,” Juno says, and then turns around. “Hey, Rex. Fancy seeing you here.”

“Juno.” Peter doesn’t bother to hide his agitation, but he does at least tuck his knife into the compartment in his sleeve before either of them can spot it in his hand. “Don’t tell me I was interrupting something.”

“Only a little bet,” Juno says. “We noticed we had a tail. Alessandra put good money on it being Miles Crawford. In which case, she was thinking of shooting you.”

“I was just going to stun him,” she says defensively.

“While he was standing on a rooftop.” Juno casts a sheepish glance back at Peter. “One way to find out whether or not it was you. Pay up,” he adds to Strong.

“Fine,” she sighs, pulling out her phone and typing rapidly. “The copies of my files are in your inbox. Happy now?”

“Thrilled, actually. Alessandra’s been investigating a string of thefts,” Juno explains. “High end stuff. Art and artifacts mostly.”

“Is she now?” Peter’s miffed enough that it takes him a moment to follow.

“She thinks it might be related to the last case we worked together. The one with the Ancient Martian pill.”

Finally Peter’s mind catches up with him. “Yes, you’ve told me about that one.” Or rather, he didn’t have to, because Peter was there. Likely, he was there for all of the crimes she was investigating.

“The thefts are too spread out be the work of one person,” Juno continues. “I’m thinking there might be a new crime ring. You heard of anything like that in Dark Matters, Rex?”

“I suppose I can look into it,” Peter says, and he falls a little more in love with his Detective.
Peter's Accent

Chapter Summary

You don't live twenty years on a planet without developing an accent.

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
The words "brahmese accent" and "dead sexy" keep rolling around in my head, and I am... intrigued, to say the least. Is there a prompt to be had there?

Rated PG

Juno doesn’t even remember what they were fighting about. It seemed important a few minutes ago—important enough that they were both shouting at each other.

Which is how Juno heard it. Most days it’s completely hidden, thanks to an attention to detail and a skilled tongue. But when Peter’s angry, it bubbles to the surface: a Brahmese accent spiced with half a dozen other languages and dialects. His vowels get rounder, his consonants curl and trill, his words lilt and dive into an odd melody.

Even when he’s shouting, the sound of it is utterly hypnotic.

Which is why the reason behind the fight has slipped his mind so completely.

“Say that again?” he asks, feeling a little dazed.

“What?”

“What you were saying. It sounded nice.”

“Then I think you missed the point of the message,” Peter says, irate. But the accent still hasn’t faded, and the sound of his voice is sending pleasant goosebumps down Juno’s spine.

“I think I did.” All the blood may have rushed south of his brain, because the next words out of his mouth are, “Did anybody ever tell you that your accent is pure sex?”

That probably wasn’t the wisest thing to tell him. Or maybe it was.

Peter has an unfair advantage over him now: their fights can’t go on very long if Juno’s too turned on to dig his heels in– and the promise of a good ending takes away most of his incentive to be stubborn.

But that’s not the only thing that’s changed.

After all, the accent doesn’t only come out when he’s angry.
Chapter Summary

Alessandra tries to help Juno’s drinking problem by giving him some company.

Chapter Notes

gavrielsaporta asked:
Fic prompt: Juno and Alessandra work a case together and get drunk together afterwards (I like to think that they get to be pretty good friends after prince of mars)
Maybe T for alcohol abuse?

Juno drinks too much.

He insists he doesn’t have a problem– he doesn’t ever get blackout drunk until after hours, and he keeps his daydrinking down to the point that it doesn’t impede his ability to do his job. But Alessandra knows the bottle is going to be the death of him, assuming somebody else doesn’t do him in first.

She suspects that’s kind of the point.

She also suspects that getting on his case about his drinking not-quite-problem is going to accomplish nothing except to push him away, and right now, isolation could be the one thing even more dangerous to him than the bottle.

So she does something stupid: she joins him.

It’s not always, usually after they’ve done cases together. She makes a point to keep her consumption moderate, and to keep a steady supply of food and water at their table. But more than anything else, she keeps him talking.

If there’s one thing that might help him, it’s that.

It usually takes a few (too many) drinks before he’s numb enough to open up. But eventually he starts talking, usually in a few bits and pieces.

Tonight he’s almost completely shitfaced before the words start to flow.

“There’s this… a guy,” he mumbles, rotating his drink on the table. “I told you about him, I think. Sorta.”

“Which one?” she asks.

“I don’t remember– did I tell you his name? Which name?” He shakes his head. “He’s tall. Pretty. Smells real nice.”
Just because she hasn’t been drinking as much as Juno doesn’t mean she’s sober enough to avoid a flash of jealousy. “Prettier than me?”

“Lessandra, you’re beautiful. And you’ve got good hands. Real good hands.” He pats them for a moment, apparently lost in his thoughts. “Anyway, it doesn’t matter. He’s gone. Never coming back.”

“Fuck him,” she says. “He doesn’t deserve you.” She doesn’t understand. It’s supposed to be a good thing. Solidarity and all that.

Instead Juno pulls his hand back and seems to fold into himself. “No, you don’t get it. I don’t deserve him. That’s the problem. Don’t deserve you, either, but you’re still here. I don’t know why.”

“I’m not going anywhere,” she says. “I like you too much.”

“But he loved me. He came back to the tomb for me. He let me into his head. He told me his name. And then I… I…” Abruptly he reaches for the bottle. His hands are shaking as he fills the glass, and he downs the whole thing in a single swallow. He tries to do it again, but she grabs the bottle out of his hand, refilling her own glass to empty the bottle.

He stares miserably at it, and she takes a drink, just to get it out of his reach.

“He loved me,” he says. “Now he hates me. And that’s how it should be. He should hate me. You probably should, too.” And then he looks up at her, his eye big and round with a sudden flash of horror. His voice goes small and soft, like he’s afraid of the answer. “Do you hate me too?”

Just looking at him breaks her heart into pieces. So she doesn’t look at him anymore. She grabs him by the shoulders and pulls him into her chest.

“No, Juno. Of course I don’t hate you.”
Lightweight

Chapter Summary

Peter really can't keep up with Juno's drinking habits

Chapter Notes

A while back I made a post analyzing what we know about Juno and Peter's body types and how grateful I was that Peter was canonically unable to pick up Juno, because carrying a grown man is hard.

Wendy-Comet's takeaway was that based on my analysis, Juno can totally lift Peter, and it should be put into fanfic ASAP.

So I did.

T for alcohol abuse

I never thought I’d see the day, but here it is: the moment when Peter Nureyev is finally disheveled.

You don’t understand how rare this moment is. I’ve seen the guy beaten up by Triad goons. I’ve seen him tortured by Miasma’s assistants. I’ve seen him woken up by an attempted assassination. Somehow he always manages to look like he’s in total control of the situation, like this was all part of his grand scheme.

Apparently, the trick to seeing him all ruffled is to get him drunk first.

Scratch that– apparently the trick is to convince him he can keep up with me when I’m drinking.

I told him it was a bad idea when we started. And then I told him it was a bad idea after the first four shots. And then I told him again when I dragged his sorry ass out from under the table, because apparently he’s too shit-faced to balance on a chair anymore.

“Anybody ever tell you that you’re a lightweight?” I have to keep my arm around his shoulders to keep him from wandering off. But he flashes a grin that’s practically trying to slide off his face.

“Did anybody ever tell you that you’re impossible?” At least, that’s what I think he said. What’s impossible is trying to understand a word he’s saying. His words are so slurred that they’d be hard to parse if he was speaking fluent Martian, but apparently he lost the ability to hide his accent around the same time he lost the ability to walk in a straight line.

To be fair, it’s a Brahmese accent, and it would be dead sexy if he was sober.

He seems to think so, too.

“Juno,” he says, sliding up against me. “Juno Juno Juno. Such a pretty name for such a pretty dame.”
He giggles, petting my face with uncoordinated fingers. “If you were an art, you’d be a masterpiece. I’d steal you in a… a heartbeat. Not to sell you, either. Just so I could look at you.” He looks concerned. Or maybe he’s just feeling the need to puke. “If you were a… an art, I mean. Not a person.”

“Yes, thank you for clarifying,” I say patiently.

The nauseous look turns into an expression of determination. “You’re good at being a person,” he says earnestly. So earnest, in fact, that he’s trying to walk sideways so he can keep looking at me. It doesn’t seem to have occurred to him to turn his head. “You care so much. Makes me want to care, too. Again. Also. You make me better. All… heroic!” The last word is drawn into a yelp as he stumbles.

I catch him before he hits the floor. After all, it’s not like I wasn’t expecting this. They call it falling-down drunk for a reason.

He giggles again, cradled like that in my arms. “Look at you, Juno. My hero.”

I try to put him back on his feet, but he seems to have forgotten how to stand upright, let alone walk.

“You know what? This isn’t working,” I inform him. And before he can argue with me, I crouch down and angle his body across mine. When I stand up again, Peter Nureyev is thrown over my shoulders like one of those old-fashioned fur shawls.

“Oh! Juno!” Peter, for his part, seems to think this is all either sexy or hilarious. It’s hard to tell.

“Here’s what we’re going to do,” I tell him. “I’m taking you back to my apartment. You’re going to drink as much water as you can handle, and I’m going to tuck you into bed, and then you’re going to sleep until next year. But first I’m going to take a video of you so I can show you exactly why you’re not allowed to drink this much ever again. Do you understand me?”

He just giggles and nuzzles my bicep. “My hero.”
Chapter Summary

Peter gets to see the video Juno made while he was drunk.

Chapter Notes

vfdbeatrice asked:
Not necessarily a fic rec but I'm super curious how you'd imagine Nureyev reacting to the video of him shit-faced re: the unprompted fic about Peter being disheveled?

Rated G

It’s a little bit like watching an accident—the really grotesque variety, usually involving multiple motorized vehicles. No matter how awful it gets, you just can’t look away, because you somehow know it’s going to get worse.

Even after the video has been paused, it takes a few moments to pry my eyes off the screen. When I finally do, I stare plaintively at my detective.

“I knew you weren’t above blackmail, Juno, but this is cruel.”

He watches me, silent and utterly unmoved.

“Very well.” I steel myself for the worst. “What is it that you want?”

He leans forward, all business. It’s no wonder the Kanagawas briefly adopted him as one of their own. He can be terrifying when he wants to be.

“First of all, you’re never going to drink that hard again,” he says evenly.

He didn’t have to go to all the trouble to convince me of that. It was bad enough living through all of Juno’s dirty looks as he scrubbed vomit out of the carpet, to say nothing of the hangover.

Still, it’s hard not to be petulant. “It’s hardly fair to impose limits on my drinking when you—” His glare is enough to stop me mid-sentence. “You said ‘first of all’; that implies you have other demands?”

He jerks his head to the stains on the carpet. “We’re replacing that. With hardwood. No discussion.”

I lower my eyelids. “Really, Juno, if it’s hard wood you’re wanting, then—”

Vindictively he thumbs the screen, and my past self resumes giggling shrilly while Juno tries to wrestle him out of a soiled shirt.

The video pauses again.
“Was that really necessary?” I ask. “Fine. Hardwood floors. That will be expensive, you know. Importing wood from Earth isn’t cheap.”

That actually manages to catch Juno by surprise, and his tone softens. “I meant the style, not the actual wood. Synthetic is fine.”

“Synthetic is fine, I’m sure,” I purr, leaning in again. “But what is it that you actually want, Juno?” Embarrassing videos aside, it really is gratifying to see him wanting and choosing things for his own comfort, rather than just accepting whatever scraps are thrown his way.

He hesitates, and I wonder if I’ve laid it on too thick. But he pushes through, pointing at the walls. The paint is thin and faded where he had to scrub… on second thought, I’d rather not think too deeply about just what he had to scrub off the walls.

“We’re repainting.”

“The wall?”

“The entire apartment. And you’re going to stick around until the entire thing’s finished, trim and all.”

“And if I do,” I say with more gravity than I feel. “The video?”

“Never sees the light of day.”

Well, that’s a relief.

It takes a bit of effort not to giggle. If he wanted to spend more time with me, he only had to ask.
Juno and Peter spend the night together at the Oasis resort

biomechatronic asked:
So, uh, bikinis make me think of lingerie. Do with that what you will.

However since silky negligee does nothing for me—on men, women, or otherwise—I’m stretching the definition of the term a bit.

If you ever need a pick-me-up, look up 1920s men’s underwear.

Juno hangs up the phone.

It’s late; Rita won’t get the message until morning at least, and by then, he’ll probably be on the Utgard Express. Or dead. Or… who even knows?

It helps, though, knowing he at least got to reach out to her one last time, whatever happens next. It feels a little bit like closure.

When he steps into the bedroom, Nureyev is already in bed. The light’s out, but the light pollution that surrounds the resort filters in with a dim red glow, just barely enough to see by.

Nureyev is already lying in bed, his breathing even and shallow with sleep. The long, slender lines of his body are stretched across the far edge of the mattress, leaving the rest open for Juno’s use.

It’s… considerate, he supposes, but the thought still leaves him uncomfortable.

If there was a couch, or a second bed, or even a cot, Juno would be bunking there for the night. But this is a honeymoon suite, and they were masquerading as a married couple, so no such luck. There’s the floor, he supposes, but he’ll need to be alert and fully able in the morning, and that’s not going to happen if he messes his back up tonight sleeping on it funny. It’s not just his own life at stake, either—failure tomorrow could mean letting a maniac get her hands on a superweapon, and there’s no telling how much damage she could do. He’s not going to risk letting that happen just because he’s too stubborn to share a bed.

So out of duty (and nothing else), he slips between the sheets and settles in for the night.

The mattress is softer than he’s used to sleeping in, and the sheets are such a high thread count that they feel unnaturally smooth and silky, without pills or threadbare patches or coarse material to be felt. It’s damn unnatural.
The one thing that doesn’t bother him is how damn cold the room is— but he seems to be the only one unaffected. Nureyev is inching closer, slowly gravitating toward the nearest source of heat.

Juno scoots out of reach, careful not to wake him, but their combined movements send the blanket sliding down Nureyev’s body.

It’s strange— Juno saw Nureyev start to strip down earlier, he saw his suit hanging up when he entered the bedroom, but it didn’t register until just this second that Nureyev is in his underwear.

It’s nice underwear, too— at least, it looks nice. One of those sleek one-piece numbers that gives suits such nice clean lines. There’s just enough light to make out pinstripes on the pale fabric. It’s… cotton, maybe?

He lets his fingertips drift over the thief’s chest, light enough that Nureyev won’t wake.

Not cotton. Bamboo fibers. And the garment has been worn in until it’s at that perfect softness that only comes with age. Here on this resort, surrounded by luxuries so foreign they might as well be alien, the texture of Nureyev’s clothes almost make him feel at home.

The thief shivers in his sleep, and it’s only then that Juno remembers the cold. He pulls the blanket up to Nureyev’s chin and tucks it around him. But just as he’s laying down himself, Nureyev rolls into him, his back against Juno’s chest.

He’s still cold, Juno suspects. Still unconsciously seeking out body heat.

So Juno tucks himself closer against Nureyev’s back, and wraps his arm around the thief’s waist, his fingertips skating across the fabric between them until he falls asleep.

Meanwhile, Nureyev grins without altering his breathing or opening his eyes. It wouldn’t do to wake Juno after the detective spent so much time getting to sleep. Besides, he’s always slept better with company.
Chapter Summary

Juno and Peter meet an old client of Juno's... at a strip club.

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
Jupeter "If you don't come up and sing with me, I will go up there and point at you. The. Whole. Time."

Rated T for strip clubs.

Peter knows the Reynards and Vixens of the Valley well enough. Not by name– not all of them– because this sort of work is hard on the body, and turnover is high for those not cut out to do this in the long term. But he sees to it that even the experienced dancers don’t remember his face. In this case, he strives to make himself forgettable, sitting just deep enough in the shadows to avoid attention without lurking, and tipping just enough to be unremarkable. In a room where dozens of eager customers are vying for the dancers’ attention, he fades into the background with practiced ease.

That’s usually the case, anyway.

But this time is different. Because seeing Valles Vicky comes with certain rules: if you talk to the Lady herself, you’ve got to pay for a dance. Or someone in your party does, anyway. And in this case, that someone is Juno.

It seems like a charming compromise, really. Juno couldn’t treat himself if you held a gun to his head, but he’s more than willing to throw himself on a sword. And if that terrible sacrifice happens to be sitting through a lap dance from a beautiful woman while Peter conducts business, Juno is just noble enough to take one for the team. And if Juno needs to release some pent up tension afterward, well, Peter would be delighted to oblige him.

He’s quite pleased with this whole arrangement– at least, until the two of them walk in through the front door.

Because while Peter’s made a habit of remaining invisible, Juno has decidedly not.

Within sixty seconds, four different dancers have winked at him. A fifth blows him a kiss. One, passing them as he makes his rounds between tables, trails a hand down Juno’s arm.

“Hello again, Juno,” he purrs, and then he’s gone.

Another well-oiled dancer approaches and flashes a smile that’s perhaps too friendly for his own good.

Perhaps that wouldn’t bother Peter quite so much if the next dancer to approach them didn’t throw
herself at Juno—quite literally. One moment she’s across the room, and the next she’s right on top of
them, her arms thrown around his Detective like they’re bosom friends.

There’s quite a lot of bosom in that friendship.

“Oh, Juno, it’s so great to see you again!” she cries. “Didja miss me as much as I missed you?”

Peter’s smile feels suddenly unnatural on his face. “A friend of yours, Juno?”

“More than a friend,” she says, smoothing down Juno’s hair with unearned intimacy. “He saved me,
you know. Juno here’s a real hero.”

“Candy was a client of mine,” Juno explains.

“Was she now?”

“And who’s this?” Candy asks, still hanging off Juno as she turns to Peter. “A friend of yours,
Juno?”

“My partner, actually—”

“Oh, I didn’t know you were expanding the business! Are you here to see the boss?”

Peter’s sure her misinterpretation was entirely innocent, but it still sets his teeth on edge. When he
smiles, it’s with all of his very sharp teeth. “As a matter of fact, we are. If you would be so kind as to
take me to Valles Vicky…”

This suggestion, at least, isn’t so easily misconstrued. The dancer jiggles off into the darkened club. When she releases Juno, his clothes are saturated with second-hand sparkles.

“My. She does like her glitter,” Peter says primly.

“Candy? Yeah. She’s a sweet girl.”

“As the name implies.” He smooths his tone before it can rise into something too sharp. “I didn’t
realize you and the staff here were so well acquainted.”

“Yeah. Spent some time here, a while back.” Juno has that look on his face that says he’s losing
himself to his thoughts. Perhaps it’s better if he stayed lost for the duration of his visit. Especially
because Candy is coming back, another scantily-clad man beside her.

“If you come this way,” she says to Peter. Juno takes a step to follow, but he doesn’t get far before
Candy tugs him aside.

“Not you, Juno,” she says. “Boss says I’m supposed to keep you company.”

Really? Her?

“Right this way, sir,” says the man in the bow tie (and little else). “Unless you’ve changed your
mind?”

But Peter’s attention is on the other dancer. “I’ve still got a few minutes before I’m on stage,” she
says. “Join me for a little duet?”

In any other frame of mind, he might admit she has a lovely giggle. Perfectly rehearsed for maximum
impact on its listener. In his present state, though, it grates his every nerve.
“Sir?” the maitre’d repeats. He’s losing patience. And Peter didn’t set up this meeting on a whim.

“Coming,” he says, forcing his tone pleasant and calm. He trusts his Detective, after all. He has nothing at all to worry about.

Still, he’ll make this quick.

The business is arranged and settled in record time, and Peter hurries through the club as quickly as possible without drawing undue attention.

He gets to the stage before Candy has finished her routine. She’s in the midst of a song, performing some jazzy number to a small crowd of patrons. The size of her audience might make Peter feel slightly better if she paid the slightest amount of attention to any of them. But no, her eyes are locked on Juno. Every twist and turn and grinding gyration is obviously, infuriatingly directed at him.

And Juno’s looking at her, too. There’s interest in his eyes.

Of course there is, says the rational part of Peter’s mind. Because this is a strip club, and people don’t exactly come to places like this for the quality of the drinks. You brought him here to watch her dance, and now he’s doing exactly what you wanted him to.

The logic of it doesn’t stop his blood from boiling in his veins.

He approaches Juno from behind, sliding his arms around his Detective’s shoulders before he announces his presence. There’s a dark rush of satisfaction at the dancer’s put-out expression.

Juno looks up. “That was fast.”

“I was reminded that I have other plans for the evening.” There’s perhaps a bit more force than necessary in the statement. Perhaps his smile contains a few too many teeth. Perhaps those teeth nip skin when he bends to whisper into Juno’s ear. “Care to join me, Juno? I’ll make it worth your while.”

He notes with something not unlike delight that Candy huffs at Juno’s pleasant shudder. All that hard work she put into seducing him, and Peter can undo it with a little touch.

Tonight, he’s going to pin Juno to the bed and fuck him so hard he forgets his own name, and Candy won’t even be a distant memory.
Sharp teeth

Chapter Summary

Lazy morning sex, now with more biting!

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
well, I gave in, so here's a nsfw prompt- jupeter lazy morning sex? you get 10,000 bonus points for any mention of nureyev's teeth or Juno's neck or the interactions of those two things.

Rated E

Juno doesn’t know the last time he’s slept so deeply, or so well. He doesn’t remember the last time he woke up content, instead of hating the world and whatever it is that dragged him out of oblivion.

Maybe that’s because it’s usually the grating notes of his ringtone or his phone alarm, instead of delicate fingers tracing patterns across his chest. He could get used to waking up like this.

He can feel Peter against his back, one arm tucked under Juno’s head, the other wandering. Juno’s abs tense as those fingers trail below his navel, and he’s answered with a dark chuckle.

“I didn’t wake you, did I?” Peter murmurs into his ear.

“I’m not complaining.”

Peter hums appreciatively and continues drawing invisible lines across Juno’s skin. “You look so peaceful when you’re asleep. So very lovely.” His fingers are circling more sensitive parts of Juno’s anatomy. “I can barely help myself.”

Juno’s already getting hard, and there’s an answering hardness at his back. “Who says you have to?” He grinds backward into Peter’s groin, just in case he didn’t make himself clear. The effect is somewhat lessened by his subsequent yawn.

With anyone else, that might have been embarrassing, but this is Peter Nureyev. “My sweet, sleepy detective.” He leans on one arm, looming over Juno. “Shall I let you rest?”

“I could be persuaded to get up.” But Juno buries his face in his pillow instead. It’s less a contradiction and more an invitation: persuade me.

For several long moments, Peter hums tunelessly, his hands drifting over the small of Juno’s back. Then they move decidedly lower.

“I’ve found a good stretch is often quite refreshing.”
“Not usually part of my morning routine, but I’m willing to give it a try.” The retort would probably sound wittier if it wasn’t muffled with a pillow. But Juno just woke up, and they both know Peter won’t hold it against him. Besides, at the moment he’s otherwise occupied. He’s got one finger inside Juno already.

“Relax, Juno,” Peter soothes, adding lube to his efforts. “So early and already you’re so tense. But you’ve got nothing to fear, love. I won’t hurt you.”

Juno excavates his face from the pillow and glances over his shoulder from the corner of his eye. “Not even if I ask nicely?”

Peter hesitates. Even the slow, coaxing movements of his finger draw to a halt.

Juno lifts himself from the pillow for half a second, just long enough to enunciate a single word, and then buries his face again: “Please.”

Peter leans forward, his lips brushing Juno’s ear. “If that’s what you want…”

The nod is slight, but decisive. Peter lingers over him, his breath hot on Juno’s neck. Then come the teeth.

Juno jerks, his whole body tense from the burst of pleasure-pain. Then his eyes roll back, his head lolls, and he stops clenching against the intrusion. With a shaking sigh, he surrenders to Peter entirely.

“Oh Juno,” his thief whispers, his clever tongue flicking over the newest marks on Juno’s neck. “You enjoyed that, didn’t you?” He’s two fingers in now, easing him open. The stretch might be uncomfortable, but Juno barely notices, because he’s reeling from another kind of penetration altogether: sharp teeth cutting into a bare shoulder.

Juno’s back arches. His legs part. His dick throbs, and he thrusts into the mattress in an attempt at some relief. It doesn’t come. He doesn’t come. And that’s great, because Peter isn’t done with him yet.

The fingers are gone, and now he’s sliding into him, so slow that Juno can feel every centimeter.

“What do you know how magnificent you are, Juno?” His first thrust brings Juno’s mind to a halt. Nothing matters except the stretch and the burn and the feeling of being full. “Do you have any idea…”

Juno bucks backward into him, partly to satisfy that craving for more, partly to stop him from talking. Juno can’t listen to Peter praising him like that right now. He just can’t. Words like that are practically an invitation for the doubts and demons inside his head to come bursting in and dredge up all the evidence about why Juno isn’t any of the things Peter says he is, why he’s useless and awful and wrong, and he’s enjoying himself too much right now to ruin it now. Instead he fucks himself harder, rougher than he should—a punishing pace—

Sharp teeth clamp down again, this time on his untouched shoulder. The thoughts dissolve in the wake of pain that is unexpected but not unwelcome, and he lets himself go slack again.

“I know you’re excited, love,” Peter chides, pulling back just slightly. “But you’re going to hurt yourself if you keep that up.”

Dammit, doesn’t he understand that’s the entire point? “I told you—”
Another flash of teeth, more a warning nip than a proper bite. When he speaks, his tone is so dark that it turns Juno’s insides into putty. “That’s my job.”
Chapter Summary

Peter is caught by the Kanagawas

Chapter Notes

gaybreel asked:
We’ve seen several instances of Juno sacrificing himself for the sake of others. What my sadistic mind wonders is how he’d react when the shoe’s on the other foot. Y’know, someone he cares about willing to take the bullet for him, and going through with it. Bonus points if it’s his thief taking the terrible blow, and especial interest if the injury’s too grisly to be pretty.

I took some major liberties with this prompt (when do I not?), because we’ve seen almost this exact situation already play out on the podcast already when Mick threw himself to the (robotic) sharks to save Juno and Sasha in The Day That Wouldn’t Die. Based on that, we know that if there’s even the slightest opportunity for Juno to blame himself for someone else getting hurt, he totally will— to the point of completely infantilizing everybody else involved. As much as I love this being explored as an actual flaw within the podcast, I took it a little differently, so I didn't have to spend the entire fic having Juno talk over everybody else.

Rated: Between M and E. Because torture.

“Hey boss– boss! Do you remember Agent Glass?”

It’s such an innocent question that Juno’s bracing before he even answers. He’s spent the last few weeks trying to forget him. “What about him?”

“He’s on TV!” Rita maximizes the window and turns her aux screen for him to see. Only the screen isn’t showing him right this minute. This is Cecil Kanagawa’s stream, and the man can’t go five minutes without showing the world his oversculpted face. It gives Juno a few seconds to steel himself against what comes next.

It isn’t enough.

The closeup is replaced by a wider angle. Beside Cecil is a chair. The man strapped into that chair is only recognizable by the caption: Agent Rex Glass, Dark Matters.

His face is swollen, dark with bruising and drenched in blood. That perfect nose is obviously broken.
His head is bowed, his shoulders shaking with the very wheezing breath. And his hands.

Oh, God, his hands.

He can count the stumps where Peter’s fingers used to be.

Rita’s saying something, but he can’t hear her over the blood rushing in his ears. The screen looks like it’s playing at the end of a long gray tunnel. He wants to throw up. He wants to run over there and rip Cecil to pieces. He wants to feel his gun in his hand, pull the trigger, and–

and by the time he gets there, Peter will be in pieces small enough to use as fishing bait.

“Rita.” His voice is cracked and hoarse. His mouth is dry.

“Boss?” He doesn’t know why she sounds afraid. Doesn’t care.

“Can you cut the feed?”

“Well, of course I can turn it off, I just gotta click the little red ‘x’, and–”

“Not turn it off. Cut it. I want you to kill the stream. I want you to kill every single stream the Kanagawas have. And I want you to do it now.”

“Got it, boss.”

Forty-five seconds later, the screen goes black. The image it held is on a different feed– a pirate stream. He and Rita are the only ones who can see Cecil as he hears that he’s been cut off.

Thirty-seven seconds after that, he makes a phone call.

Cecil answers on the first ring, his artificial face twisted into a snarl. “Either you have good news, or you’re going to be tonight’s execution special, do you fucking understand me?”

“You touch Agent Glass again and you won’t be airing anything tonight,” Juno breathes. He can hear his own voice rising from the phone’s speaker, modulated beyond recognition. Rita’s screen is crowded with new windows, scrambling Juno’s location and credentials before they ever reach Cecil. Doesn’t stop Cecil from shouting to his technical crew to trace the call.

“Your doctors are going to patch him up, and then they’re going to take him to Hyperion General.”

“If you think– what do you mean, you can’t?” Cecil shrieks at the director’s assistant who cowers at the edge of the screen. “I said get those streams up and running!”

“Every second you waste is another second that your viewers have to wait,” Juno says. “How long before they start watching the Triad instead?”

“I’m going to fucking kill you, do you hear me? Slowly.”

Not if I kill you first. But that kind of threat means nothing to a man like Cecil Kanagawa. But Juno knows how to really hurt him. “He’s still bleeding, Cecil. If Agent Glass dies, your face will never be onscreen again.”

Cecil whirls away. “For the love of fucking– somebody clean him up already! No, not like that, you idiot!” he shouts at one of his thugs who’s loading a lethal charge into a laser. “I said bandage him. Get him to a hospital, you incompetent eel!”
“He’s headed to the hospital now. Are you fucking happy?” Cecil’s face is blotchy with rage, and it’s suddenly obvious exactly where the artificial skin begins and ends.

Juno ends the call.

He would like to feel relieved when he sees the crew gather Peter onto a stretcher and vanish offscreen. He doesn’t feel anything at all.

“Are you okay, boss?” Rita says quietly. He’s not sure how long she’s been staring at him. He knows her programs don’t need her attention now that they’re running. How long has that been? “Boss?”

“Hyperion General. Are they there yet?” Vaguely he’s aware that his voice is flatter and more inhuman in his own mouth than it was from Cecil’s speaker, but he can’t remember why he should care.

Rita eyes him uneasily, but starts up another program. “Not yet… oh, wait, there. Yup. They just checked him in.”

New windows unfold across the screen, showing the blurrier footage of hospital cameras. Juno’s eyes follow Peter as he’s transferred onto a gurney, hurried down hall after hall and into a private office.

“Should I… um… put the feeds back the way they were, boss?”

No. Let them stay dead. Let Cecil hemorrhage viewers and cash the way Peter’s hemorrhaging blood. Let him suffer. Let him writhe.

But if Juno uses up his leverage now, there’ll be nothing left to keep the Kanagawas in line later.

“Go ahead and give the fucker back his spotlight.” And then he turns around and vanishes into his office, and he drinks.

He drinks because his hands won’t stop shaking. Because it’s the only thing keeping him from getting in a car and driving to the Kanagawa mansion and ripping Cecil’s eyes out of his fucking skull. Because he knows that any second now the numbness might fade and when it does the feelings left over might just kill him.

So he drinks until he can’t see the bottle in front of him, and then he keeps going by feel until he can’t find another.

He wakes up… he’s not even sure when, slumped over his desk, his head pounding like someone took a jackhammer to his skull. Rita must have been in at some point, because there’s a blanket draped over his shoulders, and a glass of water and a bottle of aspirin a few inches from his face. There aren’t any bottles left in the office, empty or otherwise.

When he scrapes himself off his desk and staggers out of the office, Rita is waiting for him.

“Morning, boss. How was the bender?” Her voice is sharp. The light streaming through the window is like a dagger in his eyes, but he stares at it instead of her. “You wanna tell me what’s goin’ on? You know I don’t mind doin’ stuff for you that ain’t entirely legal, but that was somethin’ else. The Kanagawas are gonna be real mad when they find out who was behind it.”

“Are they going to find out?” Juno’s throat is so dry that the words are practically dust before they leave his mouth.
“Not from my code,” she says defensively. “But you tell me: are you gonna do somethin’ stupid?”

“Define stupid.”

“Uh-huh.” It’s all she says as he walks past her and puts his hand on the office door.

As it turns out, it’s all she has to say. Because the doors are suddenly locked. Something tells him the windows will be the same. And his car.

“Rita…”

“If you think I’m gonna let you walk out of here after all that, you’ve got something else coming. Are you even sober yet, Mista Steel?”

“Rita, I don’t have time for this.”

“Sure you do.” She turns around one screen to face him. A hospital security camera shows Peter, his face and hands heavily bandaged. “Agent Glass is still sedated, so it won’t do him any good for you to go see him right now—”

“What makes you think I’m going to go see him?”

“And you probably shouldn’t do that until I finish writing this program to turn off the hospital security cameras. You wouldn’t think they’d be harder to bust into than the Kanagawa feeds, but they are.”

Juno frowns. He’s not sure if it’s because of the alcohol, the hangover, or the sight of Peter, but his mind is still foggy. “Why turn off the cameras in the…” And then it hits him. “The Kanagawas will be watching for whoever comes to see him.”

“And they’ll probably be wanting revenge.”

Already his hands are curling into fists. “Let them try.”
Mouthful of Forevers

Chapter Summary

Peter examines Juno's scars.

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
Jupeter based on the Clementine von radics poem "mouthful of forevers"

For those who've never heard of this poem, I found the text here

Your life story is written on your skin: thin and pale as gossamer, raised and jagged as magma cooling in cracked earth, stained orange-red with desert dust, pitted and discolored like nothing at all so much as human skin melting under the heat of plasma. Accidental, defensive, self-inflicted, and a few that are all of the above, because that’s the kind of person you are. I trace the lines of them with my fingers, and your eye follows my every movement.

That’s another scar, though still fresh enough that I don’t dare touch it.

I can feel the tension in you as I explore the history etched across your body. You’re wary, measuring my every reaction for a sign that I won’t like what I’ll find. You think if you’re fast enough you can pull away, cover yourself, hide behind leather jackets and surly glares.

Your fist is a crosshatch of split knuckles and grazes and fight bites, more scar tissue than skin. I bend low and press a kiss into your rough palm.

Look at everything you’ve survived, Juno. Every scar marks an experience that shaped you into the you that you are now. Someday I’d like to learn the story behind each and every one.
Chapter Summary

Juno's recovery comes with happy little coping mechanisms.

Chapter Notes

onegirlntheback asked:
"We're going to have to raid the neighbors for more pillows if you want to turn this fort into a pillow castle" Jupeter

Rated G, maybe PG for language

Juno makes a habit of self-denial— but habits can be broken. Especially if your boyfriend is a connoisseur of all things luxury.

When Juno first gives in to his partner's influence, he buys the not-quite-cheapest bottle of scotch. The next time he goes shopping, he goes a step further and grabs his vice of choice from the next shelf up. He does it quickly enough that nobody else can see, and makes sure the bottle is carefully hidden under the rest of the weekly groceries, and yet Peter still beams with pride long before they reach the checkout counter.

It takes some time before he starts to indulge desires that aren’t at least partially self-destructive. But he solved a particularly tricky case, and he did it brilliantly. And dammit, he deserves something nice for his trouble.

It's only later that he realizes that the thought had sounded like Peter’s voice inside his head. The resulting feelings are so confusing that he nearly puts it back on the shelf. Instead, he walks out with his prize: a new pillow.

It’s a nicer one than he would get normally, made out of a genetically modified strain of Saturnine bamboo that’s supposed to have all sorts of interesting properties, but that’s only a secondary concern. The important part is that it’s the perfect balance of firm and fluffy, it doesn’t smell like blood and booze sweat, and it’s his.

When he next spends the night, Peter’s approval is palpable. So when Juno picks up a second, he tells himself that he’s not even doing it for himself. He’s doing it for Peter. Same thing with the third— because one of them likes hogging the pillows, and neither one can agree on who’s the guilty party. (Juno isn’t pointing any fingers, but Peter is a thief…) And then he gets a fourth, for the sake of symmetry.

The fifth and sixth pillows were on sale– two for one– and hey, who’s Juno to pass up a decent sale?

The seventh pillow isn’t even a real bed pillow— it’s just some novelty thing that looks a little bit like a rabbit, and Rita saw it and thought of him.
The eighth and ninth came back with Peter from Rigel 7, stolen from the bed of a warlord who really should have known better. And it’s about here that Juno thinks he might have a problem.

See, he really, really likes all these pillows.

He likes having his aching body surrounded by things that are warm and soft. He likes being able to elevate his limbs after a fight or a bad fall. He likes having something to bury himself under when the nights are rough and he just wants to hide from the world. They’re useful, dammit, and goddamn comfortable, too.

He doesn’t know who the hell has been spreading the word about his new fixation (okay, that’s a lie– Peter’s got a thing for Rangian street poker, and they both know it), but it’s not too long before they start coming in form everywhere. Mick sends him a gift shop t-shirt sewn shut by hand and stuffed with cotton for his birthday. Julian DiMaggio includes a set of absurdly high-tech pillows in the payment for his next case. Rita keeps finding the damn things in shopping trips with her book club.

His bed is starting to look less like a bed and more like a mountain. Soft, fluffy things are spilling over the sides and turning the corners of his apartment into cozy lounging nooks. It would be an embarrassing habit for a hard-boiled detective, if Peter wasn’t so excited about showing him all the ways he could take advantage of his new collection. Still, it’s just a matter of time before he won’t be able to fit in the apartment at all. He finds himself publicly taking on other hobbies, just to dissuade people from giving him even more pillows.

It’s not long before he falls for his own con, and his smokescreen hobbies become real ones. He’s always had a penchant for photography, but now he takes the leap into painting; he starts tinkering and putting together little gadgets to help him with future cases. And you know what? He’s not half bad. More and more, he finds himself warming with satisfaction when his latest gizmo actually does what he wanted it to, or beaming with pride when Peter fawns over one of his paintings.

More and more, lounging on the pillows becomes less a way to recover, and more a reward for a day well spent.
The repairman

Chapter Summary

Juno’s tinkering habit is making him some new friends.

Chapter Notes

gavrielsaporta asked:
I’ve been in this fandom like.... half a week but I love your fics and I really wanted to think about what I was going to send you before doing so and what I came up with was a fic, maybe jupiter or maybe just centered around Juno, wherein Juno picks up a therapeutic hobby?

Rated G

It starts with a goddamn fan. Because of course the fan in his office decides to blow out when the district’s ventilation fans are on the fritz, which means he can’t even pretend to have a bit of a breeze when the entire goddamn city is sweltering under its most oppressive heat wave in decades. And because repair jobs are expensive and he hasn’t had a case in too long, he storms down to the hardware store, grabs whatever looks appropriate, and just about rips the fan off his ceiling.

There’s some trial and error involved– more error than he would like, but he’s a beginner, dammit– but eventually he flips a switch, and the fan spins the way it’s supposed to. A bit more trial, error, and profanity, and it’s reattached to his ceiling. And then he immediately calls Rita into his office to see, because she said he couldn’t do it.

The sound she makes is one of the most satisfying things he’s heard in weeks. “Boss! You actually fixed it!”

“Damn right I did,” he says, feeling smug.

Two weeks later, a tearful client throws cash at his face before running from his office. He’s not sure what she expected; she came to him wanting to know if her husband was cheating on her. Did she really expect to pay the going rate for a Private Eye if the answer was no?

But even when he does his job well, this kind of case always makes him miserable. He’s been up all night getting pictures of the client’s husband and his two new boyfriends, and lack of sleep has left him with a hell of a headache– and that annoying flickering lamp isn’t helping things. At all.

So on impulse, he yanks the power cord out of the wall, disassembles the whole thing, and finally finds a shitty connection in the wiring. A trimmed wire, a bit of electrical tape, and it’s as good as new, unlike his client’s marriage.

He starts to make a habit of tinkering, usually after his more depressing cases. When he runs out of things to fix in his office, Rita starts bringing things from home. The neighbors on his floor start
coming to him for help with their air conditioners and plumbing, because who’s got the money to pay for an actual handyman?, and they pay him back in baked goods and casseroles.

There’s something incredibly satisfying about it. Here’s a thing that was broken before he came around, and now it’s fixed because of him. Here’s one little corner of the universe that’s objectively better for having had him in it. For once in pretty much forever, he’s actually having friendly conversations with people. Helping them in ways that doesn’t make them miserable when he does his job right.

And you know what? He’s not half bad at it, either.

But the point doesn’t really hit home until a few months later. He’s busy combing digital records for proof of embezzlement when Mrs. Pataki, the baker from two doors down, comes knocking at his door. She’s a little old lady, a bit stooped with age, but sweet. And honestly, he’s happy to have a break from the endless lines of numbers.

“Hey, Mrs. Pataki,” he says absently, marking his place before he puts the tablet down. “Is your radiator acting up again?”

“No, not at all, dear. It’s working as well as ever.” She wrings her hands. “But Juno, dear, the most terrible ruffians have been loitering downstairs and asking about you. I don’t think they mean you well at all, dear.”

Juno frowns. This isn’t exactly the first time the people he’s crossed have come looking for him, but usually he doesn’t get this much warning. “Thanks, but I can handle it. How about you go visit Selma upstairs?” Eight floors should put plenty of distance between her and her wife and the people coming for him.

“If you think that’s best,” she said. “But Juno, dear?” She takes his hand and digs into her purse, pressing its contents into his hand. When she pulls her shaky hands away from his, he’s cradling a flashbang grenade, and she’s smiling like a cheshire cat. “Do take that with you. It might come in handy.”
Juno Steel: Actual Human Disaster

Chapter Summary

Peter didn't know what he was getting into.

Chapter Notes

This request comes Cecil G P:
could you do one where juno’s just generally being a human disaster who doesn’t know how to take care of himself and peter is like horrified by it?

I almost forgot that I said I'd add this one to this week's set, so here you go!

It was almost noon before Peter woke up. He wasn’t ordinarily a late sleeper, but the night had been… athletic. His skin felt almost silty with dry sweat. Juno was nestled against his side, fresh bruises washing across his skin like a map of their activities. There were quite a few places marked on that map that he’d have to remember for later; there were quite a few more that he’d never forget.

Perhaps they could revisit some favorites– but after breakfast. They’d need their energy for another round, after all.

The thought was a warm, bright little light in his chest as he slipped out of bed and crept toward the kitchen.

He couldn’t remember off the top of his head what was considered a standard breakfast on Mars. Not that it mattered– he was sure he could whip something up with whatever he found…

…providing, of course, that he could find it in the first place.

The refrigerator was empty, aside from a handful of condiments, a package of take-out from what smelled like a few weeks ago, and a half-used stick of imitation butter. The freezer contained a half-empty ice cube tray, a remarkable collection of ice packs, and a bag of whiskey stones.

His raid of the pantry was only slightly better. At least a box of rice and a bag of dried beans qualified as food, though the spices hiding behind bottles of liquor and pain medication looked like they’d lost their flavor at least a decade ago. There were also a few foil packages of dehydrated spices, implying that there had been a supply of instant noodles lurking around in the relatively recent past.

On further inspection, he found two pots and a pan. A plate, a bowl, a single set of metal silverware, and a few plastic sets still in their bags which had likely been scrounged from takeout boxes.

It seemed like the only tableware he did have was a collection of whiskey tumblers.

Two coherent thoughts bubbled to the surface amidst the dawning horror.
How does Juno live like this?

and

God help me, I'm going to starve.
Chapter Summary

Christmas on Hyperion City

Chapter Notes

A little while back, @typehere452 requested “dumb christmas fluff” with Juno and Peter. Apologies to Norse Mythology and its worshipers everywhere. And Christians. And lovers of Christmas in general. I’m more than a little bit fascinated by the way domestic traditions and rituals tend to outlive the religions they came from, and I figure that the things we consider common-ish knowledge would get pretty confused eight thousand years into the future.

Peter is not on speaking terms with time. It’s not that they had a falling out—there’s no moment in particular that ever offended him—but the two never got along well enough that Peter bothered acknowledging its existence on more than a casual level.

So yes, he can think in terms of hours, minutes, seconds, days—at least in the sense that he can keep an appointment and can accurately estimate the amount of time between a tripped alarm and the moment the police arrive—but there’s no point in taking it any further.

He lived on the streets so long that he couldn’t tell you his age or his birthday, so there’s no point in keeping track of passing years. Brahma was tidally locked, so there were no seasons to speak of, and he’s never stayed anywhere else long enough to experience the change of seasons.

He makes a point to avoid going to planets during their holidays and festivals, partly because they always come with too many ingrained rituals to keep track of, and partly because robbing someone during a holy time seems rather unsporting. Beyond that fair consideration, it’s hard to remember that such things actually exist.

But now that he’s in a relationship with Juno, time starts to mean more to him. Now that he keeps returning to Mars, he’s started noticing the little ways it changes with the passing weeks. Slowly autumn fades into winter, and the planet’s notorious dust storms migrate to the southern hemisphere, leaving Hyperion City in a state of icy calm. The planet’s atmospheric shields can only keep out the worst of the chill, and so the residents bundle themselves in thick coats and hide indoors for the four long months until spring returns.

Cold weather brings out nostalgia in people. As humanity’s oldest colony off Earth, Hyperion City has managed to hold on to a handful of old traditions. And one of those, it seems, is Christmas.

Which is why he is currently bundled in the third ugliest sweater he’s ever seen, sipping spiked eggnog beside Juno (who is wearing the second ugliest sweater he’s ever seen) and watching with a first aid kit ready while Rita (really, she should get an award for that thing—or a citation. It’s
hideous.) nails artificial greenery to the doorways.

“Why is she doing that?” he whispers at Juno over a plate of cookies (the cookies, at least, are quite good.)

“I’m glad you asked,” Rita declares from on top of her ladder. “See, once upon a time, there was this Baldr guy, and everybody liked him, so everybody promised they’d never hurt him– and I mean everybody. The rocks and trees and everything. It was a different time. Except for the mistletoe, because everybody says that mistletoe couldn’t hurt a fly. Unless you ate it, because it’s poison. So afterward everybody has this party game where they’re throwing things at Baldr just to watch them bounce off him, and it’s real fun, yeah? But then Santa’s brother Loki, he was a real jerk, he grabs a bunch of mistletoe and makes it into like a spear or something, right? and throws it right at him. And bam, Baldr’s dead. Only it’s okay, because he came back to life later so people don’t hafta go to Hel. So now we nail up mistletoe, and people gotta kiss each other under it so it doesn’t come down and murder them or anything. I saw a special on it,” she adds proudly.

Juno gives Peter a sidelong glance. *You had to ask.*

“Funny,” Peter says, taking another sip of his eggnog. “You would think that nailing it to the wall would keep that pesky plant out of trouble. Or even better, not bringing it inside at all.”

“But it’s tradition!”.

“Can’t argue with tradition,” Juno says. “Trust me, I’ve tried.”

“Ah. Of course not.” He leans over, glancing at the other bright green invader taking up the far corner of the office. It’s actually quite pretty, once you get used to the gaudy lights and strings of tinsel. Charming, even. “What did the tree do?”

“I think some carpenter guy got nailed to one, once,” Rita says. “It was a real bad accident.”

“How unfortunate. Let me guess: the tree is lit up to make it impossible to overlook?”

“Nah, we just like makin’ them shiny.”

“I should have guessed.”
Migraines

Chapter Summary

Peter gets Migraines

Chapter Notes

junonureyev asked:
Here's a prompt: Peter gets migraines. Juno's not really used to trying to be a comforting person and Peter's not used to even allowing other people to know he's in pain if it's at all avoidable (unless of course the pain is a minor injury he's dramatically playing up)

Something’s wrong.

Juno can sense it before he can put it into words. There’s just something about Peter’s tone—his words are more clipped and less lilting than usual. His head hangs lower. His gestures aren’t as broad or sweeping. The difference is so subtle that even Rita might not notice, but it’s just enough to put Juno’s nerves on edge. Even moreso because he’s taking so much trouble not to draw attention to it.

He doesn’t say anything about it at first, just hangs back and observes. Who at this party is is Peter watching? What has him on edge?

What’s more telling is what he isn’t looking at. Peter keeps turning his back to the brightest source of light in the room. He maneuvers himself to be as far away as possible from the loudest noises. He tucks business cards into his bottomless pockets before they can be read. Ignores the menu entirely to order something suave and fancy.

He sweeps in close, with the pretense of bringing Peter a drink.

“Thought you might be thirsty,” he says, trying to play it off as flirtatious. It’s not a hard act to sell when he’s with Peter. He presses a champagne flute into Peter’s hand and downs the other like a shot. But instead of drinking his own, Peter presses it to Juno’s lips. The detective doesn’t resist the second drink, tipping it back with one hand and wrapping the other arm around Peter’s shoulder.

It’s easier to be so intimate when he tells himself it’s just a front for whoever’s watching them.

His mouth is half a centimeter from Peter’s ear. “What have you got for me?”

“Several things, but nothing worth mentioning as of yet,” Peter says.

“Nothing?” Peter’s been so tense Juno half suspects there’s a bomb in the room. “Are you sure?”

“Quite positive, actually. Give me some time, and I’ll see what I can come up with.”

He’s evading. Juno knows his thief well enough to know what that sounds like. He pulls back, trying to get a better look at him.
Peter looks… normal, he thinks. Nothing is obviously out of place. Nothing is strange.

But then the woman immediately behind him lets out a sharp, loud laugh, and the change is instant.

Peter tenses in Juno’s arms. His teeth clench. His eyes twitch. His face loses that easy smile and for half an instant it’s fixed in an awful rictus grin. Just as fast it’s gone, and Peter can almost pass for normal again. Almost.

Only now Juno can see all the thousand microscopic hints of a man in pain.

He loosens his hold carefully. “Peter? Are you okay?”

“Perfectly alright, Juno. Why do you ask?” It’s an automatic reaction, practiced so often that it doesn’t even sound like a lie anymore.

So Juno puts together the clues on his own. He’s a detective, not a doctor, but he’s had enough hangovers to recognize the symptoms he’s seeing: sensitivity to light and sound, trouble reading, difficulty focusing. A migraine, most likely.

“Come over here,” he says instead, setting a guiding hand on the small of Peter’s back and pulling him through the party. He makes sure to keep away from the musicians and the awful flaring light at the refreshments tables, straying only to snag a shot of espresso from one of the caterers as they pass by and pressing it into Peter’s hand.

Caffeine for headaches, he remembers Rita telling him.

“Juno, where are we going?” Peter asks him once they’re out of the main ballroom.

“Somewhere a little more private,” Juno says. “I thought we might have a bit of a… chat.”

“Did you now?” Any other night, Peter might take this opportunity to get sultry and seductive, or chide Juno to wait and fill his head with things he’d do to him after the party. Now his interest is so forced it’s almost painful.

“As a matter of fact…” Juno makes a show of rubbing against him as he pulls open the nearest door, just in case anyone else is watching him. He’s pretty sure Peter’s not going to get anything out of the display. But at least now they won’t be followed anytime soon.

The room they ducked into is a supply closet, by the looks of it, mostly emptied for the party. Juno can’t get much of a look, because the only light is what spills in from the hallway, and that sliver vanishes as soon as the door shuts behind them. They’re in almost total darkness now.

“Juno, where’s the light?” Peter asks, already groping for one.

“We don’t need one just yet.”

“Juno…” His fondness is distinctly weary. “As much as I appreciate your enthusiasm, I don’t know if now is the best time. We are on a case, after all.”

“The case can wait.”

“Juno—”

“Is the dark helping at all?” he asks.

Peter stumbles over the words he was about to say. “Help what?”
“The headache. Is being in the dark helping at all?”

There’s a thin line of light seeping in through the crack under the door. Juno’s eyes are slowly adjusting to the near-blackness — not enough for fine detail, maybe, but enough that he can make out that Peter’s mouth hangs open for a few moments too long before he shuts it again.

“It… is, actually,” Peter admits reluctantly. “But Juno, we’re on a case. We have villains to apprehend, and that’s not something we can do from the inside of this closet. So as much as I appreciate your concern, I’m not about to put the case on hold over a little headache.”

“That’s good, because you don’t have to. I’m going right back out there in a second, and I’m gonna keep tailing Min.”

“And you expect me to just sit here while you do that?”

“That’s exactly what I expect you to do,” Juno says. “Because I’m going to attract a hell of a lot of attention from her and Cecil. I’ll text you an update every fifteen minutes on the dot. If I miss an update, I’m gonna need you to come rescue me. And I’d like them to not already have you in their sights when that happens.”

“That’s… fair, I suppose.” By now, Peter knows better than to try to keep Juno from doing anything dangerous, just like Juno knows Peter won’t stand being taken off a case entirely. But this is a compromise they can deal with. “Alright, I’ll stay here, then.”

“Good.” Juno rises onto his toes to kiss Peter’s forehead. “Get some rest and work on feeling better. You’ll hear from me in fifteen minutes.”
Chapter Summary

A case takes the detective duo to a pool

Chapter Notes

whoopsiedaisiedoo asked:
did you see the tweet on the penumbra account about Peter and Juno and bikinis? It's a prompt?

This was a trap. Juno should have known it the moment Peter handed him that bag.

Actually, he should have known it the moment Peter mentioned their client’s husband spent an unseemly amount of time at the artificial seascape in Uptown. But here they were.

Skulking around and taking pictures of the beachcombers while fully clothed was a fast track to getting thrown out. But then Peter reasoned that if they were both in swimwear, they would look like just another couple out to enjoy the water. Lovebirds took pictures of each other all the time, right? If the shots just so happened to catch a sleazeball cheating on his husband, that was purely coincidence.

And damn him, that logic actually seemed to make sense at the time.

Of course Peter volunteered to do the shopping—after all, buying bathing suits was the last thing Juno wanted to do.

Correction: second-last. The last thing he wanted to do was put the damned thing on.

It was a bikini—fashionable and overly complicated, with thin strips of fabric holding all the pieces together just barely. It was the kind of clothing that would turn to confetti if he tore a single thread, let alone got in a fist fight. It was ridiculous. Completely impractical.

At least it looked good. The criss-crossing threads accentuated the scars on his skin, made them look elegant and refined, rather than a visual testament of the hot mess that was his life.

But as good as he looked in his swimsuit, it was nothing compared to Peter. As if Juno needed reminding that his thief was slender, gorgeous, with limbs that went on for days and a grace to his movement that bordered on the hypnotic.

He didn’t even know his mouth was hanging open until Peter playfully nudged it shut. “Oh, good. I was hoping you’d like it.”


Peter just flashed his most vulpine smile. Juno was wearing next to nothing. They both knew exactly how he felt about Peter’s suit. And, judging by a brief glance south, Peter shared the sentiment.
He coughed again. “So. Off to catch a cheater, then.”

“You have your camera, I hope?”

“Right here.” They wouldn’t have any problems catching the man in the act. And if Juno gos some shots of Peter in that bikini… well, that would just be a bonus.
An unexpected proposal

Chapter Summary

The moment Juno and Peter decide to get married.

Chapter Notes

gavrielsaporta asked:
So I got home late last night and fell into bed dead tired and when I woke up I had a note on my phone that says "if peter and juno ever get married it's only because peter is picking a surname for an alias and juno mumbles 'what about steel'" and then I apparently typed a bunch of emojis but I thought it would make a good fic prompt

(I very much switched POV halfway through for no good reason. Don't try to make sense of it.)

Peter taps the pen against his lip, as if some clever words might spring fully formed from his mouth and seep into the ink. The constant movement draws entirely too much attention to that mouth. It’s very… distracting.

I must have been staring too long, because Peter’s eyes flick up from the paper and meet mine. “Hm?”

I cover as gracefully as I can. “Something wrong? Passports don’t usually give you this much trouble.”

Peter pulls the pen from his lips to wave it idly through the air. “It’s hardly trouble. Just a bit of creative block. I seem to be stuck on the name.”

“Is that right?”

“I’ve settled on Kağan for a first name. But the surname eludes me.” And then the pen is back against his mouth, delicately nestled between those sharp white teeth. His legs are tucked underneath him, his thigh pressed against mine, his cologne has long since seeped into the upholstery so the entire couch smells a little like him. A cup of jasmine tea is sitting on the windowsill behind him, a coaster between the bottom of the cup and the naked brick, and it’ll probably be another hour before he notices the tea’s gone cold.

He’s one forged passport away from vanishing to the farthest reaches of the galaxy, and there’ll be no telling when I’ll see him again. What I do know is that I will see him again, and when I do, his eyes will still be bright with the light of distant stars.

And suddenly I can’t get over how much I love him. It hits me like a sucker punch and leaves me reeling and maybe a little bit stupid. Because my next words are “how about Steel?”
'Kağan Steel.' He tests it out, weighing the syllables on his tongue. ‘It does have a nice…’

He blinks. Blinks again.

‘Juno?’

‘It does,’ I agree innocently, which is harder than it sounds when he’s suddenly staring at me like that. It’s not lust or exasperation or even fondness, so much as wonder.

I don’t remember the last time I’ve caught him so completely off guard.

Marriage certificates, as it turns out, aren’t any harder to forge than interplanetary passports, and only slightly more tricky to insert into a government database.

Ever the fan of history, Peter opts for a gold ring, and Juno chooses his to match. He doesn’t wear it on his hand the way Peter does, but on a chain around his neck. He’s not the one who has to persuade people he’s actually married, after all. Besides, he worries about the soft gold getting bent out of shape the first time he throws a punch.

There is no wedding, no officiator, no witness except for Rita— and she’s only there to take the photos (for authenticity’s sake, Peter insists, though nobody buys it). The photos only exist in Kağan Steel’s wallet and in a secret compartment in Juno’s desk. The certificate is forged so perfectly that nobody would think to contest it, but tucked away in a spare file where nobody would bother to look.

And sometimes Juno twists that ring around its chain and he wonders if it’s a real marriage that’s perfectly concealed as a fake, or a fake marriage they somehow pretended into reality— and who gets to draw that line, anyway? That train of thought always ends the same way: with a headache and the decision that it doesn’t even matter. Because whether they’re real married or fake married or something in between, he’s still counting down the days until his Thief comes home.
Juno expected it to be over quickly. A clean break: as soon as Peter realized what he’d done, he would leave Mars and never come back, and that would be the end of it.

It should have been the end of it.

Right now, Juno’s phone is in the corner of the room where he threw it when it started ringing. It hasn’t stopped. Messages are popping up like mad on his office screen, all of them encoded, all of them from the same sender.

He doesn’t want to reply. Doesn’t know how to reply. He swears to himself that he won’t reply, until a very sleepy Rita totters in through the front door.

“Hey– hey boss? You’re back.” She yawns, too groggy to notice the weight he’s lost since he left for the oasis– or the eye. “There’s a–” she yawns again, “a message from Agent Glass. Said you should… um… get to somethin’…”

“Sure, Rita. I’ll get right on it.” It’s impressive that his voice is as steady as it is. “How about you go back home and get some sleep.”

“Yeah, boss. Good idea.” And she trudges back out without so much as a glance back.

Juno creeps up to the phone like it might explode in his hand. In fact, exploding might not be a bad alternative right about now.

There are dozens of messages and missed calls, plus a few alerts from the security software Rita installed that keep third parties from turning on the tracking.

The first few messages are directed at him– are you okay, please, tell me where you are– and then they start devolving into threats and pleas against some imaginary third party, either Engstrom or the Kanagawas or one of Miasma’s surviving assistants.

He’s worried sick. Of course he is. Because at his heart, he’s a good person. One who deserves
better than someone like Juno.

Juno tries to send a message back, but his mind is moving too fast to find the right words, and his hands are shaking too badly to find the keys to type them.

*I’m sorry*
I love you so much it hurts and it’s driving me crazy
I can’t do this
Don’t you understand I don’t deserve you?
Why didn’t you just let her kill me?

It takes half a bottle before his hands are steady enough to type.

*I’m not hurt. I just changed my mind.*

He blocks Peter’s number before he has a chance to respond.
Juno adopts a stray cat.

It’s been a while, but @typehere452 requested a story about Juno adopting a stray cat.

The visit with Mick was a much-needed one, but Juno’s eager to be out of Oldtown as soon as possible. Unfortunately, so are another few thousand other people. The freeway is backed up for miles, and the only progress is in inches. So Juno pulls over and starts looking through the stack of tabloids in his back seat, sifting for the rare nuggets of truth among the fiction.

He doesn’t get too far before his attention is pulled away by a feral hiss. There’s a group of kids playing in a nearby alley, their backs to him. They’re laughing in a way that feels all too familiar– it’s the ugly, gruesome sound that comes out of you when you can make something else feel even shittier than you do. He spent too much of his childhood laughing the same way, and he’s spent most of his adulthood regretting it.

“Hey!” he calls, storming into the alley. “Hey, you little assholes! What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

He’s got no intention of hurting a bunch of kids, but he walks with a gait that he knows promises otherwise. The kids take one look at the scary stranger with the eye patch, and they scatter.

They leave behind their victim: a scrawny little cat, cowering in the corner between two buildings.

“There you go,” he grunts at the cat. “Now get out of here before they come back.”

The cat doesn’t run for it. Maybe it doesn’t have enough sense to scram, or maybe it’s got enough to stick close to the scariest person on the block, but it sticks around.

He ignores it and goes back to his reading, leaning against the side of his car.

When he finishes scouring the next of his tabloids, he’s surprised to see it closer– just outside of arm’s reach.

Its fur is a matted blue-black, its ears are notched and torn, and it’s missing two of its six compound eyes.

“What happened to you, little guy?” he asks it. “Swallow any Ancient Martian pharmaceuticals lately?”

The cat meows once and begins cleaning its fur.
Two tabloids later, traffic hasn’t improved and the cat hasn’t gone anywhere. It just keeps looking at him, and it makes him feel guilty just standing there. The damn thing is all skin and bone.

“Damn cat,” he mutters, but he pulls out the box of leftovers he grabbed from the bar. their cloned chicken wings aren’t exactly good, but he figured they’d make for a halfway decent dinner later tonight. More likely they’d just rot in his fridge, though.

The cat grabs the first one in its mouth and scampers away, eating its meal in the far corner of the alley without ever taking its remaining eyes off him.

Maybe it doesn’t have much of a sense of taste, or maybe it’s too hungry to be picky, but it comes back for a second wing, and then a third. By the fourth, it doesn’t even bother running away with its meal, and just eats it right out of the box at Juno’s feet. When it’s picked the bones clean and cleaned the sauce off its muzzle and paws, it slinks closer, rubbing itself against Juno’s ankle.

“Yeah, yeah, you’re welcome,” he tells it. “Now go back where you came from.”

The cat just stares up at him with its four compound eyes, then goes back to rubbing against him.

He thinks that if he just doesn’t pay any more attention to it, it’ll go away. But the next time he looks down from his reading, it’s climbed on top of his car and is sitting beside his shoulder, right on top of the stack of tabloids.

“Do you mind?” he asks. It yawns at him.

It isn’t bad company, though. It’s quiet, it’s not complaining or trying to hurt him. It’s managed to last this long without human help, so it wouldn’t be dependent on him. And it’s not like he could ever disappoint it— or if he did, it wouldn’t be over anything he did so much as because it’s a cat and it’s already disappointed by humans.

It takes a few moments before his thoughts catch up with him. He is not thinking about taking this thing home. Absolutely not.

But his mind wanders back to Oldtown, and to Mick.

He’s been back in Oldtown all of half a dozen times in the past fifteen years. The damn cat hasn’t even been alive that long. So all the scars and the starvation and the awful things that it’s been through? That’s got nothing to do with him. It was fucked up before he got here. And for all the things wrong with him, he could feed it. He could give it a safe place to sleep where miserable kids won’t be tormenting it night and day. He might not be able to solve all the damn cat’s problems, but he could do that much.

Slowly, carefully, he reaches a hand out to the cat. It cringes until it feels a gentle hand petting its back, and then it starts to purr. And just like that, it’s decided.

“Come on, little guy. Let’s get you out of here.”
Chapter Summary

Peter meets Juno's new cat

Chapter Notes

It’s been a while since I’ve done a prompt for @typehere452, who requested an awkward wake-up call involving Juno’s new cat.

After everything Juno’s put me through, I would have appreciated a bit more time to process our reunion. As it is, we get all of eight seconds to shout at each other before the shooting starts. Then comes the dramatic rooftop chase, the alley brawl while I steal a car, the car chase, the race across Hyperion City to find a bomb, sneaking past some obscenely misinformed local law enforcement, another brawl, another shootout, and the single most awkward hostage situation I’ve ever had the pleasure to be a part of.

It’s almost four in the morning by the time we finish giving our statements to the police, and it’s all either of us can do to stay upright.

“Point me in the direction of the nearest hotel?” I ask Juno, though at that point I’m tired enough to break into the first abandoned building I pass and curl up on the floor, standards be damned.

Juno just shakes his head. “My place is closer. You can sleep there.”

I don’t know if he has the faculties left to know exactly what he’s offering me, or if he’s simply too tired to care.

I’m certainly too tired to argue. “Are you sure?”

He waves me off. “I'll sleep on the couch or something.” And he calls for a cab.

By the time we arrive at his apartment, the remark about the couch is forgotten. Juno doesn’t even bother turning on the lights before he trudges to bed. We barely manage to strip off our clothes before we crawl under the covers. I have enough awareness left to wrap an arm around his waist, and then I’m out cold.

I’m not sure exactly how long we’re asleep, but it’s well past noon by the time I wake up.

Juno’s on his back, his head resting on my arm, a decorative pillow lying on his chest. His breathing is shallow and steady; his face is relaxed.

I roll onto my side, watching him breathe.

All things considered, we did rather well last night. An impossible case solved, an innocent life saved, a homicidal maniac put behind bars. The two of us make quite a team. I wouldn’t mind being
a part of it more often.

I lean in closer. There’s more gray in his hair than I remember, a few more lines on his face. I wish I knew what put them there. I reach out to smooth his hair–

And my hand touches something that is definitely not Juno. It’s warm, with straight, fuzzy fur that’s entirely unlike Juno’s tight curls. And it’s vibrating.

I pull my hand back. The round black pillow on Juno’s chest seems to have migrated to the space immediately underneath my hand. Four of its eyes are wide and compound, the other two have been reduced to scars.

A cat.

Why is there a cat in Juno’s apartment?

It meows loudly and begins rubbing itself at Juno’s face. His nose scrunches and he shakes his head, not yet waking. But that isn’t enough to satisfy the cat. Determined, it begins licking his face. I can hear the roughness of its tongue dragging across his face.

“Stop it,” Juno mutters, one hand flailing vaguely in the direction of his face. He manages to bat at the cat, but it remains undeterred. The licking continues. “Goddammit, Clue.”

It replies with another loud, insistent meow, and begins grooming his eyebrow.


He gives the cat a light shove that might have been harmless if I wasn’t on his other side. Suddenly I’m trying to breathe through a mouthful of fur. The cat scrambles to remove itself from my face, but somehow it manages to get its claws stuck in my shirt. It yowls petulantly and flops over, draped across my chest.

“Shit!” Juno says from somewhere on the other side of the bed. “Nureyev. You’re here.”

“You–” I have to stop to pick a clump of cat hair off my tongue. “You did invite me, Juno.”

He gives the cat a light shove that might have been harmless if I wasn’t on his other side. Suddenly I’m trying to breathe through a mouthful of fur. The cat scrambles to remove itself from my face, but somehow it manages to get its claws stuck in my shirt. It yowls petulantly and flops over, draped across my chest.

He rolls off the bed and then leans over me, carefully dislodging the cat’s claws from my shirt and scooping it into his arms. It practically burrows into his chest, and he holds it so close it almost seems like a security blanket. “I’m… I’m going to go feed him.”

As if he could escape me so easily!

I slink out of bed and follow behind him. “You didn’t mention you found a new roommate.”

“What’s to tell?” he asks carefully, letting the cat leap out of his arms. As soon as its paws hit the floor, it begins rubbing against his ankles. “I found a cat, now he lives here. Rita’s got a few hundred pictures of him on her phone.”

“Only because I feed him.” He keeps his eye down and focused on the task before him, as though scooping cat food into a bowl required the same dexterity as brain surgery. But when he sets the bowl on the floor, the cat ignores it entirely in favor of licking his hand. I would expect Juno to pull away, but he remains crouched low, his hand extended until the cat is satisfied.

There’s a softness to him as he handles the cat. A tenderness that I used to think was impossibly rare
on his face.

“What’s his name?” I ask warmly.

“Clue. It was Rita’s idea.” Some of the tension starts leaving his frame as the cat showers him with affection. I wonder if this is a daily ritual between them, or if Clue senses that he needs particular attention today. Regardless, I like the effect it has on Juno.

I reach out and stroke a hand over soft fur. “Where did you get him?”

“It’s not interesting,” he says immediately.

Perhaps not, but it’s a relatively neutral subject, and that makes it easier than any of the other conversations we should be having this morning. “Tell me anyway.”

We’ll get to those conversations eventually. For now, the two of us will be content to sit in his kitchen and pet his cat.
Alleycat (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

Delighted to learn Juno’s taking in strays, Peter decides to help.

Chapter Notes

I got a TON of requests for stories in which Juno takes in strays (particularly ones that Peter gives him)

His decision to adopt Clue was completely out of the blue— one minute he was feeding the cat beside a dumpster, and the next he was picking up flea meds and a litter box. And sure, it worked out alright in the end, what with Rita cooing over him every time she’s over and Peter becoming the cat’s favorite new pillow, but Juno knows better than anybody that he really didn’t think this whole thing through. It’s something he should never, ever do again.

But then he opens the door of his apartment, and there it is: a puppy, cradled inside a cardboard box. A scraggly little mutt, with three legs and notches in its ears, but it looks up at him with such big, sweet eyes that he can’t give it back.

Besides, the note tied around its neck (”Love you.”) is in Peter’s handwriting, and Peter’s ship left for Vega an hour ago. Juno won’t even be able to contact him for a week— which means that by the time he actually gets a chance to yell at Peter about springing this on him, he’ll have already fallen in love with the damn dog.

He sighs. “Come on. Let’s get you cleaned up.”

Clue is already well aware of the intruder, and is keeping a careful eye on it— her, a quick check tells him— from on top of the couch. It takes him a few days to get accustomed to the new puppy. A few weeks before he starts stealing scraps off the counter for her when Juno isn’t looking.

He starts taking her— Jessie, he calls her— to the office with him. It counts as her daily walk, though at first she spends most of the trip snoring in the bottomless pockets of his trench coat. By the time she’s outgrown it, she’s strong enough to lope along beside him the whole way. She sleeps on an overstuffed cushion in the corner of the room, and she’s great for business. When new clients come in, all tearful and sobbing, she’s a perfectly huggable bundle of fluff with big soulful eyes. When old enemies come to make trouble, she’s standing between them and Juno, her hackles up and her teeth bared. She’s got a memory like you wouldn’t believe, and ears that can catch familiar footsteps from the building’s front door. He’s never felt safer.

The bed, though, has never been more crowded. Now he’s got Clue sleeping on his chest, Peter beside him, and Jessie tucked into the space between their legs. If anyone gets up, even for a minute, they’ll come back to find their spot taken by one of the bed’s other occupants.

It’s comfortable. It’s warm. It’s nice.
He still wishes Peter had asked before showing up with another kitten.
Can today just be done?

He’d really like that right about now. Just go home, crawl into bed, and call mulligans on the whole thing.

It’s just been one of those days: the spilled coffee, the spoiled milk, then he locked himself out of his apartment and had to spend half the morning picking the lock to get back in, and that isn’t even getting started on the disaster of a case– and it wasn’t even the kind of disaster that he can justify calling Peter about.

Hell, knowing his luck, the bruise he got from the client’s ex will keep him from sleeping tonight. Just another thing he can’t do right today.

He’s barely got the apartment door open before Clue is at his feet, rubbing against his ankles.

“Let me guess,” Juno sighs. “I forgot to feed you.”

He throws his hat and coat at the hook by the door; both of them miss and wind up in a pile, but he doesn’t bother to pick them back up. Instead he makes his way to the food dish in the kitchen.

“Would you look at that. It’s an absolute tragedy. How could I possibly let you starve like this?” He leans down and gives the bowl a good shake; the piles of food unstick themselves from the sides of the dish and cover the bottom again. That seems to satisfy Clue, and he’s crunching happily at his dinner while Juno grabs a bottle of whiskey off the counter. That should help him get to sleep, at least.

But no sooner does he sink into the couch than Clue is bounding into his lap. It’s only a matter of luck and quick thinking that he manages to stop the cat from stepping on the more sensitive parts of his anatomy before he starts kneading Juno’s pants. His claws barely avoid the skin on Juno’s lap.

“Do you mind?” he asks.

Clue looks up at him with a look that he must have learned from Peter. There’s no other explanation. There’s no way Juno knows two creatures that have mastered that look of complete smugness.
“Can you not?”

Clue responds by climbing higher onto Juno’s chest and settling down there with a look of contentment. Even if Juno couldn’t hear the purring, he can feel it in his bones. It should probably hurt— that’s where the client’s ex buried his fist in Juno’s gut this afternoon— but honestly, it doesn’t. It’s pleasant, really, all warm and soft and rumbly, almost like a hug.

Sure, he knows the science behind it. Peter told him about it after he noticed Clue doing it a few times. The specifics went a bit over Juno’s head, but it had something to do with resonant frequencies promoting healing. But it isn’t just that— it’s the fact that Clue knew he was hurting and decided to try and make him feel better. After everything that’s gone wrong today, every little way that Juno’s messed up, his cat still thinks he’s worth fussing over. Hell, as long as Juno can magically make the almost-full food dish look really full, Clue probably thinks he’s pretty great.

“Anybody ever tell you that you’ve got low standards?” Juno asks, scratching him behind the ears. Clue headbutts his hand affectionately, smoothing his whiskers against Juno’s palm. “Yeah, yeah. I missed you, too.”

The whiskey bottle is still in his other hand, but he sets it down without shifting his weight. There’s no hope of getting the bottle open one-handed, and Clue isn’t about to let him stop scratching his ear for a drink.

“Today was pretty rough.” He shifts his scratching to the underside of Clue’s chin. “Wanna hear about it?”
wastrelwoods asked:

i remember a while back you wrote some very cute 'juno adopts a cat' fic but have you considered what it might be like if peter got himself a small kitten friend (did he steal the cat? its not out of the question)

Peter should sell the cat.

No, he will sell the cat.

It’s one of those Shangoan Mini-Leopards that’s so fashionable. It wouldn’t exactly be the highest-earning score that he’s ever made, but a few hundred creds would be a decent amount of pocket change. It might come in handy.

Besides, he doesn’t know the first thing about how to take care of an animal. Mag was very specific about his policy toward stray animals growing up, and for good reasons.

He’s a thief, after all; his survival depends on quick escapes and invisibility, and he can’t do the former if he’s lugging a cat carrier onto every spaceship and he can’t do the latter if he’s setting off a mark’s allergies or leaving behind telltale cat hairs on a crime scene, and nothing would leave quite as obvious a trail as bags of used litter and cans of tuna brick.

He is definitely getting rid of it.

He is.

Or he will, as soon as it gets off of him. As soon as he sat down, the cat perched on his chest like it meant to keep him anchored to the hotel armchair. Which is absurd, of course— it’s just a cat. It has no way of knowing how much he feels like he’s drifting right now; it can’t even comprehend a concept so abstract. But here it is, like a paperweight on his chest, warm and soft and purring.

It’s been doing that ever since he made the mistake of petting the fuzzy little thing, purring so loud that it quite nearly set off an alarm on his way out. And it looked so sad to see him go, he couldn’t not take it with him. It even seemed to enjoy the ride, perching on his shoulder while he made his escape.

Later examination found no evidence of harm, no underfeeding— by all means, it was well taken care of— but it’s clearly been sorely deprived of human company, which isn’t fair at all. It’s a clever, needy little thing. A perfect companion for anyone, really— except a thief.

He wraps his arms around the fuzzy little thing, and it nuzzles his cheek, and he can’t help falling a little more in love with it.

He can’t sell it.

He can’t keep it, either, but he can’t bear to give such a sweet cat away to a fence, just to be sold off
to the first blank face who’s willing to part with a few creds. Who knows what might happen to the poor thing.

But he can’t keep it, either.

Peter isn’t there when Juno steps into his office the next day. He doesn’t get to see the agitation and alarm on the detective’s face when he learns they’ve got a new office pet– but only because the hidden cameras he’s installed in the office don’t hit that angle.

“I would keep her at my place,” Rita explains in a rush. “But you know my building don’t allow pets, Mista Steel, and I can’t leave her at my aunt’s ‘cuz she’s allergic, and besides, this little cutie ain’t even mine. And ain’t you a cutie? Yes you are. Ain’t she, boss? Ain’t she just the prettiest kitty you’ve ever seen?”

Juno’s eyes narrow. “What do you mean she’s not yours?”

Rita pops her head up abruptly from cuddling the cat. “I’m just holding onto her until Agent Glass can get Dark Matters to let him keep her at his place. But there’s no tellin’ how long that’s gonna take, so until then this little cutie is all mine!”

It’s a little bit gratifying to see the expression on Juno’s face when he hears that– like he’s been stunned with a cheap blaster– but not so much as the way his face softens when he takes a second look at the cat.

“Okay,” he says quietly. “Just watch it. I don’t want it getting out or anything.”

“Like I’m ever gonna take my eyes off this pretty kitty.” The protest devolves into a barrage of kisses on the cat’s nose and forehead, right until Juno scoops it out of Rita’s arms.

“You keep that up and it’s gonna bite you,” Juno scolds, letting the cat go free to roam the office. He’s trying to sound surly, but he can’t quite pull it off.

Peter keeps watching the feed until he has to board the spaceship.
“It’s a bit of an odd place to put a skating rink, don’t you think?” Peter muses.

“It used to be an airlock, back in the old days,” Juno says, mostly to keep his mind off his feet and the directions they’re going. “For large shipments and construction equipment, mostly. After most of the big stuff arrived, it wasn’t used much, and it started to degrade until it sprung a leak in the thermal shielding. Back then, Mars still wasn’t terraformed as much as it is now; it was so cold that water would freeze almost instantly. So I guess they figured it was cheaper to seal it off and use it than to try and make the airlock functional again. The planet’s gotten warmer and the city’s spread out since then, but they kept the rink. They call it a city heritage site.”

Peter hums appreciatively. “You know all of that, but you’ve never gone before?”

“Ice skates and admission cost money. Didn’t have a lot of that growing up. Didn’t really see the appeal afterward.” Amazingly enough, he’s not thrilled about strapping knives to his feet and wobbling around on an intentionally slippery surface. But Peter wanted to go, and so here he is.

“Then I thank you for indulging me.”

Trust Peter Nureyev to be amazing at this. He’s gliding effortlessly across the ice, so graceful he almost looks like he’s dancing. That view by itself is worth the cost of admission.

“What about you?” Juno asks, keeping his eyes on the other man. “You do much skating as a kid?”

“Not at all. But Europa happens to have several of the finest collections of art in the system, and it is an ice moon, after all. Skating just happens to be the preferred method of getting around.”

Juno watches Peter twist, his long limbs suggesting something beyond simple transportation. “With moves like that, I bet you got around plenty.”

Peter’s grin widens. “Detective! Is that jealousy I hear?”

“No need.” There’s enough jealousy on this rink already. He can feel almost every set of eyes in the rink drift longingly toward Peter. “I know who you’re going home with when you take off those skates.”
On the porch with a laser

Chapter Summary

Dating Peter Nureyev comes with consequences.

Chapter Notes

jعوننورییا asked:
Prompt: AU where Peter didn't kill Mag

Something’s off. Juno can feel it even before he opens the door.

His mind immediately goes to Nureyev– after all, the man has a ridiculous habit of waiting for Juno in dark rooms just to make an entrance. But his gut says otherwise. Whoever’s in there, it isn’t his… whatever they are.

He couldn’t tell you why or how he knows, but he hasn’t survived this long by ignoring his instincts. His laser is on and the safety is off before he slowly opens the door.

There’s a man sitting in his chair, his wide feet propped up on the desk. He’s broad-shouldered, barrel-chested, with owlish yellow eyes that are framed by elegantly coiffed white hair.

“Ah, Juno.” He’s got a big voice to match his huge frame. “I was wondering when you’d arrive.” He takes his feet off the desk and leans forward, steepling his fingers. “I think you and I are due to have a little chat.”

“Who are you and how did you get in here?”

The other man just chortles. Not laughs, chortles. “That doesn’t matter. What matters is that I can get in again, any time I want. I want you to remember that, Juno.”

Juno bristles. “You think you’re the first person who’s tried to threaten me?”

This time the man laughs for real– a big, full-bellied laugh that might be charming if they were having a different conversation. “This isn’t a threat, Juno. It’s just a little formality. Bit of filial duty, if you will. But rest assured that I do mean it: you hurt my boy, I’ll hurt you.”

“Your…” Juno frowns. Because this can’t actually be happening. “You mean Peter?”

The other man grins, his eyes crinkling in a way that’s so sincere it almost hurts to keep pointing a gun at him. “He cares about you quite a lot, you know. You make him happier than I’ve seen him in a long time. But that also means you’re in the unique position to hurt him. So I just want to make it clear.” His expression doesn’t change so much as it crystallizes, all hard planes and sharp edges. There’s a lethal sincerity behind his eyes. “If you do, nobody will ever find your body.”

Juno’s not going to admit how much that terrifies him. He’s thirty-nine, goddamn it. He’s dealt with
worse than this— he thinks so, anyway. So he does what worked with all of them, and he puts on a front. “Don’t you think he’s a bit old for the ‘waiting on the porch with a laser’ routine?”

But the other man only grins, and a chill goes down Juno’s spine. “Oh, be realistic. What makes you think I’d use a laser?”
A rescue

Chapter Summary

Juno drowns his sorrows in alcohol and unpleasant company.

Chapter Notes

catachrestic-catastrophe asked:

juno is being harassed by men at a club and peter comes to his rescue by pretending to be juno's boyfriend.

Rated T

“Hey, gorgeous.” The man leaning over the counter has had way too much to drink. I could smell it on his breath even before he got into my space. “I like the eye patch. Very rugged.”

“Get lost.” It might have worked better if I wasn’t muttering into my glass, but I can’t muster the energy to wave away this asshole. I’m tired. I’m tired on every level, and the booze isn’t helping.

“Sounds like somebody needs another drink,” the asshole says. “What’re you having?”

I swirl the last few drops around in the bottom of my glass. I could use another round, but I’m not sure if it’s worth this guy thinking I owe him something. More than he does already, anyway.

“Get me another scotch.” Even I’m not sure if that was directed at the asshole or the bartender. I don’t care much anymore. I’m already entertaining the idea of letting the creep take me home. It’d give me something to do, at least. And hell, who’s got self-respect these days? All of that plus a pocket full of creds won’t buy you another drink.

Whatever I meant, the asshole took it as an invitation to keep going. He’s got one arm around my shoulders and he’s talking about himself like he thinks it’s gonna impress me. Like he thinks I’m looking to be impressed. The best case scenario right now is that he turns out to be a serial killer.

I sink even deeper into my chair. Where’s that drink? I’m too sober for this shit.

“Oh, there you are, Juno. I’ve been looking everywhere for you.” Or maybe I’m not as sober as I thought I was. I’d have to be pretty drunk to imagine that voice. “Oh, and you’ve made a friend.”

“Who the hell are you?” asks the asshole, which doesn’t make sense, because this can’t be anything but a hallucination. Peter Nureyev can’t be here.

“His husband,” Nureyev says in that way only he can: cheerfully cordial over deadly ice. He steps closer, and the asshole has to back up to keep Nureyev out of his space. Suddenly Nureyev’s standing between us, and he’s a lot more imposing than a man so slender has any right to be.

“It’s very sweet of you to keep my Juno company while I was away, but we have no further need of your services. Off you go.”
And while the drunk is busy sputtering about how I never mentioned being married, Nureyev turns his back on him entirely.

“You really shouldn’t go wandering off like that, Juno. You won’t believe how long it took me to find you.”

I peel myself off the bar to stare up at him. “I’m in the same place I’ve always been, Duke. What about you? I thought you were leaving Mars for good.” That was the whole point of walking out on him, wasn’t it? So I’d never see him again.

“Then clearly I’m not here for good, am I?” He wrinkles his nose. “Though this place stretches the definition of ‘bad’ to its limit, doesn’t it. What do you say we continue this conversation elsewhere?”

Behind him, the asshole is winding up for a punch. It’s an amateur move– too much posturing and telegraphing his intentions, not enough force or speed. Somebody ought to teach him how to fight. Not me, though. He doesn’t even see my fist coming.

Nureyev leans over the bar, paying off my drinks with his own card with a look of total unconcern. “Thank you for that, Juno. Are you ready to leave?”
Juno's Smile

Chapter Summary

Peter comes to Juno's rescue

Chapter Notes

So @disasterscenario drew this thing that broke my heart so much I can't stop looking at it. I think it may be one of two pictures of Juno that she’s done where he’s smiling. And god, what a smile.

So I wrote a fic for it.

Rated T for blood.

Peter’s heart is racing, but his feet move faster– he’s almost flying down the hallway, but it seems to just keep going.

He should have known it was an ambush. He should have realized. And now Juno is trapped with who even knows how many armed gangsters, and he’s alone and he’s been alone too long–

–and it might already be too late.

His glasses are fogging and his eyes are watering and he’s moving too fast to see the numbers on the doors, but he doesn’t have to. The right one is marked by a pair of bodies, dead or unconscious or something else entirely. The room beyond is even worse.

There are at least a dozen people in here, but all but two of them are on the floor. Juno is raining down punches on a woman twice his size, but she barely seems to feel them– and for good reason. His footwork is slow and shaky. His blows lack follow-through. He’s reeling with exhaustion and blood loss, but he just keeps going, even when his opponent catches him by the shirt and hurls him across the room.

He drags himself onto his hands and knees, but it’s too little, too late. He can’t even stand up anymore, and she’s bearing down on him with murder in every fiber of her being.

And then she drops, Peter's knife still embedded in her kidney.

Juno stares up at the place she used to be, and Peter can see the exact moment that resignation is transfigured into awe. His whole face softens, his eye brightens, his bleeding lips curl into a tender smile.

His breath is a sigh. “My knight in stolen armor.”

Peter drops to his knees beside him. “Juno, are you alright?” It’s an awful question because he already knows Juno will tell him he’s fine– but he isn’t fine. Blood is pouring from two long gashes
on his shoulder and a third along his scalp. Even more stains his clothes and hands. So Peter amends the question: “Can you stand?”

“Sure thing,” Juno rasps. “Just give me a minute.”

Peter cradles Juno’s face in his hands, feeling for breaks in the bone, searching for signs of trauma. And all the while, Juno is just… looking at him like that. Soft and relaxed and at peace in ways he really shouldn’t be with that many broken bones, and above all else: utterly in love.

“How hard did you hit your head?” Peter asks. “How many times? Do you know?”

“Not that hard.” And there it is again: that warm, gentle smile. “It looks worse than it is. You don’t need to worry.”

“I do and I will!” It comes out perhaps a bit too vindictively, but Juno doesn’t seem bothered by it. “Dammit, Juno—”

But he’s stopped by a calloused, bloody hand on his own cheek. “It’s okay, Peter. I love you, too.”
Juno's Smile (Part 2)

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:

it's been a while since I came in here, yelled "FLUFFY PORN", and ran away, so here I am, back again! what if peter gets a little carried away while trying to patch juno up after a fight?

Rated T-M.

Juno is stripped down to his underwear and stretched across the bed, his smaller wounds glistening with ointment. It might be a sexy image, if not for the pair of wide, deep gashes that stretch from his shoulder to his pectoral. As important it is to keep Juno’s insides on the inside, stitching his detective shut is something he’d rather avoid.

Juno, though, for all his queasiness at other people’s blood, doesn’t seem bothered. “Do you think it’ll leave a scar?”

“To add to your collection?” Peter asks dryly. “If I tell you no, will it stop you from doing something like that again? You could have died.”

“I could have. But I didn’t.”

“This time.” He tries to soften his tone. “I know you can handle yourself, love, but you don’t have to do these things alone. I’d rather be there for you before things get dangerous than worry about whether you’ll come home after.”

“I’ll… I’ll be more careful next time,” Juno says softly. Sincerely.

“I certainly hope so.” He tries to focus on the task before him, but it’s hard when Juno is looking at him like that. Not sexually– he likes to think he can resist Juno’s attempts at seduction for the most part– but so tenderly that it makes Peter’s chest ache. “How is the cold pack?”

“Still cold.”

“Excellent.” It’s one of the larger packs in Juno’s rather extensive collection– big enough to ease the swelling on his burst lip, his black eye, and his head wound simultaneously. Another pair are cooling his knuckles, and another is draped across his chest. “Now if you would put it back where it belongs so it can do its job…” Obediently Juno covers his eye again, and it gets slightly easier to focus. Peter finishes the last of the stitches, then ties off the thread and cuts it close to the knot. Now that the hard part is over, it’s only a quick matter of sterilizing the needle, dabbing the remaining wounds with ointment, and putting everything away. But their medical kit isn’t fully reassembled yet before he notices that Juno is watching him again, while the cold pack slides away from him.

Peter’s seen Juno make quite a broad range of expressions, but he’s never seen his detective look like this before– intense and relaxed all at once. It’s disconcerting. “How is your head? We can still get you scanned–”

“I’m fine,” Juno says gently. “Don’t worry. I know a concussion when I see one, and this isn’t it.”
“Are you sure about that? You seem to be taking all of this remarkably well.”

And Juno just keeps fixing him with a look that’s almost beatific. “Maybe I like the idea of you worried about me.”

“I’m glad one of us does,” Peter grumbles, but he’s silenced by a calloused palm against his cheek. Juno’s hand is icy from the cold pack, but that’s not the only reason he shivers.

“You make me feel like I’m *worth* worrying about.” A thumb ghosts over Peter’s bottom lip; it’s warmed by a sharp breath. The pack on Juno’s face falls aside as he starts to sit up. “That’s kind of new for me.”

He isn’t the only one having to adapt. It isn’t often that Peter’s flustered anymore, but the warmth in Juno’s expression is enough to make him melt.

“Juno…” He wants to slide out of his chair and into that bed. There are so many things he wants to do to Juno right now—so many things he wants Juno to do to him—“Lay back down before you pull a stitch.”

Juno looks amused, but does as he’s told. Peter leans over him instead, pressing a kiss to icy lips before replacing the cold pack.

“Now keep that there,” he says. “And stay still. You’re meant to be resting.”

“Funny. You don’t look like you’ve got a lot of rest on your mind.”

“Relax, Juno,” he says, pressing a kiss to the cut under Juno’s eye patch. “Rest. Let me take care of you.” A second kiss finds the corner of his jaw. The bruise on his neck. The curve of his stomach. The jut of his pelvis.

Juno sighs, content. And oh, that’s a nice sound from him. “Is this what people mean when they talk about kissing something to make it better?”

“Not exactly,” Peter says, tugging Juno’s boxers down his thighs. “I like to think of it more as an improvement of an ancient remedy. Behold the wonders of modern medicine.”

Modern medicine, in this case, being his tongue. It is, after all, an incredibly versatile organ.
I don’t know what time he starts thrashing. Time doesn’t mean much down here, deep underground, when the only light comes from behind those surreal hieroglyphics. I hate to wake him– Miasma’s tests take so much out of him, and he looks more spent every day– but I hate the noises he makes even more. Our captor spends enough time torturing us; there’s no need for him to do it himself.

“Juno,” I say softly, stroking his brow. Maybe if I do it gently enough, he’ll just pass out of the nightmare and back into restful sleep. “Juno, I’m right here. Whatever it is, it isn’t real. It’s alright, Juno. I won’t let anything happen to you.”

His eyes slide open, his right still bloodshot from hours of experiments. “Promise?”

Of course he’d wake up just in time to hear the one lie mixed in among the truth. Because I can’t promise that. Juno’s been inside my head. He knows exactly how much those electrodes hurt me. He’s felt my relief when he agrees to read another card.

I try to divert his attention to other obvious facts. “You were having a nightmare.”

“It happens.”

I want to ask him what it was about, assure him it wasn’t real, but I know better. The less it’s talked about, the faster it will fade. In a few moments, he might not even remember it at all. So I move on to something else– one of the few comforts I’m confident I can give. “You kicked off your blankets. Are you cold?”

He tries to sound surly, less needy than he feels. But exhaustion doesn’t make great actors out of anyone. “A bit.”

“What a coincidence. So am I.”

It’s something between a code and a ritual. He isn’t willing to ask for contact outright, but he’s willing to admit that the thin blankets we’ve been provided aren’t enough to ward off the eternal chill. So he can keep pretending that this springs from no other need than that for warmth.

I lay back, one arm outstretched, and he nestles against me, his body turned away, his head pillowed
on my bicep. As soon as he’s settled, I sweep the blanket over us both. Underneath its cover, my arm slips around his waist. My leg drapes over his hip. I bury my face in his hair and I spend a few long moments just breathing him in.

It’s been weeks since either of us has had a shower, but the familiar scent is more comforting than it ever was off-putting.

Juno sighs, and I can feel him start to relax. Underneath the blanket, his fingers twine with mine.

“Hey, Nureyev?” he whispers.

“Hm?”

“Don’t worry about protecting me, okay? Worry about yourself.” It’s meant to sound hard-boiled; instead it comes out vulnerable and small.

“This wouldn’t have anything to do with your nightmare, by any chance?”

“No.” Of course it does. “Just don’t get yourself killed on my account.”

“I’ll do my best to avoid it.” I give his hand a reassuring squeeze. “We’ll both make it out of this, Juno. I promise.”

And that’s a promise I intend to keep.
You will never be satisfied

Chapter Summary

Juno tries to get over Peter by sleeping with somebody else.

Chapter Notes

pnureyev asked:
Juno Steel and rebound sex?

The first place my mind went with this was Alessandra, but I feel she’s got too many actual feelings for Juno to be okay with being his rebound, and too much self-respect to allow herself to be used that way. So I did something else with it instead.

Rated M

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Looks like somebody’s had a rough day.”

Juno shrugs, but he doesn’t stop the woman from pulling up a stool beside his. She’s small, with a big, dazzling smile that doesn’t match her tired eyes. But his attention is on her sharp teeth.

“You could say that,” he says.

“Not just a day, then,” she infers. “Week? Month? Forever?”

“Sounds about right.”

“Then it sounds like you could use another drink.” She flags down the bartender. “Two of whatever he’s having.”

The drinks arrive, and Juno eyes her warily. “You looking to get laid or something, lady?”

“No, I came all the way out here for the atmosphere.” She snorts. “Yes, I’m looking to get laid.” She picks up her scotch and toasts Juno. “But I’m content to settle for getting shitfaced and making a royal ass of myself. How about you?”

He raises his glass right back at her. “Already halfway there.”

He’s been drinking half the night already, but she’s even shorter than he is, and with half his tolerance for booze, and she keeps paying for drink after drink. By the time he’s good and drunk, she’s right there with him, sprawled across his lap and flashing those sharp teeth.

He’s not sure if it’s booze or the smile that makes up his mind, but the next thing he knows, they’re in the back of a cab and she’s nipping at his neck.
His mind drifts back to the last person who did that. He doesn’t even notice he’s doing it until the woman pulls away.

“Feeling nostalgic?” she asks.

Juno’s stomach drops. Dammit, can he not even get past fucking foreplay without ruining it? “I’m not—”

“I didn’t say it was a problem.” She laughs. “Hate to break it to you, but I’m not looking for the long term, either.” She leans in closer, rubbing up against him. “So who is it that’s got you sighing like that?”

It’s a testament to Juno’s intoxication that he replies at all. “Someone I don’t deserve.”

She giggles. “Have you looked in the mirror lately? Not to say I’m shallow, moll, but I’ve got standards, and your ass is fine.”

“He was the love of my life, and I walked out on him. Middle of the night and everything. I didn’t say a word.”

“Oh, that’s a relief,” she says. “And here I was worried you’d be wanting breakfast in the morning.” When he glares, she laughs again. “You go ahead and feel as guilty or not guilty as you want, moll. As a fellow terrible person, I’m sure as hell not gonna judge.”

She might not, but he does. It isn’t fair, and he knows it— he shouldn’t be comparing her to anyone but herself— but he does it anyway. It might not bother her at all, but it bothers him.

Because he should recognize Alessandra in her powerful grip, or Todd in the musculature of her thighs, or Sasha in the easy way she takes charge of the night. But every single one of those people comes up as an afterthought.

She laughs so easily that it’s obvious how much her laugh isn’t Nureyev’s bubbling chuckle. She’s not as elegant as he is, not as witty or well-spoken. Her confidence is closer to abrasive than alluring. And that’s infuriating: it doesn’t matter that she is absolutely nothing like Peter Nureyev, because Juno’s mind will find any excuse to go back to him.

So he tries not to think at all. He goads her on, challenges her, argues with her, and then lets her fuck him into a blissful haze. And for a few minutes at a time, he even manages to forget.

But it doesn’t mean anything. And when she sashays out of his apartment, he drags himself into the bathroom for a long shower.

It wasn’t bad sex or anything. Hell, it was honestly pretty good.

But after Nureyev, after the memory of being loved and cherished and adored, even good sex feels like a letdown.

Chapter End Notes

This is technically a crossover. Kudos to you if you can guess who the woman is and where she's from.
The fault in our wiring

Chapter Summary

The power goes out in Juno's apartment

Chapter Notes

gavrielsaporta asked:
The power goes out because let's face it, Juno's building is not new, and the digital locks Rita installed on his apartment doors and windows go on the fritz and lock Juno and Nureyev in the apartment for an indeterminate amount of time

Rated G-PG

“It’s a simple solution, really. As heavily fortified as windows and doors are, nobody ever thinks about fortifying the walls.”

“I do,” Juno says. “Because I have to fortify them every time somebody knocks another hole in my wall, and then I have to pay another deposit on the damn place. As much money as I’ve put into this place already, I might as well have bought it already. We’re not doing this, Nureyev.”

Ah. He means business. He never calls me that anymore unless he’s irate. “Alright. Have it your way. The wall remains as it is.” There go my plans for another secret compartment. “Shall I try the window? There’s a convenient ledge—”

“I’m going to stop you right there.” Judging by his queasy tone, I suspect his concern is not for the window pane.

“You are making this a touch difficult, love.” I sigh. “What do you recommend?”

“We just wait it out. This is an old building; the power goes out a lot. It’s just a matter of time before it’s back on.”

“I see.” Or rather, I don’t. The lights died with the power, and Juno’s outdated little phone died ages ago. My own is turned off to conserve its battery, on his advice. Considering just how much of a charge it still has left, that doesn’t bode well. “Now, when you say ‘a matter of time’…”

“I’ll get some candles.”

He’s turned away from me when he lights them– a collection of broad candles meant to burn for dozens of hours at a time, all of them well-used– but I can tell he’s embarrassed.

I’m not trying to harp on him, I promise. I admire his resourcefulness and ingenuity, but Juno deserves the sun and stars. Just because he can manage just fine with castoffs and scraps doesn’t mean he should have to.
I sidle up to him. “I always did have a weakness for mood lighting.”

“I’m sure you do,” he says peevishly.

“As a matter of fact.” I press my lips to that one spot on the back of his neck, just at the edge of his hairline. Even in the dim light, I can see the shiver run down his spine. “I can think of a few ways I’d like to pass the time. Care to join me?”
The Fault In Our Wiring (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

It's not just the electricity that goes out in Juno's apartment. This time it's the heat.

Chapter Notes

This one's a response to multiple prompts, actually:

biomechatronic asked:
Sending over a fluffy prompt because life is hard, man: just, like, jupiter cuddles. That's all I've got.

Cecil G P requested “A fluffy piece where juno’s shit apartment looses heat for the night”

@typehere452 requested “Juno in a cuddle pile with his two most favorite persons ever”

Here you guys go. Rated PG

It’s one thing for the power to go out. Okay, fine. The apartment is shit and the wiring is even worse. It happens.

It’s another thing for the heat to go out. Not pleasant. At all.

But when the heat goes out during the deepest depths of a Martian winter? That’s just miserable. Especially when the doors and windows are digitally locked.

I mean, sure, we could break the window to escape, but that window is the only thing keeping the meager warmth inside and the sub-zero temperatures outside. We’ve already nailed old sheets to the windows to help with the insulation. Blankets might be better, but they’ve all been gathered into a big nest on the couch.

Rita’s on one side, her feet tucked underneath her so as not to surrender warmth to the cold wooden floor. I’m on the other, because I’ve got the good sense to wear socks. Nice socks, too. The fuzzy kind. Peter—tall, skinny, and completely the wrong build for this kind of weather— is sprawled across us both. His legs are thrown over Rita’s legs, his ass is on the cushion between us, and his torso is sprawled over my lap.

Don’t tell Rita, but It’s surprisingly cozy.

Sure, the temperature’s dropping by the hour, but between our three bodies and every blanket in the house, we’re keeping pretty warm. Rita explains the plots of her favorite shows. Peter tells us about places he’s been (a bit edited, from the sound of it). Mostly I listen. The conversations keep us occupied, and there are podcasts on Rita’s phone when the conversation runs dry. Sometimes we just doze.
All three of us have been nodding off enough, and Rita’s leg is starting to cramp. After a little bit of
groggy debate, it’s decided: we all get up, gather our blankets, and transfer our nest into the bed.

Rita on one side. Peter on the other. Two sets of arms wrapped protectively around me. Two bodies
tucked as tightly against mine as basic physics will allow. And on top, half a dozen blankets to keep
out the cold.

Okay, maybe I could get used to this.
Juno rips open the door and dives into the seat beside mine. He doesn’t look around before he all but launches himself over the barrier to the driver’s seat and points dramatically.

“Follow that car!” he bellows, and the poor driver is too shell-shocked to do anything but obey. Never mind that I had just arrived at my destination. Never mind that the cab wasn’t even parked long enough for me to get out.

I would be annoyed, but I’m trying too hard not to laugh. After all, he’s the one I came here to see. I would be disappointed to get all the way to his apartment only to find him cavorting off on another case without me.

What’s truly hilarious, though is that I’m sitting on his right—his blind side—and he’s so busy orchestrating a high-speed chase that he still hasn’t taken half a moment to glance my way.

So I sit, and I wait, and I employ all of my considerable skills to remain absolutely silent… at least until the chase takes us out of Hyperion City and into the Martian desert. Now there’s nowhere for the other car to hide, no way for it to lose us. Just a test of speed, Juno’s wallet, and the poor driver’s resolve.

But while we have a free moment, I arrange myself into a casual pose and flash my most charming grin. “You take me to the most interesting places, love.”

He startles so badly that he hits his head on the roof of the car. When he looks at me, his eye is wide and his mouth is agape. And then his gaze darts from me to all four of the doors, to the driver, to the ceiling, looking for any possible place I might have snuck in while the cab was breaking all local speed limits. If he’s going to be this adorable all the time, I need to surprise him like this more often.
King Glass

Chapter Summary

Juno considers his fantasies.

Chapter Notes

This one has been begging to be written ever since the first episode. I mean, come on, how do you hear that conversation in the Triad restaurant and not want to do something with it?

Rated M, because of course it is.

For the record: the fantasy doesn’t map to any culture or kingdom in particular, because it’s more Juno cobbling together an homage of a pastiche of a bastardization of a thing that some artist saw in a museum one time and tried to recreate years later without any references.

So basically, the same sort of thing most people think about when we try to picture ancient kingdoms.

Juno wakes up long before his alarm, feeling unnaturally well-rested, and snatching at the last remnants of a dream. His eye’s been open all of ten seconds and already it’s slipping away from him. All he knows is that it was a good dream—a really good dream, judging by how hard he is under the sheets. He hasn’t had one of those in a while.

He shuts his eyes and tries to recapture it. There was an image—something amazing—resplendent. But it’s almost entirely gone.

Almost.

*It means king, you know. In a language dead ten thousand years.*

The image rises to the surface: Peter Nureyev, bedecked in gold and silks, dripping with gemstones, bathed in expensive scents and oils from the farthest reaches of his empire. An ornate crown lays on his head, as slender and elegant as its owner. He sprawls across a throne, the embodiment of confidence and power.

*Semi-divine,* he said once, but there’s nothing halfway about him.

Juno’s cock twitches at the memory of the dream. He wraps a hand around his length and shuts his eyes, trying to recapture the dream.

He was there, too, in the dream. He’s sure of it.

*And a king, of course, is always in need of a queen.*
Juno tries to picture himself in the role: regal, elegant, perfectly composed. The image is so jarring that it almost breaks him out of the fantasy entirely.

Something else, then. A concubine? A courtesan? Someone dolled up and pretty, flashing skin and coy smiles to catch the king’s attention, who seduces this powerful man and is lavished with favors in return?

That’s not doing it, either.

Maybe he’s the one being seduced, then—a prince from a foreign land, forced into an arranged marriage and coaxed into bed with soft touches and sweet words.

“Oh, *come on.*” If he keeps this up, he’s going to lose the erection entirely.

Not somebody who’s meant to be pretty or cherished, then. Someone who shouldn’t be in the king’s bed—yes, that sounds more like it. A servant, maybe, who caught his king’s eye. Smoldering glances exchanged over serving trays. Stolen moments together when the rest of the court can’t see.

That kind of relationship might not be the healthiest in the world, but this is a fantasy, dammit, and there’s nobody to judge him inside his own head. Besides, it’s got Juno rock hard again.

In the fantasy, it’s not Juno telling himself that he doesn’t deserve this, but everybody else, and that makes every stolen kiss an act of defiance. Every time he straddles his king’s lap, it’s a great big middle finger to the courtiers and advisors who try to tell him he’s not good enough to be here. Because Peter had his choice of lovers—the courtly and the stately and the refined and the beautiful—and he chose Juno instead.

The Peter inside his head isn’t just in love with him, he’s consumed. When Juno denies his seduction, he begs. When he gets him into bed, he lavishes love and praise onto every inch of him. Juno’s worshipped by a man who might just be a god himself.

Juno’s lips quirk, and he pumps himself harder.

He *doesn’t* deserve it, though, not even in his wildest fantasies. Juno-the-servant knows it just as well as Juno-the-detective. It’s only a matter of time before they’re found out, and then the defiant servant will be executed for some trumped up charges like trying to manipulate the crown. It’s just another fucked-up element to this fantasy, but it makes him even harder. There’s an urgency here—they have no future together, so they couldn’t possibly fuck it up, and they don’t even bother planning. They just live like this, two doomed lovers trying to squeeze every second out of their time together. A few stolen moments frozen forever under glass.

*King Glass.*

The fantasy is so vivid that Juno can almost see him, can almost feel perfectly manicured fingernails over skin that’s glistening with perfumed oils. The silk draped over him is so fine that it almost floats behind him as he moves, like it’s moving through water rather than air—but it’s nowhere near as soft as those lips. The tenderness is such a sweet contrast against the friction below. They’re grinding against each other hard enough that they might just burst into flame.

*If I can’t have you on Earth, then I’ll follow you into the heavens,* the king whispers into his skin. *I will cross every star to reach you. In every life, in every world, I will always find you again.*

It’s not just a promise, it’s a sacred oath, and he seals it with a kiss so passionate that it sends Juno over the edge. He comes hard, gasping and shuddering, and lets himself sprawl limp across his bed.
He’s alone again, and decisively on Mars. The dream is gone completely, leaving nothing behind except the memory of exotic perfume.
“You’re looking sullen,” Peter remarks, not unkindly. Juno is sprawled across the couch. He didn’t even look up when Peter entered the room. “Are you having one of those days again?”

Because Juno has good days and bad days, and it’s nice not having to explain them to Peter when they happen. But this isn’t one of them— or at least, it’s not one of the really bad ones. He stares at the ceiling to avoid looking at Peter.

“Does it ever bother you?” he asks absently. “How many people you’ve killed?”

“Does it bother you?” Peter counters.

“I’m not asking about me.”

Peter sits down on the floor beside him. “I’m not sure I understand the question.”

“It seems pretty straightforward to me. Does it bother you?”

But Peter remains— genuinely, it seems— nonplussed. “Is this one of those religious things? Like not working on… Wednesdays, was it? There are a lot of faiths in this galaxy, Juno, and they have a lot of taboos. I have a hard time keeping them all straight.”

That’s enough to make Juno sit up. “Killing people is usually pretty high up on the list, though.”

“Angels do it all the time.” There’s nothing snide or hostile about it, not a single drop of snark. Just a childlike sincerity that chills Juno to the bone. Because that word means something else to Peter than it does to Juno.

When he speaks again, his voice is softer. “Not one of the big taboos on Brahma, huh?”

“It is if you’re caught, I suppose. But then, so is theft. So is vandalism.” He shrugs. “I’ve noticed those things carry different weight here. Most other planets, really. Some rules are mere formalities, and others are sins against god and man, with all sorts of justifications as to why. On Brahma, there were hundreds of laws, and only ever one punishment. It didn’t really matter what you did, so long
as nobody caught you doing it.”

Juno lays back again, feeling queasy.

“For what it’s worth, I don’t take any pleasure in it.” Peter slips his hand into Juno’s. “It’s just an unfortunate necessity sometimes. I try not to lose sleep over the things I do to survive.”

“Must be nice,” Juno grumbles, and Peter squeezes his hand.

“I can make an effort to avoid it.”

“But not because it bothers you.”

“No,” Peter says. “Because I love you, and it bothers you.”
The distance between us

Chapter Summary

Peter is unwilling to be touched

Chapter Notes

You can blame Pnureyev for this one:
post final resting place jupiter reunite but being abandoned has caused peter to really
hate being touched

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This isn’t a punishment. Juno understands that.

It’s the consequence of what he did, but in the end, it has nothing to do with him. It isn’t Nureyev being vindictive or petty or cruel. There is no amount of groveling or proving himself that will fix it.

Nureyev doesn’t like to be touched anymore. This is just the way things are now.

That isn’t to say that Juno didn’t grovel. Nureyev trusted him, and Juno threw it back in his face. Now he spends every waking moment proving that he can be worthy of trust. And he’s grateful for the chance to try—it gives him a purpose and a direction, after a lifetime of floundering without either.

Gloves and long sleeves become the basis of his wardrobe. When they’re out, he always walks just barely behind Peter, just enough so he can watch their surroundings and intercept anyone who might get too close.

When they go on cases together, Juno always pushes himself to think faster, to hit harder, to shoot straighter. Sometimes they do touch—when you’re back to back against a dozen gangsters, sometimes you can’t help it—but the contact is always respectful and brief, as much as it can be. Rather than extending a hand when Nureyev falls, Juno offers up his arm. Rather than pushing Nureyev out of the way of danger, Juno becomes very good at getting in its way. He’s even getting pretty skilled at patching up the post-case injuries; these days he can manage the whole thing without ever letting his gloves touch Nureyev’s skin.

In their private life, he strives to be more thoughtful, more considerate, more aware. They bond over good drinks and fine dining, with a table and conversation between them. When they sit together, he’s sure never to let himself sprawl into Nureyev’s space. He teaches himself to play the Brahmese sitar and lets music cross barriers that he can’t anymore. But he can watch Nureyev settle into comfort as the notes fill the air between them. It’s steady, and it’s calm, and it’s all he could ask for.

Chapter End Notes
God, this one made me sad to write.

It’s not so much the touch aversion– lots of my friends just plain don’t like a lot of physical contact, or have particular rules about the way they can or can’t be touched. What breaks my heart is the thought process that’s going on in Peter’s head to make him go from so canonically grabby to 100% hands-off.

Sooooooo we’re staying out of Peter’s head for this one.
The dame all the other cats want

Chapter Summary

Juno gets hit on at a club

Chapter Notes

the-little-red-queen asked:
I've had this prompt for a while now so here goes: Peter gets Juno all dressed up and looking good to go to some night club for (insert case/heist here) and then gets jealous when a bunch of people start hitting on his detective who is too busy looking at Peter to notice he's getting hit on?

In retrospect, that outfit may have been a mistake.

The lines are sleek and sweeping, the contrast of light and dark arranged to evoke the looming gravity of Hyperion City, accented lightly with the dusty red of Martian soil. The color brings out his complexion and the darkness of his eye. The cut flatters his form. Its suits him perfectly.

And it's a mild disaster.

Not that Juno doesn't look good in it– as a matter of fact, he's absolutely ravishing. Unfortunately, that's an opinion shared by a third of the patrons of this particular establishment.

Dozens of eyes are taking him in appreciatively and then mentally undressing him. A few patrons try to catch his eye– the one not fitted with a glass replica of Deimos, though that one is certainly dazzling.

A person of indeterminate gender sidles up beside Juno, a glass in hand. “Aren’t you easy on the eyes? Join me for a drink?”

“Not interested,” Juno says absently. His gaze is sweeping the club, squinting to make sense of flashing lights and mirrored walls.

That’s as much as Peter has the chance to see before he’s pulled away by his contact to look at the schematics for the next heist. It isn’t enough to memorize his own route; he has to plan a secondary route for Juno that won’t be noticed by the cameras or guards, and he’s got to do it before his contact notices which parts of the schematics he’s paying attention to. It’s a difficult task, but like always, he pulls it off beautifully. He might even be inclined to brag about his expertise, but the sight that greets him takes the wind out of his sails.

Juno’s on the dance floor, being paraded around by a man in one of the tackiest hats Peter has ever seen outside of an embassy. The man has no grace, no charm, and no right to have Juno hanging from his arm that way.
“Mind if I cut in?” Peter says a little too sharply. The stranger tries to sweep Juno away, but Peter is the better dancer, and far more skilled at insinuating himself into places where he isn’t wanted.

The look on his face must give too much away, because as soon as he’s got Juno to himself, Juno’s eye narrows. “Something wrong with the plan?”

“No, it’s fine,” Peter says, trying not to sound terse. “Have you been enjoying yourself?”

“You were right about the outfit,” Juno says. “Two dirty cops, a drug lord and a kingpin tried striking deals with me. Apparently nobody checks IDs before they start talking business anymore.” His lips curl into a devilish grin. “Care to help me find something incriminating?”
In the past few centuries, the human race has met and mingled with a few distant life forms. Not in the sense of intermarriage— not usually, though there have been a few oddball cases— so much as odd little retroviruses and microscopic symbionts that have integrated themselves into the interstellar travelers and carved out a little niche for themselves within human DNA. The changes they’ve made are small and hardly noticeable. Most of the time.

But anyone standing in that room (or honestly, within several hundred feet in any direction) could affirm that the sound coming out of Rita is not entirely human.

“Chance Sequoyah?” she says when she’s capable of forming words again. “The Chance Sequoyah? The Coyote of the Painted Plains?”

“Oh… yes?” One of the outlaw’s arms is thrown protectively in front of Mary-Anne; the other is busy hanging on to her hat.

It’s a testament of Moonshine’s character that the horse didn’t bolt.

“Oh my gawsh!” Rita practically leaps at her. “I’ve always wanted to meet you. You were on my top ten list of people I’d most like to have dinner with, right next to Nero and Malala. Ooh, I’m so excited. Can I get your autograph?”

Chance never actually learned how to sign her name, but she isn’t about to say as much to this bizarre stranger. Besides, before she has the chance to even consider, Rita waves her off.

“Oh, but I didn’t bring my autograph book! I shoulda known. Next time, for sure. Ooh, and I bet you’re Mary-Anne!”

Mary-Anne, at least, has an advantage here. She hasn’t been staying with Chance and the children for very long, but by now she’s grown accustomed to being shocked by outrageously familiar behavior from total strangers. This one seems fairly friendly, at least.

“I am,” she says. “And what’s your name?” It feels a little strange to speak to this woman like she’s a child— she easily has a few years on Mary-Anne herself— but it seems appropriate.
“I’m Rita. And I’m your biggest fan. I’ve seen like all the adaptations of your stories. I especially love the one where you were played by Charlene Riddle, and Chance, you were played by Cory Brighton. Oh my gosh, that one was soooo romantic!”

That makes no sense to Mary-Anne whatsoever, but she’s also become quite adept at parsing sentiment from context. “Why, thank you.”
“Alright,” Rita declares from behind her screen. “You hear rustling from the trees. Before you know it, the gibbons have you surrounded.”

“Did you mean goblins?” Alessandra asks.

“I meant what I said. Have you ever seen gibbons? Those little monkeys are terrifying. Roll for initiative!”

“That’s the twenty-sided one, love,” Peter says when Juno hesitates over his pile of dice.

“I’ve got it,” Juno says defensively, and gives the d20 a roll. “So that’s an eighteen plus… three? Twenty-one.”

“I’ve got an eleven,” Alessandra says.

“Fourteen,” says Peter.

“And the noisy little bastards are all under ten,” Rita cackles.

“Okay, so what does all of that mean?” Juno asks hesitantly. All eyes are on him.

“It means you go first.”

“Oh…okay…” He skims his character sheet, trying to make some sense of his options. As usual in this game, Peter comes to his rescue.

“Right here.” His fingers skate over the row of long rectangles indicating the weapons. “You have a broad sword, your spiked knuckles, and a crossbow.”

Juno remains nonplussed. “I know that part.”

“You need to decide which one to use against the gibbons.”

Juno’s stare takes on a disbelieving edge. “The monkeys?”

“That is what we’re going with,” Alessandra says.
“You can’t honestly expect me to shoot a bunch of monkeys, can you? I mean, they’re endangered, aren’t they?”

“Are they endangered here?” Alessandra asks Rita. Their Dungeon Master stares blankly for half a second before she makes a quick recovery, along with a couple of quick rolls.

“They are… yes. Very endangered. So endangered, in fact, that these might just be some of the last gibbons anywhere. And good riddance.”

Juno shoves his sheet away. “I’m not shooting them.”

Peter leans in. “Juno, perhaps you’d like to delay your turn until a better plan of action presents itself?”

Juno eyes him warily, but nods. Even when they’re a dwarf and an elf, he trusts Peter Nureyev.

“My turn, then,” Peter says with a grin. “I take off my cloak and use it on the monkeys.” He gives his dice a roll. “Given the penalties for an improvised weapon… does a sixteen hit?”

Rita frowns at the dice. “Wait. What are you doing with it?”

“I’m using it as a net, of course. To catch the monkeys.”

“Wait,” Juno says. “You can do that?”

“But of course.” Peter glances at Alessandra, a faint suggestion in his eyes. She catches on instantly.

“I’m making a handle animal check to see if I can tame them.”

“You can do that?”

“I got an 18,” she says. “What does that get me?”

Rita hunkers down, already rolling with it. “William Zircon caught three gibbons in his cloak, and they’re confused and trying to figure out why the sun suddenly turned off.” She rolls. “Two of them have decided to try going to sleep. Boudicea makes herself all big and scary lookin’, because she knows you gotta be the dominant monkey to make the others get into line. It works on…” Another roll. “Ten of them. But there’s another four who aren’t havin’ any of it.”

“Well, I’ve got some trail rations left, right?” Juno says. “I guess I take my turn and start feeding the ones who are being stubborn?”

“That’s enough to win them over,” Rita says. “So now you’ve got a pod–”

“Pack?” Peter asks.

“I think it’s called a troop,” Alessandra says.

“A whole freakin’ bunch of gibbons,” Rita says impatiently, and then turns up the dramatics again. “The last gibbons anywhere. Which leaves you all with a question to answer: What are you gonna do with ‘em all?”

Chapter End Notes
It’s embarrassing how long it took me to realize that you probably meant in the bedroom.
Juno and Peter live in a world of soulmates-- and they aren't each other's.

I got two separate prompts requesting this scenario.

PG

Juno watches miserably from the corner of the office while Peter interviews the new client. He’s hyper aware of their hands as they talk. Both men are wearing long sleeves, but he knows what the marks on their wrists say.

Peter says he stopped paying attention to the numbers on his wrist years ago, but Juno checks it every morning before Peter wakes up. He calculated out the exact moment. And even if Peter somehow doesn’t know, Juno does: it hit zero just as the new client walked through the door.

The other man is handsome– if not jaw-droppingly gorgeous, then at least he’s prettier than Juno could hope to be. Their banter is witty and comfortable. They lean toward each other as they talk, caught in a shared gravity.

In short, soulmates. You can see it from across the room.

The thought makes Juno feel sick. He knew this day would come. He’s been bracing for it since he met Peter, since he fell in love with him, since he realized that the numbers gave him less than a week until the big moment.

He still isn’t ready.

His hands are shoved in his pockets to keep them from shaking. He needs a drink– needs it more than he has in years, but there’s no bottle in the desk drawer anymore, and he can’t run to the liquor store to get more, because he can’t stand to look away.

Finally the client leaves, and Peter watches him go with an odd little smile on his face that Juno’s never seen before. Juno can’t make him smile like that.

He approaches the desk. He knows what he has to do.

“Maybe…” He clears his throat to get rid of the taste of bile. “Maybe you should take care of this one by yourself.” He hates himself for saying the words, but it’s the right thing to do. “You seem like you’ve got it handled.”

Peter hums absently. “It hardly looks like a difficult case, does it?” But then his eyes fall on Juno. “Is something wrong? You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”
He’s seen the ghost of something, alright.

Without a word, he takes Peter’s hand and brings it to his lips, pressing a kiss to his knuckles. Then he turns Peter’s hand over and tugs down the edge of his sleeve.

00:00:00

“I don’t have to take this case.” Peter’s voice is quiet.

Juno’s is lifeless. “Yes, you do.”

“We can pass him off to Alessandra. She won’t mind a bit of easy money.”

Juno knows what he’s trying to do. He knows, and he loves Peter even more for it. He loves him too much to let him do that to himself.

“If you don’t go after him, you’re going to regret it for the rest of your life. You’re going to resent me for having kept you away from him.” He waves a hand to the filing cabinet of old cases. “It happens all the time.”

“Juno, it won’t be like that—” Peter tries to put his arms around him, but Juno steps out of his reach.

“Please,” he says, more vulnerable than he’s been with anyone else in years. “Please don’t drag this out. Please don’t—”

God, he’s an idiot. He never should have started this relationship. He knew it wouldn’t last. He knew. He thought he could handle it when it ended, but he can’t. He’s not ready. He’ll never be ready.

Peter stares at him, and the hurt in his eyes breaks Juno’s heart all over again. “Do… do you really want this, Juno?”

No no no no no no no.

“You—” Juno swallows. “You make me happier than I’ve ever been. You deserve someone who can do the same for you.” He backs up another step. “It’s okay. Everything is going to be okay.”

“You’re not.”

“I’ll get over it.” No, he won’t. He can feel it in his chest. This might just kill him. “Besides, this isn’t about me.”

“No, it’s not,” Peter says, suddenly fierce. “This is my choice to make, Juno, and I choose you. I chose you when I first met you, numbers be damned.”

“You think you’re the first person who’s said that?” Juno rubs the dark stain on his own wrist where a tattooing needle scratched out the row of zeroes. Juno’s soulmate said the same thing to his wife: that he’d fight for their relationship. That paltry little things like destiny couldn’t divide them.

Turns out he was half right. They’re buried side by side in a little graveyard outside of Hyperion City. The obituary wasn’t clear whether she blamed him for wanting to leave, or whether he blamed her for making him stay. It probably doesn’t matter; the end result is the same.

“Listen.” Juno’s voice is raw. “Take the case. Take all the time you need. I’ll grab some things from—” He chokes around the word ‘our’. “—from the apartment. I’ll stay here if you need me.” He forces an artificial smile. “And hey, if it doesn’t work out, you’ve always got something to fall back
on, right?”

Peter draws a heavy breath. “You’re determined to end this, aren’t you?”

Juno can’t look at him anymore. “I’m not going to be the person who ruins your life.”

A corrosive silence hangs between them.

“Fine,” Peter says at last. “We’ll do this your way.” Juno cringes at the declaration. “I’ll give him a week. He can try to charm me, and then I’ll let you know where I stand.”

Juno’s shoulders sag. “Just… just promise me you’ll give him an honest chance.”

He may have won the argument, but he’s lost everything that matters.

Seven days.

Juno tries not to keep track, but he can feel the passing of every hour like sandpaper on his nerves.

He wishes Peter hadn’t said that. It would be easier to lose him completely, fall headfirst into despair so he can work on finding his way out. Instead he’s catching quick lungfuls of hope before he’s dragged back into that dark place where he can’t escape and he can’t breathe.

Alcohol helps. More than he expected, actually: he’s lost some of his tolerance for it since he met Peter.

In moments of sobriety he throws himself into his work. He takes quick, easy, mindless cases. He cleans the office. He organizes his filing cabinet. He takes out his anxieties on his speed bag until he’s too exhausted to move, and then he sleeps until he can’t. He does whatever it takes to make the clock keep moving.

Seven days.

It’s midnight, according to the glowing red numbers of the wall clock. It takes Juno a moment to register exactly what it is that pulled him out of sleep. There’s a sound– not the ordinary sounds of traffic and sirens and arguing pedestrians, but the faint rattle of keys in a lock. The creak of a hinge intentionally left squeaky to warn him of visitors. Footsteps, light as a cat’s paws.

Juno stops reaching for his gun, but he doesn’t relax. In a burst of childish desperation, he squeezes his eye shut– if he can’t see Peter, he won’t come any closer. He won’t say what Juno already knows is coming.

But Peter approaches all the same. He leans in close enough that Juno can smell his cologne– god, he’s missed that smell– and kisses Juno’s forehead.

“Oh, Juno,” he says fondly. “Your exile is over. Are you ready to stop being noble and come home?”

This is a dream. It has to be a dream.

He sits up slowly, careful not to wake himself up just yet. He wants to savor this moment.

There’s Peter, beautiful as ever. The dull stripes of light that seep through the blinds flatter him– but then, all light does.
“You’re back,” Juno says stupidly.

“I told you I would be.”

“You did.” But Juno didn’t believe it. He couldn’t. And yet… “He… isn’t your soulmate?”

Peter laughs. “He certainly is. I’m glad I had the chance to meet him properly. But there’s no romantic interest between us whatsoever.”

It takes Juno several long seconds to follow where this is going. To his credit, he did just wake up. “What… platonic soulmates? Is that a thing?”

“Soul-bound lovers tend to make for a more dramatic plot device, so they crop up more in cinema. And there are hardly any headline-worthy divorces or crimes of jealous rage between very good friends. But yes, love. Platonic soulmates are a thing.”

Juno sighs. It feels like the first real breath he’s taken in a week. “Please tell me I’m not dreaming.”

“You aren’t.” It’s a promise, sealed with another gentle kiss. “But I imagine you’ll have far more pleasant dreams in a proper bed.” He takes Juno’s hand and helps him up from his chair. “It’s time for you to come home.”
The ex

Chapter Summary

Juno and Peter aren't each other's soulmates, take 2

Chapter Notes

Pnureyev requested I do the reverse of the last prompt

didn’t tell Juno that my case ended a few days ahead of schedule, or that I’d be on the first spaceship headed to Hyperion City. My plan was to sneak into Juno’s apartment, rest my eyes for a few hours while lounging in his favorite chair, and catch him by surprise when he came in.

But when Juno steps in the door, he doesn’t look like he’s up for any surprises, even the pleasant variety.

He staggers inside and shuts the door tight behind him. His face is lined and gray, and even though I’m sitting only a few yards away from him, he doesn’t seem to notice me. Instead he goes straight for his liquor cabinet and pours himself a drink.

Something is wrong. Very wrong.

I rise to my feet and cross the apartment toward him. I took off my shoes at the door, and so I barely make a sound until I say his name. “Juno?”

The tumbler slips from his fingers and shatters on the floor. Glass cracks under the soles of his shoes as he backs away from me.

“Juno?” I’m alarmed now. “Juno, are you alright?” Is he sick? Poisoned? He looks like he might faint, and I start forward to catch him before he falls onto the broken glass.

He throws out both hands to stop me. “Peter, stay back.”

I freeze instantly. Because I trust him. “What’s wrong?”

“The glass.” His eye flashes to mine for barely an instant before he averts his gaze, like looking at me directly hurt him. “You’ll cut yourself.”

“I can handle it,” I say. “Juno, sit down—”

“I’ve got it.” More glass crunches underfoot as he crosses the kitchen to grab a broom and dustpan. “I’m wearing shoes.”

“Yes, and that can’t be good for them.” But I content myself to watch from a distance while Juno crouches low and sweeps up the offending shards.
He keeps sneaking glances in my direction, but he won’t raise his eye above my feet. He arranges himself carefully, his left side to me. At first I assume he’s trying to keep me in his peripheral vision, but then I notice the awkward way he’s moving his left hand. He’s trying to keep the back of his wrist toward me.

Alarm escalates into full-blown panic as I run through a list of things he could be hiding on the inside of his forearm. An injury? I’ve seen poisons and bombs forced into people’s bodies in the form of sub-cutaneous implants. Could something have happened to him?

I want to dive across the kitchen and grab his hand to get a better look, but I force myself to remain still. I trust Juno. I trust him. He’ll tell me what’s going on.

Any time now.

Though maybe with some prompting.

“Juno, please. Tell me what’s going on.”

He sweeps up the last of the glass and grabs a handful of scavenged takeout napkins to sop up the scotch before answering. “I met someone today on my way back from the office. Someone I used to know.”

My mouth goes dry. Miasma?

But he just turns his wrist toward me, like he’s revealing a deep, dark secret. The name scrawled across it reads Xabier. When I last saw him, the script was so faded it was barely visible on his skin. Now it’s dark and vivid, strengthened by fresh exposure to his soulmate.

I finally cross the kitchen to meet him, and there’s no pretense of broken glass to keep me back. I sweep my fingertips over his skin lightly, ready to pull back if he flinches. “Are you alright? He didn’t hurt you, did he?”

Juno can handle himself in most cases, but he’s reluctant to hurt people he loves– and it’s not unheard of for soulmates to turn violent when they’re denied.

“What? No. I’m fine.” He doesn’t seem to appreciate the flat stare I give him. “I’m fine!”

Gently, carefully, I slip my arms around his neck. “Alright. You aren’t hurt.” I believe you and I’m willing to listen. Please, talk to me.

He takes a few steadying breaths before he accepts. “He’s married– was married– to a friend of mine, back from the police academy. Was married, before I got involved. She introduced us. I don’t think she knew what she was getting into– I was still going by Jay at the time, and I don’t think she even knew my real name. And I just took one look at him, and…” He falters and looks away. There’s shame in his eye.

I kiss him softly and try not to wonder if he’s comparing my lips to anyone else’s.

“She was one of my first clients, you know,” he says miserably. “Right after I got kicked off the Force. Wanted to know who was sleeping with her husband.” He laughs, but it sounds like breaking glass. The rattle of a broken heart. “Easiest case I ever solved.”

“Oh, Juno…” I don’t know what else to say. There’s nothing I can say that will stop him from hurting. So I lean my forehead against his and listen.
“They tried to make it work. I tried to be somewhere else.” I suspect that this is the part he’s already told me: months spent drowning himself in the men, women and drinks of Valles Vicky’s Vixen Valley. He told me that it was a rough breakup that sent him there– he never mentioned that it was with his own soulmate.

Seeing him now, I understand why.

I let out a gentle sigh. “You said you saw him today. How is he?” There’s no room for jealousy here. Not when Juno’s hurting this way.

“Single, apparently. Guess the counseling didn’t work.” His eye is still downcast. “He wanted us to try again.”

“I see.” There’s no room for jealousy here, but it tries to squeeze in anyway. I shove it back as best I can. “What do you want, Juno?”

Finally he pulls back to look me in the eye. His expression is wary, but sincere. “You, Peter. I want you.”
The night before

Chapter Summary

The night before Juno leaves

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
well, it's me again. guess what I'm gonna prompt? in lieu of all of our sadness, how about filling in the blank that juno left us when he said "we spent the night together?"

Rated E

The format is going to be a bit… different today.

Years upon years ago, I read a little Sherlock fic called The Quiet Man by IvyBlossom, and I spent most of that summer babbling about it– because it was written in this odd first/second person* style in a way I’d never seen before. I’ve always wanted to give it a try, but I’ve never written a story which had enough introspection to even think about trying it. And then I started writing this story, and it happened to lend itself to the style very well.

It’s all right there. The way you refuse to look at me. The distance in your eyes when you do. The way your tone pitches from far-away to far-too-close.

And I can’t ask you what’s wrong– aside from the weeks of torture and imprisonment and violation and medical experiments– aside from nearly being executed– aside from losing your eye– aside from the moment when you locked yourself in a room with a bomb–

Aside from all of that, what’s wrong?

I could ask you how to help, but I’m afraid of the answer you’ll give me. You’re too unstable. Too self-destructive. Too shaken to be trusted to stand on your own foundation. And honestly, right now I’m too shaken to trust you, either. Because every time you shut me out I can almost see that airlock closing between us.

You still think you can save me by shutting me out.

I can feel you trying to do just that with every word you say. When I try to coax the words out of you, you respond with a careful lie.

You want to leave with me. Want to. But when have you ever gotten what you want?

So I try to show you that I want it too. Maybe your need to please will outweigh your need for
martyrdom. I bribe you with the soft, steady touches that I know you crave. I hold you close. I shower you with kisses. What good is it to wallow in misery? Look what I can give you. Look what we can share.

But it’s not enough. The doors keep sliding shut between us. Soon you’ll be gone for good.

But maybe there’s still a way to reach you.

I lean in until all you can breathe is me. Grind my hips to yours. Wrap my arms around your neck so you can’t escape. Lower my voice into a purr until I can feel the shiver run down your spine: “What do you say you and I begin that beautiful future right now?”

If you’re dazed, at least you’re interested. At least you’re finally kissing me back. At least when I slide my hands under your shirt, you’re already working on my belt.

You want this—really want this, it’s not just an act anymore. And I know, not just because you’re hard against me. You’re pulling me closer, so hard your nails are leaving welts on my skin. You’re gasping into my mouth like you need me to breathe. You’re whimpering and moaning when I move against you.

The closing doors slow to a halt. Finally you’re reaching back to me.

My kisses turn frantic as I start the push-pull that moves us to the bed. The edge of the mattress hits the back of your knees, and you hesitate. You’re still too afraid to fall. I understand, Juno. But I’ve got you. I won’t let you get hurt again. I’ve got one arm around your waist and one knee bracing against the bed. The fall is gentle and slow. You’re safe with me, love, don’t you see?

I bow low to kiss every inch of you I can reach, and then I peel back your clothes and kiss everything else. Every scrape and bruise, every cut, every inch of you that she tried to steal from me. You are holy, Juno, and I murmur prayers into your skin. I worship you, Juno.

You’re watching me so strangely—all wonder and confusion—like nobody’s ever touched you this way. Like it frightens you to be so intimate. Your arms hang at an awkward angle, like you’re not sure whether to curl into a ball or pull me closer.

Damn everyone who hurt you this way. Damn every arm that laid a hand on you. Damn every mouth that ever cursed you. Damn every careless lover who didn’t know how to treat a lady, let alone a goddess. You deserve so much better than that. And I can give it to you, if you’ll only let me.

I whisper entreaties: “How is that, love? Where do you want me?”

And if you don’t answer me with words (goddesses so seldom do), then you make yourself clear with whimpers and moans, with hands that tangle in my hair and knees that wrap around my waist. Your legs are parted and you’re sliding against my cock, and it’s driving me half insane.

My jacket is strewn across the foot of the bed, and I reach blindly for it, trying to remember which pocket is hiding the condoms and lubricant (how long ago did I put that there? Before the night we spent at the Oasis, when I thought our first night together would be a celebration of brazen victory, not a desperate plea of don’t leave me).

I work you open slowly, reverently. “How does that feel?”

“More, more, more—Nureyev, please—“

I ease a second finger inside you. A third.
You’re trying to get inside me, too, but you’re taking the long way round. Digging your nails into my skin, pulling me tight, arching your back until we’re so close I can feel your pulse against my chest. And all the while you’re fucking yourself against my hand, practically demanding, and who am I to deny you?

The first thrust inside you is divine. The look on your face is a glimpse into paradise. Your mouth is open in ecstasy. Your eye is dark and full of stars.

This is what I have to offer you.

I twine your hands in mine as we rock together. Every movement is a wordless entreaty: Don’t leave. Don’t shut me out. Don’t walk away from me.

Stay with me and I’ll give you everything I am. I will be whatever you want me to be. Whoever you want me to be. Your prophet, your angel, your priest, your acolyte— anything, Juno. Just don’t leave me.

You’re getting close. I can feel it in the way your knees tighten around my hips, the way your dick throbs between us, the way your hands claw against my back.

Your face is buried in my neck when you come, muffling your gasps against my jugular. Your muscles contract around me, and I let you pull me after.

I’m shaking with the effort of keeping my position, but I cling to you until your legs unfold from my sides and your arms slide to the small of my back.

You brush the hair out of my eyes. “That was…nice.” The sincerity in your voice is worth more than paragraphs of glowing praise. The soft curve of your lips, even more. I can count on one hand the number of times I’ve seen you smile.

I take it as a sign.

I finally allow myself to sink into the sheets and curl up against you.

My thoughts are fuzzy from afterglow and exhaustion, but I have it in me to offer one last confession.

“You know, Juno… call me a fool if you like, but… I think I may have fallen in love with you.”

“If you’re a fool, Nureyev, that makes two of us.” You laugh, and it sounds like a sliding door.
Bring him home

Chapter Summary

Young Peter goes out on a heist by himself, and Mag waits anxiously for him to come home.

Chapter Notes

I started listening to "Bring Him Home" from Les Miserables, and it turned into this.

The sky feels oppressively close tonight. Clouds hang low in the atmosphere, blotting out moons and stars and floating cities all together.

Mag hates watching the sky, but he can’t take his eyes off it. His eyes are red and dry, but he can’t let himself blink for even a moment, as if his vigilance can keep the lasers from coming down.

He never should have sent Peter out tonight. He could have found someone else for the job–

But he didn’t. For some damned reason, he sent Peter, who promised he was ready for this kind of mission. Who’s clever and nimble and a master of the art. Who’s just as vulnerable as anyone else to the bolts from above. Who’s too young to be out there alone. Who’s too innocent to die tonight.

“You can’t have him.” His voice is too soft to be heard by anyone but Gods and Angels. “He’s the only good thing left on this forsaken planet, do you understand me? This world isn’t worth saving if he’s not around to be a part of it. So don’t you dare take him from me. Don’t you dare.”

The sky responds with a low roll of thunder.

“Why am I wasting my time talking to you?” Mag asks. “You’ve never cared before.”

But maybe whoever’s up there– a God, an Angel, or a bored laser technician– is listening. Because for the first time that Mag can remember, an hour passes without the slightest flash. Even the gathering storm holds its breath and waits until light footsteps pad up the streets.

There’s Peter, scuffed and dirty but unharmed, his glasses sliding down his nose like always.

“Hey, Mag,” he says sheepishly, picking his way up the steps to their safehouse. “I’m sorry I’m late, but–”

He’ll get to finish that thought later. Right now he’s caught up in a hug so big it sweeps him off the ground.

“Oh, my boy,” Mag whispers, squeezing him tight. “Thank God you’re safe.”
"On Loving a Fighter"

Chapter Notes

mickmercury asked:
jupiter and the poem "on loving a fighter"?

I found the poem here.

This one's rated M

I think it's admirable. Standing up against the big, mean world and laughing.

And oh, what a laugh. Your lips are split and swollen, your teeth are stained with your own blood. Nowhere else is your eye so bright as when you're fighting. There's no place on the battlefield for sadness or guilt or shame, only a rage so brilliant it makes the whole world glow. Five-to-one are your favorite odds, and you dance among your adversaries like a Maenad at her feast. Every dodge is graceful, every punch an act of beauty, and I thank whatever god made you for the chance to watch you move.

Your enemies cower when they see you plunge into battle. I'm trembling too, but for reasons they'll never know.

I love how rough you get when you're still coming down from the adrenaline high. I love the way you pin me down and take what you want and for once never question if you deserve it. I love the look on your face when you make me scream, like watching sparks erupt from a blazing flame.

And I love you still when your rage burns itself out. And when you collapse back into the embers, I'll wrap you in my arms and keep you warm.
On Loving A Fighter (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Sometimes Juno needs the chance to vent some frustrations. Peter is more than happy to help.

Chapter Notes

This one was directly inspired by the previous prompt, along with some analysis on just how kinky Peter actually is (very).

Rated E.

The secret to understanding Juno is learning to read his moods. He needs comfort when he’s soulful, gentle affection when he’s tender. Playful ribbing when he’s too cynical for his own good, praise when his wit is especially wry.

And when he’s angry, he needs watching.

It isn’t always a problem, of course. An unstated perk of his vocation is that he has a multitude of chances to see justice done, and plenty of violent enemies to take his anger out on when it isn’t. But since we started working cases together, he’s started being more careful about the cases pursues and the situations he gets us into. More and more often, he prefers to set traps and show off his marksmanship rather than his fists. And I appreciate the concern, really I do, but it leaves certain other needs unfulfilled.

You can see it when it happens, if you know the signs. The little ways the tension mounts, ratcheted higher with every bit of bad news, and then every little inconvenience. Without an appropriate victim to let it out on, he bottles it up inside himself. Then the snide little comments start– the absentminded self-deprecation, the casual self-loathing. The levels on his liquor bottles start to dip when I’m not around to see him drink. And then the lingering glances at things that shouldn’t look nearly so appealing.

He’s aware of his anger problems, he’s explained to me when he’s calm enough to put it into words. He’s his mother’s son, after all, and he can feel her influence running through his veins every time his blood boils. He hates that part of himself, hates himself for not being able to stop it, and that loathing only feeds its power. He lives in fear of his own fury, knowing full well that it’s only a matter of time before he does something truly unforgivable.

It’s been happening again. He’s sullen and reclusive. His shoulders are hunched over a tabloid, his brows knitted as he reads, his hands balled into fists so tight that he can’t even hold the paper.

“Enjoying your fairy tales, Juno?” I hum, leaning over him.
He grunts. “I’m busy.”

“That’s unfortunate. I’m in need of a bit of entertainment.” I snatch the tabloid out from under him. Before he can grab it back, I’ve dog-eared the page he’s on and rolled it into a tight cylinder, tucking it into my back pocket.

“I said I’m busy.” He rises from his chair, impatience and agitation crackling off him like sparks.

My grin remains vicious and sly. If he really wanted me to stop, there are words he can say to make me stand down without a fight. But it’s a fight he wants right now, and I’m more than happy to give it to him. “Go on. Entertain me.”

He’s fully on his feet now. “Nureyev—”

And then I flatten myself against him and say the words that always begin this little game: “Go on, Detective. Why don’t you show me what you’re made of.”

Permission granted. Now do your worst.

He grabs me by the shoulders and shoves me away. I twist his momentum and bring myself right behind him, close enough that he can feel my breath on his neck when I laugh.

He whirs to face me, kicking over the chair in the process and sending it sliding across the floor with a squeal, and the noise is enough to distract me for a fraction of a second– just long enough for him to grab me by the wrist.

I spin out of his reach, but my clever Detective knows me too well. Before I can put a safe distance between us, he’s back in my space, pinning me to a wall so abruptly that it knocks the breath from my lungs.

“Are you done?” he growls. In a gentler mood he might have asked *are you hurt?* But I know the words to stop this as well as he does, and I’m not about to end this yet.

“Oh, Detective,” I say breathlessly, and not just because of that impact. “I’ve barely begun.”

His grip on my wrist is unrelenting. There’ll be a bruise there later in the shape of his hand. When he grabs for the other, I throw myself against him. My knee rises to his groin. My mouth finds his and I catch his lower lip between my teeth.

His grip loosens just long enough for me to slip out of his hold, and I’m behind him once again.

He lunges and I dodge. His fists fly, but I deflect with practiced ease. Even when his blows fall, they land on shoulders and hips– even with my consent, he would never really hurt me.

I sweep a kick to knock his feet out from underneath him, and he hits the floor with another gasp. I pin him down between my knees, already reveling in the feel of his groin straining against mine. I lean down to nip at his lip again.

“Oh, Juno,” I purr.

And then I’m interrupted by a sharp click and a sudden coldness around my wrist.

Before I can ask myself when he grabbed the handcuffs, he buckles underneath me, sending me toppling over his head and onto the floor. I try to direct my momentum into a roll, but it’s rendered less graceful by the other handcuff still caught in his grip. Before I can scramble away, he’s snapped
it around my other hand, the chain caught around one of the legs of the desk.

“Finally.” His voice is so low I can feel it in my bones. “I’ve got you.”

And then he’s on top of me, grabbing at my clothes. I chose this outfit specifically because it’s disposable, worn out and out of style, but the sound of ripping fabric always catches me by surprise. My pants will need mending later; the shirt is beyond repair. Packets of lube fall out of my shredded pockets, and Juno rips them open between his teeth, letting it slide down his fingers in slow drips.

I’m ready for him— I made sure to take care of that while he was sulking— but he prepares me himself, makes sure I can take it before he rams himself into me.

I was expecting it, but still I can’t help but howl.

He silences me with two unlubed fingers shoved into my mouth. I wrap my lips around them and suck, my tongue swirling, my teeth raking down his skin so hard I might just scrape off his fingerprints.


He rewards me with a snap of his hips that leaves me screaming, and then another. I can see the exact instant that he gives himself over to frenzy, and it makes my heart race.

I love seeing him like this. I love the rough, ravenous way he kisses me. I love the way he pounds into me, so hard I swear I can feel him in my throat.

My legs are already wrapped around his waist, my ankles locked behind his back. With every thrust, I’m caught in the delicious, vicious friction between us. But as orgasm rushes closer, my back arches to bring me even closer. My eyes roll back. My toes curl. My head lolls back, and my screams fall silent as I’m left gasping for air.

Juno’s hips stutter against mine. He pulls out just in time to come across my stomach.

A slip of my wrist, a wire from my sleeve, and my hands are free to catch him and ease him onto the floor beside me before he has the chance to collapse.

I take a clean scrap of cotton from what used to be my shirt and use it to wipe the sweat from his skin.

“Did I–” Juno’s voice is raw. “Did I hurt you?”

“You were wonderful, Juno.” I kiss his forehead. “I love seeing you so passionate.” My voice isn’t much better than his at the moment. I’ll be rasping for days– a nice little reminder of today, along with the bruises and the soreness when I sit down. I’m going to treasure those souvenirs as long as I have them. I’m not about to let Juno feel guilty for giving them to me. “What about you, though? Any pain?”

“No. No, that was…” His hand rises to cover mine, and his eyes flutter shut. “It was nice.”
When Juno opens his eye, he’s staring at the familiar cracks of his office ceiling.

Funny. He doesn’t think he was planning to sleep in the office last night. His desk isn’t littered with the bottles that usually indicate a bender, either, but his mouth feels like he’s been licking the office carpet, the faint noise of Rita’s arrival feels like a jackhammer against his skull, and the thin shafts of light streaming through the blinds feel like lasers when they hit his eyeball.

He was definitely drunk last night.

He tries to sit up, and is immediately assaulted by a wave of agony as the skin across his back stretches and pulls. Now that he’s paying attention, he can feel tape clinging to his sides, holding sheets of gauze in place.

“Rita!” he calls, and she pops her head into the office.

“Good morning, Mista Steel,” she singsongs, loud enough that he’s tempted to pass out here and now. “Didja have a fun time last night?”

Juno groans. He’d like to send her back out, but he needs to know. “What the hell happened?”

“Well, if you don’t mind me sayin’, it looks like you had a little too much to drink. Not that I’m gonna judge or nothin’, you know me.”

“No, my back.” He tries to grab at his shirt, and hisses in pain as the attempt to reach stretches his skin even more. “Help me get my shirt off.”

She eyes him cautiously. “Your… shirt?”

He cuts her off before she can start on one of his tirades about HR and sexual harassment. “Something happened to my back last night, and I need to know what. Now help me already.”

“I don’t–”

“Rita.”
“Alright, alright.” Carefully she helps him untuck the shirt and ease it over his head, careful not to let the fabric brush against the wounded skin. There aren’t any bruises on his chest or arms to indicate defensive wounds, but that doesn’t mean much if he was drugged.

Rita peels off a stretch of tape, pulling back the gauze, and gasps.

“What is it?” Juno demands, already preparing himself for the worst. “Is it Triad work? Kanagawa? Dammit, Rita, It feels like I’ve been flayed. Talk to me.”

He hisses in pain as she rips away another length of tape, and then another. A cluster of dried blood comes off with one of the gauze pads, but she keeps going.

“Mista Steel, it’s beautiful!”

Wait. “It’s what now?”

“Oooh, lemme get a picture! Hold still.” She fumbles with her phone for a moment, then brings it around for him to see. “Oh, boss, you shoulda told me you were gettin’ a tattoo!”

No wonder his back feels raw. The entire thing is covered with fresh scabs, each one of them stained with white ink that stands out sharply against his dark skin. The lines and curves are too haphazard for him to make any sense out of them at first, but then he realizes: it’s lineart. Very detailed lineart, meant to be colored in at some later date. In the mess he recognizes wings, a pair of cards torn in half and fluttering to a train. A compass. A fox with a clever smile and cutting teeth.

He’ll need to check his credit card receipts for the name of the artist. Rita was right. It really is beautiful.

“Okay, boss, you gotta tell me,” she gushes. “What does it mean?”

He stares at the marks on his back: a love letter etched into his skin, addressed a dozen times without ever using his name.

“I…” He swallows. “I must have been pretty drunk last night. I have no idea.”
Skin and Ink (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Peter learns about Juno’s new tattoo

Chapter Notes

wastrelwoods asked:
if you don’t mind continuing the tattoo prompt, what does Peter say when he sees Juno’s new ink?

It isn’t that Peter doesn’t trust Juno. His detective has proven himself reliable a dozen times over on this last case alone, to say nothing of the several they’ve shared before that. And he seems genuinely remorseful for what he did before. Peter wants to trust him. He does.

But every time he shuts his eyes, his heart starts racing and he has to check one more time, just to make sure Juno hasn’t left again.

Because sleep is apparently impossible, Peter whiles away the hours just enjoying Juno’s company. His detective looks so much more peaceful when he’s asleep. Younger, without the lines of care and worry that pull at his scars and drag at his eyes. He looks like he needs more rest like this.

Juno shifts in his sleep, rolling from his back onto his side, facing away from Peter and the light seeping in from between the blinds. And for the first time, Peter gets a good look at the tattoo.

He was aware of it before, of course– he caught a glimpse of crisscrossing lines when Juno’s shirt rode up earlier, saw the ink encroaching onto Juno’s sides when that shirt came off entirely, noted a splash of color when he was sinking his teeth into Juno’s throat– but he never stopped to really look. If anything, he assumed it to be some kind of abstract design.

It isn’t. Not entirely.

He sees the native calligraphy of Brahma inscribed across an Angel’s wings. A fox’s teeth. An owl’s eyes. A crown. A plasma knife. A train. A mask. There are newer elements to the design, brighter and more vivid, inked on top of scars instead of interrupted by them: a brass falcon covered in gems; a gun with a hidden compartment; a poisoned rose; a pair of dancers in clothes that he remembers all too well. That one is still fresh enough to stand out, in that odd place between scab and scar.

Their adventures together, lovingly etched across his skin in a language only they can read.

The lines are thin, but incredibly detailed. The colors are vibrant and superb. It must have been excruciating to have it done– hours and hours of needles carving into his skin. He can’t help but wonder how much of it was an act of self-flagellation. Knowing Juno, it isn’t an insubstantial amount. But there’s no self-destruction here. Only breathtaking, heart-wrenching beauty.
He leans in close and kisses the uppermost boundary of the tattoo: Mars and its two little moons, nestled at the base of his neck, just low enough to be hidden by the collar of a shirt. Brahma is the opposite boundary, cradled in the small of his back. With its swirling clouds and elegant rings, it could be easily mistaken for Saturn by anyone who didn’t know better. But Peter knows.

A hand slides against his cheek, fingers tangling in his hair.

“Hey,” Juno murmurs, his voice still thick and slurred from sleep. “C’n I get you something?”

Peter presses another kiss into Juno’s shoulder. “I’m alright, love. Go back to sleep.”
Awkward questions

Chapter Summary

In which Juno has a uterus and bad timing

Chapter Notes

LettuceKitty asked for a fic in which Juno and Nureyev are both (and/or present as) female.

But given the nature of gender on Mars, I don't think very much would actually change with these two. So I focused on one of the few things that would.

Rated T, because uterus things squick some people out.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I’m not going to ask him.

I’m not.

Nope. Not gonna do it.

Not even a little.

We’re in a freakin’ tomb, I don’t even know how deep we are underground, Miasma is dragging us out of bed and to her experiments at all hours, and she’s barely feeding us as is– probably figures it’s a waste of resources, considering she’s planning to kill us both anyway.

We’ve been surviving off the contents of Nureyev’s pockets so far, mostly the food and medical supplies he’s got stashed all over the place. Miasma’s assistants took away our knives and lasers, but they didn’t bother with the rest, probably out of some distant semblance of sympathy. And Nureyev has deep pockets.

There’s a chance he’d have what I need.

Maybe.

But I’m not gonna ask him, because that would be… I don’t know, that would be weird. I don’t even like asking Rita– of course, I don’t need to ask, because she tends to keep supplies stashed in a little basket in the office bathroom, complete with a cute little ribbon, as a courtesy to clients. I’m sure she doesn’t notice that I sometimes steal a few for my own use, on days when I’m caught by surprise and don’t have my cup on hand. I’m sure she wouldn’t care.

But I still don’t want to ask.

“You seem pensive, Juno,” Nureyev observes.
I wave him off. “Nah. Just thinking.”

He smiles fondly, but not without concern. “Unpleasant thoughts? You look uncomfortable.”

“Do I? In a luxury resort like this?” I wave an arm to indicate the bare floor and buckets we’ve been provided. There is an actual bathroom, complete with a shower, that we’re brought to once per day, mostly to avoid offending Miasma’s nose. But the deranged xenoanthropologist apparently doesn’t share Rita’s sense of courtesy, and I’m not about to ask any of the guards to share.

Ugh. I feel wet and sticky and gross, and it’s not going to go away.

Well, Nureyev’s going to find out sooner or later– either when I ask him, or when I start bleeding all over everything.

“You wouldn’t happen to have a tampon in one of those pockets, would you?” I ask finally. “Or a pad? Or… literally anything. I’m dying over here.”

“Well, since you’re dying.” That fond, indulgent smile again, like I’m the dramatic one between the two of us. “I have both, actually. Do you have any preferences?”

Oh, thank god. “Tampon.”

He pulls a little vinyl-wrapped thing out of his vest and tosses it to me. “I would offer you some ibuprofen, but I’m afraid I ran out a few days ago.”

His face is carefully composed, but there’s still that slight look of amused concern. Apparently I wasn’t hiding my cramps nearly as well as I thought I was. Makes sense– they hurt like fuck.

“Don’t worry about it,” I say instead. “This is plenty.” There’s just the matter of getting it into place.

I get up and lean close to the bars.

“Hey, assistants!” I call out, loud enough that I can’t be ignored. “I’m demanding a bathroom break.” When they don’t high-tail it in here, I raise my voice even louder. “I said get down here, or I swear to god I’ll bleed on everything you love!”

I can barely hear their approaching footsteps over the sound of Nureyev’s snickering.

Chapter End Notes

For the record, Juno's not ashamed of having a period-- just the fact that he has to ask for help in the first place. Because that's the kind of lady he is.
Peter works mechanically, the motions so familiar they’re locked into his muscle memory.

“Rule One of Thieving: When you abandon a safe house, leave nothing behind.”

They’ve had to do this plenty of times, whenever one of their hideouts got compromised. There’s been a lot over the years.

But this is the first time he’s had to do it by himself. This is the first time Mag hasn’t been around to prattle all the rules at him while they work.

He’s never going to name another Rule One of Thieving again.

Peter has to stop typing. His hands are shaking too badly to hit the proper keys. His heart is hammering in his chest.


He goes back to typing. Finishes the familiar lines of code and executes the program. Within seconds, the computer’s memory banks are wiped clean. It stops functioning, but its mechanical components start spinning faster and faster until they stutter and skip and keep going regardless. While the computers rip themselves into scrap metal, Peter moves through the house, emptying every secret compartment.

Cash, tools, food: stuffed into his pockets, layered perfectly so they don’t obviously disrupt his silhouette. Anything that can’t be taken with him is reduced to ashes, but it’s fairly short work. Mag did the hard work of liquidating their more difficult assets before they started the job. The interplanetary passport comes last, only once the ultraviolet ink has dried.

It doesn’t look right, sitting on his workstation alone like that. There were always two passports, side by side. His and Mag’s. And now…

He grabs it and stuffs it into his pocket. He can save the mental breakdown until he gets offworld—assuming he can survive long enough to make it to the spaceport.

He slips into a new persona: pleasant, hardworking, and blandly charming. The kind of young man who might warrant a smile and nod in passing, but no more.

And then he steps outside. There’s no bolt from the heavens. No knife in the back.

Just Brahma, as it’s always been. Brahma, still unaware that less than an hour ago, Mag died trying to save them all from the tyranny of Angels. If they ever learn his name, it’ll be as a villain and a traitor. News channels will label him an enemy of the state. Ordinary people will casually curse his name over the breakfast table.

The thought steels his resolve.

If that’s going to be Mag’s legacy on Brahma, then good riddance. There are other planets out there. Free planets, without floating cities or their Guardian Angels. The other members of the Resistance thought they could work things out peacefully, well, now they’ve got their chance. Peter’s done his part to give them that much. The rest is up to them.

He sets out for the spaceport, hearing Mag’s voice in his head.

Rule One of Thieving, Pete: When you see your chance, take it.
Body swap

Chapter Summary

Juno and Peter wind up in each other's bodies.

Chapter Notes

catachrestic-catastrophe asked:
Could I get a fluffy jupiter bodyswapping au? Maybe nureyev takes care of Juno's body and juno doesn't know what to do about it?

Rated T

Juno rushes back to the apartment as quickly as he can without bumping into things or falling over. It's been more than a day, but he's still not used to this body. He feels almost like a gazelle, effortlessly bounding around on Peter's long legs. It's hard to judge distances now that he's got two eyes again, and it's even harder now that he's a good half-foot taller than he was a week ago. And every bump and misstep leaves a mark– Juno's seen peaches that bruise less easily.

So when he climbs the stairs to his apartment, he takes them slowly, careful not to cause any extra harm.

He's still bouncing on the balls of Peter's feet when he unlocks the door.

“Peter!” he calls the moment he gets inside. “Peter, they've found the lab!”

There's no reply.

The apartment is unoccupied. The blinds are drawn. The air is humid, and smells like… lilac? And faintly he can hear the strings of a Brahmese sitar. Cautiously, he follows the strains of music.

“Peter?” he asks, knocking on the bathroom door. “You in there?”

“You can come in,” calls a voice from the other side. “The door's unlocked.”

Listening to that voice is like the auditory equivalent of looking into a funhouse mirror. Juno can recognize it as his own, but only barely. It's already too high when Peter tries to imitate Juno’s tone; in Peter’s own lilting cadences, it sounds almost shrill. How can Peter stand to be in the same room as him?

When he opens the door, he’s hit by a wave of aromatic steam so thick he has trouble breathing for a second. As he stops to catch his breath, he shuts the door behind him and averts his eyes.

Peter’s lounging in the bathtub, entirely nude. Which is fine– it isn’t like Juno hasn’t seen Peter naked before– but looking at him now, in Juno’s body, feels a little like looking at a stranger. The body language is right, but the body is all wrong– too short, too stocky, too scarred. He’s lounging in
the bathtub, his– Juno’s– face obscured by a mud mask, his hair soaking in what might be coconut oil. One leg is folded over his lap, and he’s working at the soles of his feet with a pumice stone and looking entirely too pleased with himself.

“Peter?” Juno says blankly.

“Hm?”

“What are you doing?”

“I think that’s fairly obvious, don’t you?”

Alright, maybe. The better question is why? Peter’s grooming habits have always been more particular than Juno’s, but this looks pretty extreme even for him. He’s even had a manicure.

“If you didn’t like the smell, you could have just taken a shower. You didn’t have to open a spa in here.”

Peter chuckles, and the sound is so completely him, regardless of the voice he uses.

“Anyway,” Juno says quickly. “Rita just called from the station. The HCPD found the lab. If we head over now, we can help catch the bastards that did this to us.”

He hums. “I’m sure Hyperion City’s finest can handle it.”

“Finest? Have you met these guys?”

Peter chuckles again, but doesn’t rise out of the tub. “I’m sure they’ll be fine.” He stretches out his legs and then begins working on the other foot with his pumice stone. “Besides, I’m in no hurry.”

“Why not?” Juno asks, more puzzled than exasperated. Why wouldn’t anyone be rushing to get out of that body?

“It’s quite educational, really,” Peter says. “You know, you’ve never mentioned the pain in your knee when you run.”

Juno blinks. “It’s fine.”

“I’m sure it is, love, but you could probably avoid most of that with a knee brace. Just for the bad days. Occasional supplements might keep it from getting any worse. I can pick some up at the store sometime, if you’d like.”

It isn’t like Juno hasn’t noticed the lack of pain since he’s been in Peter’s body. It was a little disorienting at first. “Um… yeah. If you want to.”

“And your back– there’s just so much tension.” He pauses in buffing Juno’s feet for a moment and lays back with a sigh. The noises he’s making as the hot water hits his shoulders are obscene, and Juno has absolutely no idea how to feel about that. Normally he’d be thinking about joining Peter in that tub, but it’s his own body. “I think more back rubs are in order once this is all sorted out, don’t you? Work some of these kinks out.”

Juno is seriously wondering if the kinks in his back aren’t the only ones Peter’s talking about. Is Peter one of those guys who’s always wanted to know what it’s like to have sex with himself? Juno won’t deny that watching two Peter Nureyevs going at it would be hot as hell, but he still can’t get over seeing his own face peeking out at him from behind that mud mask. That would be weird. He’d
be willing to try for Peter’s sake, but it would still be weird.

Peter sinks below the water, scrubbing his hands over his face and hair. The water, already dyed purple from whatever he’s been soaking in, turns opaque as the facial dissolves. When he sits up again, rivulets of water pour down his back.

Juno swallows. “You… ah… you’re really enjoying yourself, huh?”

Peter flashes a grin that Juno’s going to have to remember the next time he wants to get laid. Why didn’t anyone tell him his face could look like that?

“I enjoy taking care of you, Juno. And if I’m going to have the opportunity to do so directly, far be it from me to waste it.”
Chapter Summary

Peter gives Juno a massage.
Rated T

Chapter Notes

gavrielsaporta asked:
Oh man I've been thinking about your massage candle comment about the locked in the apartment without power fic so how about jupiter - massage candles

pnureyev asked:
non-sexual jupiter massages?

“You sure this isn’t some kind of religious experience?” Juno asks, stripping off his shirt.

“Would you like it to be?” Peter’s grin is lit up by what has to be the hundredth candle in this room. Their collective warmth is enough to leave Juno sleepy, and the scents mixing in the thick air really aren’t helping.

“Just as long as you don’t sacrifice me to some Ancient Martian god or something.” He lays on the bed, his face tucked into his folded arms, feeling a little bit like an offering on an altar.

“Would a Venusian god be acceptable?”

Juno yawns. “Yeah. Venusian’s okay.”

“Duly noted.” The last of the candles must be lit, because Peter crawls onto the bed, carefully positioning himself so that he’s straddling Juno’s thighs. “Shall we begin?”

He starts at the small of Juno’s back, digging the heels of his hands into the skin and pushing deep into the muscle. The sound of flickering candles is joined by the crack and pop of vertebrae as they’re forced back into their proper alignment.

“Holy shit,” Juno mutters. “Did you hear that?”

“I did.” Peter continues, pressing and pushing, stretching out a spine that’s been far too compressed for far too long.

“God, Peter.” It comes out a sigh. “That feels better already.”

“I’m happy to hear it. But I’m not finished with you yet.”

He pulls one of the candles off the bedside table and blows out the flame, pausing for a moment to
admire the plume of smoke rising from the wick. Then he tips it out. Molten wax pours onto Juno’s back, not unpleasantly hot, but still enough of a surprise to make him gasp.

“Not too much, is it?” Peter touches the wax to test it just in case.

“No. No, it’s fine,” Juno assures him. “Go ahead and do… whatever it is you’re doing.”

Peter’s hands splay in the pools of wax, spreading it across the planes of Juno’s back. The heat seeps through his skin and right into his bones, deep and perfect.

Juno grunts as Peter’s fingers dig deep into his muscle– and that grunt melts into a groan as Peter untangles the first of his knots.

Peter leans low. “Enjoying yourself?”

Juno can only give him a muffled hum in reply.

Peter chuckles warmly and continues kneading Juno’s back. “You know, I posed as a masseur for a heist once, a few years ago. You would be amazed at the kinds of tricks you can pick up at a place like that.” He rearranges himself, grinding his elbow into a particularly stubborn bundle of nerves. Juno almost whimpers in relief as the muscle relaxes for the first time in years. “It’s a good skill to have. Got me out of more than a few tight spots over the years. Even saved my life on one occasion.”

Juno believes him. Without all the tension in his back, he feels almost boneless. He tries to pay attention as best he can, but he’s too lost in the warm haze of his own relaxation.
Oh, the horror

Chapter Summary

Peter has an... unusual accessory

Chapter Notes

ingridlake asked:
last week i got this in my ask box from an anon as a response to the Nureyev's Endless Pockets nonsense: "Juno and Peter are getting hot and heavy and Juno unbuttons Peter's shirt but stops at the waist because his hands brush against something: a fanny pack". I've been trying to write a fic for it but I just cannot do it justice. I trust you though. I trust you to do this horror justice if you feel so inclined.

Rated T, for oggling?

This…

This can’t be right. Can it?

Is it… is it new? Did he just start doing this? Because I swear I would have noticed it at some time. I mean, how long have I been ogling his ass that I didn’t notice something like this?

But then, how long have I been ogling his ass today, and somehow I didn’t notice it until just now. Oh god, it has one of those plastic side release buckles and everything. I didn’t realize those came on anything other than children’s backpacks anymore.

Apparently they do.

“Juno? Juno, is something wrong?”

God, I can see it now. Yup. No wonder I didn’t catch it before– his suit jacket is custom tailored to accommodate the goddamn thing without losing its nice, clean lines. Who does that? I’m not just talking about Nureyev anymore– which self-respecting tailor looked at a goddamn fanny pack and decided that this was why they went to sewing college or whatever? Did they have to be bribed to do it, or is that just a normal thing?

Is it normal? Have I been walking past crowds of people wearing hidden fanny packs all my life and just not noticed until now?

Is every single skinny person with an unusually perky ass going to be suspect from now on? Is this what the world has come to?

“Juno? Would you mind saying something, at least? You’re starting to worry me.”

I have to physically tear my eye away from it. “Sorry. What were you saying?”
“Admiring the accessory, I see,” he hums.

“It’s… um… it’s definitely different.”

“You know, you’re not the first person who’s said that to me. I’ve heard it called a Brahmese bustle. All the rage where I’m from, but apparently the trend hasn’t caught on outside the Outer Rim.”

It’s fashionable where he comes from. Of course it is.

“Is it going to be a problem, Juno? Or shall we continue?”

It’s really not much of a decision to make.

After all, I could cope with him being a thief. I suppose I’ll learn to forgive this, too.

Eventually.
Aftercare

Chapter Summary

After some kinky sex, Peter introduces Juno to aftercare

Rated M

Chapter Notes

pnureyev asked:
Juno who's gotten kinky before but has never got aftercare and nureyev teaching the beauties of it

There’s not much negotiation beforehand– one minute they’re kissing and the next they’re in bed, and everything along the way is less planned and more a reaction to the not-so-subtle signals Juno gives.

Juno’s cock jumps when he’s held down. His pupil positively blooms when Peter ties him to the bedposts. His back arches. His toes curl. Peter can track the spread of Juno’s blush from his cheeks to his neck, down to his chest, and while Peter sits back to survey him, Juno licks his lips in anticipation.

Which is to say nothing of the more overt clues he’s receiving.

“Dammit, Nureyev, stop teasing and get in me.”

“God, yes– fuck me harder–”

“–want you to sink your teeth into me–”

“Fuck yes– just like that– please, Nureyev, please don’t stop–”

When it’s over, Juno looks dazed, and he’s breathing hard. He flinches, likely still oversensitized, when Peter unties him and kisses the raw skin on his wrists.

“Wait here,” Peter whispers, dragging himself up from the bed. His own knees are weak, and he feels giddy and unbalanced. “I’ll be right back.” When he pads back into the bedroom, his hands are full, and he spreads his finds on the bedside table before he climbs back in beside Juno.

The damp washcloth is pleasantly warm, but Juno startles when he feels it against his skin.

“Shh, love,” Peter murmurs. “It’s just me.” He wipes away the spots of blood from his more enthusiastic love-bites.

When he starts cleaning up the splash of come on Juno’s stomach, Juno fidgets underneath him. “It’s okay,” he hedges. “You don’t have to worry about any of that. I can take care of it.”
“I know you can, love. But I want to.” The washcloth is set down, and a soft cotton ball takes its place, soaked in ointment, and Peter begins treating the fresh wounds, along with a few older ones that opened up thanks to the rough sex. Juno watches him the whole time, his brow furrowed, silently perplexed.

“I happen to enjoy taking care of you, Juno,” he hums as he works. “I get far too few opportunities to pamper you the way—” He catches himself before he can say ‘the way you deserve’. But that phrase is too loaded for this moment. Instead he finishes the thought in a way Juno might still find acceptable: “The way I want to.”

“I don’t know why you do,” Juno murmurs, but he doesn’t resist when Peter brings a water bottle to his lips.

“Because I love you, Juno. I cherish the time we spend together. And as much as I enjoy getting rough with you, I never want to hurt you. Not if I can’t be there to make it better again afterward.”

Juno sighs, half contented and half defeated. “Alright, I guess. If it’s so important to you.”
I got you a flower

Chapter Summary

Peter does a daring stunt to impress his lady

Chapter Notes

My friend Kya drew me something while she was at work. She said I could post it, under the condition that it’s accompanied by a fic. So here you go~

You can find the image here.

“Showoff,” I call up to Peter, just loud enough that my voice will carry but quietly enough that it’ll be lost in the other noises of the night.

He flashes me a grin from over his shoulder and continues scaling the building, with somehow even more flourish than before. I don’t understand how he does it. The wall is practically smooth, but somehow he keeps finding handholds and footholds where they really shouldn’t exist– and at the speed he’s going, he might actually outrun an elevator.

When he can do something like that, why does he even bother taking stairs? Except to keep me company, I mean. As cool as it is watching him do stuff like this, the thought of being up there beside him makes my stomach do backflips, and not in the good way.

Suddenly he stops short, his eyes caught by something that I can’t see from all the way down here.

“What is it?” I want to ask, but if he’s been spotted, the last thing I want to do is give him away.

He climbs sideways on the wall, crossing over windows and balconies at the same absurd speed. And then he stops again, looking down in annoyance. He’s reached the end of the line– literally. The safety lead I keep insisting he wear is more than long enough to go the vertical distance, but it’s not meant to go up and sideways, too.

I can see what he’s thinking before he does it.

“Peter, don’t you dare!” I hiss up at him. “Peter!”

If he hears me, it doesn’t stop him from unhooking the lead.

“Peter!”

He gives me an indulgent look, and then wraps it around his ankle with a dramatic gesture, like he’s doing all of this just to humor me, and not because a fall from that height could actually kill him.

He leans over the railing of the next balcony, his bound leg outstretched. I can’t see what he’s doing–only the ambient light of a laser cutter flashing for a few seconds before he scoots back.
His free foot rests on a ledge, but his center of gravity is all wrong. I can see it from all the way down here, the way he twists to correct it, the way he tilts. He brings down his other foot to give himself a wider base, but it’s still tied up, and when he tries to pull it in, he only succeeds in pulling himself toward the rope.

And off the ledge entirely.

“Peter!” All thoughts of stealth and secrecy are replaced by blind panic and I rush forward to— I don’t even know, to catch him, maybe. If that can even save him from a fall like that.

It’s not a fall straight down, but at an angle. He’s too far away to catch the next windowsills or balconies, so instead he curls into a ball.

The safety lead goes taut, stretching and then bouncing him just a few feet from the concrete. Once it’s settled down somewhat, he unfolds. The line is still wrapped around his ankle, but he’s also got it looped around his arms and clenched in both hands. There’ll be rope burns and bruises there later, but the injuries won’t kill him.

“Goddammit, Peter,” I’m gasping. “Are you alright?”

“Nothing to worry about,” he says, like he didn’t just fall five stories over hard concrete. “Just a minor setback.”

This man is going to be the death of me. “What were you even thinking, taking off the line like that? What the hell was worth almost dying for?”

“Well, if you must know.” He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a single long-stemmed rose, slightly crumpled from the fall but still damp with morning dew. It’s one of the old-fashioned Earth varieties that you can barely find anywhere else. “How could I possibly walk past a flower like that and not bring it to my lovely lady?”

I cover my face, because right now I can’t decide whether to grimace or smile. Because damn that’s sweet, but he almost died. And it’s so very like him that I almost laugh. “Maybe try actually walking next time.”
"You've been beautiful much longer than I've been good"

Chapter Summary

Peter has researched Juno extensively

Chapter Notes

onegirlintheback asked:
Jupeter "You've been beautiful much longer than I've been good." From a Clementine von radics poem.

“That all sounds nice, but is it really enough reason to trust someone you barely—”

“And, of course, I trust you because I have researched you. Extensively.”

“What?”

“Just... an incredible amount of research.”

That frightens you, doesn’t it?

Just what is it you’re afraid I’ll find? A history of juvenile delinquency? A problem with alcohol? A hushed-up scandal in the HCPD?

How many times did you have those records dredged up and read back to you? How often were you invited to defend yourself– or did you even bother? A man like you might be more content to stand there and take their accusations. Maybe you heard them often enough that you even started to believe them.

But they don’t know you like I do.

Do you really think any of that would surprise me, Juno? And more pressing– do you really think my research into you would be so shallow? Didn’t you think I would want a little more of a peek into the mind of the man I gave my name?

When they pulled up your academic records, they only ever looked at it in isolation. They never held up your brother’s record next to yours and watched the sine wave curve across the screen.

When he was ten, he got in a fight because another child found out he couldn’t read. For the next month, your teachers complained that you slept through every class– but by the end of that month, his teachers noted him bringing books to class. By the end of the year, reading was his best subject. Every time his grades dropped, yours followed right after, and suddenly his would rise again.

Your teachers were suspicious of your inconsistent grades. When you failed, they called you apathetic and lazy. When you did well, they accused you of cheating off Agent Wire.
Did any of them realize you were your brother’s tutor?

His death was ruled an accident, but I read the police report: a brainless investigation handled by incompetent officers. You could have done better, and you were still a child. Is it any surprise that you were driven to do better? To deliver the justice he never got?

Several of your known associates were caught trafficking firearms—apparently that’s not an uncommon pastime in a city full of organized crime—but at least some of them must have gotten into your hands, because your aim was impeccable. They called you a prodigy, but that does you no justice. The skill you have is no innate talent— it’s the product of hundreds of hours of practice. You earned your marksman’s ability, just like you earned your place in the police academy, through hard work and dedication.

The HCPD didn’t deserve someone like you. They’re bad enough now, but they were little better than gangsters at the time. A man of your loyalty— they expected you to clean up their messes and protect them from the consequences. With your courage and wit, you could have risen through the ranks in no time. You could have led them, a capo and captain.

Instead you called their injustices out for what they were, and you put them down. You found loopholes and escape clauses for their victims. You fought them in every legal way, and then in every way necessary. I don’t know exactly what you found on the old police captain, but I know blackmail when I see it. It’s no mistake that the two of you left the force in the same week.

I can only imagine what that must have cost you, Juno. Your career. Your pension. Your dignity.

I can only imagine what was worth trading them all away. But I know it was worth it.

Because that’s the kind of person you are, Juno. A nurturer. A guardian. You uphold justice when nobody else will. I don’t think I’ve ever been safer than I am in your care.

And you make me want to be a better man.
No such thing as happy endings

Chapter Summary

Juno makes a case for why he left.

Chapter Notes

gavrielsaporta asked:
Oh man I really must hate myself and everyone else apparently because what about a jupiter fic inspired by the bed song by Amanda Palmer and the grand theft orchestra

Rated PG. Unnecessarily sad.

There is no happy ending to this story.

Juno already knows that, but he reminds himself with every step he takes away from the hotel.

He needs to leave now, when he still loves Peter Nureyev so much that leaving still feels like carving his heart out of his chest. He wants to remember this feeling, bottle the pain of losing him and keep it on a shelf where he can remember it.

He’d rather feel pain than relief. He’d rather hate himself for leaving than learn to hate Nureyev— and he would. Dammit, he would. Because that’s what happens. It always happens. First there’s tenderness and passion and love, and then it fades and all that’s left is cold and bitter and he can’t go through that, dammit, he can’t have something this precious and then watch it slowly die.

The night is cold enough to leave his hands numb, but he doesn’t shove them into his pockets. Maybe if he loses feeling in his fingers, he’ll stop feeling altogether.

The only downside is that he fumbles his keys. It takes a few tries to unlock the office door. He doesn’t bother to lock it when it shuts behind him. Instead he makes a beeline straight for the bottle of gin under his desk. He needs the alcohol right now. He needs warmth back in his fingers and fog back in his head. He needs to drink until he’s certain that this was the right decision.

Better now than later, he keeps telling himself. Better now than later. Better hurt than relief.

A floorboard creaks before he’s tossed back enough gin to properly dull his senses. His head snaps up: the door is shut. The office is as dark as it was a moment before.

A car sweeps past the office, and its high beams flood the room with light. There’s a shape there, tall and lean, before it vanishes again into the shadows.

He wants to ignore it. Write it off as the ghost of his own regrets. Pretend that the cologne he’s smelling was brought in on his own clothes.

He wishes he was drunk enough to believe it.
Nureyev is just standing there. Just… watching him. He doesn’t break the silence, and Juno can’t bring himself to do it, either. So instead he climbs to his feet and trudges to the filing cabinet that covers the far wall.

There’s fifteen years of cases on that wall. Every one of them starts with an unhappy ending and just gets worse from there.

He opens up a random drawer and begins thumbing through the files. He remembers every single one, and he picks out the ones he needs, one after another, until they’re too many to fit into his hands.

Then he sets them on his desk and steps back.

“You can look through those if you want,” he says.

“What are they, Juno?”

An explanation, he wants to say.

Instead he flips open the first of the files. “Finn and Manuelita Patel. Happily married for ten years before things went south. Somewhere along the way they got tired of each other. Manuelita wanted me to prove her husband was cheating so she could get out of the marriage.”

Another: “Lidija and Anabella Petrescu. Perfect for each other until Lidija disappeared. Their daughter hired me to find her– turns out she and her new girlfriend were dead. Killed by the jealous wife.”

Another: “Ailill and Tsisana Penzik. First time I got hired by both partners in the same marriage. Each one wanted me to find evidence the other one had violated the prenup.”

Another: “Toma and Neifion Park. That one was a custody battle.”

He slaps them on the desk, one after another after another. “It’s the same old story. Every single one of them starts out perfect and happy and wonderful. They always think they’re the ones who are going to make it. That they’re going to be happy together forever.” The folders are neat and tidy. The breakups weren’t. “The ones that didn’t end in divorce ended in murder.”

And he can see it. Goddamn it all, he can see it. Maybe not now, but five years down the line– ten years, if he’s lucky– he can see the jealousy and the bitterness and the rage building up in him until he can’t take it anymore. He can see the anger that’s always been inside him boiling over, turned against the person who’s standing closest to him.

But it won’t be Nureyev. God help him, he won’t let that be Nureyev.

“It doesn’t have to be that way,” Nureyev says quietly.

“That’s what they all say. They wind up at my door all the same.”

“Well, that’s one thing out of the way, then. We’re already here.” He’s determined. “There are relationships out there that don’t make it into your files. There are people who never have to come to you for help because they can work things out on their own. Because they aren’t afraid to try.” He steps close. His face is pale, almost corpselike in the yellow light, and Juno recoils. “You weren’t afraid to put a laser to your own temple to save me, Juno. You weren’t afraid to lock yourself in a room with a bomb. Why are you so afraid to talk to me?”
Because a laser, a bomb, even Miasma— the worst they can do is kill me. You could hate me.

“I’m sorry, Nureyev. It’s not going to work.”

“We can make it work—”

“No, you can make it work.” Juno believes he can do anything. Anything but this. “But I can’t. That’s the problem here. And as long as I’m in the equation, it’s a problem you can’t solve.”

“Dammit, Juno—” He steps forward. Juno doesn’t know what he’s going to do. He doesn’t care anymore.

“I’m sorry, Nureyev,” Juno says again. “I shouldn’t have let it get this far.”

“Don’t I get any say in this?”

“You just did. The answer is still no.”
A birthday surprise

Chapter Summary

Juno gets unexpected presents on his birthday

Chapter Notes

A while back, @typehere452 requested Peter surprising Juno on his birthday.

Rated PG, maybe T

Juno’s coming home from the shooting range when his comms beeps at him.

Damn thing. He’s sure he turned it off. No, he’s absolutely positive. Rita must have turned it on remotely again, because she’s the one whose name pops up on his screen.

“Dammit, Rita,” he mutters under his breath, rolling his eyes. Today was supposed to be his day off. He doesn’t take many of those; he thinks he deserves a break once in a while.

“This better be good,” he says when he brings the comms to his ear. “I told you, I’m not coming in today.”

“I know, boss, I know,” she says. “I was gonna let you deal with it when you got to the office tomorrow, but they just kept coming, and I don’t know what to do. It’s gettin’ kinda hard to move in here.”

That’s not a good sign.

Possibilities are cycling through his head: bombs, assassin drones, severed body parts, clients, angry past clients who suddenly decided to take out their failed marriages on him.

He turns around and starts marching down the street. It’s not far from his apartment to the office; he can make it in a few minutes if he runs. “Rita, what keeps coming? Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, boss. Just a bit cramped, is all.”

“I want you to tell me, what exactly keeps coming to the office?”

“Packages, mostly. I gotta say, the mail carrier looks awfully annoyed. The elevator’s broken, you know, so she had to carry it all the way up—”

“I’ll be right there.”

Packages. That rules out new clients, but not bombs, body parts, or cheating spouses. But Rita doesn’t sound concerned. It’s fine. He’s probably working himself up over nothing.
Hopefully.

He keeps his pace at a fast walk, and when he reaches his building, he takes the stairs two at a time.

“Rita?” he calls from the hallway. Through the frosted glass of the office window, he can see bulky shapes obstructing the light. He opens the door.

No wonder the mail carrier got pissed.

Rita wasn’t kidding, the office is packed with boxes. The air is thick with the smell of packing crates and decontamination spray and… flowers?

Yeah, flowers. There on the desk, arranged in a vase. A whole bouquet of them. Only these aren’t lilies or roses or anything he recognizes. Cowslip and diosma, heliotrope and mignonette, according to the card.

Notably absent from the card is any indication of who sent them or why.

“Come on, boss!” Rita is bouncing on her heels. “The suspense is killin’ me! Open them, open them, open them!”

He grabs a box cutter out of the desk drawer and cautiously approaches the first box— one of the smaller ones. Hopefully learning the surprise won’t kill them both.

He slices through the sealant tape and carefully pulls back the flaps. Inside is…

Almost a dozen box cutters. Fancier than the one in his hand, high class and heavy duty. Who the hell would send him box cutters?

He moves to the next. A trench coat, not unlike his own, this one looks like it might be made of actual leather, with a million pockets hidden in convenient locations, perfectly tailored to his size. In the next, a hat.

Specifically, the same kind of hat that got stomped flat in the basement of a Triad restaurant three months ago.

He keeps opening boxes.

Some of the longer, flatter packages contain paintings— dramatic, beautiful paintings of mythical heroes standing triumphant over their enemies. One gorgeous piece that he recognizes as the goddess Juno.

His face is burning red, but he keeps going. The only saving grace in all of this is that Rita doesn’t know what it means. She only met the man she thought was Rex Glass for a few seconds.

In another box, there’s a top of the line SW P22000 handgun, along with a holster and cleaning kit. A new pair of shoes in exactly his size. A fancy watch. A gold necklace. A pair of stunning earrings. A diamond ring (he palms the ring before Rita has a chance to see it and hides it in his pocket). A stationary set. Collections of things that he’s eyed wistfully on online shopping sites— clothes and gadgets and even a box of sex toys (he hastily shuts that box and stuffs it inside another while Rita answers the door). He’ll need to have her update the security on his computer.

But later. At the moment, she’s too busy squealing about the box that’s just arrived. Unlike the others, it won’t require a box cutter to open: it’s thin cardboard, sealed with simple tape, but he can already smell vanilla and buttercream wafting through the cracks.
He peels back the tape and opens the lid.

“Mista Steel!” Rita’s voice is reaching new heights. “You never told me it was your birthday!”
Cassie Kanagawa, Private Eye

Chapter Summary

Cassie becomes Juno’s protege

Chapter Notes

aussie-bookworm asked:
Hi! I was re-listening to the first episode of the Penumbra and for some reason I can't stop thinking of the line where Juno goes "if you ever get that desperate Cass, you'd make a hell of a PI." Can you please write a fic where Cassandra Kanagawa is a PI? Thanks!

PG

The best thing about being a Private Eye? It’s private.

The first thing Rex taught her was how to walk into a room so she blends into the shadows and the background. Juno taught her how to dress for the part– with a fedora pulled low to hide her face, and a trench coat that completely hides her figure, and hell if it isn’t a good look on her. And Rita– well, Rita’s the best part, because she’s loud and dramatic, all bright colors and big gestures, and when Rita makes her entrance nobody ever notices Cassie standing right next to her.

She’s practically always out with Rita when she’s on the job. That was the arrangement: Rita’s the sleuth and Cassie’s the muscle and they better make sure to keep an eye out for each other, because if Juno has to bail them out of jail or drive them home from the hospital, there’s gonna be hell to pay.

“Anything you say, Mom,” she said at the time, and she had to take a few minutes to stop and rethink her life.

Because first of all, when did Juno Steel turn into the Mom Friend? And how the hell is she more comfortable calling him mom than she ever was with Min? But she can’t deny that it is comfortable calling him that. Just like the sneaky clothes are so much more comfortable than the tight, awkward, finicky fashion plates she always had to wear. Just like being a wallflower is so much more comfortable than being plastered across billboards. Hearing Rita gush about the “Rita Detective Agency” is so much more comfortable than having to imagine her own name scrawled across yet another sign.

It’s kind of surreal. For the first time, she’s watching everybody else instead of the other way around. And now that she’s getting some practice, she’s actually not half bad at it. She notices the little things, the nuance and subtext and fine print, that Rita misses sometimes. Of course she does– she always had to be on the lookout for them. Because slight turns of phrase in a contract could be used like shackles. Subtle little looks and mild comments would inevitably be cut into a montage sometime later. No detail was small enough to escape their video editors.
And now no detail is small enough to escape her eyes.

She’s practically beaming when she and Rita close their first case— and then their second— and then their third. Because here’s something that they did, all by themselves, without the help of technical crews or creative editing or anything. And when they keep closing those cases, it just hammers it home: she’s actually good at this. She’s got an eye for details. She’s got talent.

A gal could get used to this.
It gets better

Chapter Summary

Juno experiences a change

Chapter Notes

I write a lot from experience.
When this happened to me, I thought it was kind of bizarre— then I had a conversation with a coworker where she mentioned the same thing happening to her.

It happens on a Sunday afternoon.

He’s on his way back from the office, a sack of groceries in his hand, going over the details of the case so he can double-check the paperwork when he goes back in tomorrow.

He notices movement from the corner of his eye: a rabbit is reaching through a storm drain for a stray cred note that somebody dropped. It’s just out of reach, and the rabbit’s arm is too burly to fit through the narrow hole, but damn if it isn’t trying. Juno pauses to nudge the note a little closer with his foot. The moment his shoe leaves it, the paw closes on the bill and snatches it down into the sewer with a grunt.

“You get yourself something nice,” he tells it with a chuckle, and walks on.

It’s a nice day: warm, with the setting sun painting shades of blue and purple across the crimson sky. Today’s case went well. Peter’s already at home and waiting for him; Mick and Rita and Alessandra will be coming over for dinner later, if they’re not there already. He feels good.

The realization hits him like a crowbar to the gut, and he almost doubles over from the force of it. He blinks. When he touches his free hand to his face, his hand comes away wet with tears.

But that doesn’t make sense. Suddenly nothing at all makes sense.

He’s happy.

He can’t remember the last time he’s felt this way— calm and content, looking forward to tonight and tomorrow and the next day without the dread that it’ll all come crashing down on him.

But that can’t be right. It can’t. He tries sifting through his memories, looking for the last time he felt this way, but he comes up empty. Maybe he’s blanking, but he can’t find anything. Even on his good days, he couldn’t stop waiting for the other shoe to drop. They were just a chance to catch his breath before he had to start fighting again.

The tears come harder, and he ducks into the shelter of an alley to wait it out— because it isn’t like that anymore, and he knows it with just as much certainty as he once had that everything would eventually go to hell. If he goes home looking like this, then Peter will be on him in an instant, all
concern and comfort. If they’re there, Rita will be rolling up her sleeves for a fight against whoever made him cry. If Juno doesn’t name a culprit quickly, Mick will start inventing them. Alessandra will try to be a voice of reason and an extra fist, if necessary.

He sets the groceries down so he won’t drop them and tries to focus on breathing.

When did this happen? When did he get so sure that everything is going to turn out okay? How long have things been okay that this feels normal?

And why the fuck did it take this long?

He lets himself cry it out in the alley. He dries his face with one of Peter’s handkerchiefs, stowed away in his slacks because his husband isn’t the type to let any pocket go to waste, and he knows Juno will always be nearby to let him retrieve whatever he’s squirreled away. The thought is so ridiculous and wonderful that the tears start all over again.

A few passersby pause to make sure he’s okay—because they’re good people who care about strangers—but he assures them that everything’s alright.

Because it is. Somehow, against all expectation, it is.
Rita loves love.

Or rather, she loves other people’s love, what with all the angst and drama and fluff and sweetness—it’s enough to make her heart absolutely melt. She can’t get enough of seeing them swoon and sigh, and she giggles until she’s a little bit of a wreck, just burying her face in her hands from the excitement of it all.

It’s dramatic and amazing and wonderful. Just look at her boss, after all—hardly a day goes by when he’s not sighing over that special someone (he thinks she doesn’t know, but she noticed his hangovers started gettin’ worse after Agent Glass left). And that super dreamy Prince of Mars—he was so in love, and it was so sad, and he still was absolutely torn up about what happened to Juno even in the middle of his own tragedy. It really makes you see the good in the world, you know?

It’s all so wonderful, really.

Mista Steel asked her once, when he got drunk, if it ever bothered her that she didn’t get all twitterpated about folks the way he does. It’s a weird question, really. Like asking if it ever bothered her that she doesn’t like peanut butter, or that she doesn’t have a tail, or that she can’t play the hyrdo-harpischord. Sure, she could, but it’s such a weird thing to get hung up about, isn’t it?

Besides, she’s pretty sure she’s saving herself a whole lot of headaches. As much fun as her stories are to watch, she’d rather not be the one having to live ‘em.
The only part he can keep

Chapter Summary

Peter cultivates a Juno Steel persona

Chapter Notes

@wearestarstuff618 requested this one based on a tumblr post:

ok but now someone needs to write the post-s1 fic where peter’s go-to PI persona is
juno steel’s personality

because it’s the one piece of juno he’ll allow himself to keep

It was a bad idea to come here. I don’t often return to planets once I’m done with them, let alone
cities, but there’s a prize here that I can’t just walk away from. It’s a matter of pride.

The criminal element of the city has seen me before, and they’ll be on the lookout for me– or rather,
they’ll be on the lookout for one Richard Ivy, a scatterbrained smuggler who just happened to vanish
along with their godfather’s art collection. Rumor has it he’s out to recoup his losses in blood.

So Richard Ivy won’t make an appearance here. Instead I’ll be using another persona.

I don’t slouch so much as I hunch, my head bowed into the shelter of a high collar, my shoulders
almost around my ears. My eyes are barely visible beneath the wide brim of a hat, pulled low over
my face. My hands are balled into fists and shoved deep into my pockets.

My back will hate me for weeks– I use that pain, transfigure it into a scowl that’s permanently etched
on my face. My brows are knit with constant tension, my jaw clenched when it isn’t spitting out
mile-a-minute one-liners. As a final touch, I splash a few drops of bourbon onto my neck and wrists
for scent.

I practice my gait in the spaceship– the short, careful footwork of a boxer and the light tread of a
dame used to sneaking through forbidden corridors– and by the time I leave the spaceship, it’s quite
convincing.

Almost too convincing.

I pass an old-fashioned shop with a great big shop window, and I stop short. A cold sweat creeps
down my back. He’s here. He’s come looking for me. I only glimpsed him out of the corner of my
eye, but I saw him.

I whirl around, not yet sure if I want to throttle him or kiss him or maybe do both at once–

Only to find myself staring at my own reflection in the glass.
All at once it comes flooding back, fresh and raw all over again: the closed air lock door, the hotel bed, the night we spent together, the morning I spent alone. In that moment I hate him for leaving me and I hate myself for not being able to make him stay. I want to run or hide or march into the nearest liquor store and drown this feeling before it drowns me.

Instead I take that feeling and I use it. I memorize the way it looks on my features, the way it feels on my skin, and I keep it there.

I stride into a familiar stronghold, past guards I once shared beers with, until I’m stopped by a capo. I know this man. We shared a few drinks of our own— along with a few experiences in a back alley afterward. He looks me right in the eye.

Did it hurt him, I wonder, when I left without a word? Was I just another fling to him, or was it only me who didn’t care? Does he hold a candle for me? A grudge?

Nothing of the sort, it seems.

“Where do you think you’re going?” he asks.

My voice is low and sharp. “To ask your boss some questions.”

“You guys hear this asshole?” He leans in closer without so much as a glimmer of recognition. “Listen, buddy. Nobody sees the boss without an appointment. So if you ain’t on the books, you sure as hell better scram. The boss don’t wanna talk to you.”

“I think you ought to let him decide that for himself,” I say. “I’m not the only one who’s been asking around. Some of the other people poking around won’t be nearly so gentle about it.”

He snorts. “Who the hell do you think you are?”

I hold his gaze for just a moment, then let it flit away. “My name is Janus Irons, and I’m a private eye.”
Peter doesn’t like untethering himself from the timeline. It’s painful, dissolving himself down past the molecules, the atoms, the strings, the god particles that make him semi-divine. And then he has to collect what’s left and drag it with him. Every minute he goes back is grueling. He can feel their passage like sandpaper against his consciousness.

It isn’t a skill Peter uses often– it saved him from the murderous sky on Brahma more often than he can count, but without the imminent threat of death from above, it’s too exhausting to be practical. Better to let quick thinking and sleight of hand get him out tricky situations. Unlike the lasers of New Kinshasa, people can be reasoned with.

But viruses can’t. And right now, that’s what’s burning its way through Juno’s system.

It’s a designer disease, manufactured in some military lab with too many aspirations and too little security. Some bastard stole it, and Dark Matters hired Juno to retrieve it.

Only they never bothered telling him what was inside that case. Maybe if they had, he would have been more careful. Maybe it wouldn’t have shattered. Maybe he wouldn’t have touched the broken pieces with his bare hands.

Maybe he wouldn’t be dying right now in an isolation chamber.

But that was days ago– before Juno started manifesting symptoms. Before those symptoms got bad enough that Juno let Peter take him to the hospital. Before the news feeds started reporting quarantine zones and started throwing around words like ‘plague’.

It stops here.

This timeline stops here.

Security at the hospital has tightened since the quarantine began, but the measures they’ve taken are safeguards against panicked citizens and curious rubberneckers. When Peter steps inside in a nurse’s scrubs and forged credentials, the guards stationed at Juno’s door don’t look twice.
They also don’t look inside. Because then they’d see Peter slipping inside the oxygen tent and bending over Juno.

His detective’s eyes flutter open. He’s too weak to sit up, but he tries.

“Peter,” he rasps. “Dammit, Peter, you—” His whole body folds with the violence of his coughs, and Peter tries hard not to think about what the doctors said is happening to his lungs. When the fit ends, blood is sprinkled across the bedsheet. “You shouldn’t be here.”

“It’s alright, Juno,” Peter murmurs, stroking a hand down Juno’s back. “It’s alright. I won’t be here much longer.”

The little color left in Juno’s face drains away, and he’s an alarming shade of gray. “Are you sick? Jesus, Peter— did I—” He’s interrupted by another hacking cough, and Peter wraps around him protectively.

“No, Juno,” he whispers, once the coughs have subsided and Juno’s gasping in his arms. “No. I’m alright. And I’m going to fix this. I swear I will.”

“It’s too late,” Juno rasps. “Peter, it’s already out of control.”

“I know.” He leans in and kisses Juno’s brow. “That’s why I have to do this.”

“Do what?” There’s panic in Juno’s eye. “Peter!”

“It’s alright,” he repeats at a whisper. “Everything’s going to be alright.”

He presses his lips to Juno’s one last time.

And then he lets it happen.

The world shifts with his perspective. The man that is Juno Steel stops being a whole and becomes a conglomeration of organs made up of molecules made up of atoms made up of protons and neutrons and electrons. The harsh light of the room becomes a series of waves-that-are-particles-that-are-waves. The fabric of space-time stretches out before him like a canvas, dipping and stretching around every cluster of mass.

Peter Nureyev ceases to exist as the pieces of himself dissolve into their barest components, just small enough that he can swim against the flow of time. His consciousness unspools, spreading across the universe before he can gather it up and keep going. The universe is expanding, the Galaxy is shooting across it at a breakneck speed, its arms spiraling as it twirls. In one of its lesser arms, the Solar System shoots like a laser, its planets and comets and satellites whirling around and around, and little Mars is spinning and spinning and spinning and spinning.

It’s all moving so fast, and he can barely take it all in. He’s losing his grasp on himself, on here and now and why it even matters. A single word echoes across his awareness, but it repeats so often that it doesn’t make any sense. Just sounds that don’t do any justice to the feeling behind them.

Juno
Juno
Juno

In the end it’s that feeling that steers him. When all of reality is meaningless entropy, that feeling is the only thing he can cling to. It’s the only reason why he takes the time and effort to find that particular cluster of particles among all the rest. It’s the only reason why he takes the pains to reform
at all.

One name, too absurdly small for the miracle it contains.

Peter finds his own cluster of particles, and he folds his own consciousness in with the old.

It only takes an instant, but it feels like an eternity. His legs fold underneath him and he gasps in shock and pain. The other cluster-particles-atoms-molecules-organs-person-Juno-Juno-Juno is at his side in an instant, catching him and easing him to the floor.

Vibrations and moving air distill into sound and syllables, and Peter can hear again. His own name is on Juno’s lips. Juno’s one eye is wide in concern and fear.

Peter raises a hand to Juno’s face, but his hand is shaking. The motion is uncoordinated. His past and future selves are too distinct at the moment, still too unevenly mixed to sit properly. In time they’ll meld into each other, blending into a seamless whole. The memories of a time that no longer exists will fade into nothingness until they’re little more than a dream.

But for now, at least, he remembers. And he’ll keep remembering long enough to save Juno.

Chapter End Notes

Because there is so very little of the actual Penumbra in this one, I wound up publishing it as a free short story under my author name, and also submitting it to a podcast.

If you see it floating around elsewhere, don't panic. It's probably supposed to be there.
Okay, so Juno’s going to be the first to admit, seeing Peter all tied up and helpless is definitely sexy.

He just doesn’t know what to do with him from here.

*Anything*, is Peter’s challenge. Everything. Whatever Juno wants. Which is such an open-ended invitation that it leaves him completely blank.

He considers using some of Peter’s tricks against him— the teeth, the raking nails, the sharp swats against oversensitive skin— but the thought makes him uncomfortable. As much as he trusts Peter to defend himself if things get too rough for him, he’s tied down— even if he did slip those restraints, or tell Juno to stop (*why is talking the afterthought?* Juno wonders), it still wouldn’t undo any damage that Juno’s already done to him. And the thought of hurting Peter, even on accident, makes his gut twist unpleasantly.

“Juno?” Peter prompts, tilting his head. His eyes are covered by a blindfold, which is the one saving grace in all this— Juno’s not sure he could cope if his partner was watching him mull around indecisively for endless minutes, his erection long gone. “Are you alright?”

“I’m building suspense,” Juno lies, and hopes Peter will actually believe him.

Dammit, he should have prepared better for this.

Awkwardly, he traces a finger up Peter’s thigh, just to prove he’s doing *something*.

“Oh, Juno,” Peter purrs, low and sensual. “Shall we—ee!” He jolts suddenly, his knee bending as far as it’ll go without breaking the restraints.

He’s not the only one who jumps. Juno’s heart skips a beat. “Did I hurt you?” It was just his bare fingers. His nail didn’t even touch Peter’s skin. Did he hit a bruise or something? A broken bone? No, it can’t be a broken bone— the last place he touched was the crease of Peter’s thigh, and there’s too much muscle and sinew there for him to disturb bone with such a light touch.

“No,” Peter says quickly. “No, I’m fine. That tickled, that’s all.”
Tickled.

That’s something Juno hasn’t taken into consideration.

“You’re ticklish?” He sweeps his fingertips over the crease of his other thigh, and Peter jolts again, his leg again folding to try and protect the sensitive skin. The yelp he makes is adorable.

“Yeeeee– yes,” he says, hurriedly composing himself. “A little, I suppose.”

Juno hesitates. “Do you want me to stop?”

“I thought we agreed that you would be in charge tonight.”

“That’s not a no.”

“By all means,” Peter says, finally giving a clear answer. “Continue. If I need to stop I’ll let you know—oh!” The last word turns into another yelp as Juno’s fingers run up the side of his waist. Peter’s whole body contorts as he twists away from the sensation, but there’s no escaping Juno’s fingers.

Peter’s keening might be cause for concern if it wasn’t interspersed by mad giggles that bring Juno to full attention. He loves the sound of Peter’s laugh.

He’s practically diving at Peter now, catching him by surprise on his other side, under his arm, on the inside of his elbow. Peter’s writhing and flailing under Juno’s ministrations, laughing so hard he’s gasping, until finally he wheezes out, “stop! Stop! I’ve– I need a break.”

Juno’s hands leave him in an instant, and he moves to Peter’s side.

“What you want this off?” he asks gently, tugging at the blindfold.

Peter’s breathing hard. “No. No, I’m– I’m fine. Just– just let me catch my breath.”

“You take as long as you need. Do you want anything? Something to drink? Something to–”

Peter leans into him as much as his restraints will allow. When he speaks, his voice is sultry and as irresistible as when he’s the one taking charge. “You, Juno. I need you.”

It’s not a request Juno’s about to refuse.
“You’re going to be fine. Juno, you’re going to be fine.”

What do you mean ‘going to be’? I am fine. You’re here.

God, I never thought I’d see your face again, but here you are. Here you are touching me– I didn’t even dare to dream that would ever happen again, after the way I left.

“I’m sorry,” I say. My words are hazy; I can barely keep them in my mouth. “I was an idiot.”

“Yes, of course you were,” he says. “And we’re going to have a very long discussion about not walking into buildings full of gangsters, but later. As soon as you’re better. As soon as that damned ambulance arrives!” He raises his voice and looks wildly around him, like the drivers have incredible timing and will magically arrive just as he says the words.

Like they’d be in any hurry to get to Oldtown.

It’s a coin toss whether they’ll come at all. Depends on how busy the hospitals are today. Depends on how dangerous it is to be in other parts of the city. Depends on traffic.

Depends on a lot of things, is what I’m saying, and none of them matter right now, because he’s here.

“That’s not what I mean,” I say, dragging my thoughts back to him. It’s so hard to focus. I don’t want to let my mind wander to anything but him. “I never… I never should’ve left. I should’ve…”

“No, you shouldn’t have, and that’s another thing we’re going to discuss later, Juno.” His voice catches, and he tightens the pressure on my leg, like he can stop the bleeding. “Later. When you’re well.”

His hair falls into his face, and I reach out to brush it aside. “God, you’re beautiful.” Even though when my hand comes away, there’s a streak of blood where I touched him. “I should’ve told you
that. Every single minute…”

“I’m flattered, Juno, but I imagine that would make for rather tiring conversation after a while.” He flashes a smile, but it’s brittle and frail. He looks like he’s on the edge of panic. “Help is going to be here any minute, Juno. It’s…” The smile cracks, and the terror shows through. “It is coming, isn’t it?”

“It’s going to be fine.” I lay my hand on his cheek. He’s warm– or maybe my hand is cold. “Everything is going to be fine.”

“Damn them,” he hisses. “I’ll– I’ll steal a car. Just give me a moment, and I’ll–”

But the moment he pulls his hand away from my leg, the blood starts pouring again. He cries out, horrified, and throws both his hands over the stab wound.


His shoulders sag, and he crumples forward.

“Alright, Juno,” he whispers, leaning his head against mine. Maybe it’s started raining, because I can feel something warm and wet on my cheeks. “Alright. I’ll stay.”

In the distance, I can hear somebody shouting. The voice sounds familiar, but I’m drifting.

“C’mon, you two,” says the voice. “If you’re gonna do that in the alley, then do it behind the dumpster. Kids play in these alleys, dammit.”

“Goddammit, Mick,” I mutter, mostly a reflex before I realize it really is him.

Nureyev looks up, wide-eyed, frantic, and covered in my blood.


_Vampire? Oh, come on, Mercury. But he’s already storming down the alley toward us, ready to bust in heads as only an Oldtown local can._

“You’re a friend of Juno’s?” Nureyev fumbles, pressing his full weight into my wound with one hand and raising the other in supplication. “Listen to me, he’s hurt. He’s–” His eyes focus for a moment too long on his blood-soaked hand. “We need to get him to a hospital, and quickly. Do you have a car?”

Mick stares, already caught up in the force of Nureyev’s personality. “I– no? I could probably jack one, if you gave me twenty minutes–”

“He doesn’t have that kind of time.”

Mick reaches down and grabs a brick off the alley floor. “Then give me two. Hold on, Jay, I’ll be right back.”
Yesteryear (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Peter and Mick bond while Juno is in the hospital

Chapter Notes

Have you ever written something where nuryev and mick meet? I think it’d be hilarious given that mick lies in weird generally unsuccessful ways and nureyev lies in weird successful ways

I should get out of here.

There are too many security cameras in this hospital. Too many opportunities to capture my face. I should look for them, calculate their angles, at least sit somewhere where they can’t see me.

It would give me something to do with myself, anyway.

But I can’t make myself move.

In that alley, and then in the stolen car, I couldn’t move. If I took my hands off the wound for even an instant, Juno would bleed to death. He’s in the emergency room now, with a team of nurses replacing what he’s lost with artificial blood, but I still can’t make myself get up. I can’t move. If I move, even an inch, he’ll die.

It’s magical thinking—I learned the term from some persona I put on and discarded a decade ago, it means I’m assigning cause and effect to things that have no relation. But right now it’s all I have, and I cling to it with every fiber of my being. Better that than feeling powerless.

Juno’s in the other room, straddling the precipice between life and death.

If I move from this spot, he’ll die.

His blood is still on my hands.

Something white takes up my field of vision. I have to blink a few times before I can focus properly.

It’s a wad of paper towels, heavy with water. It’s being offered to me by the man from the alley. Juno’s friend. Mick.

“I thought you might wanna wash up,” he says. “Dried blood gets all itchy after a while, ya know?”

“Thank you.” I sound pathetic, but I don’t have it in me to fake bravado right now. Gingerly I take the paper towels from him and wipe down my hands. Most of the blood is flaked and dried, but some is still tacky. It’s not an unfamiliar sensation, but it’s somehow more unpleasant, knowing it’s Juno’s blood.
“You don’t have to worry about Jay,” Mick says. “He’ll pull through, no problem. He’s been through worse than this loads of times.”

“He seemed fairly convinced that he wouldn’t,” I admit hoarsely.

“Nah, that’s just Jay for you. He likes to act like the world’s ending so that it looks all cool when he turns it around at the last second. Not that he needs all that to look cool, ya know? You should see some of the stuff he gets into. Like this one time, we were in this sewer, right? And we were being chased by robot ghost sharks…”

He goes on about that for a while– and when he finishes with those, he talks about eyeless children that haunt a labyrinth, and serial killers who create elaborate murder puzzles, and rabbits as large as humans who sneak into daylight to buy carrot cake. He’s a remarkable storyteller, all big gestures and perfect voices. I let myself get drawn in to his fairy tales. The longer he talks, the easier it is to believe that this is just another grand adventure in the life of the invincible Juno Steel.

They’re just stories, I’m sure– or I would be, except he seems to believe them, too. For all his exaggeration, his every word is bright with sincerity. Is he a liar, I wonder, if the only person he fools is himself?

Or maybe they’re not only stories, after all. Because when he’s interrupted, it’s by a doctor who informs us that Juno’s condition has stabilized.

He’s going to live.

“You can go home and get some sleep, if you want,” Mick says. “I can call you when he wakes up.”

“I appreciate that.” I give him the number to one of my burner comms. When I finally stand, my joints are stiff and aching. Now that I can think clearly, there are things that need to get done. Security feeds that need to be erased. Clothes that need to be changed. Gangsters that need to die. “I’m glad Juno has you for a friend, Mick.”

He returns the gesture with a pair of finger guns. “And I’m glad the lady’s finally fallen for someone classy.”
Yesteryear (part 3)

Chapter Notes

likeactuallyroselalonde asked:

Could you please write a jupiter reunion possibly ending in cuddles?

This is one of those challenging prompts, because it’s really hard to make it work without breaking character, especially given how they parted. Juno’s still got a bit of character development to go through before he’ll be much of a cuddler. So I thought we’d go back to Yesteryear.

It’s well past visiting hours, but that means nothing to me. I’ve already memorized the nurses’ schedules, and I have every intention of making myself scarce when they make their rounds.

If I wasted my time with introspection, I might ask myself what exactly I intend to accomplish here. After all, my presence won’t do anything for Juno that the surgeons couldn’t accomplish on their own, and the hospital security is surprisingly capable in this facility, so it isn’t as though he needs me to defend him.

But I have to be here.

I’ve never been one to deny my impulses, and so I indulge it as easily as I did any other, and I stay. For hours I sit quietly in the dark, ignoring the discomfort of the hospital chair, just watching the heart monitor trace his pulse, watching his chest rise and fall as he breathes, and repeating an endless litany of reassurance.

He’s alive. We got him to help in time. He’s alive.

I count the hours in the sweep of headlights across the room’s curtains, in the faint clatter of wheelchairs and gurneys and practical shoes past the closed doors, but every so often my eyes are drawn to the digital clock by his heart monitor. His nurse will be coming by soon. I’ll need to disappear.

I rise to make my escape, but a hand catches my sleeve before I can pass more than a few steps from the bed.

“Don’t go.” Juno’s voice is slurred, thanks to a dose of painkillers so potent that even his liver will have trouble processing them quickly, but his eye is intent on mine.

“I didn’t realize you were awake,” I say softly.

His hand curls around my cuff. “I could smell you… that cologne.” Even without the help of the heart monitor, it’s obvious how much effort it costs for him to speak. “Thought I dreamed you.”

_Do you dream about me often, love?_ I want to ask, but that can happen later—preferably when we have the guarantee of a private room without interruptions. The nurse is on xir way, and I don’t want to be here when xe arrives.
Carefully I untangle his hand from my clothes. “I really should let you rest, Juno.”

“I can rest with you here. Please. Stay. Please?” He sounds so forlorn it breaks my heart. “Please don’t go. I just got you back. Don’t want to lose you.”

“You won’t, love.” I catch his hand in mine and press my lips to his knuckles, one by one. He watches me with rapt attention, and I tell myself it’s the drugged haze that leaves him so enthralled. I could stay here forever, but I’m running out of time. “Someone’s coming to check in on you, Juno, and I can’t let them see me. But I’ll still be here. I promise you that.”

Juno squeezes my hand with what strength he has left; it isn’t much, but it’s earnest, and then he lets me go.

So much is communicated in such a simple gesture. He trusts my word. He trusts my skill. He trusts that I won’t abandon him. It’s a precious gift, being trusted so completely by someone like Juno Steel.

I vanish into the florescent light of the hallway and into an unoccupied room a few doors over, and all the while I count the minutes. I know by now how long the nurse will take with Juno, how long it takes xir to check his vitals, refill his fluids, update his charts, and all the other minutia of inpatient care. My hands dip into my pockets as I wait, feeling through their contents with a mindless compulsion, hoping that the shapes and textures I’ll find there will calm my nerves. I want to get back to Juno. I don’t want to keep him out of my sight for a moment longer than necessary.

And then, at last: a heavy pair of orthopedic shoes march away, signalling the nurse is finished. The moment the coast is clear, I pad down the hallway and back into Juno’s room.

He’s sitting up now, though it looks like it takes most of his strength just to stay upright. The hallway light falls on him only for a moment, only until I shut the door behind me, but that’s enough for me to catch a glimpse of his face.

“You’re back,” he whispers, and if that expression doesn’t melt my heart, his voice just might.

“I told you I would be.” I start back toward the uncomfortable hospital hair that’s been my perch for the last few hours, but he stops me.

“Not there,” he says. “Here. Sit with me.”

“In your bed?” I can’t help a smile. “I don’t think there’s enough room for two.”

“I’ll make room,” he says, as though that was remotely an option. I didn’t think it was possible, but his words are even more slurred than they were before; it’s likely the nurse increased the dose of his painkillers. It won’t be long before he loses consciousness entirely.

So why shouldn’t I indulge him, if only for a few moments?

I perch daintily on the edge of the bed, though it’s a precarious position. I wrap my arm around his shoulders to steady myself, and instantly he nestles against me.

“Anybody ever tell you that you got a nice smell?” he slurs.

“It might have come up,” I say, just to humor him. “Do you like it?”

“It’s my favorite. Best smell in the galaxy.” He buries his face against my neck, almost humming. “Been looking for it for… forever, but couldn’t find you. Isn’t the same without you.” His words
come slowly now, trickling out of him a few syllables at a time. Any moment now, he’ll succumb to
the medication. “I… missed you.”

“I missed you, too, Juno,” I whispers and I press a kiss into Juno’s hair. I don’t know if Juno heard
me before he drifted off.

It doesn’t matter. I'll make sure to tell him again in the morning.
Handcuffs

Chapter Summary

Juno helps Peter practice his lock-picking. In bed.

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
did someone say prompts? i say...... jupeter smut (what a surprise)! what happens if juno gets peter in handcuffs instead of the other way around?

An anon requested something with aftercare.

Rated E (clearly)

Peter has never been one to refuse a challenge. Especially when the battleground happens to be Juno’s bed.

The subject of their little contest: handcuffs. Two sets, securing his hands to the posts at the head of the bed. A timer sits on the floor, counting down the seconds. Once Peter’s hands are free, he’ll hit the timer.

They’ve done it once before, without the interference of outside variables. It took him all of twenty-three seconds to slip the cuffs and escape to freedom. This time he’ll have Juno to contend with.

And Juno has a head start. He hasn’t laid a finger on Peter yet, but already it’s getting difficult to focus on the array of pins he’s got stashed away behind the mattress. Peter can’t see what Juno’s doing with his hands, but Juno’s back is arched, his eye is shut, his bottom lip is caught between his teeth, and he looks so vulnerable that Peter might just slip these cuffs right now and finish the job.

“Maybe a quick round before we begin?” Peter means to sound sultry, but it comes out a little too much like begging.

“Nope.” Juno flashes a devious grin. “Making you wait for it is part of my strategy.”

“Your strategy sounds an awful lot like cheating.”

“I’m sure we could make it a bit easier if you don’t think you can handle it.”

“By all means,” Peter says. “I did say I wanted a challenge, didn’t I?”

“And I’m planning to hold you to that.” A slight grimace crosses Juno’s face as he straightens, wiping the lube off his hands with a hand towel. He tosses it aside, picks up the timer, and climbs onto the bed, straddling Peter between his knees. “Are you ready for me?”

If he wasn’t before, he certainly is now– he’s flushed down to his chest, his glasses are fogging, and
if his cock gets any harder, it might just hit the ceiling. Watching his partner open himself up like that will do that to a man. Still, he keeps his voice light. “I’m ready whenever you are. Why? Did you think of any last-minute errands you needed to run?”

“There’s just one thing I’ve got left to do.” There’s a faint beep as he starts the timer, then he leans over and drops it beside the bed.

The timer is merely a technicality. The real race is to see whether Peter can escape his restraints before one of them comes. Against any other opponent, Peter wouldn’t have a problem. But he’s up against Juno Steel, and that in itself is the biggest obstacle of the night.

The game begins.

Peter’s fingers trace the edge of the bed for one of his pins, but it’s hard to navigate by feel when Juno is rising and descending over him, and his cock is sliding between the cheeks of that magnificent ass.

It’s hard to take his eyes off Juno at all right now—his arms are folded behind his head, his head thrown back and his back arched to stretch his skin taut over elegant muscle. Peter wants to run his hand over every inch of that beautiful dame.

A pinprick on his finger reminds him of the task at hand, and he draws the needle out of its hiding place in the bedsheet. He palms the needle and starts sliding it into the lock—

And in the same moment, his cock slides into a far more welcoming hole. His eyes roll back at the sweet, tight heat.

“God,” Juno moans above him. “Peter.”

All this time, and still nothing gives Peter chills quite like Juno saying his name. It takes a moment to collect himself before he can tackle the lock again.

But no sooner does he try than Juno rises on his knees and comes down again, quick and hard, and the friction is enough to make Peter see stars. They unfold into entire nebulae when Juno does it again, and then again. Even if Peter could manipulate the needle with any coordination, the whole bed is shaking. Juno’s riding him hard, and Peter never wants him to stop. All he wants is Juno— to touch him, to hold him, to squeeze that gorgeous ass and pull it down even harder— but his hands are bound to the corners of the bed. He’s trapped, and the frustration of it makes him even harder.

His cock is drumming on Juno’s prostate now— he can see it in the way Juno’s mouth hangs open, the little gasps that follow every beat, the ecstasy etched into his features.

Peter’s going to lose this damn game, but he doesn’t care anymore.

“I’m so close,” Juno’s moaning, almost feral. “God, I’m so close. A little more, Peter, just give me a little— I need— Peter, please—”

Peter’s hand closes around Juno’s cock; the other pulls Juno down to meet him. In an instant he catches Juno’s lip between his teeth and bites so hard he nearly breaks the skin.

It’s Juno screaming into his mouth that finally sends Peter over the edge.

The timer counts down several long minutes as the two of them catch their breath. Juno’s settled in on the bed, his head resting on Peter’s shoulder. He reaches across his thief and fingers the handcuff
still secured to the bedpost.

“Damn, you’re good,” he murmurs.

“Amazing what you can do when you’re properly motivated.” It’s false modesty— or the closest that Peter comes to modesty, anyway. He doesn’t actually remember picking the locks at all; between muscle memory and a very intense desire to watch Juno finish, it just sort of happened automatically. That by itself is enough to be impressed by, but he has no need to brag. Not when Juno’s kissing away the red marks on his wrist where the cuffs bit into his skin.

He could tell Juno that he doesn’t rightfully need aftercare— a few little restraints don’t exactly intimidate him, after all— but that would mean passing up the reverent way Juno cleans the sweat from his brow and the come off his stomach.

They never did decide on a prize if Peter won their little contest. He’s more than happy to let it be this.
“Uh… Boss?” Rita’s voice crackles on the comms. “You’re about to have company.”

Peter rises from the filing cabinet he’s rifling through.

“How many?” Juno asks.

“It looks like seven, heading right for you.”

“Can you slow them down?”

“I’m tryin’, I’m tryin’! But you two better get outta there fast.”

Juno’s already halfway to the door. He grabs the doorknob and pulls.

Nothing happens.

He shakes it– then throws his whole body into it, just to be sure. It doesn’t budge.

“Rita, can you unlock this thing?” He gears up to throw himself at the door again, but Peter pulls him back.

“Don’t bother, Juno. You’ll only wind up hurting yourself. It’s a Europan Deadbolt– as soon as a switch is tripped, it locks itself into the door frame and severs its internal circuits.”

“Can you hack it?”

“Of course I can,” Peter says, though somewhat sheepishly. “From the other side, at least.”

Juno scrubs a hand down his face. It was a setup. This whole case was just one big trap, and they took the bait.

“Rita?” Juno says. This is getting bad.

“I’m tryin’, boss! I tried sticking the elevator, but they’re taking the stairs. But they’ve got the whole
floor locked down and shut out of the system.”

That, of all things, makes Peter perk up. “The whole floor, you say?”

“Well, yeah…”

“Then I think we have our way out.” He strides toward the window. It takes Juno a few moments too long to follow his train of thought.

“Wait,” he says. “Hold on a second– you don’t mean–”

Peter just flashes that sharp-toothed smile. “As a matter of fact, I do. Juno, if you would stand back?”

It’s all the warning Juno gets before Peter whips out his box cutter and carves a person-sized hole in the glass— and then a few smaller ones toward the bottom of the glass, sized just right to be hand- or footholds.

Which would be fine. Really.

If the window wasn’t on the sixty-third floor of this building.

Juno takes an involuntary step back. “Oh, you have got to be kidding.”

“Quickly, Juno. We’re going to need all the head start we can get.” Peter reaches out to him, and Juno retreats another inch. “Juno?”

“You go ahead,” Juno says too quickly. “I’ll stay here and get the drop on them when they get here.”

“All seven of them?” There’s real concern in his voice now. “Juno, are you alright?”

“Me? Fine. I’m great. Never better. How are you?” All of that might have sounded more convincing if he didn’t manage to squeeze five sentences into as many syllables. He’s not sure if he’s feeling cold because all the blood drained out of his face, or because the night air is whipping through the hole in the window. Loose papers get sucked out through the glass and drop into the seemingly endless abyss below. He swallows. “Boy it sure is windy tonight.”

Peter steps closer. A long-fingered hand cradles Juno’s face, blocking the gaping window from his field of vision. Peter’s other arm wraps around his waist. “Juno, we don’t have much time. I need you to talk to me. What’s wrong?”

It’s easier to breathe when there’s only Peter in front of him, but Juno’s still shaking. The last time he got within five feet of an open window like that, Alessandra grabbed him by the hand and dragged him through it. Sure, there was a car waiting for them on the other side, but there definitely isn’t right now. If he goes out there now, there’ll be nothing holding him up but smooth glass, his own sweat-soaked hands, and the worn-out soles of his boots.

“Juno, please,” Peter says, dragging him back into the moment.


That might just be the understatement of the millennium.

Peter looks him in the eye, calm and quiet. He doesn’t comment on the shitty timing to learn this little fact. Doesn’t call the fear stupid. Doesn’t try to appeal to Juno’s need to be brave.

Instead he looks up. “Would a twelve-foot drop be more palatable?”
Five minutes later, the guards flood an empty office.

“Shit!” shouts the first. “They went through the window!” She sticks her head through the massive hole; there’s a second, matching one a little further below. “They’re on the next floor down! Come on, hurry it up before they get away!”

They pour out of the office just as quickly as they entered it, never bothering to look up. Maybe if they had, one of them might have noticed the slight bulging of the drop ceiling of a body stretched out across the tiles to better distribute his weight.

“Rita?” he whispers once the footsteps fall away.

“It looks like the coast is clear, Mista Steel. You two can come out now.”

Juno dislodges one of the tiles and drops down onto one of the filing cabinets. A few moments later, Peter climbs back in through the window, scaling the glass with a grace and agility that doesn’t entirely put Juno’s anxiety to rest, but it helps.

“There,” Peter says, brushing the dust off Juno’s shoulders. “That should keep them busy for a while.”
Lip stain

Chapter Summary

Peter happens to quite like the lip stain Cecil picked out for Juno...

Chapter Notes

the-little-red-queen asked:
Psssst!!! Juno's lipstick. What does Peter think? (Also: You rock!)

Rated PG

Peter makes a point of not complimenting the color on Juno’s lips, not when he knows fully well that it was put there by force while Juno was shackled and chained.

But pretending the color doesn’t flatter him? That’s a lie too big for even Peter Nureyev to sell. The color draws attention to those full lips, gives just enough contrast to highlight the tiny scars that cross his mouth after years of brawling. Peter’s eyes follow that attention, linger there while he wonders what it would be like to kiss those lips, and he’s grateful that his sunglasses hide his staring.

Months turn into years. His association with Juno Steel becomes a partnership and flirtation becomes romance. He comes to better understand his impossible detective and the odd relationships he forms with people, caught between undying loyalty and outright animosity, because Juno Steel is a complicated lady and the people he associates with are merely different shapes cut from the same cloth.

Mr. Cecil Kanagawa, for example: a lifetime performer who sincerely believes that giving a person the spotlight is the greatest gift a man can give. And if he can offer his terminally depressed lady friend a flattering alternative to suicide, all the better, right? Deranged it may be, but Peter can see the logic behind it, and the misguided attempt at kindness. It’s endearing, in its own way. Not enough to ever let Cecil and Juno be in the same room unattended, but he doesn’t protest their association.

And it helps to know that Juno doesn’t hold anything against Cecil for trying to kill him. Especially when an anniversary rolls around.

Precisely two years ago, he walked into Juno’s life in a Dark Matters uniform and a false identity, and within a day he was willing to shed both just to have Juno at his side. Two years ago, he’d wondered whether the tingle of their first kiss was pure chemistry or just the neurotoxins in the lip stain taking effect, and knowing full well that it was worth it either way.

That morning, Peter lounges in bed, pretending to oversleep while Juno goes off on his morning routine. But his detective knows him too well to be fooled— the moment he spots something amiss, he glances over his shoulder.
“This yours?” he asks, holding up a tube of lip stain.

Peter props himself up on his elbows. “I thought it might suit you.”

It’s only a mild distortion of the truth. He knows fully well that it suits Juno, and he conferred with Cecil to make sure to get the precise shade—sans poison, of course.

Juno hums thoughtfully and turns back to the mirror. When he emerges again, his lips are a breathtaking shade of violet.

“Still think it suits me?” Juno muses.

Peter pulls back the covers, suddenly wide awake. “Why don’t you come back to bed, love, and I’ll show you exactly what I think.”
Vixen

Chapter Summary

Juno works as one of Vicky's Vixens to pay off a debt

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
if ur still taking fic prompts, could you do something where juno winds up working as a vixen to pay off his debt to vicky? i love that idea but i havent seen it written yet. maybe a scene where he gets a customer that he knows in the show? (anybody, whether it gets hot or funny is up to you)

Rated G

Well, I can’t say I’m exactly surprised.

I mean, I thought I’d give it a shot. There’s a place for all sorts in this city, and for most of those sorts, that place is the Valley. And I figured, sure, some folks go in for the whole rough edges type. Might like lookin’ at a lady like Steel. And some of ‘em do.

Unfortunately, some of the folks who come lookin’ aren’t exactly the type I want in my establishment. Real scumbags, ya know?

And Steel, he happens to know a bunch of these scumbags by sight. Comes from having worked as a cop, it turns out. I know because he’s recitin’ their rap sheets between punches.

It’s a real sight to see, I’ll tell you. The three bozos all piled up nice and neat on top of each other, Juno sittin’ on top of the whole lot like he’s queen of the fucking mountain. His makeup’s all smeared and his costume’s barely hangin’ on by a thread. It’d be bad for business, sure. I probably won’t let him on the stage again, just so he don’t scare away any legitimate customers. But first I’m gonna let him finish. A show like that? It sends a nice strong message.

Maybe I’ll find another place for Juno. A right hook like that, he might make a halfway decent bouncer. Replace the fishnets with something a little more sturdy.

Yeah. That sounds about right.

Chapter End Notes

When a prompt completely clashes with the way I view the characters, I'll likely still try
to fill it... but I reserve the right to make it go in directions that I'm positive the prompter didn't intend.
Distractions

Chapter Summary

Peter wants to know what Juno saw inside his head

Chapter Notes

reliantstraylight asked:
Hi there! I absolutely adore your writing :) If you're still taking prompts, here's a fun one; Peter asking Juno what he saw in Peter's memories in that Martian Tomb and absolutely refusing to let the subject drop.

Rated G

“Oh, come now, Juno,” Nureyev whines. “You aren’t being fair.”

That’s Peter Nureyev, Master Thief for you: elegant, refined, and seductive until the moment he doesn’t get his way, and then he’ll pout and whine like a little kid.

Damn if I don’t love him for it.

“What’s unfair about it?” I ask. “It’s in my head and I’m fine letting it stay there.”

“But it was in my head first.”

If it was a physical object, there’d be no keeping it from Nureyev. You can’t play keep-away with someone that tall and wiry, no matter how good you are– and even if you could, Nureyev would just snatch it out of my pocket the moment I’m halfway distracted.

We’ve already established that he’s especially good at distracting me.

“Just tell me.”

Maybe that’s what this is: a distraction. Because sure, they could be talk about me locking myself in with a mad Martian and a bomb, or walking out on him after probably the best sex of my life, or the six month dry spell that followed and all the ways it wasn’t worth what I did to him. Instead of all that and the awkwardness and headaches and shame that comes with it, Nureyev is fixating on the one thing that could possibly make him look bad.

It’s not just that, though.

This might not be a physical game, but he’s draped all over me all the same. In any other scenario, this moment would be charged with tension and uncomfortable memories of the last time we were close enough to touch. Instead we’re a couple of oversized toddlers trying to out-stubborn each other. He’s flopped across my lap with his arms looped around my neck, and there’s nothing even remotely sexual about it.
I’ve been dreading the thought of ever seeing him again. Now that he’s here, I’m having fun.

That’s part of the reason I’m holding out as long as I am: every minute we spend bickering about this is another minute we can spend happy together. The moment I give in, all of that ends. Patricide tends to do that to a mood.

I think he knows that, too.

If he really wanted to know, he just has to look me in the eyes and ask me seriously, and I’ll tell him everything he wants to know. For the moment, though, he seems to be content to let this stay a game. And as long as he’s okay with that, I am, too.
Chapter Summary

Peter needs warming up.

Chapter Notes

eternalgirlscout asked:
i can't stop thinking about juno/peter spooning and in particular juno being the big spoon
can u indulge me

Rated G

The moment I crawl into bed next to Peter, he sighs and sidles closer to me. He’s been in bed at least a half hour longer than I have, but somehow his skin feels lukewarm at best.

I don’t get it. How can a guy be buried under *that many blankets* and *still* be cold?

He’s been all over the galaxy— I know some of those planets get colder than Mars. How does he survive on worlds made of ice? Does he bundle himself up in layers? Does he turn up the charm and hope for a bit of shared body heat? Or does he just freeze?

I know my solution to his problem. I nestle closer beside him, tucking his back against my chest. My arm wraps around his waist; my legs tangle with his. The sound he makes is so blissful that it borders on the obscene.

“You’re so warm,” he hums, wrapping his icy fingers around my arm.

“That’s what I’m here for,” I murmur.

He sighs again, and I echo it with one of my own. This is nice. Especially because my face is pressed right into the crook of his shoulder, just at that perfect spot where his hair is draped around me without getting in my way.

I don’t think I give Peter’s hair enough credit. It’s so soft and shiny, and it smells incredible— not quite the same scent as his cologne, but it compliments the other smell just right, the perfect combination of earthy and mellow and spices.

I inhale deeply, sighing against his ear.

“I ever tell you that you smell nice?” I whisper.

His only answer is a soft snore. Looks like he’s finally warmed up enough to fall asleep.

I press a soft kiss to his neck, just because I can. “Sweet dreams, Peter. I’ll make sure you stay warm.”
The worst part is the vulnerability.

It might be, anyway. Any time Peter spends more than a few seconds thinking about the subject, he’s swept up in the deluge of feelings—the loneliness, the betrayal, the self-doubt, the worry, the anger, the love, the shame. In the aftermath he’s always left raw and gasping, feeling like he’s been flayed from the inside.

He hasn’t felt this way since Mag. Nobody but Juno ever got under his skin or into his head enough to make him feel this way. Nobody else has ever had the power to hurt him the way Juno has.

He would shed Peter Nureyev like a torn coat, but there’s nothing underneath. So he puts on other layers instead. He becomes someone else—someone more confident than he can feel—and adds another layer on top of that, and another, and another, until he’s Chervil Altesse, an interstellar adventurer off to fight pirates and find his fortune.

He slides into a dive bar—not because this is the kind of place where detectives come to drink, but because Altesse wants to. He pulls up a seat at the bar, buys drinks all around. When a crowd’s gathered in gratitude, he spins tales of his adventures that capture the imagination, until the people watching him are as drunk on his words as they are on his liquor.

One man stands apart from the crowd: a beautiful man with eyes like slate and constellations of scars across his skin. He’s instantly drawn to that man—and his tongue falters around his story as he realizes why.

It’s been weeks, dammit. It’s not supposed to hurt so much.

He chooses another one—practically a boy scout, straight-laced and baby-faced, who cringes slightly every time he takes a sip of the drink he didn’t buy. When Altesse offers him another round, he politely declines, insisting that the first is already going to his head.

That’s not the only thing to go to the sweet little thing’s head that night. Altesse wins him over with soft words and smoldering looks and touches that the other man follows like he’s being pulled on a
“I– um–” Boy Scout stammers, loosening his collar. “Maybe we should– um– take this someplace more…” He stumbles adorably. “Private?”

Altesse flashes a smile that could start wars. “I thought you’d never ask.”

Even in the cab, Boy Scout is shy, and so Altesse keeps his advances gentle— a held hand, a caress, a lingering kiss. Enough to feed the fire without frightening him off.

The apartment they arrive at is exactly like its owner: clean, sparse, and practical, with a few small trinkets in places of honor. Boy Scout seems embarrassed about it, awkwardly flitting around to tidy things that hardly seem out of place.

“Could I get you anything?” he asks, rubbing the back of his neck. “Something to eat? Or… um… drink? If there’s anything you want…” What he doesn’t say is apparent in every self-conscious gesture and word: I’m sorry, I’ve never done this sort of thing before.

Altesse closes the distance between them, a vulpine smile on his face. “You.”

Boy Scout’s jaw goes slack, and a gasping breath falls out of him as his back hits the wall. Altesse kisses him softly, gently, inviting him to deepen it.

Kissing Juno was like pulling him off a ledge, and suddenly the two of them were caught up in the inexorable pull of gravity.

Kissing Boy Scout is nothing like that. His lips are hesitant and careful. When long-fingered hands start to work open his pants, he pulls back.

His face is flushed, his breathing heavy. “I– shit.” The profanity is so out-of-place in that virginal mouth that Altesse kisses it clean. It takes Boy Scout a few more minutes pinned under his lips before he can bring himself to speak again. “I’m sorry– I didn’t even think– I don’t have a condom–”

“That’s alright,” Altesse purrs in his ear. “I’ve got plenty.”

Judging by the look on his face, that alone is enough to blow Boy Scout’s mind. The poor thing has no idea what to do when Altesse sinks to his knees between his legs. He bites down on his finger to keep from swearing as Altesse swallows him down. A few expletives manage to escape as that tongue migrates to other parts of him.

He still remembers the litany of curses that poured out of Juno the first time he came.

Peter wants to stop. He should stop.

Altesse takes Boy Scout’s hand and leads him into the bed. Lays him out like the sweet nubile thing he is, and opens him with a gentle hand.

It’s not the same.

It isn’t meant to be.

He’s not Juno.

Yes, Altesse assures him. That’s the point.

He fucks him tenderly, because that’s what Boy Scout wants, what he needs– but not because it
means anything. *He* doesn’t mean anything.

But he could.

It wouldn’t be that hard, would it? Just sculpt Altesse into the kind of man who is desperately in love with the person underneath him. Use him to fill that Juno-shaped hole in his chest, and hope he never needs to fill in the cracks.

He could do it. The way his partner is looking at him now, with sweat on his face and stars in his eyes, it wouldn’t be hard.

It’s that look that stops him. Because there aren’t just stars in those eyes, but trust. Openness. Vulnerability.

He can’t go through that again.

Wrapped in the condom, it’s easy enough to pass off the illusion of a climax, and he coaxes his partner into a very real one. While Boy Scout drifts through an orgasmic haze, Altesse spins a tale about having to catch the next solar wind, how he wishes he could stay longer, how he’ll never forget the man who never told him his name.

It may be a lie, but at least it’s a goodbye.

It’s more than he ever got.
A Face in the Crowd

Chapter Summary

Juno is faceblind

Chapter Notes

I talk a lot on my blog about being (somewhat?) faceblind, and an anonymous follower requested I write about that.

Anonymous asked:
i hope this isn’t too weirdly personal of a prompt, but faceblind juno who falls for multiple nureyev aliases before figuring out they’re the same guy?

Rated G

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The first time Peter Nureyev meets Juno Steel, Peter is posing as a mob henchman with hunched shoulders, a thick Uranian accent, and a scar that puckers half his face. The detective manages to get the two of them trapped in an elevator, and he spends two long hours grilling Peter for information about Peter’s current employer.

The next time they meet, the detective is hunting down an embezzling accountant at an uptown party. It wouldn’t trouble Peter, except he happens to be hanging off the arm of that very accountant, and there’s no more certain way of drawing a detective’s attention than making a break for it. So he flashes and smiles and hopes. This time the rigid collodium has been replaced by flawless winged eyeliner, the ratty clothes with a flowing ballgown and zircon gems that glitter like stars in his hair. His voice is pitched high, his stance is light and airy, but he’s still sweating. The detective’s eyes keep drifting back to him. He’s recognized Peter. He’s sure of it. It’s just a matter of time before he unveils Peter to half of Mars’ upper crust, and then a month’s worth of planning and research will be rendered useless.

But he doesn’t.

While the police handle the accountant, the detective questions Peter, wheedling for any information he might have on the accountant’s secret stash. But unlike their last interrogation, Juno is gentle with him. He speaks softly, relatively politely, the way one would to a piece of high society arm candy who got in over his head.

And the longer it goes on, the more certain Peter gets that this isn’t a trap at all. The private investigator really doesn’t recognize him.

Peter might be able to understand it if they last saw each other years ago, but it’s only been a few weeks. That can’t be right.
A bit of research gives him the answers he’s looking for. Years ago, Juno Steel applied to join Hyperion City’s Police force. He scored outstanding in all fields, particularly marksmanship, but was rejected based on his inability to accurately identify faces.

Peter would assume that the same deficiency would add some difficulty to being a private investigator, but when Juno watches people, his eyes rarely track their faces. Instead he watches their movements, their posture, their clothes, their most prominent features. When they speak, he writes down every relevant detail and matches it to their names.

Peter learns all of this while posing as a harried waiter in a low-end diner. He’s not even wearing makeup this time— it’s just his face, his hair disheveled, a dirty apron wrapped around his waist. He lingers over the detective, refills his coffee at every opportunity. When Juno starts looking suspicious, Peter sits down in the booth across from him, flirting with all the subtlety of a cat in heat. And Juno humors him, even flirts back a little bit. But there’s not a trace of recognition in his face.

To Juno Steel, he’s just another face in the crowd. He might as well not exist. After all these years of trying to erase his identity, the thought is absolutely delightful.

He starts arranging little clandestine meetings, asking him for directions, sitting next to him on the train, asking to split a cab. After the first few, he doesn’t even bother with disguises— even in plain clothes, Juno doesn’t recognize him.

When Dark Matters assigns Peter’s latest alias to work with a local detective, Peter’s overjoyed to hear it’s none other than Juno. He’s been orbiting his favorite Private Eye long enough to have learned the little quirks and turn-ons. With the slightest effort, he’s got Juno dancing to his tune— and Peter so does love to play.

Maybe he gets a little bit too caught up in the game, because he makes a decision. A stupid, rash, absurd decision, but he loves it almost as much as he loves pinning Juno to the wall while he steals the keys out of his pockets.

He’ll tell Juno his name.

It’s like a child’s game, a gamble with no stakes. Without a face to attach it to, Peter’s name is nothing but ink on paper, but the thought of writing it down still sends thrills down his spine.

Stealing the Throne of Architeuthis keeps Peter occupied for weeks on Mars’ southern hemisphere, and by the time the whole unpleasant affair is over with, he’s in need of a palate cleanser. Almost as soon as he arrives in Hyperion City, he makes his way to Juno’s favorite haunts.

He finds Juno on the street outside his office, probably heading to lunch. Peter’s already plotting it out: he’ll be busy looking at his comms and bump into him, and then he might say something—

“Nureyev?”

Peter fights the sudden flash of instinct to fight or freeze or flee. His isn’t a common surname, but it’s not unique in the galaxy. Juno must be talking to somebody else.

But when he looks up (as casually as he can manage), Juno’s storming his way, his eyes locked on Peter’s. Not on Peter’s stance or his clothes or even his hair— on his face. In Juno’s expression is the recognition he’s been missing all this time.

It just happened to come at the worst possible moment.
So Peter does what he does best: he disappears.

Chapter End Notes

For the record, if we’re assuming Juno’s condition is like mine, then he’d only have to fall for Peter once to be able to recognize him. For me, at least, something about having very strong emotions attached to a person makes them infinitely easier to recognize.
Red-eye flight

Chapter Summary

Juno picks up Peter from the spaceport

Chapter Notes

biomechatronic asked:
I'm in the mood for some more jupeter cuddles- maybe after they haven't seen each other in a long time?

Rated G

Peter arrives later than either of them expected. The spaceship had to make a last-minute detour to avoid some oversized debris that found its way out of the asteroid belt. It’s probably for the best, as far as secrecy is concerned. At a little past four in the morning, the staff are too tired to look closely at Peter’s documentation and check for forgeries. They send him through without any more trouble.

He sent ahead to Juno to go ahead home– no point making him wait an extra five hours when he could be at home asleep. When Peter steps through the arrivals gate, he’s already got his comms out to summon a cab.

But when he looks up, he's not alone. Juno’s standing right in front of him, a tabloid folded under his arm as he reaches for Peter’s bag.

“Juno? What are you—” Peter’s too tired to form coherent sentences. “You should be at home.”

“So should you.” Gently, Juno pries the bag out of Peter’s fingers. “You look exhausted.”

“Perhaps a bit.”

In honor of that exhaustion, the kiss they share is chaste and sweet. Anything more intense and Peter might wind up swept off his feet, and not necessarily in the fun way. But he’s in good hands. Juno shepherds him through the labyrinthine spaceport so deftly that Peter doesn’t have to think about which way he’s going– one moment he’s at the gate, and the next he’s inside Juno’s car and the lights of Hyperion City are flitting past them in a blur. Everything’s a blur, come to think of it.

He touches his face absently. He could have sworn he was wearing his glasses…

Before he can put it into words, Juno takes one hand off the wheel and pulls them out of the visor, offering them to Peter. “You took them off so you could doze.”

“Did I?” God, he’s tired.

“It’s alright,” Juno says gently. “We’re almost there.” He’s not wrong. Once the world comes back into focus, Peter recognizes the buildings a few blocks over from home.
He blinks hazily, startled by the thought despite himself. It’s Juno’s apartment.

But it’s also home.

The car door opens, and he looks up. Juno’s standing over him, Peter’s bag already in hand. At some point they must have made it into the parking garage underneath the apartment.

“Come on,” Juno says fondly. “Let’s get you inside.”

There’s a delirious energy that comes from being back in the familiar. Between the car and the apartment door, he’s convinced himself that he’s fine—between napping on the spaceship and the doze in the car, he’s slept more than long enough. He might as well stay up for the rest of the day and sleep at night like a normal person.

Besides, there are so many things he’d rather do than sleep.

“I’ve missed you, Juno,” he murmurs, making a nuisance of himself while Juno struggles with the keys.

“I’ve missed you too,” is what Juno probably intends to say, but only half the words make it out between their lips. Peter obliges him, making his way down Juno’s throat. “Maybe—maybe we should hold off on some of that until tomorrow.”

“Why wait?” Peter tugs apart his collar with a grin.

“Then how about we hold off until we’re not in the hallway?” With final grudging click, the door swings open. “How about you get in bed? I’ll be right behind you.”

Peter giggles. “If you insist.”

While Juno locks the door, Peter peels off his clothes. He hasn’t done anything physically taxing in the past few days, but the clothes feel grimy and damp with sweat. Peeling them off feels absolutely euphoric— but not so much as crawling into bed.

The mattress has the perfect degree of give under his weight. The sheets are soft with frequent use. The pillow—wonderfully lumpy—smells like Juno’s sweat and Juno’s shampoo and just a hint of bourbon. He breathes it in with a long sigh.

The door opens. Distantly, Peter’s aware that Juno’s pulling off his own shirt. “You need anything?”

Peter hums into the pillow. He’s beyond understanding the question. “I’m home,” he mumbles happily, snuggling deeper into the galaxy’s most comfortable bed.

“Yeah.” Juno slips between the sheets and wraps an arm around Peter’s waist. “Welcome home.”
“You know what? I changed my mind. Let’s just go.”

Peter quirks an eyebrow. “I can get you a different size if you need it.” Though he was certain he’d gotten the size right. Usually he’s got an eye for these things.

“No, don’t bother,” Juno mumbles from the other side of the dressing room stall. “It fits. It’s just…” He makes a vague noise of frustration.

“Unusually eloquent today,” his thief says. “Would it help if you show me what’s wrong?”

Juno makes another unintelligible sound. The dressing room door unlatches, but it remains shut.

“Juno?” Peter applies the slightest pressure to the door, and it swings open with a slow creak. “Juno, what’s…”

He doesn’t get much further than that.

“See what I mean?” Juno asks. He would cross his arms in frustration, but the dress is so ornate that he doesn’t know where to put his hands without messing it up.

Meanwhile Peter hasn’t said a word. He’s too busy staring, his eyes sweeping up and down Juno’s form and back again. The look on his face is nothing short of stunned.

“It’s too much,” Juno mutters.

Right now Peter isn’t sure if he’s referring to the flowing skirt or the trailing gemstones or the price tag, but he’s very sure he doesn’t care. “It flatters you,” he manages to say– the first words he’s been able to utter since he laid eyes on his detective in that dress.

Juno just wrinkles his nose and starts reaching around to his neck. “Let’s just get this off me and go already. Help me with the zipper?”

“Of course.” If Peter tugs the zipper lower than is strictly necessary, and bares a little bit too much of Juno’s back to be entirely appropriate, that’s simply an accident. He just so happens to feel particularly helpful right now. Who’s to blame him if he just so happens to enjoy the sight of Juno disappearing behind the closed door with that dress falling off him.
A few moments later, the dress is thrown over the door of the stall while Juno changes back into his street clothes. Peter gathers it up in a heartbeat.

“I’ll just take care of this, shall I?” he asks, and Juno grunts an affirmative. That’s all the excuse Peter needs to make a beeline for the register.
Hostage

Chapter Summary

Peter is held hostage

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
Juno and Peter meeting in an awkward hostage situation?

Rated PG for blood

“I said walk away, Detective. Now! Or this guy gets it.”

I’m not going to deny the sense of deja vu I’m getting from the situation. This isn’t exactly my first time in a hostage situation with the Piranha. At least this time she isn’t threatening to chuck a helpless cat into traffic— instead, she’s grabbed one of the bank patrons cowering under the counter, this one tall and thin and…

Did I mention the deja vu?

“You have got to be kidding me.”

The Piranha shoves her blaster into the hollow of Peter Nureyev’s throat. “You think I won’t do it? Wanna bet his life on that?”

“You,” I say. “I thought you said you weren’t ever coming back to Mars.”

“I didn’t intend to,” he says delicately. “Circumstances pulled me back.”

I raise an eyebrow. “Do those circumstances involve robbing a bank, by any chance?”

“Really, Juno. What kind of petty crook do you take me for?” Nureyev sniffs indignantly, but he gives me a look.

The Piranha’s grin stretches to show off her jagged teeth. “You two know each other. Perfect.”

“If you must get Biblical about it,” Nureyev mutters. The reference goes right over the Piranha’s head, so I help her out a bit.

“Oh, come on,” I snap. “You don’t have to bring that up here in front of all these people.”

That gets her attention.

“Why shouldn’t I?” Nureyev asks. “You’re the one who walked out on me. If anyone should feel sensitive about it, it should be me.”
A lumbering hulk pokes his head in from the vault. He’s holding a duffel bag that’s large enough to hold a body, the whole thing loaded with credits.

“What’s goin’ on, boss?” Bosco yawns.

The Piranha cackles. “Looks like the Detective over here and our hostage had a one-night stand.” She presses the blaster deeper into Nureyev’s throat. “Whaddaya think, Detective? Maybe I should do you a favor and kill him for you, since you’re already done with him.”

Nureyev looks me in the eye. “Well, Juno? Are you done with me?”

Way to put me on the spot, Nureyev.

“Of course not.” I spit it out before it can get lodged in my throat. This isn’t the time to get tongue-tied. “Listen, what I did— that was a mistake. I wasn’t in a good place, and I did a lot of shit I shouldn’t have done, and you shouldn’t have dealt with the fallout. I’m sorry, okay?”

“Aw,” coos Bosco. “That’s sweet. Does that mean you’re gonna get back together?”

“That depends on the Detective over here.” The Piranha removes her blaster from Nureyev’s throat for half a second to wave it at me. It’s a perfect opportunity— his knife is already clenched in his hand, hidden just barely up his sleeve— but he doesn’t take it. “You gonna put your weapon down, or are you gonna be sending flowers to your ex’s funeral?”

“Juno?” Nureyev prompts, and I can’t stand that he looks so damn hopeful.

“You’re kidding, right? After all that, you don’t actually want to get back together with me, do you? And here I thought I was a masochist.”

“I’m not gonna tell you again,” the Piranha snarls.

“Juno.”

“The answer is yes, okay?” I crouch low, setting my blaster on the ground. The other hand is extended in a show that I’m unarmed. “Yes, I want you back, if you’re crazy enough to have me. Is that what you were waiting for?”

The Piranha jerks her blaster at me again. “Now kick it to–” The last word is lost in a shriek as Nureyev’s knife embeds itself in her arm. She tries to elbow him, but he’s already out of her reach, vanishing behind the teller’s counter. I can’t help but wonder how many creds will disappear into those bottomless pockets of his.

I stun the Piranha before she has the chance to regroup, and Bosco joins her on the floor a few seconds later.

“Well,” Nureyev says, looking entirely too cheerful for a man who was just held at gunpoint. “I think that was fairly productive, don’t you?”

“You could’ve stabbed her sooner,” I mutter.

“And miss your answer? I wouldn’t dream of it.”
Peter leans back, stretching out to take up as much of the luxurious space as he can. The walls are far enough apart that he needs to stretch out his arms to touch them both at the same time. It wasn’t difficult to con himself into the First Class section of the spaceship, with its roomy berths and its exquisite concierge service. Now he’s got all the space he could ask for, and a few dozen hours to do with as he pleases while the ship makes its way back to Mars.

Back to Juno.

He can’t wait. It’s been months since he’s seen his Detective. Maybe he’ll be able to persuade Juno to come with him on the next trip– not forever, just as a little vacation from his day job. He’s sure he could find a way to be properly persuasive.

His excited hum is swallowed by the padded walls of the berth. He can think of quite a few ways to persuade Juno to come with him.

His dick twitches at the thought, already growing hard with that sweet tension, and he takes himself out.

He’s not alone. Two berths down, a high-class lawyer is having a threesome with their two partners. Four beyond that, a couple on their honeymoon is joining the Stratosphere Club. On his way to his berth, he was propositioned by no less than three different strangers to join them for a while. It’s not that spaceships are inherently sexy– it’s just that the flights are unbearably long, and accommodating larger passengers means that most of the long, horizontal berths are large enough to hold at least two people. It’s only a matter of time before the selection of pre-saved streams dries up, novels lose their novelty, and long naps give way to cabin fever– and so quite a significant percentage of passengers finds more carnal ways to pass the time.

The spacelines are well aware of the practice, which is why the pads that line the berths are washed between flights, and why complimentary packages are passed out to the adult passengers at boarding.

There was a time when Peter would be taking advantage of his– maybe right now he would be pressed close against another body, listening intently as his partner murmured about the places they’d
been or the things they’d seen. Sometimes when they disembarked, he would come with them, and they’d have a grand adventure together.

The thought carries nostalgia, but the thought of seducing a stranger doesn’t draw him the way it used to. When he pictures himself sliding against another man’s skin, it’s always dark and patterned with scars. When he thinks of looking into another man’s eye, it’s always the one, and always that bright, hopeful blue.

He’d love to take Juno here.

He catches the double entendre a moment after the thought crosses his mind, and he grins. He’d love to take Juno right here, pinned underneath him in the confines of this berth. He’d love to hold him down and fuck him hard while Juno’s feet find purchase against the padded walls. He’d like to bear down on Juno until his beautiful Detective is flat underneath him, unresistant except for his fingertips digging into the soft pads. He loves the way Juno’s eye rolls back when he gets like that– he loves the sighs and soft moans as Juno gives in to pleasure.

Maybe he’ll make love to Juno slowly then, tenderly. He’ll build Juno up for hours and draw out the climax for as long as he can stand. When he finally does come, the sensation will be almost transcendent. The look on Juno’s face will be nothing short of a masterpiece. When he comes down, he’ll be shivering and shaking, but Peter will be there to help him feel grounded, even all the way out here in the depths of space.

Maybe later, once they’re both rested and rehydrated, when they’ve both got it in them to get it in them, they’ll go in for something more fast-paced.

He can see Juno now, grinning down at him, straddling Peter’s hips as he lowers himself onto an eager cock. Peter can practically trace the curve of Juno’s spine as he leans back, his thighs squeezing together as he fights to keep his balance. And then Juno will ride him hard– so very hard–and he’ll look down with a challenge in his eye, and he’ll ask “is that all you’ve got?”

Maybe it will be, for the moment. Maybe Peter will be overwhelmed by the pressure around his thighs and the tightness around his cock and the impish glee on the face of the man he loves, and he’ll come until he’s seeing stars.

He can see them now, sparking in front of his eyes as he comes undone. Entire nebulae are unfolding before him, unnamed and abstract.

*They’re pointing the way back to Mars.* The thought floats on the post-orgasmic bliss that hazes his mind. *They’re pointing the way back to Juno.*

He lets his eyelids droop and surrenders himself to sleep. It won’t be long now, and he’ll have Juno back in his arms.
Redirection

Chapter Summary

Juno redirects harmful urges into something sorta productive

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
can you do something with juno actively not letting depression kick him in the teeth? i'm having a hard time and juno, as the worst role model, helps me get through days.

This one's rated T, but be aware, it does deal with self-harm impulses.

Breathe. Just breathe.

He squares himself against the bag. For a moment, he sees his own scarred face on the synth-leather, and he punches it hard enough to leave his knuckles smarting. The bag smacks the back of the board and comes bouncing back to slap his fist, and he punches it again.

For the longest time, Juno avoided the boxing gym just out of spite—because he didn’t want to see the smug looks on the faces of all those people who told him ‘exercise, you’ll feel better’. It goddamn doesn’t work that way, and he knows it, and he wasn’t about to take their stupid, self-righteous, smarmy, bullshit advice as if he hadn’t tried that already. All the cardio in the world can’t fix what he has, so why bother?

As it turns out, there are other reasons to go: The slap of synth-leather against his fists, the burn of muscles that are pushed past their limits, the sweat dripping into his eyes. There’s a vindictive glee in the back of his head—today he hates himself enough to welcome the pain. He wants to hurt. He wants to punish himself. Tomorrow he’ll be too sore to roll out of bed, and he’ll deserve that, too, he tells himself, and he keeps on punching.

Breathe.

He’s caught up on the rhythm: fist-bag-fist-bag-fist-bag-fist. It’s such a simple, mindless task, but it takes all his focus to keep it going. There’s not room to let his mind wander. All the extra processing power in his head is spent making sure he keeps breathing, until what’s left is something almost like a trance.

There’s nothing here: no self-loathing, no guilt, no blame, no shame. Just the slap of the synth-leather, the burn of his muscles, the sweat in his eyes, the rhythm of the bag, the count of his breathing.

Sometimes when he feels the firmness in his bicep, there’s a twinge of pride there, a concrete thing that he likes about himself that wasn’t there before. Sometimes (though he’ll never say it to a soul), he even feels halfway good after he’s done, usually while he’s in the jelly-leg limbo between the end
of the workout and the beginning of the soreness.

Alessandra’s the one who told him about it, back on a long stakeout on a bad night. The War left her with demons of her own to deal with, but she’s found her own ways to cope.

“If you’re that determined to hurt yourself, then at least do it in a way that’s productive. Do something that’s not permanent. Something that’ll leave you better off than you were before.”

“I think you’re missing the point,” he told her.

“What do you think the point even is, Juno? You can’t magically turn off your feelings. But you can trick them into working for you.”

So he keeps going to the gym and hitting the speed bag until his arms feel like overcooked noodles, and he blurs the line between self-flagellation and self-care until even his own messed-up head can’t tell which he’s doing right now. If he doesn’t feel better, then at least he’s too exhausted to hate himself, and he’s so ravenous that eating doesn’t feel like a chore– and right now, he’ll take what he can get.

In a few days, or weeks, or whatever, the thing that’s tearing into him will move on, and he’ll be able to function normally again. Until it does, though, he’ll keep punching.
Chapter Summary

Juno, Peter and Rita go to the movies

Chapter Notes

eternalgirlscout asked:
   since it's too early to request anything to do with The Spoiler from today's episode, how about touch-starved juno? i just want good gentle things for him just once i'm withering

   This one's rated T for mentions of sex in the abstract, but mostly it's just cuddling.

He’s doing it again.

Touching me. Just… touching me.

He’s not flirting– at least, I don’t think he is? He’s not laying it on as thick as he usually does, anyway. He’s just telling some story, illustrating it with big, sweeping gestures with one hand. The other hand is hand is on my shoulder like he’s anchoring himself to me, like if he lets go he’ll be swept away by it. It’s… kind of nice, actually. Like he trusts me to keep him here.

It’s the opening night of Pirates of the Asteroid Belt, and there’s no getting out of it without breaking Rita’s heart. She’s been looking forward to this thing for months. She’s even dressed up for the occasion– apparently there are costumes? Even Peter’s dressed up for it, though his is more subtle. I figure I fit in just fine with the eye patch, but Rita gave me a plush beakmonkey to put on my shoulder, just in case.

When Peter first reaches over my shoulder, I’m sure that he’s just wanting to adjust the accessory, or play with it, or something. When he keeps it there, I decide, okay, this one’s a come-on. I know it. It’s such a classic that it’s passed beyond cliche and right back into classic again. We’re about a third of the way into the movie; it’ll probably be a bit before any of the others get out. Plenty of time to sneak into the bathroom for a quick bit of side entertainment. But when I look up at Peter, he just smiles at me and returns his attention to the movie.

He’s just tall enough that his arm fits comfortably around my shoulders, the crook of his elbow in just the right spot to cradle my head, his long, elegant hand resting lightly on my chest. I’m sure he’ll get bored eventually, so I take a moment to enjoy the moment of connection while I can.

He’s here beside me. Right now, even Peter Nureyev can’t just disappear without taking me with him. He doesn’t look like he’s going anywhere, though. His eyes are straight ahead, engrossed in the movie. Something must have happened on the screen, because he gives my shoulders a squeeze– and it’s great, like a hug but without the awkwardness or the crushed lungs. Just a quick reminder that he’s right here, holding me while we watch this movie.
In an impulsive moment, I want to return the gesture, but I can’t. My arm’s pinned by his, and besides, he’s too tall for me to reach him from this angle. So I press myself into his side, and I lay my head on his shoulder.

It’s a surprisingly comfortable shoulder.
In the days after Peter comes home with him, things are okay. He falls into bed with the man of his
dreams and wakes up beside him in the morning and makes him breakfast. When Juno’s called in on
a case, Peter joins him— it’s dangerous and ridiculous and more fun than he’s had in a long time, and
by the time it ends they’re laughing so hard they have to lean against each other not to fall over.
Juno’s happier than he’s been in years.

He should have known better. It was only a matter of time before the other shoe dropped.

He’s just getting out of the shower when he spots Peter standing halfway in the closet, and idiot that
he is, he doesn’t even think to be worried. It just seems like Peter Nureyev deciding whether he’s got
enough closet space for his many disguises. But then Peter turns, and Juno spots the sliver of dusty
red behind him.

“Juno?” It doesn’t sound like an accusation, even if it feels like one. He just sounds curious. “I didn’t
know you were married.”

Suddenly Juno wants to retreat back into the shower. He wants to turn around and walk out of the
apartment, towel and all. Hell, even the window is looking pretty tempting right about now.
Anything’s better than being in this conversation.

“I’m not,” he says woodenly, because he can’t think of anything else to say.

He knew this couldn’t last. He knew. Goddamn it, he knew. He can see it now in the sudden
guarded expression on Peter’s face. And if Juno had any dignity, he’d let it go there. He’d let Peter
get upset and leave, because that’s how this story goes.

But he can’t, dammit.

“It’s not that I don’t trust you or anything,” he says quickly, as if he could possibly salvage this shit
show of a situation. “You can probably look it up, there’s probably a record of it somewhere. I just—
I don’t like talking about it.”

That might be an understatement. The words are stuck in his throat like he swallowed caltrops, wedged so deep into his esophagus that they might as well be stabbing through his adam’s apple. He knows he’d reach in there and dig them out and show them to Peter if he asked, just like he knows how Peter would react if he did.

How he should react, anyway.

But Peter just stares at him, his forehead creased inelegantly, all sympathy and concern as if Juno deserves any of that, and Juno can’t take it.

“Don’t look at me like that,” he says, almost snapping the words. “It wasn’t some big tragedy, okay? It was me. I had something great, I fucked it up, and now it’s gone. It’s over. So can we just drop it?”

He doesn’t say, If it doesn’t sound familiar, you haven’t been paying attention.

He doesn’t say, Don’t you understand that you deserve better?

He doesn’t say, Get out while the getting’s good or You’ll regret it if you stay.

“I don’t even know why I kept the damn thing,” he says instead, digging a cleanish shirt out of the laundry. He can’t stand being close to the closet right now, but he can’t stand feeling any more vulnerable than he has to, either. “I’ve been meaning to burn it.”

Peter gives the gown a considering look, and then shuts the closet door. “You know, it has been a while since I’ve had a decent bonfire. I could pick up a bottle of wine, if you’d like. Marshmallows, perhaps.”

In that moment, Juno is struck dumb. He knows how people react to this thing. How they always react, with the prying, the judgement, the pity, the awkward fumbling. His whole goddamn life is an open book, and everyone’s just itching to tear out the pages and shove them back in his face.

It’s not very often that somebody just lets him move on. But that’s what this is, isn’t it?

“Marshmallows?” he asks faintly.

“It’s something they do on Callisto, though I believe it’s an old Earth custom originally. You put marshmallows on a stick and roast them over an open fire. It caramelizes the sugars quite nicely.”

“I… yeah,” Juno says slowly, and he actually means it. “I think I’d like that.”
Seduction

Chapter Summary

Juno and Peter have an awkward reunion while Peter's in the middle of seducing a mark

Chapter Notes

dykerose asked:
Maybe a Juno and Nureyev reunion post-frp where Nureyev's persona is seducing somebody?

Rated T for violence and innuendo

It took three whole seconds of the world being sideways for me to realize I was on the ground. That bruiser had one hell of a right hook.

It just goes to show: no matter how far you go, you’ll always find a little piece of home to make you feel welcome. It was my first time offworld, hunting down a crime boss named Diffusion Deus on behalf of Hyperion City’s mayor-to-be; my welcome wagon consisted of a set of reinforced knuckles against my jaw, served up by by one of Deus’ bruisers. Nice lady. She even scraped me off the floor when she was done so she could take me to meet Diffusion Deus himself. I might have appreciated the gesture a bit more if the room would quit spinning long enough for me to see the guy.

Maybe that’s why Deus wasn’t the first person my eyes landed on– it was either that or the dress.

But there he was: Peter Nureyev, wrapped in a dress so tight it had to be outlawed on at least three planets. It might have been even more flattering if it wasn’t hitched up to his thigh, showing off those long, gorgeous legs to half the room. Deus wrapped an arm around Nureyev’s waist, and then his hand slid lower.

Right then, all rational thought fell out of my head.

“Get your hands off him,” I snarled, charging forward. A fist to my jaw knocked me back down.

When I looked up again, Deus squeezed Nureyev tight against his side. “You know this clown, Grafin?”

Nureyev gave an elegant shrug. “Nobody important, darling. Just an old flame.”

Deus raised an eyebrow. “I can always snuff him for you.”

“There’s no need for that, darling.” Nureyev giggled, resting his chin on the mob boss’s shoulder. “I assure you, that spark has long gone out.”

That stung, but not as much as the sight of Nureyev pulling Deus into a kiss. It looked like the two of them had more than enough fire to keep things heated between them. I was about ready to douse
myself in lighter fluid just watching them.

“Would you cut it out already?” I asked.

“You sure know how to pick ‘em, doll,” Deus said. “Sounds like the jealous type.”

“Envious,” Nureyev corrected, flashing his teeth. “What you’re thinking of is envy. Jealousy implies that I was ever his to lose.” He caught my eye for half an instant, and then turned back to Deus. “You have nothing to worry about.”

“Maybe I don’t,” Deus said, nodding at me. “What brings a man like yourself to an establishment like mine? If you were hoping to rekindle—”

“Ramses O’Flaherty sent me,” I snapped, before the bastard could rub it in any further.

“And he sent his little lap dog to yap at me?”

“What kind of sick fuck sends threats to soup kitchens and food pantries?”

“It’s just business,” Deus said lightly. “Tell Old Ramses that he has no one to blame but himself. If he didn’t keep intercepting my shipments, none of this ugly business would have to happen.”

“I’d love to pass the message on,” I said, “but your buddy here looks like she wants to break my jaw.”

“Yeah, that might be a problem.” He made a signal with his free hand. “Martina, get an envelope. I want you to mail Old Ramses a few of the wise guy’s fingers.”

Nureyev made a face. “Deus, must you? All that blood is going to put me off my appetite.”

“It’s business, Grafin. It’s gotta happen.”

“I’m sure. But before dinner, though? We had plans.” The whine in his voice shouldn’t have been so damn irresistible, but that was Peter Nureyev for you. “And I was so looking forward to dessert.”

Maybe somewhere in the galaxy there was a person who could resist an offer like that from a guy like him, but Diffusion Deus was no such soul.

“Lock him up,” he said, waving at the bruiser. “I’ll deal with him in the morning.”

It was well after midnight when Nureyev appeared again, slinking into my cell like a shadow. At first I only noticed him from the lack of noise: the odd silence as my guard suddenly stopped his pacing. A moment later, Nureyev came into view.

He was still in that dress, but it was creased and awkward, like he’d pulled it on in a hurry.

I didn’t want to think about where he’d been all this time. And it wasn’t like I had any right to complain. After all, I’m the one who left him. A mature adult would recognize that and keep their mouth shut. Unfortunately, I’m a brat, so I asked anyway. “How was dinner?”

“I’d rather you not make me regret this, Juno.” Nureyev’s lips pressed into a thin line, his lipstick hopelessly smeared. He tugged a pair of pins out of his hair—no, not pins, but a hook pick and a torsion wrench—and got to work picking the lock on my chains. “I’m throwing away months of work coming here tonight.”
“By all means, don’t let me keep you,” I said. “Go right back to who you were doing.”

He glared. “Jealousy isn’t a good look on you, Juno.”

“Envy, remember?” My grin probably looked more like a rictus than a smile. My face was so bruised that it hurt to do more than talk. “You said it yourself, jealousy–”

“I know what I said.” Before I could ask uncomfortable questions, he changed the subject. “If you think I’m going to stand by and watch you get dismembered, you’re more of an idiot than I thought.” The lock snapped open, and he unwound the chains from around my arms and torso. The relief was dizzying; when he yanked me upright, I lost my footing and stumbled into him. “The cars are this way. We’ll need to hurry.”

“Planning on coming with me?”

“I don’t exactly have much choice. When Deus realizes what I’ve done, he’ll want me skinned alive. I plan to not be here when he draws that conclusion.”

Yeah, that was probably a good idea. Unless…

“Unless he never realizes.” I grabbed the gun from the fallen guard.

“What are you thinking?” Nureyev asked, but he was already starting to follow my lead.

“How are you at crying on cue?”

We had a few minutes to set up: a few practiced lines, a few artistic rips on that dress of his, a bit of my blood dabbed on his face, a few crocodile tears. Nureyev even coached me on the proper way to grab his hair.

“Slide your palm along my scalp, then make a fist, and– not quite so hard, Juno.”

I released the fist instantly. “Did I hurt you?”

“That’s hardly the problem. In case you haven’t noticed, this dress doesn’t hide much from the imagination.”

“What? I– Oh.” It took a lot more effort than it should have not to look down. “Right. I’ll… not do that, then.”

When we finally reached the guards, I kept him pressed tight against my side. My free hand was wrapped around his throat, tight enough to look menacing but not enough to actually cut off any air flow. Nureyev trembled and flailed like he was born for the role, and I made sure the gangsters got a good long look at him being held prisoner before I left them stunned on the ground.

With Nureyev guiding me, it wasn’t long before we found the garage, piled with a fleet of luxury cars. The way I see it, a guy who can afford cars like that can afford to make repairs when a high-powered laser carves through the engine blocks. There was no way I was letting Deus turn this into a high-speed chase.

We piled into the last car with a working engine and gunned it through the garage door. I barely had time to engage the autopilot before the display panel lit up. I didn’t think– I just grabbed Nureyev by the hair just in time for the camera to turn on. Out of sight of the camera, Nureyev slipped me a knife, and I raised it to his throat.
“You fucking yap dog–”

I jabbed the knife at Nureyev’s throat, and he responded with a theatrical cry. “You were saying?”

“Get your fucking hands off Grafin, you–”

“You can have him back when I’m done with him.”

“I swear, if you touch him–”

“Now why would I do something like that?” My finger caressed the blade. “No, I’m not gonna hurt him unless you make me, you got that? If you threaten another one of my boss’s charities, you’ll get him back in pieces. You want him alive, you’ll have to start playing nice.”

“Deus, please!” Nureyev sobbed. “Do what he says!” The last word ended with an abrupt yelp as I jerked his head to the side.

“You think I don’t know a bluff when I see one?” Deus demanded. “You wouldn’t dare. You don’t have the guts.”

“You wanna bet on that?” The knife bit into Nureyev’s throat. A line of blood seeped from the point of broken skin. “After this– this whore– left me for you? Go right ahead, darling. Tell me what I can’t do.” I pulled back the knife. Nureyev whimpered.

“Wait!” Deus shouted. “Goddammit, wait! Don’t hurt him!”

My lip curled. “That’s what I thought.” I leaned back, pulling the knife away. The cut on his throat was shallow, but I still felt bad. “Watch yourself, Deus. I’ll be keeping an eye on you.”

I pressed the button, ending the call.

Nureyev stayed in character for another half a second, and then groaned. “Oh, Juno, that last bit was too much.”

“What? No, that was perfect. The pun, though…” He made a face.

Of course that was what he’d take offense to. I fought back a grin. As much as I enjoyed the thrill of a clean getaway, this wasn’t something I should be getting used to. “Sorry if I got a bit rough at the end there–”

“Don’t lie, I know you were yanking me around like that on purpose.” Even after he wiped the secondhand blood and crocodile tears off his face, his eyes sparkled with delight. I could look into them forever… but I shouldn’t.

I cleared my throat and wrapped my hands around the steering wheel. “So how do you want to do this? I drop you off, you tell him some dramatic story about how you escaped certain death, and then you get back to doing… whatever it is you’re doing here?”

He leaned in, his head tilted to one side. “Oh? Over your jealousy already?”

Of course not. There was a part of me that would rather shoot Deus than let him get his paws on Nureyev again. “It doesn’t matter how I feel about it. Whatever you have going on with that guy is between you and him. I don’t get a say in it.” I gave up that right when I walked out on him. I knew that.
“And if you did?” He was so close I could smell that cologne. “If I wanted you to have a say in how I spend my time?”

If I had the time to think about it, I might have come up with the right answer, but right then I was exhausted, bruised, and still riding the high of our getaway. So I gave him the truth instead: “I would… want you to spend it with me.”

He flashed a grin that made me feel warmer than I’d like to admit. “Well, then, you’re in luck. I’d make a poor hostage if I escaped so soon.”
When you just can't reach

Chapter Summary

Juno needs to reach something on a high shelf

Chapter Notes

jellyfishpikachu asked:
If you haven't done something like this yet: Juno gets frustrated trying to get something he needs off a high shelf that he's too short to reach, so he starts stacking stuff to reach it. Peter walks in on him trying to climb up it.

Rated G

Peter isn’t unfamiliar with the sound of things crashing in Juno’s apartment. Instinctively he has his knife out and ready, just in case the crash came from a another would-be assassin.

The string of curses filtering from the kitchen, though, suggest something a bit more mundane.

“Goddamn fucking twelve-foot ceilings and the fucking stupid top shelves made for goddamn fucking giants with their stupid stupid stretchy arms and…”

The knife is returned to its safe place in his back pocket. “Juno? Is everything alright?”

“Fine,” Juno grates out. “Stay where you are, I’ve got it covered.”

As if Peter could resist.

“Are you sure?” he says innocently, poking his head into the kitchen. And oh, it is worth it.

He’s not sure exactly how Juno got up there, but his detective currently has one foot in a cabinet and the other resting precariously on the point of the kitchen sink. Scattered across the kitchen floor are two separate chairs; judging by the way they’re arranged, Juno tried stacking them on top of each other before he climbed on them. That seems to have gone about as well as could be expected.

“Goddammit, Peter. Not a word.”

“I haven’t said a word.”

“And I swear, if you do—”

“My lips are sealed.” Peter even draws a finger across his lips to illustrate it. Hopefully the gesture disguises the fact that he’s activating the hidden camera in his jacket button. There are some images that should be preserved for posterity— or at least for Rita. “Would you like help getting down?”
Chapter Summary

Rita goes lingerie shopping with Juno

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
hey there! if you ever get the chance, i would probably die if you wrote about juno in lingerie.
You'd be surprised, but this one's G. Like, PG, tops, and that's for language.

Juno is pretty sure there’s some kind of rule about having your secretary shop for your intimates, but it’s not like he’s going to hear any complaints from HR. After all, it was her idea.

Rita’s the one who spotted the piece when she was out shopping with her book club, and she’s the one who dragged him here on his lunch break so he could see it for himself.

“What do you think?” she squeals, bouncing on her feet. “Ain’t it something?”

“It’s something alright,” he says warily. It’s all silk and swish, with long panels of translucent fabric that make him think of art deco and stained glass more than any kind of clothing. It’s as classy as it is impractical.

Peter would love it.

He drags Rita back to the office with a halfhearted lecture about wasting time— one she doesn’t listen to, he’s well aware.

Later that night, though, he goes back to the store. Just to look, he tells himself. He’s sure most of the positive qualities of that weird little nighty are just overinflated fantasizing while he was bored. A second glance will prove that it’s awful… or that it’s actually as nice as he remembers, dammit.

It’s not like he wears lingerie— stuff like that is usually expensive and awkward and cumbersome, and he’s enough of a mess that dressing up a little bit wouldn’t fool his partners into thinking otherwise.

But it does look nice. And when he tries it on, just to humor himself… well, he doesn’t look half bad. Besides, it’s on sale. Who even knows the next time he’s going to find something this nice for that price?

So he grabs it and stuffs it in a basket and doesn’t make eye contact with the cashier who can’t be more than half his age, and he rushes out of the store before he can change his mind.

He can’t remember the last time he made an impulse buy that didn’t involve liquor, and honestly? It’s
a little bit exciting. Especially since Peter’s due to get back from Olympus Mons tonight.
Juno surprises Peter with his purchase

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:

i need to know what happens After that lingerie fic

I'm gonna call this... T-M? Depending on where you stand on such things.

It’s late.

Juno’s taken off the piece half a dozen times already, telling himself that this is stupid and ridiculous and he should just go to bed already. He always puts it back on. Every time, it looks a little less strange on him. A little less uncomfortable.

This time, he’s keeping it on. He’s decided. And just to keep himself from fidgeting with all the swishy fabric, he retires to the bathroom and worries about finding a lipstick that will match the color, and then worries about getting his eyeliner right, and then–

Well, then he hears the footsteps.

He scrambles for a place to sit. Sprawled out in bed– not exactly subtle, is it?– or reclining against the couch– would that be too confrontational for a look like this?– or maybe lurking in a shadow so he can sneak up behind Peter– okay, let’s be serious, there’s no such thing as sneaking up on Peter Nureyev.

In the time it takes Peter to unlock the door, Juno settles for the classic approach and throws himself onto the bed, subtlety be damned. He smooths the wrinkles out of the silk while Peter hangs up an overburdened coat and sets his bag down in the front hall.

“Juno?” he calls, so soft that his voice barely carries through the bedroom door. “Are you sleeping?”

“In the bedroom,” Juno calls back. He’s hit with one last wave of self-doubt, but shoves it back. It’s too late to get out of this now.

“Oh, good.” The doorknob turns. The bedroom door swings open. “I’m glad you’re still… awake…” And then Peter sees what’s waiting for him. “This is new.”

Juno fights back a shrug. He’s going for sultry, not noncommittal. His mouth is dry, but he manages not to swallow until Peter’s eyes sweep down the length of his body.

He shouldn’t be nervous, dammit. It’s not like this is his first time having sex. Hell, it’s not like this is his first time having sex with Peter. There’s absolutely no reason to get shy.
But he is.

Sure, he’s gotten dolled up for Peter before, but usually he’s sulking in the dressing room while Peter throws him whatever might look most flattering. And yeah, he’s initiated sex, but usually it’s less of a production and more him just leaning over and kissing Peter and letting the chips fall where they may, and if they land in bed, all the better.

This is…

This is different.

It’s not just the dress or the fact that he cleaned up a bit before Peter got back or the makeup or the candles— it’s the fact that he’s putting effort into this at all. Because he can’t just pretend that he isn’t hoping for something right now. Because if one kiss doesn’t go anywhere, there’s nothing lost— but if he actually tries and it turns out he’s just not good enough—

Okay, so maybe he’s a little bit terrified.

No matter how much he tries to keep his voice calm and nonchalant, it comes out sounding raw. “I saw it and thought of you.”

It sounds so stupid when he says it aloud, and suddenly he can think of a million better things that he should have said, but it’s too late now.

He’s half a breath from calling the whole thing off when he feels Peter’s lips against his, and all the thoughts spinning through his head grind to a halt. When Peter pulls back, it’s with a sly grin. “You’ve been thinking about me, hm?”

“Oh?” Peter rests one knee on the bed, so close that the polyfiber of his pants slide against Juno’s silk. “And what occasion would that be?”

“The usual.” He’s grateful that he’s got the banter to focus on, because now Peter’s full weight is on the bed, and Juno’s pinned between his knees. “At night. And when I’m lonely. And when I’m breathing.” He leans forward, so close that he can feel the air of Peter’s soft exhale. “Touch me.”

Peter runs his hand down the length of Juno’s thigh, skin sliding against silk sliding against skin. Juno lets himself fall back an inch at a time until he’s stretched out across the bed, basking in the luxury of Peter’s hands on him— and then his mouth.

He always thought Peter’s lips felt like silk. Now he knows for sure.
Juno buys a virtual reality porn machine.

Ramses isn’t exactly the first rich guy who’s offered to keep me on retainer– I’ve had a few clients with deep pockets and lots of enemies, but most of them are the type that make me want to scrub down with steel wool after I’ve shaken their hands, so I tend to decline. Sure, the pay is good, but I’m not that kind of girl.

Besides, what am I gonna spend it on? More booze? Or a new liver once the one I’ve got finally decide it’s had enough of me? It’s not like there’s anything that I want desperately enough that I can’t wait for a paycheck or two to clear (as for anyone… well, money wouldn’t fix that, anyway).

So I sit on my money. Buy my booze. Pay off the debts I’ve been neglecting. Get a tune-up for my death trap of a car.

And when I’m energetic enough to be bored and bored enough to do some window shopping, I make an impulse buy.

It’s a practical purchase, really. I have needs, after all, and Ramses keeps me too busy to do much on the dating scene… and besides, after that disaster with… with what’s-her-name, I’m not in any hurry to get back into it. This is a nice substitute: a short-term interface that lets me see and feel and fuck like there’s a whole other person here with me, except without the awkwardness and expectation of reality. All the met needs and none of the mess.

Yup. Exactly what I need.

Okay, so maybe I shove it under the bed and don’t touch it for a few weeks. Buyer’s remorse is a thing.

Only, like I said, a lady has needs. And they’re not the kind of needs I’m interested in dealing with on my own. So I break out the interface, and I read the instruction manual a few times over because like hell am I calling in Rita to help me figure it out, and then I put it on.

It’s a hell of a lot of work for a process that shouldn’t take all that long, but hopefully it won’t take so long after I figure out the basics and get it set up. First I need to program in the auditory failsafe, then
I need to program in everything I am and am not okay with, and then I start entering in my
preferences on partner—gender expression, physical sex, body type, all that stuff. You can even
scroll through the profiles for all the models they use. They’re all fairly attractive, in one way or
another, but none of them really stand out to me. I’m near the end of the very long list and I’ve pretty
much decided to settle on whatever when I spot a name.

It isn’t a name I know, but it feels familiar all the same. Seeing as I’ve got nothing better to do, I
make the selection: Solomon Clay.

My every muscle tenses at once. “Halcyon,” I tell the interface, triggering the failsafe. “Goddammit, I
said Halcyon!”

I yank it off me, breathing hard. It can’t be. It goddamn can’t be. He wouldn’t be that— that stupid,
not after all the effort he put into hiding his face. He wouldn’t be that bold—

Okay, so he would be that bold. Especially if the profile is hidden in the farthest corners of a decently
expensive program. And it’s not like most people buy a porn interface to look at the stars’ faces.

Slowly, carefully, I put the interface back on. I was right about it being faster the second time: my
preferences are all saved onto the software, and this time I don’t even have to search.

“Give me Solomon Clay.”

And suddenly I’m on an expanse of silk as far as the eye can see— or I think I am. I’m not exactly
paying attention to the decor so much as I am to the man who’s sharing it with me. Peter Nureyev is
lounging in front of me, wearing an amused smirk and not much else. Well, a little bit else, but the
big crystal necklace and ear cuffs and bracelets don’t really count, and the rest is perfectly tailored so
it doesn’t actually hide anything. God, it looks good on him, though: gloves so long they almost
reach to his shoulders; silk stockings that stop at his perfect thighs and held in place by a slinky garter
belt, and a slip of fabric that might be called a thong if it had less dignity. All of it is black, all of it so
thin it’s almost translucent, all of it classy and refined and so very Nureyev.

“Here at last,” he purrs, resting his head on one knuckle. “I’ve been waiting for you.”

There’s a spike of adrenaline, and I almost use the failsafe again— but no. No. This is just a pre-
recorded message. It’s part of the program. It’s got nothing to do with me leaving him in that hotel, or
shoving the interface under my bed and pretending it didn’t exist.

He hums contentedly. “So. Where shall we begin?”

I should begin with an apology. I should begin by groveling at his feet. I should…

But that doesn’t matter, does it? Because no matter how much I apologize, this is just a program in a
computer. A digital projection of him. No matter what I say, he won’t really hear it.

“I just…” my voice breaks. “I just want to look at you for a minute.”

Another warm hum. “That sounds lovely.” He lays back, sprawling across the silk so I can see every
inch of him.

He looks younger— he must have been in his twenties when this was recorded— and he’s somehow
even more lean and willowy than when I knew him. His skin is flawless, his muscles toned and
perfect, his hair artfully disheveled. But it’s him. Oh god, it’s really him.

My hands are shaking when I reach out to touch him, and his skin is warm and smooth under my
fingertips. I can feel muscle, and beneath it the hardness of bone. While I run my hands over his chest, he tips back his head and sighs.

“You like that?” I ask, my voice dry.

“That feels wonderful.”

And that’s… that’s permission, isn’t it? To keep touching him.

What am I saying? It’s a porn program. Of course it’s going to be okay with me touching it. But I have to ask. I can’t look at that face and not ask.

I touch him slowly, reverently. He deserves more than that– he deserves more attention and care than I know how to give, but I have to try anyway. He chuckles when my hands brush his bare skin. Moans when I card my hand through his hair. When my fingers slip under his garter belt, he gasps sweetly, his leg rising like a reflex. I bend over him, pressing my lips to his knee, and then slowly make my way down until I’m kissing his feet. I don’t know how else to let him know how badly I fucked up, how sorry I am, how much I need him to forgive me.

The program probably interprets it as a submissive gesture, because he’s sitting up now, his gloved elbows on his stockinged knees, and the look he gives me is dark as an oil slick.

“Do you want me to take over for a while?” he asks, and I nod frantically. I don’t know what else to do with myself. He’s here but he’s not and there’s so much I want to say but I can’t–

“Come here.” The command in his voice is inescapable. “That’s right. On your knees.” The silk of his gloves glides across my skin and circles my entrance. A single finger slips inside me, and I’m gasping.

“It’s lovely to see you like this,” he purrs, stretching me open with an inexplicable slickness. It’s happening faster than it rightfully should, but I don’t care. I can feel the stretch, the burn, the sweet friction of his fingers inside me, and I push against it.

With his free hand, he swats at my ass, and I gasp. The sting of it sings against my senses.

“Not until I say so,” he warns. “You’re not finished yet.”

“Goddamn getting there.” I’m panting, my whole body shaking as he plunges deeper inside of me. I grab at the sheets, just to have something to hold onto. And then his fingers find just the right spot, and it’s like I’ve been lit up from the inside. I’m writhing on the sheets, trying to press myself against his hand just so he’ll do that again.

His free hand wraps around the back of my neck, pressing me back into the sheets. “Ah-ah. Not until I say so. You’re in my power now, remember?”

“Yes,” I gasp, trembling against him. “God, yes, whatever you say– just please do that again.”

“You’re lovely, do you know that?” He laughs, his fingers twitch against my prostate, and I might just melt here and now. “Absolutely beautiful. And nobody else gets to have you this way. Only me.”

“Only you. You’re the only one I want. Nobody else.” I’m babbling now, but I don’t care, not when he’s pushing me closer and closer to the edge. “God, Nureyev, I need you, I need you so bad, please–”
“Very good.” His hand tightens around my neck. “Now there’s one last thing I want you to do.”

“Anything.” My voice is muffled in the silk sheets. My back is arcing. “Anything, please. I’ll do whatever you want, just say the word. Please, just–” It ends in a frustrated keen.

He leans close, his lips inches from my ear. “I want you to come.”

I wouldn’t dream of disobeying. I don’t even know if I could.

I come so hard I’m left shaking on the sheets. I’m soaked—there’s sweat dripping down my skin and tears from my eyes and come pooling in the sheets underneath me. I’m still weak-limbed and nearly limp when he gathers me into his arms, cradling my head in his hands. I’m too hazy to understand the words he’s whispering in my hair, but I don’t think they matter when he’s holding me like this.

I reach up and touch his cheek. He feels so solid and warm and strong.

This moment is everything I’ve ever wanted. It’s absolutely perfect. He’s absolutely perfect.

That’s how I know he isn’t real.

It’s weakness that makes me draw it out. I wait until I stop twitching before I open my mouth. “Halcyon.”

He stops short, his lips frozen around a half-spoken word, and then he disappears. The come and sweat and tears are still there, but now they’re uncomfortably cold, and I’m alone in my room.

I pull the interface off me and shove it back in its box. I should throw the damn thing out. I should smash it into pieces. I should drown it in the kitchen sink until it short-circuits.

Instead I shove it into a dark corner under the bed.

Sooner or later I’ll talk myself into using it again. Sooner or later I’ll be desperate enough to pretend that I’m looking at him, and not some digital echo. I’ll probably hate myself then as much as I do now, and I’ll probably think the same thing that I do now:

That it was worth it. Because just for a few minutes, I had him back.
Every time I turn on the interface, I tell myself that this is the last time, that I’m going to use it just once, just for old time’s sake, and then I’m going to throw it away.

This time, I don’t have it in me to lie to myself. Today was too long, too brutal, too ugly. I’m still shivering from my shower, but I know it’s no use. No amount of scrubbing is going to make me feel clean.

But it’s for the greater good, isn’t it? Everything that happened today— it was a fluke, but it had to happen so we can save Hyperion City. Or so Ramses can save Hyperion City, anyway. I’m not sure how much good I can do anymore. I’m not sure how much good is even left in me anymore.

This habit of mine is pathetic, but then, so am I. So what’s the point of fighting it?

I turn on the interface and make my selection, and then I’m back in the only place where I feel halfway sane. Red silk stretches out as far as I can see. The air is clear and clean in a way that Hyperion City never has been. And in the center of it all is Peter Nureyev, dressed in flowing robes and not much else, and maybe the biggest lie in this goddamn simulation is that he actually looks happy to see me.

“Hello again,” he says warmly. “I’ve missed you.”

I know that’s the adaptive AI talking. Rita’s explained to me how this stuff works, and even though I can only understand about a quarter of it, I understand enough to get that much. The program is taking my responses and adjusting itself accordingly, tailoring the experience to my needs. Some days I hate the damn thing for doing that, and I almost talk myself into actually destroying it. But I can’t. I need it too much.

I don’t answer him at first. I shouldn’t have come here. He’s too clean, too beautiful, and I feel too disgusted with myself to reach out to him— but I don’t pull away when he wraps his arms around
“What are you feeling up for?” he asks gently.

“I…” My voice cracks. Right now the thought of being intimate with him— even an echo of him— makes me feel sick. “Can— can you just hold me? I just… please…”

“Of course.” He leans back, pulling me closer against his shoulder. He’s safe and warm and solid against me, and goddammit, it shouldn’t feel this good. I shouldn’t get to have something like this. I shouldn’t get a hug and a pat on the back after the things I’ve done. I should turn off the interface, grow the fuck up, and accept what I deserve.

I should. I know I should. But goddamn it, I can’t.

Tears are already welling in my eyes. I try to blink them away, but they just keep coming. And goddammit, it’s just a computer, it isn’t going to judge me. So I let the tears come, ugly and loud, and I sob into Nureyev’s shoulder like I’m a little kid.

“It’s alright,” he whispers. “You’re safe, Juno. I’ve got you. I’m right here.”

It’s a lie and I know it, but I need to hear it right now anyway. I need to live in the lie, because I don’t know if I could live with myself any other way. So I let myself listen, and I let him pet my hair and stroke my back and cradle me in his arms until the tears run dry and the shaking stops and I’m too exhausted to think about why I came here in the first place.

I vaguely think that I should turn off the interface, that I should get off and go to sleep, but the thought ends there. When I fall asleep, it’s nestled against Nureyev’s chest, listening to a pulse that isn’t there. When I wake up, the interface is hanging off my face, mostly askew. By the look of it, the program timed out at some point during the night; it’s only meant to be a short-term simulation, after all.

It was just a fantasy, barely better than a dream.

At least it was a good dream.
Chapter Summary

After the reunion, Peter does some snooping.

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
when they inevitably reunite, do you think peter ever finds out about the interface thing?

Also rated T

It happens after I’ve moved in on a semi-permanent basis, months after we’re properly reunited. In all that time, I never bothered to check under the bed—there’s no point hiding anything in such an obvious hiding place, after all, and besides, Juno’s been fairly straightforward about the fact that that’s where he keeps his stash of pornography.

That’s the only reason why I’m down there at all. His birthday is coming up, and there’s nothing quite like research to get some ideas flowing— and other things, depending on what I find.

I don’t deny I’m a bit titillated by the prospect of it

The underside of the bed is dusty, the not-so-secret stash unused in recent weeks, but I don’t mind getting a bit dirty to uncover a good secret or two. And what a secret indeed: sitting on top of a few aged magazines is a Sense-X 360. I posed as a motion capture model for them, back when I was half my age and had a third of the sense. I should have deleted any record of my likeness off the program, but I was still riding high off my latest heist; leaving a copy of myself on the software of the man I’d just robbed seemed like a signature on a masterpiece.

I know better now, and not only because I’ve been recognized by a fan or two over the years.

Rightfully, I should know better than to put it on and activate it, but I do anyway. There’s no doubt in my mind that Juno found my face among the hundreds stored in the archive, and that means I have a perfect rehearsal of his fondest fantasies. A quick glance tells me that he hasn’t even used any of the other profiles, and the thought gives me a delightful sense of satisfaction as I descend into the simulation.

Red silk and lingerie aside, it doesn’t feel very pornographic. Perhaps that’s because I’m looking a younger version of myself, and I’m intimately aware of all the little flaws and imperfections that have been digitally corrected. Perhaps it’s because of the way my younger self looks at me— not sultry or seductive, but calm and interested. He looks more like he belongs in a university cafe than in a program like this.

His hands slide around my neck, and he flashes a gentle smile. “Hello again.”
This is a personal program, not meant to be shared. It has no way of differentiating between myself and Juno. All the better.

“What are you feeling up for?” my younger self asks.

“Give me the usual,” I say, and I’m already grinning. There’s something adorably transgressive about having sex with yourself; I wonder if that’s something Juno might find exciting. My younger self wraps his arms around me and squeezes.

I’m waiting for something more to happen, but all I get is the gentle rhythm of a hand sliding up and down my back.

This doesn’t make sense. The Sense-X isn’t a cheap piece of equipment—by all rights, it should be completely outside of Juno’s means. He could use software like this to experience nearly anything, to make his most secret fantasies come to life.

Of all that—of all the limitless possibilities—what he asks for is a hug. Not once, either, but so often that it’s become the program’s default setting.

My younger self pulls back just slightly, just enough to look me in the face. His expression is soft and gentle.

“It’s alright,” he murmurs. “It’s going to be alright.” He kisses my forehead. “I forgive you.”

I trigger the failsafe and take it off, and for a few minutes I can only stare at the device that holds his most unattainable fantasy.

I wait until I’ve regained proper control of myself before I turn on my comms.

“Hello?” Juno answers before the second ring. “Is everything alright?”

“Perfectly fine,” I say, my eyes still on the interface. “I just wanted to say hello. And that I love you.”

His voice grows tense. “Are you sure you’re okay?”

“I am. I just don’t think I tell you enough. I’ll see you after work, then?”

“Yeah,” he sounds perplexed, and perhaps a little worried. “I’ll try and finish up quickly, okay?”


As soon as the call ends, I get to work replacing the interface in its box and returning it to its hiding place under the bed.

His most unattainable fantasy.

Perhaps I can make it just a little more real.
Chapter Summary

Peter pierces Juno’s ears

Chapter Notes

dykerose asked:
Strange request today but what if Juno really liked Nureyevs earring so peter pierced his ear for him

PG

I had to do a surprising amount of research for this one-- I've never had my ears pierced, mostly out of principle

In Oldtown, piercings were a liability. That much he learned secondhand, when Mick started the morning with a classy hoop and ended the day with a notch in his ear.

In the Academy and later the HCPD, they were against regulation, probably for the same reason, but the official line was that jewelry made Hyperion’s Finest look “unprofessional”.

And after… well, after that, Juno was all out of fucks to give.

But things are better now. Maybe it’s got something to do with waking up to a gorgeous man every morning, but his supply of fucks is actually doing pretty well lately.

Sure, there are bad days, but some mornings he feels pretty good. On some mornings, he actually wakes up with enough energy to try looking nice. A fancier shirt; a bit of makeup. Hell, he might even try jewelry once in a while, if he actually owned any, the only stuff he owns is from his wedding, and like hell is he putting any of that on again.

“Perhaps you could try this,” Peter muses, starting to take the elaborate cuff off his ear.

“Thanks,” Juno says. “But I don’t know what I’d do with it.” He flicks one of his earlobes, pointedly devoid of piercings.

“Perhaps something else, then,” Peter says, but he doesn’t miss the way Juno’s eyes linger on the ear cuff.

The process is a slow one:

On a good day, Juno decides that yeah, he’d actually like to wear earrings once in a while.
After the case with the deranged jeweler in the local mall, Juno decides that he’s not letting strangers near him with needles until the day he dies.

A week later, when the subject of earrings comes up again, Peter offers to do it for him.

A week after that, Juno’s having the kind of dark day when he hates himself, but he doesn’t feel like explaining any of that to Peter—so as a compromise, he convinces Peter that this would be a great day to stick pointy objects in his ears.

But maybe, he thinks belatedly, maybe this idea wasn’t half bad.

The tools are sterilized and laid out before them, and Peter’s numbing Juno’s ear with an ice cube—but of course Peter couldn’t possibly do this while standing. No, he’s decided that he’ll work best when straddling Juno’s lap. Most of his weight is bearing down on Juno, and the pressure of it is soothing in a way nothing else has been for the past few days. Peter keeps narrating what he’s doing, but Juno finds he doesn’t care about the hows and whys so much as he does about the soft murmur of Peter’s voice washing over him.

He’s so lulled by the sound that the feel of the needle in his ear takes him by surprise, and he voices a hiss.

“Don’t worry, love,” Peter says. “It’s almost finished.”

“I’m not in any hurry,” Juno says, recovering himself. “Take all the time you need.” He means it, too: the pain in his ear has dulled to an ache, no worse than a typical night after a case. He’s more focused on the way Peter is draped over him like a heavy blanket.

Peter finishes the first ear and leans back to kiss his forehead. “Shall we stop there for the day?”

Juno shrugs. “Why not do them both?”

“If you’re sure.”

Juno nods. A little bit of pain is a small price to pay to have Peter fawning over him a little longer.
A pint of ice cream makes it better

Chapter Summary

After Dragon's Den, Rita is crushed. Juno sympathizes.

Chapter Notes

This one was unprompted.

It was also written after Part 1 of the episode, so it might be jossed by the end of Part 2

I have to knock at the door twice before I hear an answer.

Rita’s “Go away!” is muffled by the door, but she can’t hide the fact that she’s been crying. Hell, I don’t think she’s even trying to hide it.

“I brought ice cream.”

“I don’t want any. Just go away.”

That right there? That’s a bad sign. A part of me is thinking I should have grabbed the gin instead, but no. Booze is my solution to all life’s problems, not hers. Besides, I know what it’s like to crawl so deep down a bottle that you forget how to come out again. I don’t want that for her.

So I clear my throat. “How about a hug, then?”

There’s a beep, a mechanical click, and the door unlocks. I pull it open, just a bit.

“A hug is okay, I guess.” She sounds even worse without the door in the way, all thick and phlegmy and hoarse.

The curtains are drawn tight, and it’s dark inside, with the exception of the little light that comes on when I open the freezer to put the ice cream away. I’ve been over here enough times that I can navigate by memory and touch, but I still have to shuffle my feet to avoid stepping on the clutter in Rita’s apartment. It’s not a huge place—after a quick check in the living room, I find her in bed, cocooned in blankets. Her comms is lying on the floor beside her bed, the application that runs her locks still open and glowing on the screen. I pick it up and set it on the windowsill, just so I don’t stop on it later.

I sit on the edge of her bed. “Hey.”

She makes a sound halfway between a moan and a mewl.

“Do you want to…” Uh… “Do you want to watch one of your shows or something? I could bring the TV in here.”
She tries to say something, but it comes out a sob.

Right. Sappy love stories probably aren’t what she needs to see right now.

“You…” God, I’m bad at this. I’m the worst person to be here right now, but I can’t not be here, either. “You did the right thing, Rita.”

“Did I?” she demands, sitting up as much as her blanket burrito will let her. “Did I really? She was—she was a nice lady, and a good mom, and all she wanted was to keep her kid safe, and— and— oh gawd, I’m a monster!” She collapses into another round of sobs, landing on my lap.

Awkwardly I stroke my hand over her back. I’m not even sure she can feel it through all the layers.

“And we included that in the arrest report, Rita. All of that’s gonna be taken into account during the trial. She might not even go away for all that long.” But she is going away. There’s no avoiding that.

“She killed those people, though,” she says through a break in the tears. “And she tried to kill us. She’s one of the bad guys, Mista Steel. I know that. But— but—”

“I know what you mean.”

“No you don’t!” she snaps, loud and angry again. “Don’t say like you know, because you don’t! I— I really liked her, okay? I really liked her a lot, and now I know she’s a criminal and she’s done all those awful things, and that should make me hate her, and I don’t, and I hate that I don’t, and you ain’t got no idea what that’s like!”

I wait until the shouting stops. It stings a little bit, hearing her yell like that— not excited or peeved but actually angry— but not as much as knowing that she’s hurting.

“I might have an idea.”

She just stares at me through those big, puffy, red-rimmed eyes, like she thinks I’m making fun of her.

“You remember Agent Glass, from Dark Matters? Last year?”

“Yeah?” she asks warily.

“He wasn’t from Dark Matters.” And that’s not enough, is it? “He was a thief, working for… well, for a real piece of work. And I really liked him, even though I knew that. Turning him in was still the right thing to do. And it sucks. A lot.”

“Is this the part where I’m s’posed to suck it up and get back to work?”

I smoothed her hair. “Work helps keep your mind off it, sometimes. But that can wait. Right now you just… just cry as much as you need to, okay? I get it. There’s ice cream in the fridge if you want it later.”

“And my hug?” She asks quietly.

“Yeah. You get one of those, too.”
A lover and a gentleman

Chapter Summary

Peter is a sappy dork

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
Prompt: Juno learns that Peter is actually a sappy dork when he's in love

The holding doors thing? That never really goes away.

Sure, he’s not as obnoxious about it as he was on that first date— I mean case— but that’s mostly because this time he’s not collecting miniature syringes off the doors. These days it’s a lot more natural, usually when he gets to a door before I do… and since he’s got legs that go on for miles, that happens more often than you’d think. At least he doesn’t make a big deal of it or anything.

He doesn’t make a big deal of the flowers, either. He doesn’t present them to me with a lot of fanfare or anything— I just turn around one day and there’s a bouquet on my kitchen table. By the time they start to wilt, there’s another. I kept them in empty liquor bottles for a while, but it never really looked right. Classy flowers like that deserve at least a vase, maybe a clean table to put them on once in a while. I get better about taking out the trash, so you can actually smell them.

Don’t get me started on the notes, though.

Peter might not be able to draw, but the man can write like you wouldn’t believe, and the way he hides them would make squirrels jealous. I keep finding them even when he’s on long trips offworld, hidden inside the third-to-last coffee cup in the cabinet, or tucked inside a sock in the back of my drawer, or snuck between piles of mail that I need to sort and throw out sometime.

Some of them are poems— sonnets and villanelles and tankas, and a few forms I can tell are meant to be some kind of deliberate form but I couldn’t tell you what it’s called— others are letters that might as well be poems, the way he writes them. I keep them in an unmarked file folder in the office, which is the last place anyone will look for them. When he’s away I go through them all, one at a time, just to feel like he’s back again.

Call me sentimental, but I’m not complaining. It’s not every day you meet a guy who knows how to treat a lady.
An unexpected soulmate

Chapter Summary

Rita is Juno's platonic soulmate

Chapter Notes

eternalgirlscout asked:
i know you already have two soulmate aus going but i was thinking about AUs where your soulmate can be any type of love, not just romantic, and if that's the case then Rita and Juno as platonic/familial soulmates is now all i live and breathe

When color seeped into Juno’s vision for the first time, his heart almost stopped. He looked around wildly, searching the precinct for a new face, for that one person who walked into his life and changed everything.

He didn’t have to look hard.

“Oh my gawd!” shouted the new secretary– a plump little thing with a shrill voice and flapping hands. “Are these colors? They’re amazing!”

And that… that couldn’t be right.

Because this dame was loud and energetic and all the things he had never been. He was getting tired just watching her as she darted from cop to secretary to suspect, frantically demanding if they just met their soulmate, too.

He kept his mouth shut. Maybe there was some kind of mistake. Maybe somebody else had gotten theirs at the same time. It could happen.

When Juno was thrown off the force, it wasn’t quietly.

The chief shouted like an enraged bull, and Juno shouted right back. When it was demanded of him, he didn’t so much turn in his badge as he ripped it off and threw it at the bastard’s feet. To hell with him. To hell with this whole corrupt snakepit.

His face burned as he felt the eyes of the entire force on him, but he refused to look down. He refused to bow his head. He grabbed his few personal effects off his desk without breaking his stride, and he kept going.

He didn’t pause so much as stumble. And he would have been embarrassed, except he was too caught up in the injustice of it.

There was Rita, quietly seething while she piled her own things into a box.
“You too?” he croaked.

“Damn right.” There were tears in her eyes, but they were less sad or mortified than they were righteous fury. “If they’re kickin’ you out, then I’m going too.”

Juno stood over her desk while she finished clearing it out. All the while he glared at the rest of the precinct, daring them to say a word against her.

If they had a problem, they could take it up with him.

Rita never did get any quieter. Didn’t get any calmer, either. So Juno learned to order her decaf when he brought her coffee. He learned her quirks and habits and idiosyncrasies, and she learned his.

And, weirdly enough, they fit. Really, really well.

He had no clue how to use a computer, but she had that covered. She didn’t have a ton of street smarts, but he had enough for the two of them. He mellowed her highs, and her intensity kept him mobile even on his lowest days.

She organized her head in terms of stories– usually the ridiculous soaps she loved so much– and he’d spent enough time dealing with his mother’s moods and making up bedtime stories for Ben and untangling Mick’s yarns that he understood stories pretty well himself. It wasn’t even that hard to follow, once he figured out how to catch the right plot thread. And sure, sometimes she rambled and got off track the way all soaps do– but he could be her editor, then. He knew how to cut out the unnecessary exposition and get right to the point.

People always said a soulmate is supposed to make you feel calm. And they weren’t wrong, not really. Juno could name a thousand cases when the only thing keeping him from falling apart was Rita’s voice in his ear. But he could name just as many times when she sent his blood pressure through the roof.

See, it turned out that being that close to a person meant they could get under your skin. And Rita had a real talent for that. She wasn’t an easy person to work with, or live with, or love. But then, neither was Juno.
A rejected proposal

Chapter Summary

Someone unexpected proposes to Juno

Chapter Notes

theflatwoodsmonsterisalesbian asked:
Okokok i feel like i send u too many asks so ill try to chill but i just gotta request one
more thing: juno getting a really quality hug

Juno isn’t entirely sure how he got an invitation to this party, really. Sure, he saved Valles Vicky’s
life, but the last big fling they attended together almost ended in a homicide— you’d think it’d be bad
luck or something. He attends anyway, just incase Vicky needs someone to watch her back.

It’s… it’s kind of nice, actually. Ten years is a long time for anything to last, especially in Hyperion
City, and that’s not even getting started on the deranged ex. They deserve to celebrate it.

But while the stars of the event are busy talking, their son toddlers away. And nope, that’s not gonna
happen on Juno’s watch.

He sinks into a crouch directly in the kid’s path. “Hey, kid. How about you stick around where your
moms can keep an eye on you.”

Maybe that was poor choice of words, because the kid is now paying close attention to Juno’s eyes,
and he gasps.

Shit– the kid better not start crying or something– Juno knows he’s not exactly a disarming dame to
look at, but–

“Your eyes are so pretty!” the little boy squeals, and throws his arms around Juno’s neck. “Will you
marry me?”

And this… this is new. “Um?”

Jeez. How the hell is Juno supposed to even respond to that?

“Um… tell ya what, kid,” he says. “Give it like… eighteen years, and then we’ll talk.”

Sure, that talk is gonna probably be in the form of one of those embarrassing stories that’s shared at a
graduation party, but the kid doesn’t need to know that just yet. He seems pretty happy with Juno’s
answer, because he just squeals and cheers and squeezes him even harder.
Chapter Summary

The curse on Grim's Mask was real

Chapter Notes

wastrelwoods asked:
how do you think murderous mask would have gone if the curse on grim's mask was real?

When Rex described the ghost, he said something about animal bones, serrated brass, and clotted blood. And sure, he wasn’t wrong, but that didn’t do it justice: it looked like somebody dumped half a morgue’s worth of bodies and murder weapons in a dumpster and let it stew for about a week. And now that shambling mound was on its feet and heading our way.

My blaster was almost out of charge, and all we’d learned was that lasers didn’t leave a scratch on that thing. Hell, they barely managed to push it back. Cassie tried attacking it directly.

Yeah, that could have gone better.

And now her brother was trying to save what was left of her arm while Rex and I barricaded the sitting room door. The barricade wouldn’t do much; the monster had torn through the last few in minutes, but that bought us time.

“Any ideas, Rex?” I asked as we hauled a coffee table in front of the door..

“Would you like to live?”

“Don’t go out of your way.”

He glanced at the twins. “What about—” He didn’t need to finish the sentence. Cecil was on the edge of hysteria, and Cas was bleeding out fast. Rex and I could probably make a break for it and outrun this thing, but that meant leaving the two of them as decoys.

“But other ideas?”

“Salt, silver, and cold iron are supposed to be effective. But those are fairly specific to Earth folklore.”

I frowned. “You think cast iron will work?”

“It may.” The uncertainty in his voice wasn’t encouraging, but this was the only lead we had.

“Cecil, Cas?” I asked. “You still have the supplies from that cooking show?”
It was like something out of a movie– I was pretty sure of that, because Rita had described at least a
dozen movies just like this over the years.

Lines of table salt had been laid across all the doorways, along with Min Kanagawa’s fanciest
silverware, the forks laid end to end across the threshold of the kitchen. Even if the silver and salt
didn’t stop the thing, getting a fork embedded in its foot would be annoying.

I yanked an Old Earth cast iron pan off the display on the wall. It was solid and heavy– I could
probably put a few dents in that ugly skull.

But Rex had other ideas. He grabbed a deep pot from the same display. “Juno, you wouldn’t know
where they keep the oil, would you?”

I yanked open the pantry. It had been years since I’d spent a lot of time with Cas and Cecil, but
apparently nobody had reorganized the kitchen. “What kind? Peanut, olive, canola–”

“We may as well try peanut.” I handed him the enormous jug of oil, and he dumped it
unceremoniously into the pot. As an afterthought, he added, “Give me the olive oil, too. Are you
particularly religious? Consecrated oil might be useful.”

“You’re talking to the wrong lady.” I looked at the jug of peanut oil, still sloshing as it poured the last
of its contents from the too-small spout. “What, hoping it’s got a nut allergy?”

“Nonsense.” He tossed the empty jug aside and picked up the pot, setting it on the half-open door. It
was precariously balanced– one twitch, and the pot of oil would come crashing down on top of
whoever tried to open the door.

Rex flashed me a sharp-toothed grin. “I’m going to set it on fire.”
Vocal

Chapter Summary

Juno is loud in bed.

Chapter Notes

This one's NSFW

From someone requesting that they remain anonymous:
ever since disasterscenario’s nsfw sketch dump i CANNOT stop thinking about juno being really loud during sex and i feel like your writing style would make that concept both very hot and funny if you have the time and inclination

Peter Nureyev is incredible in bed. He has to be.

It isn’t a boast so much as it is a survival strategy. One evening’s passions can– and often do– make the difference between getting caught and being narrowly saved, usually with a last desperate kiss and a breathless promise of nights that will never be forgotten. Nobody ever risked arrest for the sake of a lousy lay.

Consequently, good communication is essential. There’s no single best way to have sex, no sure-fire method that will please every partner, and so he learns to listen intently, to coax out the deepest, darkest desires and bring them to life. Some partners require more coaxing than others; admittedly, it can be a little nerve wracking to be caught in bed with someone who clearly isn’t having a good time and won’t tell him why, especially when his future and freedom might well hang in the balance.

All of which is to say: he very much appreciates Juno Steel.

Peter barely has his hands under Juno’s shirt and already he’s panting, a sweet breathy Peter that makes his hair stand on end. His hand drifts up to a delicate nipple, already hard and puckered in arousal, and gives it a twist, and in return he gets a sibilant gasp that lingers even after Peter lets go.

His approval is more explicit as Peter slides his pants lower and wraps his hand around Juno’s cock.

“Goddamn– fuck, Peter.” He only lets Peter pump him a few times before he gets demanding. “God, I want to– fuck– I want you inside me. I need you to– please, just fuck me.”

Working him open, Peter can precisely gauge the stretch of Juno’s ass in the way he groans– high when it pushes his limits, and growing low and throaty as he adjusts to the new girth. His prostate is so sensitive it might as well be rigged with an alarm– one brush, and Juno swears; tease around it, and he’s panting. Work it properly, and it isn’t long before words fail him altogether. And, of course, he knows Juno’s ready right about the time when he starts saying, “Jesus, Peter, please– please, get in me.”
Peter is only too happy to oblige him. There’s something intoxicating about being balls deep in Juno, caught up in the frantic rhythm of his pleas to “keep going, yes, just like that, Peter, Peter, Peter—” until there’s come on his hand and on Juno’s back and the air is raw with his screaming.

Peter slips out of the bedroom before Juno wakes up. There’s no need to alarm him just yet, but Peter’s certain he heard footsteps outside the apartment door. Armed with a knife and wearing a bathrobe and a charming smile, he glances through the peephole. Nothing.

When he cracks open the door, he finds a small package. Taped to its top is a note.

“The walls are thin, and I need to sleep.”

He grins. *How thoughtful.*

Inside the box is an old-fashioned ball gag.
Most facts about Peter Nureyev are of the little-known variety, but there’s one in particular that even Juno doesn’t know:

Peter has a predilection for public sex.

It’s that little bit of spite toward the nearest authority, that chance to scandalize whatever moralizing blue-blood who might be horrified by the thought, the chance to have a partner in crime who knows perfectly well what they’ve done when the rest of the world is oblivious, the intimacy of a shared secret, the smug glances exchanged afterward.

Call it a favorite hobby, if you will, though one he’s given up since he started his relationship with Juno. Not that he minds terribly– after all, he wouldn’t ever say no to the sound of Juno’s howls as he comes undone– but every once in a while he’ll spot a convenient hiding spot, and he’ll allow himself a moment to imagine the possibilities.

And now, thanks to that incredibly thoughtful gift from an anonymous neighbor, he doesn’t have to imagine any longer. And once he brings it up to Juno… well, his sweet detective is willing to try anything once, especially when he sees the look in Peter’s eyes when he suggests it.

Though it seems he’s having trouble getting into the spirit of the game.

Perhaps it’s the lack of space in the little alcove underneath the apartment building’s stairwell. Perhaps it’s the faint odor of cleaning solutions lingering in the makeshift closet, or the collection of mops and brooms leaning against one wall. Perhaps Juno’s boldness doesn’t quite keep pace with his insistence that he really is fine with this. Whatever the reason, he’s unbearably tense, straining to hear the sounds of footsteps.

“Shh,” Peter purrs against his hair, so soft that it doesn’t carry past his ear. “It’s alright, love. I’m going to take good care of you. Relax.”

“I’m relaxed,” Juno argues at a mutter. The thin shafts of light that seep through the stairwell light up his face, still upturned and focused. “I’m more than relaxed. I’m fine. Let’s just get on with it.”
That’s certainly a crass way to put it. Peter makes a face, but he leans in closer. “Come now, love. How am I supposed to seduce you if you won’t pay attention to me?”

“I am,” Juno protests. “Of course I am. What else would I be–” His words are reduced to a hiss of breath by the sudden sensation of a hand cupping his groin.

“Are you sure about that, Juno?” With his other hand, Peter lifts Juno’s belt and taps it lightly against his detective’s nose, holding the buckle tightly to keep it from clanking. “I thought you might have noticed me relieving you of this.”

Juno blinks at it like he’s never seen it in his life. “When did you– fuck,” he hisses as Peter squeezes the delicate anatomy, and his cock rises to press against the invading hand.

“Oh, I intend to.” Peter releases Juno’s balls and slides around his hips to settle on his backside. It’s such a fine ass, perfectly proportioned for squeezing, but Peter refrains. “But how can I when you’re so very preoccupied?” He draws the word out like taffy in his mouth, leaning in close enough to invite Juno for a taste.

Juno’s eye loses its focus and he gives in, a groan already building in his throat. But before he can go for the kiss, he’s stopped by Peter’s finger pressed against his lips.

“Ah ah.” He lets Juno mouth at his fingertip for half a breath before he slides it down to the gag hanging loosely around his neck and he gives it a tug. “Not a sound.”

“You’re gonna be the death of me,” Juno mutters. It’s the last thing he says before he slides the gag into place and pulls it tight. For a few moments he works at the gag, his cheek bulging as he explores the limits of the gag with his tongue.

Peter steps closer, pressing their hips together so Juno can feel exactly how much he enjoys the sight, just before he slides Juno’s pants down to his thighs.

He has to bite his lip to keep from murmuring words of encouragement and praise as he wraps a condom around Juno’s cock and another around his own. He keeps his approval contained to sly grins and petting touches, and an arm around Juno’s shoulders while his other hand dribbles lube into the cleft of Juno’s ass.

Regular sex with Juno has spoiled him; in place of keening moans, he has to listen to the subtle shift of breathing to measure his progress as he works Juno open. It takes more care than his other method, more precision, like cracking an antique safe by ear. It’s a lost art, and one he revels in the mastery of.

His fingers leave Juno open and empty, and Juno works at the gag between his teeth, digging into it like he plans to bite it in half.

Peter has to swallow a dark chuckle. So eager.

The ball gag silences the greater part of the cry as he slides inside him, muffling a scream into murmured grunt. His head tips back, his whole spine arching with need, silently begging for more.

It would be ungentlemanly to refuse.

He can’t be too rough– even with the gag, that would make far too much noise– but he knows other ways to meet Juno’s needs. One hand wraps around Juno’s shaft; the other slides under his shirt, feeling for the tender skin of nipples. He’s pleasantly surprised by a bit of texture underneath his fingertips.
“You wore something lacy for me,” he purrs into Juno’s ear, barely audible. Juno’s breath hitches beautifully. “Were feeling especially fancy? Or were you hoping for something like this?” He catches the nipple between layers of lace, stamping the texture into the delicate flesh.

Juno answers by grinding harder against him, pushing Peter’s cock deeper.

Peter barely manages to restrain a moan.

\textit{My clever detective. This wasn't supposed to be difficult for me.}

Without Juno’s cries to drive him, Peter’s focus is free to dance between the more nuanced signals—the tilt of Juno’s head, the quiver of his thighs, the pace of his breathing, the darkness of a blush as it crawls down his neck and colors his shoulders. He’s free to appreciate the elegance of his lady’s back, the curve of his neck, the beads of sweat as they drip down his spine.

He’s captivated, and he chases that feeling, fucking harder, harder, harder— until he hits a breaking point. There’s a moment of perfect, pristine stillness as he clings to Juno, shuddering through an orgasm.

But when he comes down from that glorious high, Juno remains motionless. His head is tilted upward— not in rapture, but in attention. Somebody’s coming— and not in the fun way.

Peter pulls out and flattens himself against Juno, shielding him from view, one hand closing unnecessarily over Juno’s mouth to encourage silence. He can feel Juno’s heart pounding.

Did they notice? Did they hear?

But the footsteps keep going down the hall, passing them by. The moment of danger is over. And so, it would seem, is the moment, judging by the way Juno starts to reach for the gag.

But that won’t do at all. Peter may have finished spectacularly, but he’s the only one so far, and he’s not about to leave his lady unsatisfied.

He tightens his grip on Juno’s chest and exhales into Juno’s ear.

“I love the way your mouth looks, Juno,” he murmurs, letting his teeth skim Juno’s earlobe. “I love seeing those gorgeous lips of yours wrapped around that gag.” With a fluid motion he curls around Juno, turning them until they’re pressed chest to chest, but his mouth never leaves Juno’s ear. “I can only think of one place where those lips would look even better.”

He chuckles, but the sound doesn’t make it past his throat. The laughter vibrates in his ribs, still pressed tight against Juno’s.

Juno’s eye is clouded again. He sways, unsteady, ready to drop low at Peter’s command. But that won’t do, either.

“Perhaps I can give you a demonstration.” And Peter sinks to his knees, looking Juno in the eye all the way down.
Chapter Summary

Juno is working for Dark Matters. This is not the time for a meetcute.

Chapter Notes

readerofmuch asked:
Prompt: it's raining and i just dropped my extremely confidential papers in this puddle. Because you stopped to help me, I have to shoot you. Shit. (Junopeter)

There’s a saying they have at Dark Matters—there are a lot of sayings, actually; it feels like half Juno’s training involved rote memorization of bullshit slogans— but one in particular comes to mind now:

At its core, every mission is just a series of points on a line. Points of action, reaction, interaction. Control those points, and you control which way it goes.

Take this mission, for example.

Point: Agent Steel picks up the file from Hyperion City’s hall of records. He doesn’t complain about the fact that Hyperion City still keeps records on paper like a bunch of neanderthals. He doesn’t say anything to the receptionist who hands him the file, except that he’s here to pick it up. He does nothing at all to draw undue attention to himself, the file, or the mission. Control of the situation is his.

Point: The sky opens up a touch too early and down pours a summer’s worth of acid rain. Agent Steel swears under his breath and turns away from the road to avoid getting splashed by passing vehicles, and he opens his coat to tuck the file safely away from the corrosive rain. In his moment of distraction, he doesn’t notice the oncoming pedestrian until the man has crashed right into him. Control slips from his fingers as easily as the file.

“Oh, I’m so sorry,” says the pedestrian— a tall, slender man with an accent that Agent Steel can’t quite place. He bends at the same time that Steel does, and the two wind up bumping into each other a second time. “I was just trying to get out of the rain— I had no idea the summer storms on Mars were quite so acerbic! Oh, let me just get that for you—”

“It’s fine,” Steel grates out. The one time he has a goddamn meetcute with a handsome stranger, and it’s while he’s on the clock. Fantastic. “I’ve got it. Just go get dry before you start to burn.”

“And let a lady reach into a puddle?” He tsks affectionately. “I insist. After all, I am wearing gloves.”

“So am I.” Steel reaches for the file again, but his arms are shorter than the other man, and he can’t grab it away before the stranger has it in his hands.
“I’m so sorry,” he says, wiping the acid off the file with the blade of his palm. “Do you think it’ll be alright?” With a flick of his wrist he flips open the folder, revealing the first page.

Steel grabs the file away, but it’s too late. He catches the flick of the other man’s eyes as they look into Steel’s just a moment too late. He was reading what was on that first page. Around his iris is the telltale ring of an ocular lens camera, hair-thin and hidden behind his glasses, but undeniably there.

That bump was no accident.

When he stuffs the file under his jacket, his hand lingers against his chest for a moment longer than necessary, showing off the blaster in its holster.

“You’re not going to run,” he says evenly. “Because I am authorized to shoot you, and I will not hesitate to do so. Do I make myself clear?”

The stranger smiles, showing off sharp teeth. “As clear as Glass, Agent Steel.”

“Then you’re going to come with me.”

It’s time for Agent Steel to take back control of the situation.
I swear I don't miss you

Chapter Summary

Peter doesn't miss Juno. He doesn't want him back. He swears.

Chapter Notes

Naomi asked in a comment:
I just?????? Really really want an angsty sad thing about peter after junod left. Maybe make JUNO have to comfort HIM. I just never get to see it.

I think part of the reason that you don’t get to see it very often is the same reason why we don’t see Juno being jealous very often: because unless he’s in a significantly healthier place beforehand, he’s not going to fight for Peter purely on the grounds that he thinks he doesn’t deserve him. It takes a whole lot of setup and finagling for him to not just walk away at the first sign of conflict.

Peter hears that familiar voice, and for a moment he’s swept away by elation. It’s Juno. Juno's here, Juno’s found him, Juno’s come back, his detective has--

The train of thought grinds to a halt. Because that isn’t right.

Juno isn’t his detective, is he?

He never was.

Peter shuts down the thought before it can linger and he shoves it into the neat little compartment in the back of his mind. He has a team of space pirates to double-cross, a ship to commandeer, and a cargo hold full of priceless artifacts to sell to the highest bidder-- none of which he can do if he’s distracted by Juno Steel.

So he gets back to work. He tries to focus. He fails, of course, but that’s no fault of his own.

He’d specifically chosen to go through the cargo hold to avoid running into the detective. How was he supposed to guess that Juno would step through the door just as Peter’s about to spring a trap on a significant portion of the crew?

If he’s being romantic, he’d say that the worst part is that Juno spots him at the same moment-- that when they lock eyes, Juno can see the ache in Peter’s expression-- that for that split second, Juno knows exactly how much Peter wants him back.

If he’s being practical, he’d say the worst part is that the split second of romance is enough to alert the pirates to their presence. In a split second, his clever trap is rendered useless and an ambush becomes a shootout. He’s only got a knife on hand, and the pirates are shooting too wildly; he can’t get in close enough to strike, not without getting himself killed. On all sides, crates are cracking and
breaking under the force of hard light projectiles.

Better the crates than himself, he supposes when he takes cover behind an impressively large stack of crates.

In hindsight, that’s rather flawed reasoning.

The firefight has already put the stack of crates into a precarious position. All it takes to overbalance the whole thing is one pirate diving out of the way of Juno’s lasers. The stack wobbles. Shifts. Creaks. And then falls.

Peter doesn’t have the chance to escape. All he can do is curl into a ball, cover his head, and minimize the damage as a mountain of crates collapses on top of him.

At first all Peter can register is the chaos of the collapse– the sounds of crates and their cargo falling around him, the pain of sharp corners digging into his ribs, the weight forcing him down while his foot remains wedged in place elsewhere. His vision blazes red as his ankle twists.

Cold panic surges through his veins. He needs to get out of here. He needs to disappear. He needs to run, but he can’t do that on a damaged ankle, which means he needs to focus– he needs to think– but the haze of pain leaves his thoughts wandering.

_Breathe,_ he tells himself. _Just breathe and don’t make a sound. Let them think you’re dead. They’ll move on if they think you’re dead._

He tries to take inventory: Twisted ankle. Broken ribs, but no punctured lungs. Blood and bruises. Nothing permanent. Nothing he can’t shrug off if he needs to.

Above him, the crates are starting to move. One of them falls as it shifts, its sharp corner gouging his side on the way down, and he can’t hold in a hiss of agony. He claps his hand over his mouth to stifle another cry. They’ll have heard that, and if they realize he’s still alive they’re going to kill him–

“Still alive,” gasps a familiar voice, and the crates begin moving again. “Hold on, Nureyev. I’m gonna get you out of there.”

Juno is still here. That fact gives Peter a single solid point outside of himself. He fixates on it, forcing agony and confusion to the back of his mind.

“Nureyev?” Juno’s voice cracks around his name. “Come on, Nureyev, talk to me.”

Peter doesn’t answer. He doesn’t move. It’s the first rule of thieving: don’t ever come when called. If they have to shout for you, it means you’re doing something right.

Besides, he missed hearing Juno say his name. It’s been too long since he’s heard Juno say it. Since he’s heard _anyone_ say it.

He clamps down the thought. That’s the haze talking, not him. He needs to focus.

”Nureyev? Nureyev!” Juno’s voice is raw as he hurls the crates aside, probably smashing priceless artifacts in his hurry, but the weight on Peter’s body is growing lighter in time with Juno’s frantic babbling. ”No, no, this isn’t supposed to happen. You’re not even supposed to be here. You’re supposed to be out there, stealing the stars out of the goddamn sky or something. Come on, Nureyev. Be okay. You’ve got to be okay.”

And just like that, the last of the crates is tossed aside, and in place of darkness is Juno Steel. Bodies
litter the floor of the cargo hold, some of them still twitching from Juno’s lasers. All of them are either unconscious or dead. Juno’s eye is open wide, his face ashen and bloodless, his hands cut up from scrabbling at the synth-wood crates.

“Jesus, Nureyev,” Juno whispers, and he gathers Peter into his arms and pulls him from the wreckage.

It should stop there, but Juno’s hands are all over him, checking him for injuries and whispering frantic nonsense as he frets.

Peter’s stomach lurches. A part of him– the animal part still overwhelmed by fear and pain– urges him to lean into the sensation, to take comfort and safety where he can get it.

Peter didn’t get to be a master thief by listening to that part of himself. Juno’s the type of person who takes it to heart when anyone gets hurt. It doesn’t mean anything.

Peter already knows how this ends.

“I’m alright.” He sits up, using the motion to push Juno away.

“You sure about that?” Juno hovers, but he doesn’t touch him again. “You took one hell of a hit just now.”

“Yes, I noticed.” Every part of him is sore and aching, but there’s no time to sit around. At least some of the pirates are still alive, and that means he needs to make himself scarce before they reappear. He rolls onto his hands and knees, gritting his teeth against the pain as he tries to pull himself to his feet.

“What are you doing?” Juno demands. “You need to stay down, Nureyev, it looks like–”

“I would ask you to be a little more careful with my name,” Peter says sharply. He can’t keep hearing Juno say it like that– like it actually means something to him.

With this, at least, Juno listens. “It looks like your ankle’s broken,” he says carefully. “You need to stay off it.”

“I need to get out of here before these people wake up,” Peter says, and he drags himself to his feet.

Maybe Juno isn’t all that far off in his diagnosis, because the moment Peter tries to put weight on his ankle, pain arcs through him like an electric shock. By the time the blood red has receded from his vision, he realizes that Juno is at his side, his shoulders under Peter’s arm and his hand at Peter’s waist.

“I’m fine, thank you.” It isn’t a term of gratitude, but dismissal. As always, Juno ignores it.

“You’ll get out of here faster if you stay off that leg,” Juno points out. “Come on, my car is over this way. We can get you to a clinic, and–”

Peter pulls away. He’d rather hobble.

“Dammit, would you stop that?” Juno reaches for him again. “You’re going to hurt yourself even worse.”

“I’ve survived worse than a broken ankle,” Peter says coolly. He’s sure there’s a hover dolly around here somewhere that he can use. “Go and arrest your pirates if you want, but I have business here,
and I don’t intend to leave it behind.”

“Okay, fine. Then tell me what you need and I’ll get it done.” Juno digs his heels in, stubborn as a toddler in a supermarket, and for a moment Peter can’t help a flash of affection for him.

He wants to say yes.

They really are quite the team, the two of them. They’ve made it through impossible odds before; something like this would be child’s play, if it didn’t spin itself into a grand adventure first. And he knows that all the while Juno will be charming and clever and even affectionate, so long as one of them is bleeding. It might even end with a kiss, right before Juno walks away.

Peter can’t put himself through that again.

“I think I’ll pass,” he says coldly. He tries to pull away, but Juno won’t let him go.

“Dammit, stop,” Juno says. “I get it, okay? You don’t want anything to do with me, and I don’t blame you. Just let me get you somewhere safe, and then you’ll never have to see me again.”

And maybe any other day of his life Peter might have been able to keep his mouth shut, but his mind is still a swirl of agony and the only place he doesn’t hurt is where he’s touching Juno, and he hates how desperately he wants to cling to that comfort.

“Forgive me if I’ve lost faith in your promises.”

The ankle will heal in a few weeks. But it’s been more than a year since he last saw Juno, and he still can’t get the detective out of his mind.
Chapter Summary

If Agent Glass is going to survive Casa Kanagawa, Juno's gonna have to play a little game.

Chapter Notes

typehere452 asked:
I keep thinking about Cecil wanting to turn Juno into a star and all the painful, creepy things it can and probably will involve. As a fic prompt, I want your take on that.

It’s not like chess.

Chess only has so many pieces to keep track of, and it has set rules that don’t change, and it assumes that both players are on roughly equal footing.

It’s more like… well, more like gladiatorial combat, with all its monsters and hidden traps and surprise lightning rounds with real lightning.

Okay, so it’s probably not the best metaphor Juno’s ever come up with, but give a lady a break: he just headbutted a lion. It was worth it, though, because now the lion’s back in the far corners of the arena, and Juno’s staggering while his sense of equilibrium rites itself. A big dramatic move like that? That’s good television. And if he’s at enough of a disadvantage to make it stop being interesting, then Cecil might have to give him some kind of hint. A clue, or a break, or… hell, a gun would be nice right about now, but good luck with that. The only gun in the arena is the bionic one attached to the lion.

But you get the idea.

If there’s anything chess-like about this whole fucked-up situation, it’s that it’s a game of skill. Of predicting the other player’s moves, trying to push them into making a mistake.

Like when Cecil first shoved Juno into this stupid game show, Juno called his bluff. He just sat down, folded his hands in his lap, and let it happen. After all, what’s the worst all those monsters could do? Kill him? Sure, that would hurt, but meanwhile Cecil’s ratings would do a nose dive, and he couldn’t have that.

But Cecil called his bluff: if Juno doesn’t play the game, then Agent Glass will be the one who pays for it. Every game Juno wins is worth a certain number of points; the more drama, the higher he scores. And when all this is over, those points are what he’s gonna use to pay to keep Rex in one piece. Each of his teeth is worth a hundred; his fingers are a thousand a piece. His ears five thousand each. His eyes, ten thousand. And any part he can’t pay for? Well, at the end of the game, that part gets ripped off and put on a platter.
So Juno plays the goddamn game.

If he loses a challenge, he loses points. If he wins too easily, then Cecil will just make the next one even harder. But if he cuts it close— if he keeps the audience at the edge of their seats right up until the end—

Well. That’s a lot of ‘if’s.

He doesn’t think about how long it’s been since he’s slept. He doesn’t think about the broken bones in his left hand or the burn on his shoulder. He doesn’t think about how his career as a PI is over now that all of Mars knows who he is.

He just thinks about the numbers.

He shot down every last one of the flying monkeys— fifty points each, plus a few more for style. The gigantic mechanical puppet was worth as much as much as one of Rex’s eyes. The scarecrow… well, that was worth the nightmares he’s going to have from this point on.

He can’t see the lion, but he can hear the canned audience getting anxious, and that means it’s getting ready to do something.

Cecil hasn’t thrown him any bones; looks like it’s just him and the lion.

Fine by him.

“Here, kitty, kitty,” he singsongs. “It’s time to put on a show.”
Waiting for you to come home

Chapter Summary

Peter and Rita wait for Juno to come home

Chapter Notes

This one’s the result of multiple requests for softness and hurt/comfort.

Peter gives up on pacing the room long enough to grab his comms.

“Rita?” he says the moment she picks up the call. “Have you found anything?”

“Nope. His car hasn’t moved since the last time you called. But that was only like five minutes ago, so… you never know?” She tries to push a hopeful note into her voice, but it’s laced with as much anxiety as Peter feels.

“And his comms?” he asks.

“Still d–” Her voice trips over the syllable. “Still offline.”

The word she was going to say is dead. Still dead.

“I’m sure he’s fine,” she says, as unconvincing as she is unconvinced.

Peter’s beyond persuasion. He’s putting on his shoes and stuffing his pockets with knives.

“Send me the address where his comms went down. I’ll look for him myself.”

“But– but Mista Steel said–”

“We’ve waited long enough,” he says sharply. “Send me the address.” And he hangs up the call.

He grabs his coat off the hook and is about to pull it on when the door swings open.

And there he is: ragged and and bloody and suspiciously damp below the elbows and knees, but amazingly alive.

“Juno,” Peter breathes. And then chokes a little, because Juno smells like he just crawled out of a sewer grate.

Juno’s stare meanders from Peter’s startled face to the coat hanging in his hands to the telltale bulges that reveal an array of knives. He doesn’t get to stare long before Peter is in his space, foul odor be damned.

“Juno, are you alright?” he asks, wiping the damp curls out of Juno’s eye.
“I’m…” Juno looks down. “Can I answer that after a shower?”

While Juno scrubs himself down, Peter sends Rita a text letting her know that Juno made it back in one piece, then he stows the soiled clothes and shoes in a trash bag until he can get them washed. The long coat will need to be dry-cleaned (and it will be, even if Juno insists that the service is one blaster shy of armed robbery).

And then he waits.

He tries not to count the minutes that Juno spends in the shower, or to calculate the point when the last of the hot water must have run out. When the water shuts off and Juno still doesn’t come out, Peter manages to stop himself knocking at the door and asking if he’s alright. He waits.

Finally the bathroom door cracks open and Juno peeks out. He seems a little surprised to find Peter sitting on the bed waiting for him.

“Hey,” he says through the door. “Can you grab the first aid kit?”

“Of course,” Peter says, and vanishes for a few seconds to retrieve it. “Would you like some help?”

He doesn’t miss Juno’s reluctance before he answers. “If you want.”

“I do.” It’s as close to an invitation as Peter is likely to get, so he lets himself inside.

Juno’s stepped back from the door, and now he’s leaning against the counter with a towel around his waist and his arms folded over his chest. He’s trying to cover the laser burn on his side without being too obvious about it; perhaps he’s given up on trying to hide the other cuts and burns on his body.

“Well,” Peter says softly. “It looks like you had an eventful evening.”

Juno won’t look him in the eye. “You didn’t have to wait up for me or anything.”

“I know. But I wanted to.” Peter takes out a jar of burn cream and another jar of disinfectant. “Give me your hand?”

Gingerly Juno unlatches his hand from his chest and offers it up, and Peter begins the careful work of tending to the multitude of smaller wounds. The sewer can’t have been kind to Juno, even with the shower to get the worst of it off.

“I tried calling you.”

Juno looks away. “Yeah. One of the gangsters I was chasing broke my comms.”

Peter hums sympathetically. “Don’t you hate it when that happens?”

But Juno takes it the wrong way. He yanks his arm back, glowering at the bathroom tile. “I didn’t break it on purpose, okay? It just happens. There was a fistfight, and the damn thing got smashed. There wasn’t anything I can do.”

“Juno,” Peter wraps his arms around Juno, careful not to disturb any visible wounds. “Juno, shh. It’s alright. It’s just a comms. I have plenty of burners to spare.”

“You got another car in those pockets of yours?” Juno mutters petulantly. “Because that got totaled, too.”
Ah. Is that what he’s so worried about?

Peter strokes Juno’s cheek, making sure to avoid the fresh black eye. “Does that mean you’ll let me help you pick out a new one?”

Finally Juno looks up at him, a little confused and a little relieved and entirely too vulnerable.

“It’s gonna be a pain in the ass,” he mumbles. “An expensive pain in the ass.”

“Sounds like a challenge,” Peter smiles wide enough to show off his teeth, and he manages to inspire a small smile in return from Juno.

“Listen,” Juno says when the smile flickers out. “I’m… sorry. For all…”

Peter leans in to kiss his forehead. “You have nothing to apologize for, love. I’ve got you back in one piece. That’s more than worth a little bit of worry.”

Juno sighs against him, and some of that pent-up tension finally starts to melt away. “That’s… that’s good to hear.”

“Now.” Peter pulls back and picks up a fresh cotton swab. “You’ve kept me in suspense long enough. Why don’t I finish patching you up and you can tell me what happened?”
“Hey, boss?”

Rita’s got that tone in her voice when I come into the office. It’s not her concerned tone– I can walk past that one any day of the week. It’s the tone that says she’s not the only one asking. She’s talked about this– probably with Alessandra– and they’ve come to the same conclusion, which means if I don’t have this conversation now, I’m going to have it later.

So I stand still like a big girl and I try not to look too done. “What is it, Rita?”

“Is…” She hedges for a second. “Is everything okay? You just seem really…”

I cut her off before she can decide on the word. “Sure, everything’s fine.”

“Are you sure?”

“Of course I am. I couldn’t be happier.” When she doesn’t buy it, I add, “I’m just tired. I haven’t been sleeping all that great.”

That at least seems to satisfy her a little bit. “Oh. Okay, then. You know, Frannie’s got this tea that she says works wonders when she can’t sleep. I could stop by the store on my lunch and get you some.”

“I…” No point fighting it. “Sounds good.” And I step into my office and shut the door before she can push the conversation any more.

I wasn’t lying to her. And if Alessandra asks me the same questions later, I’ll tell her the same thing and it won’t be a lie then, either.

Nothing’s wrong. Everything’s fine. I’m happier than I’ve been in a long time.

*That’s the problem.*

There are entire hours when I’m on top of the world and I feel like this is okay. But the more I think
that I could get used to this, the more I feel that pit in my stomach, like I’m at the top of a roller coaster and I’m about to go down fast.

Because this thing I’ve got with Alessandra? It’s good. It’s comfortable. It’s nice. And if life’s taught me anything, it’s that I don’t get to have nice things. As soon as my guard is down, something always sneaks up and knocks me off my feet. And I already know that if it’s not some disaster— if it’s not some hit from the triad or a case gone wrong or DiMaggio’s killer coming after one of us— if it’s not any of the thousand things that could happen to a PI— then it’s going to be me.

And that’s almost worse— only it isn’t, because I think— I hope— I’d only break her heart, whereas all the rest of that stuff might actually kill her— and the fact that I almost wish some big tragedy would strike instead, just so it won’t be my own damn fault— that only proves what I already know. It only drives home just how much I don’t deserve her.

Because Alessandra is— she’s amazing. She’s smart as hell and tough as nails, she’s one hell of a PI, she’s fearless, she’s funny, she gets along great with Rita— and she’s got this goddamn optimism. And it’s not like she doesn’t know any better, either. She was a soldier, goddammit. She knows how ugly the world can be, and it never surprises her when she sees the worst it has to offer. But for all that, she’s still looking for the good. She still chooses to hold out hope that most people, most of the time, are better than that.

I wish I could be half as good as she believes I am, but I’m not. I can’t be.

I should have told her as much from the beginning, when we were in the hospital and she was talking about making this a habit. But I was… an idiot. I was hurting, and she was solid and warm. I’d been a damsel in need of saving, and she’d stormed in like a big damn hero to rescue me. And… and I’d seen her vulnerable, thanks to that goddamn pill. And I knew if I called it quits right then, right there, she’d think it was because of what I’d seen in her head. She’d think it was her fault, not mine.

So I gave in. I let her kiss me, and I kissed her back, and I let her pick me up like the bad habit that I am.

Doesn’t she know she deserves so much better?

I sigh and fall into my chair. It’s bad enough that I spend my nights thinking myself in circles about all of this. At least at work I might have a case or two to distract me.

Almost on cue, my comms beeps with a message. No name from the sender, just an image attachment: a body hanging half outside of a glass trophy case, the whole scene splashed with blood— except for one spot on the wall behind it, where it hasn’t been splashed so much as smeared into a message.

_You’re next, Juno Steel._

Agent Rex Glass is…

He’s…

He’s gorgeous, okay? With those big bright eyes and those sharp teeth and that slightly homicidal smile. He’s attractive in all the ways I should very much not be noticing right now when I’m in a committed relationship with Alessandra, and I kind of hate myself for it.

I definitely hate myself for the reason why I noticed in the first place: because that would be one hell
of a way to convince Alessandra that I’m no good for her.

I climb back in through the window, and I look him in the eyes. “You know what? Tell Agent Wire I changed my mind. I’ll be taking that asteroid after all.”

Chapter End Notes

I’ve been mulling this one over for ages. Because as much as I think they’d be darling and actually fairly healthy… if one half of it wasn’t a lady with a death wish and a debilitating phobia of relationships. Until Juno gets emotionally healthy, he's going to be the weak link in any relationship he's a part of.
It takes trust

Chapter Summary

Juno trusts Peter. He swears he trusts Peter. But this is hard to deal with.

Chapter Notes

romeojuliets asked:

is it possible for me to request a jupiter fic with a very jealous juno??

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Juno instantly knows something’s wrong. He isn’t sure what– just that Peter suddenly goes stiff beside him and plucks Juno’s hand off his hip.

And his request isn’t making Juno any more comfortable.

“Love, I’m going to need you to trust me.”

And Juno does. Of course he does. But the fact that it needs to be asked for? That’s not a good sign. “What is it?”

“I promise I’ll explain later. But right now, I need you to go home.”

“Listen, if there’s trouble–”

“I can handle it on my own.” The anxiety in his eyes sends a chill down Juno’s spine. “Juno, please, there’s no time. Go.” And before Juno can ask him again, Peter grabs him by the shoulders and shoves him back with so much force it’s nearly violent. Juno crashes into the next table over, sending several drinks to the floor. He turns around just in time to see a broad hand slide around Peter’s shoulders and pull him close.

“Is this guy bothering you, Rhodri?”

Juno watches the emotions wash visibly over Peter’s face: he’s startled at the touch, but as he looks at the man holding him his expression lights up with something between fear and awe. “Okul,” he breathes.

The other man is a big guy– broad and even taller than Peter, with the kind of glare that says mobster, the kind of muscles that say bruiser, and the kind of shoes that say he’s a few dozen rungs higher on the ladder. The posse of grease-haired gangsters supports that idea. He gestures at Juno. “Boys, take–”

He doesn’t get the chance to finish the sentence before his mouth is otherwise occupied. Peter’s in his arms, kissing him like the world is ending, like he needs this man to breathe, like there’s nothing else he could possibly want more than him.
Juno feels it like a punch in the gut.

He should have known. Goddammit, he should have–

No. No, that doesn’t make sense. Peter’s not like that. Sure, he could do better than Juno Steel, but this guy over here? This half-rate mobster? He’s beneath Peter’s dignity. Besides, Peter’s too good a con to pull something like this right in front of Juno– not if he had any intention of deceiving him.

No. He trusts Peter. He trusts Peter.

Juno drags himself to his feet, grabbing a napkin from the frantic waitress to sop up the beer all over his jacket and disappears into the darkest corners of the bar while he cleans himself up.

He trusts Peter. This Okul guy, not so much. It’s not that he’s worried about him making a move– that spaceship has sailed– but mobsters like this aren’t exactly known for being level-headed and peaceful. If he gets violent, Juno wants to make sure Peter isn’t alone.

Even if that means he’s got to sit through this nightmare.

“I thought I’d never see you again,” Peter says, pulling away just enough to look the mobster in the eye. His arms are around the other man’s neck; the mobster’s hands are a whole lot lower. “Okul, I thought you were dead.”

Okul’s grin makes Juno’s teeth grind. “Don’t be ridiculous. Nobody can kill me. I’m invincible!”

Wanna test that theory?

Peter steps back, but he doesn’t get far before Okul’s arm settles around his waist, looking about as comfortable as a manacle. Peter could slip out in a heartbeat– instead he leans into it and drapes himself around a bicep as big around as his waist.

Juno can’t hear what they’re saying, but he can see Peter’s long fingers tracing patterns over Okul’s skin, the glances half-hidden under long eyelashes, the words whispered too slowly into the mobster’s ear. And then Okul turns his head and kisses him again, tugging him onto the dance floor.

The beer-soaked napkin turns to pulp in Juno’s hand.

He trusts Peter. He trusts Peter. He trusts Peter.

But it’s hard to feel comfortable when the two of them are that close, sliding and grinding against each other like they’re goddamn fucking with their clothes on. Okul is too rough with him, holding Peter’s hands too tight and changing directions half a beat before the music does just so he can catch him off guard. If for a second it looked like he was hurting him, Juno would put a laser between his eyes, but Peter’s face is flushed and his eyes are bright and he’s leaning even harder into him–

Does Peter like it like that? Is what he’s got with Juno just not– not enough for him?

Dammit, if he wanted something rougher he only had to say so. Juno could do better, he could be better, just give him the chance–

And now Okul is shepherding him toward the door with a grin that makes Juno’s skin crawl. No. No, that can’t happen. Juno jumps to his feet and starts after them. He doesn’t know if he’s being rational or overprotective or just plain pathetic, but his mind is flashing visions of all the things that could happen to Peter if he’s alone with that man and Juno likes none of them. He needs to stop this.
The club is crowded; by the time he wades through the throng of people and gets out the door, Peter and the mobster have a several-minute head start.

Unfortunately, that’s not the worst of his problems.

The moment he steps through the door, a pair of enormous mitts grab him by the collar and almost yank him off his feet. The next thing he knows, one of Okul’s lackeys is in his space. “Why, if it ain’t the dame who can’t take a hint.”

“Nah, hints give me indigestion. More of a wine-and-chocolates guy.”

Three more close in, dragging him into the alley. “You think you’re real funny, don’t you?”

“Usually I am, but it’s been kind of an off night for me,” Juno says.

The lackey sneers. “I bet it was. The boss said he saw you skulking after his side piece.”

“You call that skulking?” Juno asks.

The gangsters don’t indulge his bit. “He wants us to teach you a lesson.”

“Yeah?” Juno’s fist collides with the lackey’s jaw, and the other man goes staggering back. “Let’s start with how to throw a right hook.”

Four gangsters isn’t the worst Juno’s had to deal with– especially not when he gets his hands on one of their blasters.

He calls in an anonymous tip that there’s been an attempted mugging, and he makes a break for it before the cops can show up and pin it on him.

That leaves him alone, with Peter who-even-knows where, having who-knows-what done to him by some a guy who looks like he could have been one of the guinea pigs for super soldier experiments back in the war.

He trusts Peter.

But if Peter needs his help–

_Goddammit._

After too much pacing in back alleys, he comes to a compromise and he pulls out his comms.

_Are you okay?_ A call might blow Peter’s… whatever this is, but a text should be unobtrusive enough not to be a problem.

For several long, grueling minutes, there’s no response. Juno’s already thinking about ways to convince Rita to track Peter’s comms when he finally gets his reply.

_I have it handled._

And then another:

_Go home._

Juno stares at his comms in dismay.
That’s… good. If Peter isn’t in danger, that’s good. Great. He’s got nothing to worry about.

Nothing at all.

He does go home, like Peter told him to. He sinks into his chair. Watches the clock and the comms.

Thinks about pouring himself a drink, but decides against it. If Peter does need him later, he’ll want to be sober.

Tries not to think about what Peter’s doing right now. What’s being done to him. How he feels about it.

Reminds himself that he trusts Peter to take care of himself. To come back in one piece. To come back at all.

The clock strikes midnight, and then keeps going.

Two.

Three.

He should sleep. He doesn’t.

He wants to text again. His fingers keep tracing the message and then deleting it again.

Are you having fun?

Are you okay?

Are you alive?

Please don’t be dead

Leave if you want to but please don’t be dead

Each message is erased before he can give into temptation to send it.

He trusts Peter.

It’s a little past four when the apartment door clicks open. Peter makes it two steps into the apartment before he stops.

“Juno?” The door shuts behind him carefully. “You didn’t have to wait up for me.”

Wearily Juno rises from his chair. Maybe at a more reasonable hour, he would have come back with something witty, but he’s too tired– at least until he gets a good look at Peter.

Peter’s shirt is damp and wrinkled; it looks like he spent some time scrubbing it in a sink, but he couldn’t get out that last hint of red. His hands are clean, except for little crescents of gore that have gotten lodged under his fingernails. There are bruises, too, and not all of them look like the friendly variety.

”Are you alright?” Juno demands, getting close. “Did he hurt you?”

It doesn’t help that Peter’s expression is guarded and distant. “You don’t have to worry, Juno. I took
care of it.”

Why won’t he answer the question? “Did he hurt you?” Juno repeats, trying not to sound as frantic as he feels and failing miserably. “I swear, I’ll kill him—”

“There’s no need for that.” Peter retreats until his back is almost pressed against the door. “He’s already dead.” He unbuttons the cuffs of his sleeves, just to give himself something to look at. Juno knows the gesture well by now. “I paid off a few rabbits to get rid of the body. The evidence should point to a rival gang, assuming the police bothers to investigate at all. There shouldn’t be a problem.”

“Peter,” Juno starts, but he doesn’t know what else to say.

Peter takes a long breath. “It’s something I probably should have done years ago. Okul was a dangerous man even before he acquired a following.” Finally he looks Juno in the eye, resolute in just one thing. “I wasn’t going to let him come after you.”

Chapter End Notes

Jealous Juno is actually surprisingly hard to write, because the poor babe genuinely believes that he doesn’t deserve someone like Peter, so it’s just a matter of time until he’s tossed aside.
God if that doesn’t break my heart.
I’ve got a whole lot more jealous Peter, because the guy is a whole lot more proactive about knowing what he wants and going for it (and he’s got a quasi-canonical track record for being possessive about Juno.)

If you remember Okul, it’s because he’s from The Many Exes of Peter Nureyev, which is tucked away somewhere in the Casefiles.
A desk job

Chapter Summary

Peter’s latest heist requires him to sit behind the desk of a hotel. And then Juno arrives.

Chapter Notes

boatcrash asked:
Prompt: Peter Nureyev is undercover working behind the desk at a hotel, when one day a certain detective shows up for a room with someone else.

The how and why of the job aren’t terribly important. What matters is that it is of the utmost importance that the President of Venus (quite possibly the unluckiest man in the galaxy, and consequently one of the most careful) be housed in the corner room of the forty-second floor of the Sagittarius Heights Hotel that evening.

In a building full of cameras, that window is one of the only blind spots. And so it’s the only place where a specially placed team can sneak in, snatch President Morningstar from his bed, and sneak out again without arousing suspicion.

Morningstar’s security team knows this, of course, which is why they’ve explicitly barred him from using that room. And why, when Peter went in to change the reservation digitally, it was changed back within minutes.

But there are details they can’t control. And that is why Peter finds himself in the blandly dapper uniform of a concierge, ready to give President Morningstar the key to his room, along with assurances that of course it isn’t the forty-second floor, here at the Sagittarius we use the Uranian system for numbering our floors, it’s far more fashionable, don’t you think?

Talking circles around people happens to be his specialty.

He’s already planted a signal scrambler in the room, set to activate a few minutes before Morningstar’s little appointment to keep him from calling his security team, and he’s manning the front desk in case Morningstar tries using the in-house comms.

There’s still room for something to go wrong, of course. That’s always a possibility. And that’s why he stays at the desk for hours that night, just in case. Whatever comes up, he’s sure he can handle it.

He just wasn’t counting on the spanner in the works to be quite so grating.

A couple arrives at the hotel. One of the parties is walking backwards, almost tripping over the train of their obscenely tight blue dress as they drag their partner along behind them.

“Just look at this place,” they giggle. “They’ve barely changed a thing! Ooh, except that chandelier.”

“Guess they had to make it less climbable,” mutters a voice that makes Peter’s bland smile freeze on
his face.

It can’t be. Not here.

“Oh, how is Cas, anyway?” Blue Dress pauses halfway across the lobby, a thoughtful note in their voice. “I haven’t had a chance to catch up with her since she got out of Hoosegow.”

“I wouldn’t know,” Juno says, so emotionless that he’s obviously lying. He’s looking at the light fixtures, the molding on the walls, the tasteful waterfall in the center of the lobby.

He doesn’t look at Peter’s face. Why would he, after all? Who looks at the concierge?

“Oh, come on, Junebug.” Blue Dress leans close to Juno, their arms winding around his neck. “You’re the smartest person I know.”

“If I’m at the top of your list, then you really need to get out more,” Juno says.

Blue Dress bursts into a peal of giggles that sets Peter’s nerves on edge. “Isn’t that what we’re doing right now?”

Peter doesn’t have time for this. He’s got a job to do, and no room for distractions. Especially not a distraction quite as complicated as Juno Steel.

He grabs that whole complicated mess of emotions and shoves it into a box in the back of his mind. He’ll deal with it later. He can be calm. He can be collected.

At least until Blue Dress pulls Juno into a kiss. A very long, passionate kiss— one that they seem to have no intention of concluding anytime this month. Their dress is hiked up to their thigh as they hitch a knee over Juno’s hip. Their hands are all over Juno, pulling at his collar and tangling in his hair and tugging in that way he confessed to liking so much.

And the worst of it— the thing that makes Peter’s teeth grind in his smiling mouth— is that Juno’s hands are on their waist and he’s pulling them closer. He’s kissing them back.

If they keep this up much longer, the two of them will end up on the lobby floor. The thought leaves Peter feeling ill.

But it shouldn’t. Juno made his position quite clear when they parted ways. There’s no reason whatsoever to feel a sting when he sees Juno’s hand wrap around their thigh.

He takes a deep breath to regain his composure. He’s playing a part: calm, collected, and banally cheerful.

“Good evening,” he says pleasantly, as if he hasn’t been watching some trashy discount celebrity try to rip Juno’s clothes off.

Blue Dress turns with a breathless giggle. “Oh! Whoops. Maybe let’s save that for the room, Junebug.”

Juno says nothing. He’s staring at Peter, his mouth parted like he’s a breath away from saying something. Like there’s anything left for him to say.

Peter doesn’t miss the burst of bright colors on the right side of Juno’s face. It seems Juno finally got himself a cybernetic eye. It’s no wonder, if he’s on the arm of the kind of people who can afford to stay here. One of them probably got the eye for him. Maybe even the giggling idiot in the blue dress.
Peter’s expression doesn’t change. His tone remains perfectly cordial. “Do you have a reservation this evening?”


Peter holds Juno’s stare, but his expression remains unchanged. “Will that be acceptable, Mister Junebug?”

“I–” Juno swallows.

“Junebug?” Blue Dress asks. “Juno? Are you okay?”

“I–” He finally tears his eyes off Peter. “I think that last drink is hitting me harder than I thought. I’m–” He swallows. “I’m not feeling great all of a sudden.”

If there’s one thing that can redeem Blue Dress in Peter’s eyes, it’s the way they change their tune. Immediately they’re in Juno’s space again, laying the flat of their hand against his forehead.

“Poor baby, you’re burning up. Oh, Junebug, you should have said something. You there,” they say to Peter without looking his way. “Bring him some– some water, will you?”

Juno holds out a hand. “No. No, I’m fine. I should just… head home. Listen, Lhamo, I’m sorry–”

“Don’t you worry about a thing,” they say.

“Maybe you should go back to the club. I’ll– I’ll catch up with you later.”

“Oh, Juno, are you sure?”

“Yeah,” he says, sounding for all the world like a man awaiting his own execution.

Blue Dress insists that Juno sit somewhere comfortable before they traipse off. Juno watches them leave, not looking away until they’re out of sight.

When he turns back, Peter is smiling with all of his teeth.

“Mister Steel. I think you and I have quite a lot to talk about.”
A desk job (part 2)

Chapter Notes

atleastthisusernamewasnttaken asked:

I would give my left kidney for a continuation of the Peter Nureyev hotel desk fic

T

Peter wishes he could say he was in control of this situation, but he isn’t inclined toward self-delusion. At the moment he’s all but chained to the concierge desk– if he leaves, then months of planning will be put into jeopardy, and with it his reputation as a master thief. Juno, on the other hand, can walk out the hotel door at any time without consequence.

Peter isn’t entirely sure what he would do if that happened. Would he let Juno go– for good, this time? Or would he abandon everything he’s worked for and chase after him like a lovesick fool?

He isn’t sure he could forgive himself for either one.

He feels suddenly trapped– no matter what he does, he’s going to lose Juno all over again. And like any fox caught in a trap, he bares his teeth.

“Your friend certainly seems entertaining,” he remarks, too snide. “Lhamo, was it?” His smile is wide and sharp, but it’s wasted on Juno. The detective can’t meet his eye. “I hope you didn’t change your plans on my account, Juno. It must have been quite the occasion to bring you here. What was it– an anniversary? Or were you just trying to save Mars again?”

For a moment, there’s a light in Juno’s eyes that has less to do with bionics and more to do with anger. For that moment he’s as defensive as Peter, ready to fight with a thousand ugly, cutting accusations. Just as quickly, the light goes out of him and he lowers his eyes. “Lhamo and I know each other from back in the old days. We just ran into each other tonight.”

His voice is low, without inflection. There’s no sign of that endearing, infuriating stubbornness, and that just makes Peter angrier. He knows how to deal with Juno being sullen; that’s practically the detective’s default state. But this? Passive and quiet? He’s only seen that once before, and the memories cut him as sharply now as they did the morning after.

“What was it you said? They should go back to the club?” Peter’s grin only widens as he steps closer. “You never did strike me as much of a dancer. Or is that from the old days, too?”

“I was trying…” For a moment Juno’s voice carries some semblance of passion, but it bleeds out of him before he can finish the sentence. “I’m not.”

“Then what could possibly bring a girl like you to a place like that?” It’s a question so pointed it could impale, and he maps out a dozen ways it could be parried or deflected, but Juno just lets it hit him. He looks like he’d like to sink into the marble floor, but he doesn’t leave. He doesn’t fight back. He just stands there with his eyes on the ground like he’s waiting to be punished. Like this is exactly what he deserves.
That won’t do at all.

“Look at me, Juno.”

Slowly Juno obeys, but there’s no satisfaction in it. There’s no winning against somebody who’s already surrendered. There’s only one question Juno hasn’t answered without a fight, and so that’s what Peter pursues.

“What were you trying to do?” he demands, getting closer.

“Nothing,” he says. “It doesn’t matter.”

“It matters because I say it does,” Peter says sharply. “Answer the question.”

“What’s it to you?” For just a moment, something in him hardens.

Peter steps even closer, crowding Juno’s space. “Why were you in that club, Juno Steel?”

When Juno’s eyes meet his, he’s momentarily the petulant detective again. “I was trying to get laid.” The statement is barbed, meant to stick in the skin long after it’s drawn blood, but Peter’s unimpressed. He guessed as much when he saw Juno’s arms around his friend in the blue dress. But when Peter doesn’t react, the spark fades again just as quickly as it was lit. “You said you were leaving Mars for good.”

“You said you were coming with me.” Peter’s tone is judicial, just short of accusatory, and Juno’s gaze slides back to the floor. “Look at me, Juno.”

When Juno meets his eyes, there are only a few bare centimeters between them. Peter could close that distance in a heartbeat— and he wants to. For all his anger and ire, he desperately wants to. He wants to see if those lips still taste like whiskey and that awful cheap lip balm he uses, if he still kisses like he’s asking permission, if he still makes those soft needy sounds when he’s running out of air but doesn’t want to break contact.

But Peter can’t. Not without answers.

“Why did you do it?” he asks quietly.

Juno opens his mouth, but already his head is shaking, and Peter knows he won’t get an answer. Maybe Juno himself doesn’t know what the answer is.

The in-house comms rings back at the desk, loud and jarring.

This is why Peter’s here in the first place. If he doesn’t answer it, the entire plan might be ruined.

But if he does, Juno might take the opportunity to walk away— just another convenient escape from an inconvenient conversation, while Peter is left alone in yet another hotel.

The comms rings again. Peter hasn’t taken his eyes off Juno.

“Do you want to get that?” Juno asks.

No, he absolutely does not want to get that. The damn thing can ring until the end of time for all he cares, because Juno is right here and he can’t keep doing this—

Something falls into place, a grim epiphany. He pulls away from Juno and turns toward the reception desk, careful to keep his back to the private eye.
He can’t keep doing this.

The thought feels like a lead weight in his stomach, even when he dons the banally cheerful voice of his concierge persona and answers the call.

He *could*, though. He could drop everything that he’s built, everything that’s ever mattered to him, in hopes of keeping Juno close to him. He could spend the rest of his life trying to fill Juno’s every need, to be everything he needs him to be. He could try to pull Juno back in every time he pushes him away, chase him down every time he runs, just to prove how much this matters to him.

But it doesn’t work that way, no matter how much he wants it to.

If Juno wants to go, there’s nothing Peter can do to make him stay.

He sets the comms back into its cradle, his persona dropping off his shoulders like a shroud, and his shoulders sag. He doesn’t want to turn around. He’s not sure he can face the empty lobby.

He does it anyway.

“Something wrong?”

Peter’s not sure how to answer that. The relief is so heady it leaves him dizzy– because right now, for just this moment, Juno’s still here.
A different kind of fight

Chapter Summary

Peter and Juno get into a fight

Chapter Notes

I wrote this ages ago, but forgot to add it here (or anywhere, actually). I completely forgot about the fic until I was working on another one and got some serious deja vu.

This is written in response to the idea that Juno has a penchant for partners “with an active desire to do him harm”.

There’s nothing violent on the page, but there are themes of past abuse, so tread with caution.

Rated T

There have been little arguments up til now, of course– little grievances about dishes or laundry or who makes breakfast– but this is the first one since they’ve started living together that feels like a real fight.

This is the first one where they’re shouting.

Both of them are, which speaks to the severity of it all– because Juno’s so loud that Peter has to scream just to make himself heard, and now they’re too caught up in the fight to care that the neighbors can hear every word despite the fact that the two of them are all of three feet away from each other.

A part of Peter knows that this is a very bad conversation to be having at top volume, that there’s only so much the neighbors can overhear about the right and wrong of killing people before they call the police, but he’s too carried away by his own momentum to stop now, not when his whole life is being held under scrutiny and Juno is being such a damned hypocrite.

It’s not the threat of police intervention that stops him.

It’s that part of him that he can’t quite turn off, the conman brain that watches all the subtle little clues of body language and keeps him apprised. He’s mid-sentence when it alerts him to the change. When he pauses for breath, he notices it consciously.

Juno’s hands are clenched tight into fists at his sides. His feet are perfectly spaced under his ribs. His shoulders are tucked in, protecting his neck. His head is low.

He looks like he’s getting ready for a fist fight.
No. That isn’t right. Because Peter’s seen Juno fight, and it doesn’t look like this. It’s not so sunken and guarded.

Juno isn’t getting ready for a fight. He’s getting ready to take a punch.

He thinks Peter is going to hit him.

Peter’s mouth is open to shout another argument, but he can’t remember the sentence forming inside his mouth.

So he doesn’t speak.

He puts his hands on Juno’s shoulders, all too aware of the way Juno flinches when he’s touched.

“Juno,” he says evenly. “This isn’t getting us anywhere.”

It was the wrong thing to say, because Juno goes tense as piano wire. His eye is wide with alarm and fear and fury, and he sneers. “Hey, if you’re done–”

“No, Juno. I’m not.” Peter picks his words more carefully than any other he’s spoken that night. “This is a conversation we need to have, but neither one of us is in the right frame of mind to have it right now."

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Juno snaps. “I’m fine to talk. I’m great!”

“But I’m not,” Peter says, because he has to. Because Juno’s afraid, and that leaves him too defensive to back down on his own. He has to show Juno that he’s not the only one feeling vulnerable. “I’m asking you to put this aside for now. Please.”

For several long moments, Juno seems more confused than anything else. Because he’s familiar enough with taking a hit to prepare for them in advance, but he seems completely unfamiliar with this.

“Okay,” he says slowly, uncertainly, like he’s reading a script for the first time. “Fine. We’ll talk about it later.”

“Thank you, Juno.”

Juno hesitates for a few awkward moments. “Are… you okay?”

It’s a question they both should probably have started asking more than an hour ago.

If Peter’s being honest— and he needs to be, if this situation is ever going to work— he isn’t okay. There’s far too much emotion tied up in this conversation, too many parts of himself out in the open and under attack. It’s been twenty years since he last felt this exposed, and it will take more than a few months before he’s telly comfortable with any of this.

But he can’t make himself form those words yet. So he rests his forehead against Juno’s and says the other thing that should have been said an hour ago.

“I love you, Juno. That isn’t going to change.”

Some of the tension melts out of Juno’s shoulders. His hands find Peter’s waist and settle there, solid but gentle. He opens his mouth, but after all these months he still has trouble forming the words. That’s alright. Peter can be patient.
“I love you too,” he mutters, half embarrassed, like it’s a first-time confession. It always feels that way, but it seems to come a little bit easier every time.

They stand there for longer than either of them would care to count, holding onto each other while their breathing settles and their pulses slow.

Peter isn’t sure when exactly they’ll finish this conversation, but that doesn’t matter right now. It can wait until Juno feels safe enough to actually have it. Until they both feel safe enough to have it. Right now, getting to that point will take priority.
Tuesday Movie Night

Chapter Summary

On Tuesday Nights Small Fry comes over for movies.

Tuesday night.
Juno always makes sure to lock up the office a little earlier on Tuesday nights, and he heads into his apartment and turns on the living room light– the one that can be seen from the sewer grate across the street. By the time he hangs up his coat and blaster, he can hear a gentle scritchting by the fire escape.
The window’s already unlocked, but she waits outside for him, just because she’s polite like that.
He pulls open the window and steps aside for her to climb through. “Hey, Small Fry. Ready for the marathon?”
She’s getting bigger now, her excited barks are getting deeper, but he can never quite unsee the scared little bit that she used to be.
She barely hits the floor before she’s bouncing in excitement, but before she leaps out to hug him, she darts for the bathroom instead.
“Yeah, you know the drill,” he says. He waits until she’s shut the door behind her before he mops up the slight trail of sewer water she left behind. Moments later he can hear water running in the pipes as she starts up the shower.
He’s spent too much time in the sewers to be particularly offended by the smell anymore, but he also knows better than anyone that it’s just about impossible to get out of upholstery. Besides, there’s gonna be a lot of popcorn being passed around, and the official rule is that only clean paws are allowed to touch food.
By the time Small Fry gets out of the shower, smelling of goji berries and wearing one of the supply of clean clothes she stashes here, Mick is already lounging on the couch with a bunch of hand-drawn blueprints that are definitely not up to code. He makes a big presentation out of them, giving Small Fry a full-blown business pitch that she might not understand, but she barks enthusiastically in all the right places. Juno’s only half-listening– he’ll hear the full spiel in a little while, when Mick presents it to Rita– instead busying himself with snacks.
The drinks are already by the couch, courtesy of “The King of the Beverage” and Rita’s bringing popcorn; Juno’s made a habit of picking up veggie trays at the grocery store on his way home on Tuesdays– he started doing it so Small Fry could get her paws on some carrots that didn’t come packed with sugar, but he’s finally admitting to himself that broccoli isn’t half bad when it’s dipped in something. Last night he tried making a carrot cake, too.
He can’t remember the last time he’s actually baked something. He didn’t realize how much he missed it until it was twenty minutes in the oven and the whole apartment smelled like a dream. Hell, he iced it and everything.
He knows the exact moment Rita arrives, because the moment the door is open she’s shrieking in delight and leaps right for Small Fry. The next who-even-knows-how-long is one long string of Rita hugging her and petting her and telling her how big she’s grown and managing to pack the word ‘cute’ with more syllables than you find in a standard dictionary.

Somewhere in between all of that the popcorn gets made, the latest get-rich-quick scheme is pitched, the carrot cake is presented and distributed, and Small Fry gets dry enough to classify as “the fluffiest!” in Rita’s book.

And then, after all that, come the movies.

If Juno’s really being honest with himself, the movies are the least important part of this new little tradition of his. The plots may be really good or so bad they’re hilarious or something in between, but that doesn’t really matter. It’s less important than the food crowding the coffee table, or the way Rita squeals and Mick gasps at every new development like this story is somehow new to them, or the collection of blankets Juno’s accrued just so he can drape them over the assembled pile when they inevitably fall asleep on his couch.

Sometime after midnight, Mick will wake up enough to get back on his bike and drive home, and Small Fry will slip back into the sewers with her adopted family, and Rita will wander off with a yawned “see ya in the morning, boss” that would only be accurate if you count “morning” as “half past noon”.

Juno puts what’s left of the food in the fridge, but he leaves the rest of the cleanup for morning. That part can wait until after he’s slept.

On Tuesday nights, he never has trouble sleeping.
For hours, Juno has to fight with himself just to get the words out.

It’s such a stupid thing. He should be able to just shrug it off and go on with his day, but he can’t. No matter how hard he tries to tell himself that he’s overreacting, it’s just sitting there like a ball of acid in his chest, burning away at his insides until all he can feel is that corrosion.

That’s his problem. There’s no need to put it on anyone else.

A deeper, animal instinct tells him to hole up someplace by himself and snarl at anyone who dares to get close. Those instincts have kept him alive, but they’re also what he keeps him from getting better. Keeping your back to the wall and snarling is a good way to protect yourself when you’re surrounded by monsters, but it just makes things worse when the one you’re barking at is the vet.

So he makes the decision, and he grits his teeth, and he fights with himself until that snarling part of himself is pinned down enough to get its shots.

“Nureyev?”

“Juno?” Peter’s brows are raised in patient anticipation. He’s probably sensed Juno’s tension for a while now, but he doesn’t press it. He knows better than most not to back Juno into a corner.

“This last case…” The words practically have to be dragged out of his mouth, and each one burns his throat on the way up, but he forces himself to continue. “It hit some nerves, and I’m not… doing great right now.”

A part of him still argues that it shouldn’t be affecting him this badly. They caught the would-be murderer before she could kill her kid, and now she’s going to spend the rest of her life behind bars. He should be feeling great. He should be proud. But he can still hear her words bouncing around inside his skull, and in his head her voice sounds a whole lot like Sarah Steel.

“Would you like a distraction?” Peter asks gently, even though the voice in Juno’s head insists that he doesn’t deserve it.

“I think…” It’s still hard getting it out, but now that he’s started there’s nothing to do but keep going until it all comes up. “Right now I just need to know—” That you love me. That I can be loved. “I just need some reassurance.”
Peter gathers him into his arms and kisses his forehead, and for the first time since the end of the case, Juno can feel a calm settling over him. He still feels raw from dragging that acidic thing out of his gut, but it's not eating away at him anymore. So he shuts his eye and leans into those soft touches, and he trusts Peter Nureyev to drown out the voices in his head.
A Million Reasons

Chapter Notes

tillthebitterend suggested A Million Reasons by Lady Gaga, and it was just such a Peter song that I had to write a thing.

Until this moment, the reunion has been remarkably straightforward. After all, with Peter’s identity and the lives of that police captain’s children on the line, the two of them have had plenty of motivation to keep moving. Whenever things got awkward or uncomfortable, they dove right back into the case. It was a convenient enough diversion.

But now it’s gone.

The case is solved and the day is saved, and that leaves them… here.

In Juno’s car.

With nothing but the rain sizzling on the windshield and their own thoughts to disturb the silence.

Peter promised himself he wouldn’t do this again. Juno made it clear months ago that he didn’t want him in his life, and he accepted that with grace. Since then he’s done an excellent job of staying far away from Juno– from Mars– from the whole Solar System– and he would have stayed away if he could have avoided it. It isn’t his fault that preserving his anonymity required coming back here. He never planned for his path to cross the detective’s.

But now the case is over.

It’s over.

And that’s a good thing, isn’t it? There are so many beautiful worlds for him to explore. So many unfortunate memories to escape. He has a hundred thousand reasons to open the car door and step out into the rain.

He sees his face reflected in the passenger side window, and Juno’s face hovers just beside it, watching him through the reflection.

“Where are you going to go?” Juno asks at last.

“Offworld, I imagine.” A lifetime of cons allow Peter to keep his voice light and airy. “I understand there’s a statue on Io that’s just begging to be relocated.”

Unless you want me to stay here. With you.

Peter is too proud to beg– not in so many words– but he catches the reflection of Juno’s eye.

“The next ship to Io doesn’t leave until morning,” Juno says. It’s a lie. It has to be a lie. There’s no way he could know that off the top of his head. “Do you need a place to stay until then? I could drive you to the spaceport in the morning. Beats taking the bus.”
As if Peter wouldn’t take a cab. It’s a flimsy reason to stay and make a terrible decision.

But all Peter ever wanted was a reason to stay. He never specified that it had to be a good one.

The night is soft and sweet in a way that their last night wasn’t. And unlike their last night, there are no promises. Nothing is offered, so nothing can be broken. This time they’re in agreement: it’s just this one night, and nothing more.

Peter tells himself that this is enough, that this memory will carry him until he finds a way to occupy his mind elsewhere.

Then morning comes, and he catches himself for a liar.

He’s had so many opportunities to watch Juno sleep, but never once has he seen his detective so serene as when he’s wrapped in blankets and pressed against Peter’s side, his mouth just barely open, his face bathed in the soft light that filters through the summer rain.

Peter could look at him forever. Instead he turns on his comms. The next flight to Jupiter’s moons is leaving within the hour.

It ends here.

He only lingers for a few minutes more before he tears himself away to shower.

By the time he’s finished washing up, he’s decided: there’s no point in asking Juno to shower and dress just to drive him to the spaceport. He’ll call a cab instead. And if Juno wakes up to find him gone…

Peter’s hand is on the front door of the apartment when a floorboard creaks behind him.

He’s waiting for the accusation, for bitterness and betrayal or that kicked-hound look that only Juno can wear, but it doesn’t come.

“Do you have an umbrella in one of those pockets?” Juno asks.

That was unexpected. “Hm?”

“An umbrella. Reinforced, preferably. The rain will eat right through that coat of yours if you let it soak in.”

Peter glances back. Juno’s standing in the door, wearing only a pair of worn pajama pants, and looking calm– a little bit hopeful, a little bit resigned. Hanging from a hook on the wall is an umbrella.

Bad weather isn’t a particularly good reason to stay on Mars.

Peter hangs up his coat beside the umbrella. “I’m sure there’ll be another flight after the rain clears.”

At half past noon, the sun is drying the puddles outside Juno’s apartment when a call comes in from the office. There’s an emergency, apparently. One involving a break-in.
It would be rude for Peter not to offer his expertise.

He isn’t surprised that Juno gets hurt during the case. That Juno asks him for help bandaging the wound, however— that is unexpected. Peter supposes that makes sense, though, given that it’s on his back, just under his rib cage.

Peter tells himself that he’ll leave as soon as he helps Juno apply the bandage.

And then he tells himself that he doesn’t trust the bandage to stay on during the night. He’ll be needed for observations— or at least to help him reapply it in the morning. But in the morning, for sure, he’ll be gone.

Peter’s barely finished applying the bandage when the doorbell rings. Waiting by the front door is Rita, vibrating in a way that only partially has to do with the to-go tray of coffee in her hands.

“‘Oh good!’” she squeals when he opens the door. “You’re still here! I was meanin’ to practice on you! Can I? Can I can I can I?”

“Can you… what?” Peter asks, nonplussed, but he steps aside to let her into the apartment.

“Read your moonstones! Frannie taught me how, and she says I’m a real natural, but I need more practice, and you can only practice on yourself so many times, ya know?”

And Peter agrees. After all, he’s never tried his hand at being a fortune teller before.

But according to his moonstones, this isn’t a good day for travel. If he were to set out now, there’s no telling what misfortune would befall him. As enthusiastic as Rita seems to be on the subject, he decides not to contradict her.

He doesn’t miss the look of gratitude that Juno shoots in her direction when he thinks Peter can’t see.

“Nureyev…” It’s four in the morning, and the adrenaline from the night’s case has finally worn off. Juno hasn’t touched a drop of whiskey tonight, but there’s a slight fuzz to his words that belies his exhaustion. His voice softens. “Peter.”

That’s how Peter knows he’s serious, even if he is sleep-addled. “Hm?”

“You belong out there.” It comes out all at once, like he’s been sitting on this for days. He can’t quite meet Peter’s eyes. “That’s where your life is. Your work.”

“I imagine you’d like to get back to your life, too,” Peter muses. His voice is warm and soft, like it’s a natural conclusion to draw. Like it doesn’t hurt him to say it.

“I–” Juno stops and swallows it back. “I can’t ask you to stay. It isn’t fair.”

No. Of course not. Peter knew from the beginning that this would only be a fleeting thing. It was only ever a matter of time before he ran out of reasons to linger.

“But I want to. I want you here. With me. And I know that’s not exactly a good reason–”
Peter doesn’t let him finish that thought.

Even when they separate, breathing heavy, Peter whispers into Juno’s ear: “That’s the only reason I need.”
Chapter Summary

One possible way Season 2 could end.

Rita can feel the THEIA crawling through the halls of her brain like Venusian kudzu through a run-down house, choking entire hallways until they’re impassible.

But it doesn’t know what it got itself into.

Sure, the hallways of her mind may be blocked, but she still has sewers underneath and nice big air ducts overhead and all sorts of secret passageways. It won’t let her think about programming directly, but it can’t navigate her constellations of movies and soaps fast enough to keep up with her.

Her favorite episode of Love and Loss in the Outer Rim.

The production code of the worst episode of the New Adventures of Andromeda.

The amount of money she spent at Valles Vicky’s that one time when Mistah Steel dragged her there with him.

The birthdays of her favorite actors in As Venus Rises.

The exact time of a commercial break in seconds.

The number of episodes that Mistah Steel was a secret guest star in the Kanagawa streams.

Hundreds of numbers rearranged in patterns that are nearly incomprehensible, broken down into strings of binary, and then: thought.

Strings of ones and zeros and zeros and ones, registered by the THEIA Soul, recorded, and then quietly slipping into its programming.

The last digits settle in her mind, and she feels an unpleasant shock as the THEIA’s programming starts to malfunction, and then as it withers and dies around her, leaving her free.

Now all she’s got to do is do the whole thing again– preferably on a massive scale, so she can get that nasty computer’s hooks out of all those innocent people.

But that shouldn’t be a problem.

She’s Rita, after all.
This fic comes from a conversation with @crownsnbirds about Peter Nureyev.

Without his glasses, Peter can’t read the glowing numbers of the clock by Juno’s bedside, but the only light seeping in from the windows comes from distant neon displays, and the traffic outside is so sparse that he can make out the swerve of individual cars passing the building. Maybe four in the morning, he guesses.

It takes him a moment to realize what woke him: soft, tender fingers brushing over the pulse point on his wrist, tracing the lines of an old tattoo. This is hardly the first time Juno’s seen it—after all, there wasn’t much opportunity to hide it in Miasma’s cell—but he’s always been too polite to bring it up.

“You’re allowed to ask, if you’re curious,” Peter murmurs, and Juno pulls his hand back.

“Did I wake you?”

Rather than answer, Peter buries his face in Juno’s hair. “I’m not a mystery for you to solve, love. If you have a question, you only have to ask.”

The bar code on Peter’s wrist reminds him too much of Brahma. Of Mag, and the promises of the new world that they would build together. Of endless winters huddled together against a fire, delirious with hunger and cold.

He remembers living on the streets, when he would wake up screaming and clutching his wrist, sobbing from nightmares of dying with his hand mangled, his body unidentified as it decomposed, his name forgotten forever. Back then, the tattoo felt like a lifeline. These days it feels more like a shackle made of ink.

For years, Peter kept it covered.

Foundation and concealer with a nice waterproof sealer are enough to keep other people from noticing the row of dark lines on his skin, at least not at a cursory glance. In his own eyes, the lines burn through the makeup, barely muted at all by the concealer. They taunt him, the pattern of zeroes and ones declaring his identity for the whole damn galaxy to see.

He keeps it covered with other things, just so he can’t stare at the ink, breaks up the lines with long sleeves, watch bands, bracelets, cuffs. Anything to divert attention away. He’s good at misdirection, after all.

On bad days, when he’s too tired to think clearly, he picks up a knife and considers getting rid of it the old-fashioned way—cutting it off his skin like an Old Earth sailor, or burning away the digital ink with the heat of a plasma knife. Not to hurt himself—he has little desire for self-harm, thank you—but because he wants it gone.

There’s no need for that, of course. He could always hire someone to remove it for him. A few medical lasers ought to do the trick.
But he doesn’t. Every time he comes close to the decision, he backs away. That tattoo is his link to Brahma. With that string of numbers, he can access his census records. With one quick search, he can find out his age, his birthday, the names of his parents.

Was his father’s name Peter Nureyev, or was that a lie, too?

What kind of man was he? Was he the hero Mag made him out to be? Was he a nobody, unremarkable from the day he was born until the day he died? Was he one of the constables who brutalized homeless children? Was he a deadbeat who walked away from his family and let his son starve? Was he the kind of man that Peter would have been safer being far away from?

Does he really want to know?

He could erase the tattoo and walk away, and his father will forever be Mag’s fairy tale: a noble, heroic man who left Peter because he had no choice, who had every intention of coming back and saving him from the dark and cold.

Or he could learn the truth. And while he mulls it over, the bar code continues to glare at him on his wrist.

Juno lays a paper file folder on the desk before him.

“Another case, love?” Peter asks, reaching to open it. Strange—usually Juno’s casefiles are labeled with the name of the client, but this one is blank.

“It’s yours.”

Peter’s hand freezes over the file. Without opening it, he scours it for information: the file is thick, its contents seem to be primarily printer paper and still flat and unbent from handling, but other than that, it’s innocuous.

“I had Rita run the numbers from your tattoo through Brahma’s census bureau. Everything attached to your number is in that file.”

“That’s…” Peter swallows. He can’t put it into words.

“I was with her when she did it. She didn’t read any of the files, and neither did I. You don’t have to read it. Hell, you can destroy it if you want. But I figure it’s there if you want it.”

Peter swallows, his hand turning just slightly until he sees the shadow of dark lines against his skin.

And just like that, he has one less reason to keep the damned tattoo.
There’s still a part of Peter that winds itself tense when he wakes up. Those first moments of consciousness always come with a risk, and there’s no telling what he’ll see when he opens his eyes. There are too many possibilities to account for, too many things that could go wrong.

And then he inhales— a deep breath of cinnamon and vanilla and melted butter— and all the pent-up anxiety seeps out of him.

Juno’s here, and he’s relaxed enough to be making breakfast. He’s safe.

They’re both safe.

Peter slides out of bed, and the cold floorboards against his bare feet jolt him properly awake. His slippers aren’t all that far away, but he ignores them to pad silently from the bedroom. A little bit of chill is worth the sight that greets him.

Juno has his back to him, too busy minding the stove to notice that he has company in the kitchen. In the soft light, the scars on his bare back are faded into a distant memory, upstaged by the far brighter apron strings tied carelessly around his waist. The apron was a gift from Rita, absurdly bright and entirely unlike Juno Steel, but frequent washing has faded into something comfortable and soft, stained and splattered with use, and now it catches splashes of sizzling grease that would otherwise strike Juno’s bare chest.

Juno’s movements are subtle and deliberate, nearly a dance: back and forth, flipping and frothing, stirring and spicing, and the entire apartment fills with mouthwatering aromas in his wake. His eye is lowered to the pan, and he hums some old tune that Peter only barely recognizes. On his lips is a soft, gentle smile.

Peter has stolen art and artifacts and technology, he’s emptied vaults and drained bank accounts, but never has he stolen anything as precious as a glimpse of that smile.
A face in the shadows

Chapter Notes

pocketpluto asked:

Have you written anything where Peter messes up a job bc he was pining over Juno? I have a Need for angst..

Rated PG

When Peter comes to, it’s with the taste of ozone and iron sharp in his mouth, an unpleasant reminder of the stun laser that ended his escape. Bruises on his skin and scrapes on his glasses attest to his treatment on the way to this jail cell– a few broken bones short of what he might receive in Hyperion City, but still far more brutal than is warranted by a few stolen trinkets.

And these Solar people have the gall to call the Outer Rim uncivilized.

Footsteps come his way– heavy and booted, dragging their heels slightly, echoed by the soft flapping of a long coat. One of the cops come to gloat, no doubt. Peter quickly sifts through his personas, looking for one best suited to his escape, when the owner of those feet speaks.

“I guess it’s true what they say.” There’s a scoff in the voice, cold and derisive. He’s too far away, but Peter can almost smell the whiskey on his breath. “People who stand for nothing will fall for anything.”

Peter’s on his feet before he realizes he wants to be, his hands wrapped around the bars of the door as he tries to pull himself closer. “Juno?”

And he’s there, all sloping shoulders and surly stare. The flourescents overhead have long since gone out, and so the only light comes from behind him. Most of his face is in shadow, but Peter would know him anywhere.

“How many times are you gonna fall for it, Nureyev?”

He almost says something unseemly, but catches himself quickly, regains his composure. “I was struck by a laser, Juno, not fooled.”

“And what about what happened thirty seconds before you got shot, Nureyev? You had a straight shot to freedom, and you threw it away– for what? A dame with bad posture and a good taste in outerwear?”

Peter almost shrinks back. “Ah. You saw that.”

“I saw you make a fool of yourself.”

“Yes. Well.” He clears his throat. “I thought he was you.”

Juno snorts. “Me? He didn’t look anything like me, except out of the corner of your eye. But that was enough to make you trip up and blow this whole heist, wasn’t it?” The snort becomes an angry,
accusing laugh. “And it wasn’t even the first time, was it? The first time we met, you were so busy flirting that you didn’t notice I’d caught on to your act. Did anyone ever tell you that you’re under arrest?”

Peter can feel himself deflate. “Perhaps I was a touch overconfident, but–”

“Oh, is that what went wrong? Is that why you spent months working for Miasma without picking up on the fact that she wasn’t even human anymore?”

“I–”

“Or how about that night in the hotel? God, how stupid can you be? After everything you put me through, how the hell did you think I’d go anywhere with you?”

Peter’s stomach drops into his knees. His mind is racing, but he can’t put his thoughts into words.

“I’m not even just talking about Miasma. You didn’t bother researching Cecil Kanagawa’s experiments, and I practically get a concussion distracting his cameraman so it doesn’t eat you alive. You go running after a mobster with a bionic arm and I get my arm ripped open to keep him from turning your face into hamburger. You can’t handle a goddamn card game with a senile has-been, and I’m the one who has to put my life on the table. You piss off your boss, and I have to put a laser to my head to keep her from dumping your body in the desert. You needed a distraction to get out of that tomb, so I was your fall guy.”

“Juno–”

“And after all of that– after fucking all of that– you ask me to walk away from everything and start the whole goddamn thing over again? How many of your messes did you want me to clean up for you, Nureyev?”

Peter’s knuckles tighten around the bars. “Juno, stop.”

But Juno doesn’t let up. “Was this your big plan? Always running, never looking back? No friends, no rest, no safe place to hide? No thanks.”

“I would have protected you.” Peter’s all too aware that he’s pleading.

“Like you protected me from Engstrom? His trigger-happy bodyguard gassed me, Nureyev. She almost killed me while you were having your pissing contest with an old man. Or how about like you protected me from Miasma?” He steps closer, and Peter can see it clearly: the ruined eye, still raw and bleeding, as fresh as the moment Peter first saw it all those months ago. Peter stumbles away from the door, bile rising in his throat.

“No,” he whispers. “This isn’t real. It isn’t real.”

“Of course it isn’t real,” Juno says, his voice heavy as a neutron star. “So why do you keep acting like it is?”

Peter looks up, and suddenly there’s no door between them. Juno’s eye is cast in shadow once more, and without its gore his face is soft.

“Listen, Nureyev. What you did out there, getting yourself shot chasing some person who kind of looked like me? That was a dumb move. You can’t keep doing shit like that. Not when I’m not around to save you.”
“But Juno, love, isn’t that what you do?” Peter leans in, his forehead pressing against Juno’s. It’s hard to look at him from this angle, but that’s probably for the best. He isn’t sure he can look Juno in the eye right now. “When someone needs you, you swing in on a beam of starlight to rescue them. What is it going to take for you to come back to save me?”

Juno’s hand is rough and callused against Peter’s cheek, but it feels so warm. “I can’t save you from being lonely.”

“But you could,” Peter pleads. “I know you could. We could do anything together, Juno, if you just—”

His thoughts outrun his mouth, and he does the only thing he can think of: he closes those last painful inches between them with a desperate, frantic kiss. He’s begging, pleading, hoping that this kiss might be enough to convince Juno to stay.

Even in his dreams, he knows better.
Chapter Notes

A prompter who asked to remain anonymous asked,

“you’ve written peter getting off thinking about juno, could you do the other way around? maybe post FRP?”

Naturally, this one's explicit

Goddammit, this isn’t working.

Juno’s been yanking at himself for longer than he’d like to admit, trying to scratch the itch that’s lingering deep under his skin. He wants to get off. He should get off. It might even help him feel marginally better, if those articles he saw aren’t completely full of shit.

But he can’t.

He just can’t.

He doesn’t feel sexy or satisfied– he just feels stupid. What the hell made him think he could do this again? What the hell made him think he deserves to?

His mind keeps wandering to the last time he was stretched across a bed like this, hard and bare– and then he remembers who he was with– and then he remembers what he did.

He’s an idiot. He’s an asshat. He’s the queen of all fuckups.

But he’s not going to get an ounce of sleep as long as this itch keeps burning away under his skin, and he’s got places to be in the morning.

So he clears his mind, and he wraps a hand around himself, and he squeezes his eyes shut–

And he sees Peter Nureyev all over again, goddammit.

No. Fucking no. Not this time.

It’s not Peter Nureyev. It’s a different man. Replace the dusty jumpsuit with a smart black uniform, replace the sleek wire-framed glasses with prescription shades.

His hair is shorter than it was that night, slicked back with luxurious pomade except for a single twist that hangs over his forehead, throwing off the otherwise perfect symmetry of his features.

That searing, piercing sincerity is gone, too, replaced by a laugh as rich and smooth as aged cognac. “So that’s how it is, is it?” A man who laughs like that can’t be hurt. You’d have to get on his level just to try, and Rex Glass is on a level that Juno won’t ever reach.

“You know…” Rex lowers his drink, peering at Juno over the rim of his glass. “You’re very handsome when you’re like this.”
It’s a joke. It has to be a joke. So Juno beats him to the punchline: “Getting drunker by the second?”

But Rex just grins. His version of the joke is so much better: “Morally outraged.”

Juno doesn’t watch him set down his glass or slide closer. He focuses on the stones cooling his whiskey and pretends not to feel the slender hand sliding across his neck. Those long, deft fingers are cold from holding the glass, or maybe they never warmed up properly from the time they spent outside, or maybe Juno’s just burning up, but the chill of Rex’s skin is as startling as it is soothing.

“Look at him,” Rex murmurs. “Standing up against the big, mean world.”

He’s said that before. He called it admirable, being able to stand up to the world and laugh in its face. But Juno doesn’t feel much like laughing now, and anyone dumb enough to admire him deserves what they get.

Rex is even closer, his breath puffing warm against Juno’s cheek. “It’s so… futile.”

He’s not wrong.

“And foolish.”

Juno sighs.

“And…” Rex is so close Juno can feel lips brush his earlobe. “Sexy.”

There’s no excuse for the way he says it, husky and breathless, like there’s nothing he wants more right now than to pin Juno to the counter. His lips part, and those sharp teeth find flesh.

This is the moment.

In another place, in another time, Juno pulled himself out of Nureyev’s grasp and gave him one last chance to do the right thing. But who even knows what’s right or wrong anymore? Sure as hell not Juno.

Besides, this isn’t Peter Nureyev, and he isn’t hiding anything but a thick dossier marked CONFIDENTIAL, same as every other Dark Matters agent in the universe. This is Rex Glass, a man with a job to do and enough sense not to trust his one weakness to a washed-up detective— but not enough sense to stop him from working with Dark Matters in the first place, or believing in curses, or spending his last night on Mars in this washed-up detective’s apartment.

So Juno changes the scene. He stops worrying about crime and justice and thieves and private eyes, and he lets his mind linger to this moment: a gorgeous man, a forlorn lady, and a point of contact between them. He doesn’t deliver any sappy lines about how he doesn’t have to do this. He doesn’t try to persuade him of anything at all.

Instead of pulling away, he leans in. He just says one word, soft and raw and hungry. “Rex.”

The Rex Glass of fantasy doesn’t need him to ask again. His lips skate along the edge of Juno’s jaw and down his throat, disturbing the stubble there with the lightest sensation. He finds a nick on Juno’s skin— because there’s always at least one, and more than a little razor burn, because that’s just the kind of mess he is, and nobody in their right mind would want a piece of him.

But since when has Rex Glass ever been in his right mind?

He grins at the imperfections, flicks his tongue over the old cuts like he can catch the ghost of spilt
blood, nips at the rawness of razor burn just to bring more red to the surface of Juno’s skin.

Juno’s breath catches with every dip of tongue and flash of teeth. He’s being studied like an artifact, tested and dissected like a goddamn mystery, picked apart and proven like the fucking curse that he is, and Rex Glass—Agent Rex Fucking Glass—looks at the godawful mess before him and his eyes light up behind the dark glasses. “Incredible.”

Juno’s knees part, open and inviting, and Rex slots himself between them. His hand is already on Juno’s thigh, pulling him closer as he lifts him onto the counter. His other hand twines with Juno’s, pressing it to the cabinet behind Juno’s head.

It’s a trap—he’s caught between Rex’s iron grip and the unyielding fixtures of his own goddamn kitchen—but then, Juno’s never fallen for a trap he didn’t deserve. When the handcuff clicks around his wrist, he isn’t even surprised as much as he is relieved.

“I know, I know,” Rex says, and he’d sound coy if you didn’t see his fox’s grin. “Not usually until the second date, but our time together is short. I’d rather indulge in a bit of fun. What do you say, love?”

“Never been one for delayed gratification,” Juno mutters.

“That’s exactly what I wanted to hear.”

“Fuck,” Juno whispers, somewhere back in reality. There’s sweat running down his back as it arches off his mattress. One hand is pressed against the pillow; the other is pumping hard, almost painfully so—a punishing, brutal pace.

He can feel Rex on top of him, all sharp teeth and roving hands. He has the precision and attention to detail of a world-class investigator, honed to the utter ruthlessness of Dark Matters. Those long fingers will work him open at the perfect pace, but they’ll leave rings of bruises on his wrists and throat that will be tender for days.

Juno doesn’t have to imagine the feeling of having Rex inside him. The dildo in Juno’s hand doesn’t even come close, but it’s the best he’s got right now, and that’ll do the job. That’s what his imagination is for, isn’t it? So he can picture those bright eyes wild with hunger, no longer hidden as the dark glasses slide down his sweat-slick face. So he can get drunk off the scent of sex and cologne. So he can hear Rex’s voice grow rough and husky as he loses all composure.

“Juno,” he growls in time with each thrust. “Juno, Juno, Juno—”

Juno feels so full, but it’s almost enough—almost, but not quite.

“Come into me,” Juno begs, clawing at him with his unbound hand. “Rex, please, I need you to come. I need to feel you. I need—”

Rex pulls Juno closer so abruptly that Juno almost slides off the counter, so sharp that the handcuff slices into his wrist, but Juno’s caught in his arms, in his guttural cry, in the shuddering of the cock between his thighs. When he comes, he comes hard enough that it almost hurts.

And then it’s over. There’s no handcuffs, no fresh bruises, no ridiculous mess across his kitchen counter.

And no Rex Glass.
wifecrime asked:

May I request jupiter with Peter finding a wrapped up sandwich in his pocket that juno made for him bc he had to go somewhere

Rated G

It wouldn’t be the first time that Peter’s reached into his pocket and found something unexpected. Over the years, he’s developed a habit of palming whatever isn’t nailed down and tucking it into his jacket without thinking about it.

He thinks he would have remembered the sandwich, though, wrapped in plastic and tucked into one of the larger, harder-to-reach pockets in his jacket. The one usually hiding his supply of smoke bombs.

That’s what he’s reaching for in this moment: a smoke bomb, to distract the security guard who broke the pattern and ruined all of Peter’s careful planning. Instead his hand wraps around a shape that’s vaguely square and slightly squishy.

“A sandwich?” the guard asks. “Okay, you’re right. I wasn’t expecting that.”

It’s a reply to something, but at the moment Peter can’t remember what.

The edges of the sandwich reveal curry chicken. Funny. He thought they didn’t have any of this. No, he knows they didn’t; he remembers looking in the refrigerator, remembers mentioning to Juno that he was craving it. Just an offhand comment, and yet…

And yet, here it is. The lady who can wear the same clothes for a week straight because he can’t make himself do laundry found the energy to go to the grocery store, get Peter’s favorite lunch meat–and his favorite bread, too, from the looks of it– make him a sandwich, cut it into triangles, wrap it tightly so it won’t get messy, and then hide it in his jacket in case he gets hungry.

It took effort and energy and intention– and all of it for him. All of it without a word.

“Hey, buddy,” the guard says. “You okay?”

Peter just turns the sandwich over in his hands. The heist suddenly seems so absurdly unimportant. “Have you ever been in love?”
Arrivals at Juno's Apartment

Chapter Summary

Written before Long Way Home.

Juno lets Buddy and Vespa use his unoccupied apartment

PG

“You’re sure you’ll be safe here?”

“As safe as anywhere on Mars,” Buddy said, unbuckling her helmet and offering it back to her friend. “Thank you, darling.”

“Of course,” he said, replacing the helmet in its designated bag, and then Vespa’s helmet after it. “I’ll need to return to Juno to see to his aftercare. If you need me—”

“I’ll be sure to call,” she said, clasping his hand with a warm smile.

He nodded. “Be safe. Both of you.”

And then he revved up his hovercycle and rode away, back out toward the desert and the distant beacon of the Cerberus Province.

Beside her, Vespa was silent, her eyes flitting over every detail: the people milling in and out of the apartment complex, the traffic cameras above the intersections, the cars overhead that slowed down just enough to not be worth slapping with a speeding ticket.

Buddy stepped closer, in part to announce her presence and in part to better wrap an arm around Vespa’s shoulders. “Do you see anything out there?”

“All sorts of things,” Vespa muttered. “Some of them are even real.” Her electric green hair bobbed as she nodded to the top of a nearby building. “See how those blinds are all bent out of shape? Somebody’s been watching this building recently. That traffic cam has been hacked, too, you can see where somebody’s climbed it to get in there. And some bad deals have gone down in that alley…”

“It’s hardly ideal accommodations, is it?” Buddy asked. “But we won’t be staying here long. I’m sure Juno will want his apartment back eventually. As soon as we get back on our feet, we’ll find someplace nicer. More secure.”

Vespa’s gaze stopped flitting around the thousand dangers of Hyperion City and turned back to Buddy, her eyes burning into hers with a piercing intensity. "I'm not gonna let anything happen to you, Buddy. You know that, right? Not in the next place we find, not here, not anywhere. Not ever again."

"Why do you think I was so quick to take Juno up on his offer?" Buddy asked, and gave Vespa’s hand a squeeze. “So. Let’s see our new accommodations, shall we?”
That might have been a mistake. If the neighborhood was a mess, that was nothing compared to the inside of Juno Steel’s apartment. There were three designated piles for laundry—one on a corner, one beside the bed, and one that might possibly have been for clean clothes, loaded on top of what was probably a chair. An old shirt lay bundled in the bathroom sink, hand-stitched in more than a few places and left to soak out a bloodstain on a bed of soap scum. What little fresh food and takeout had existed in the refrigerator had gone bad long ago, though there were still a few nonperishables in stock that could be worked with—after, of course, the mountain of dishes in the sink was taken care of.

At least it hadn’t come as a surprise. Even if her friend hadn’t informed her as to the state of Juno’s apartment in intense detail, Juno had been upfront about it. Still, it was a place to stay free of charge, it was safe within the protection of a dome, and it was far away from Razbach and his company, and that was all she could ask for at the moment.

“Well,” she said, taking in her surroundings. “It’s not the worst I’ve dealt with so far. What do you say, Vespa? Help me with the dishes, and we’ll see what we can cobble together?”

After the first moment of distaste, she was grateful for the sink of dirty dishes. There was something soothing about the sound of running water, the suds on the plates, the squeak and click as Vespa dried and found places to arrange the clean dishes. It gave them something to focus on besides the fifteen-year-long silence that still lingered between them, but still provided the opportunity to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, and just focus on being in the same room again.

Suddenly, Vespa twisted to face the door, glaring like if she stared hard enough she could look right through it to the other side.

“Vespa, darling?” Buddy asked carefully. “Did you hear something?”

Vespa’s hand tightened on the last thing she’d been drying—a pitted butter knife. It was dull, even for a safety knife, but that wouldn’t make it any less lethal in her hands. “Someone’s coming.”

“Are you sure they’re coming here?” Buddy said carefully. “A lot of people live in this building. They could be going to one of the other apartments.”

Or it could be nothing at all—just another of the hallucinations that Vespa had to deal with these days. Buddy couldn’t stop those from happening, but she could at least help Vespa tell the visions apart from reality.

Vespa shook her head. “No. She’s coming here.”

The words were barely out of her mouth when a fist pounded against the door. “Hello? Hellooooooo? Anyone in there?”

Vespa flattened herself against the wall just beside the door. The instant it opened, she could put the knife through the stranger’s throat before she knew what was coming.

“Vespa, wait,” Buddy whispered. “Let me talking to them first.”

A frantic gleam entered Vespa’s eyes. ”I’m not losing you again, Buddy.”

"I know, darling.” Buddy smoothed Vespa’s hair and brushed her lips with a swift kiss. “I know. And if things go sour, I know you’ll be right here to save me. But let’s see if we can keep it from coming to that, first.”

Vespa gave a small, breathless nod, then stepped back behind Buddy, her back flat against the
hallway door.

Before Buddy can reach for the door, it slides open, and on the other side is a woman—just one, wearing a big puffy skirt and crop top combination that’s far more flattering on her round little frame than it would be fashionable, and a red-faced glare so intense that she can’t actually see what’s in front of her.

"Mistah Steel!" she shrieks into the apartment. "Darn it, Mistah Steel, we talked about this! What were you even thinking, leaving like that? You said you’d only be gone a few hours, a couple'a days, tops, and it’s been a week, Mistah Steel, a week! I was worried sick, do you hear me? And after you promised you weren’t gonna just up and leave again, too! You coulda called or somethin, instead of just goin’ straight back here while I— I—"

Buddy could pinpoint the precise moment when the young woman actually took in what she was seeing. It was all very flattering, actually. First came the moment of pure confusion, followed by a little sagging motion as the woman’s knees went weak and her gaze went dull and sappy.

"You’re so pretty…” she started, and then with all the abruptness of an electric shock, she regained her composure.

“No. No. It doesn’t matter how pretty you are, this is private property. Who do you think you are, breakin’ into Mistah Steel’s place like this? I can call the cops– okay, I can’t call the cops, because they hate the boss and they’d probably take more stuff than you will. But I can call that nice Mistah Khan and that cute friend of his and they—"

"There’s no need for that, Rita,” Buddy said, flashing her most disarming smile. “It is Rita, isn’t it?”

“The one and only,” she said automatically, but immediately her eyes narrowed. “Who’s askin’?”

“A friend of Juno’s,” Buddy said. “He’s the one who gave us the key to this place. He said you might come asking for him. Now, as much as I’d like to talk this out, I’d rather not do it in the hallway. Come inside?”

Maybe this Rita was braver than she looked, or maybe she was just careless, but she marched through the door with less than a glance at Vespa— or at the knife in Vespa’s hand.

“Where is he?” she demanded before the door was closed behind her. “I wanna know what happened to him.”

“He ran into a bit of trouble out in the desert,” Buddy said. “He’s safe, but he’s going to need some time to work through a few things.”

“And he couldn’t just tell me that in person?” Rita demanded.

“Not if he didn’t want people to track him back through your comms,” Vespa said, her glare sharp on Rita— but approving.

“There are people looking for him right now,” Buddy said. “People who probably mean him a lot of harm. And until he’s ready to deal with them, he needs to stay in hiding. But that’s why he offered to let us stay in his apartment: so we could get a message back to a few of the people he can still trust in Hyperion City— but especially to you.”

“Of course he wanted you to send it to me,” Rita said. “I’m his best friend after all.” But that moment of beaming pride didn’t last long. Again she narrowed her eyes. “But how do I know this all ain’t a big lie?”
“He told us that when all this is over, he’d sit down and watch a whole movie marathon with you. Maybe even give those Andromeda movies another shot. That mean anything to you, sweetheart?”

It must have, because tears were starting to form in Rita’s eyes and her lip was starting to tremble. "Really? He said that?"

“Yup.”

“So he really is okay? He’s really coming back?”

“Tell you what, sweetheart,” Buddy said with a warm smile. “Sit down and have a drink with us. We’ll tell you what we can about Juno, and maybe you can help us get situated around town. How’s that sound?”

“Y-yeah,” Rita said, sliding into a couch. “I’d like that.”
On shaving

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked: but honestly at this point in the story juno is sporting a full grown unmaintained beard right?

PG

Juno stared at his reflection in the cramped bathroom of Hanataba’s clinic.

The last mirror he’d looked into had been the one behind the bar in Buddy’s lighthouse, but that had been too badly aged and warped to get a decent view. This place, though—this place was lined with enough lead and concrete to keep out the worst of the radiation.

He thought it would take some time to get used to looking at himself through only one eye again, but it was surprisingly… not that bad. The whirling colors of the prosthetic had always felt wrong, too bright and flashy to fit his face. It had always felt too much like wearing a mask, and not even his own mask. Something borrowed. Something stolen.

And sure, maybe it was because he’d had six months to get used to the eye patch, and maybe it was because the THEIA really was just that annoying.

But this… this felt right. More right than he’d felt in a long time.

The eye situation did, anyway. The rest of his face was a mess.

Looking at himself now, it was no wonder Buddy had picked him to play a sad drunk. He had a week’s worth of patchy beard, most of it dusted with sand, some of it tacky with a substance he’d rather not think too hard about. And that wasn’t even getting started on the obvious lack of sleep or the peeling sunburns or the still-healing wound on his hand. Or, you know, the smell.

So on impulse he peeled off his clothes and stepped into the recycled-water shower. The water was cold, and the water pressure wasn’t great, but there were little toiletries waiting for him by the tap, and right now that was all he needed. He stood under the water for as long as his legs could hold him, and when they gave out he sat in the stall and just let the water wash away the dust and blood and grime— and the guilt, and the grief, and the shame. And maybe he’d never get rid of those entirely, but he didn’t have to wallow in them anymore.

The big guy wasn’t much of a conversationalist, but Juno was getting used to that by now. Problem was, with all that silence there wasn’t much for Juno to do except think. And that would have been fine—maybe even necessary—but his mind kept coming back to such trivial little things.

Like the beard. The beard bothered Juno.

It wasn’t that he never wore a beard, it’s just that when he did it was usually when something had just gone really wrong with his life: The weeks after Ben died. Right after he got thrown out of the HCPD. The months after he lost his eye.
And sure, he could think of reasons for that. He could still hear his mother sneering that he looked like a slob, for one. The HCPD had regulations about facial hair, and Juno had never had the face for a mustache, so he’d gone barefaced altogether. Afterward, letting it grow out felt too much like letting himself go, like giving up, and he was too stubborn to admit that was exactly what he was doing.

And he didn’t feel like that right now.

“Hey, big guy,” he said— the first words he’d spoken aloud in hours. “Any chance you got a razor in that jacket of yours? Or… I dunno, scissors? A hedge trimmer might work in a pinch.”

“A hedge trimmer would not fit in my pockets,” Jacket said, because of course he did. “But I do carry a razor with me. Are you feeling well enough to use it safely?”

Juno wanted to say something flippant and sarcastic, but he actually found enough sense not to. It was a serious question. “Yeah. I think I can handle it.”

It was one of those old-fashioned safety razors that could be screwed together and disassembled again when you were done with it. It cut through the jungle that had become Juno’s jawline like a machete, and after every pass he had to unscrew half of it just to get the thick hair out of the nooks and crannies.

After the first full pass, though, he actually looked more like himself: still scruffy, but scruffy on a good day. After the second pass, his face was clean and as smooth as it was gonna get with all those radiation burns still healing all over his skin. But even with the radiation sickness still curdling his stomach, he felt good.

Better than he had in a long time.

It wasn’t like he made any kind of conscious decision to let his beard grow out. It just… happened.

Things were going well. Nureyev was back, the two of them were… a thing?… and Juno was actually getting excited about what was ahead of him.

And then there was that incident with the HCPD, and Nureyev had to make a break for it before he could get caught.

That was just how things happened sometimes. And Juno told himself over and over again that it wasn’t his fault, that it wasn’t Peter coming to his senses and making a break for it while he still could, that it wasn’t the inevitable conclusion of every good thing that Juno would ever get his hands on.

He kept telling himself that, but goddamn it was hard to believe it. And somewhere along the line, he got so busy ignoring his own good sense to bother with little things like taking care of himself, or basic grooming.

Thus the beard.

He kept telling himself he’d shave it all off any day now. Any day. As soon as he got around to it. He was just too busy at the moment: there were cases to solve, and taxes to do, and games of solitaire to play. He’d get around to it, though. Any day now.
“Is this a new look for you?” Nureyev purred (that was the right word—there was something absolutely catlike about the way he slid against Juno’s jaw). “I don’t think I’ve seen you with a beard before.”

“I do it every now and then.” If Juno could stay confident, then maybe he could pass this off as a look, instead of physical evidence that he’d neglected basic hygiene in the weeks that Nureyev was gone. He braced himself for the inevitable scolding about letting himself go—

“I like it,” Nureyev said, nuzzling against Juno’s cheek as he moved in to whisper into his ear. “It’s very rugged.”

Months later, Juno leaned over the bathroom sink, twirling his razor between his fingertips.

Maybe it was a good thing Peter had been offworld for the past few weeks—Juno had been experimenting with letting his facial hair grow out, and he’d only just gotten past that awkward patchy stage that looked so awful.

This, though? This wasn’t altogether terrible. A bit of beard oil and a decent trim, and it would actually look pretty good.
The realization popped into my head at five in the morning: Peter Nureyev is a liar.

“I’m thinking of grabbing some Jovian on the way back to the office,” Juno says a little too casually. “Have you eaten?”

“Not yet,” Peter replies. “In fact, I was just thinking of getting lunch. Shall I join you?”

“Sure thing. Meet you there.”

And Juno watches Peter put down the comms and call over the server so he can pay for his meal.

It’s only by chance that Juno spotted him in the restaurant, but he’s been watching him ever since. Nobody else has joined him at the table, he hasn’t passed any notes to the server or fellow diners. Maybe something was secreted to him when he was given his food? Or a refill? Or maybe he’s been casing the joint, but he doesn’t seem to be paying enough attention to his surroundings for that.

It looks like just a regular meal with no ulterior motives. But then why would he lie about it?

He doesn’t want to ask about it— he remembers the look of betrayal on Peter’s face in that hotel room, so long ago, when he realized Juno had gone through his pockets to find coded messages that weren’t.

This time it was just an accident that he caught Peter in a lie, but it isn’t the first time. They’re always little things— things that Juno might not have noticed if he wasn’t a Private Eye— things that sound too easily like exactly what Juno wants to hear. And it keeps happening.

It’s not that he doesn’t trust Peter. He does.

But nobody lies without a reason.

“Juno, are you investigating me?” Peter asks it casually, like he couldn’t care one way or another, but Juno sees the strategy in it. The apartment door is locked; the window to the fire escape isn’t. If Peter needs to make a break for it, he can be out of the apartment in seconds and Juno will have to scramble to catch up. And that’s smart— Peter wouldn’t be a master criminal if he didn’t have an escape plan when he knows he’s being hounded— but it also hurts to know that Peter needs that to feel safe right now.

There’s part of him that wants to be angry and defensive, or else accuse Peter of all the things he knows.

He swallows that part down.

“That’s not…” He starts, and then softens his tone. Not defensive. “That’s not what I was going for.
But that’s what it’s turned into, hasn’t it? I’m sorry about that.” He pries out the apology before stubbornness has a chance to hide it away. “I’m just—” Dammit, no, this isn’t the time to go justifying himself. “I’ll try to be better about giving you some space.”

“You’re just what, Juno?” Peter asks— not like an accusation, not like he’s trying to trap him, but like he genuinely wants to know. And dammit, isn’t this whole thing about unnecessary lies?

“When I’m on a case, the biggest leads always come from the point where people started lying to me. And I get that it doesn’t matter, because this isn’t a case and you’re not a suspect. I trust you. I do. It’s just a— a bad habit. And it’s one I’m going to work on.”

Peter frowns. “I’ve been lying to you?”

Is he really going to deny it?

Once again Juno feels that surging need to dig his heels in and accuse Peter of every little useless fib, but he forces himself to take a breath instead.

“Listen, Peter. You have your own life. I get that. You don’t have to tell me where you’re going or what you’re doing. I trust you. I want to trust you.” Goddammit, what was in those stupid pamphlets Rita gave him? That way he was supposed to phrase things. “But when you lie to me, it sets off all these alarms in my head, and…” And after Ramses, that kind of alarm gets a lot harder to ignore. He swallows, his voice small. “I panic.”

And maybe those stupid pamphlets are actually good for something after all, because before he opens his eyes he feels Peter’s arms around his neck and the weight of Peter’s forehead against his. It’s close. Intimate. There’s no exit strategy here.

And he explains.

People don’t lie without a reason.

But Peter does have a reason: a lifetime of running from the law and hiding every detail, practicing his lies until they come easier than the truth. It isn’t a compulsion so much as a reflex— in every conversation, he picks out exactly what the other person wants to hear and then he gives it to them, because that’s how they let their guard down, that’s how they learn to like him enough to let him in close enough to get what he wants from them.

“It’s an invaluable tool when I’m enacting a heist,” Peter explains, his slender fingers twining with Juno’s. “But I suppose even the most artful tools become clumsy and destructive when removed from their context.”

Because this isn’t a heist, and it isn’t a case. It’s their life together.

“It seems you aren’t the only one with bad habits. I’ll work on it.” And he leans forward to kiss Juno, gently. “Thank you, love.”

Juno doesn’t recognize the tension that’s been aching in his chest until it dissolves. Somewhere along the way he expected shouts and accusations, flipped furniture and thrown tableware, hours spent stewing and drinking until the inevitable crawling back with a grovelling apology. Not this.

For the first time in weeks, he can breathe easily.
Chapter Notes

whatshecalled asked:

Hey so I am v much Not a writer but I got this plot bunny and I shall donate it to u in case it tickles ur fancies, so if ur in the mood for some Sad Nureyev: Ramses O'Flaherty being informed (by Strong?) of Juno's assumed post Martian desert death while at a post election fancy party, then being distracted by a clatter nearby, as a tall, extremely beautiful, and only slightly suspicious waiter drops his tray in shock... Nureyev's subsequent actions/reactions up to you :p

Rated PG

Mayor Ramses O'Flaherty hasn’t gotten this far by getting caught off guard.

He knows the name of the woman who marches past security with all the inevitable gravity and force of a star going supernova. He knows her name, her living situation, and the promise that Steel made her on his behalf. And so he knows that trying to stop her would accomplish nothing except to draw out the inevitable.

“Tell security to let her through,” he says to his personal assistant. “And wire a hundred and fifty thousand credits into her account. She’s an employee, and I intend to see her paid.”

He signals for his water to be refilled and continues his dinner. It’s one of the few indulgences he allows himself, but even this would seem paltry compared to his predecessors—fish and steamed vegetables, dark bread and butter. He will do many things, but he won’t feast on taxpayer credits.

His personal assistant sends feeds from the security cameras to track the woman’s progress. The mayoral mansion is enormous, but she makes good time; he only manages to catch a few glimpses of her in any detail before she moves out of focus.

Her hand is expertly bandaged, but the dressing is old and dirty, all but entirely bled through. She looks like she hasn’t bathed in a week, though there’s a sheen of gloss uneven on her lips. She didn’t come here directly, it seems—no, first she made a stop elsewhere, to reassure someone who kissed her thoroughly when they saw her. Her fiancee, if Ramses had to guess.

A well-meaning member of the staff steps into her path.

“Ma’am, do you have an appointment? I’m afraid the mayor is very busy at the moment, but if you could just—”

“I don’t give a shit how busy he is,” she snarls. “There are lives on his hands, and he’s not walking away from this. Pilot Pereyra is dead because of him. _Juno Steel is dead_—”

She’s still shouting, but Ramses’ attention is diverted by the crack of broken glass.

One of the waiters stands frozen, his eyes wide, his mouth hanging half open. For a moment, he doesn’t even seem to notice the shattered pitcher at his feet or the cold water soaking into his shoes.
Then the moment passes, and he scrambles to clean it up.

“My apologies,” he says quickly. “My grip must have slipped. I’ll just fetch a dustpan—”

He isn’t even at the door before Ramses signals his personal assistant. “Zaynab, make sure that young man is alright.” He gives Zaynab a meaningful glance, and she understands it intrinsically: *don’t let him leave.*

The waiter will be dealt with later. For now, he must see to Alessandra Strong.

The moment Strong is sent on her way, Ramses has Zaynab’s report in his hands. Once again, he isn’t surprised: on closer examination, the waiter who dropped the pitcher isn’t the same one who was vetted by the security team. He’s tried to sneak away twice since he was detained, but security has been watching him like a Mercurian falcon. He hasn’t had a chance to properly escape by the time Ramses returns to his office.

The stranger looks up when Ramses arrives— frightened and chagrined, not like a thief who’s been caught in the act, but like a busboy about to be disciplined for a job poorly done. “Mayor O’Flaherty, sir. You wanted to see me, sir?”

He’s even trembling. That’s a nice touch.

“I did.” Ramses strides across the office and sits in his chair. “It was Mister Ivy, wasn’t it? Richard?”

“Yes, sir.” The words tumble out of his mouth. “I’m so sorry about the pitcher, sir. I promise I didn’t mean to break it, sir. I’ll take it out of my pay, I swear, just please, I need this job—”

Ramses raises a hand in reassurance. “I’m not angry with you, Richard. I only wanted to make sure you were alright. You looked shaken.”

“I appreciate your worrying about me, but it’s nothing, really,” the man says too quickly. That’s his strategy of choice, it seems– talk fast enough to sweep away his mark with the flow of the conversation. The only way to control the course is to stop him from talking. “Loud noises have always had that effect on me, and—”

“I’m sure they do,” Ramses says. “But that isn’t the reason why you dropped it, is it?”

“My mother always did say I had butterfingers.”

Ramses continues over him. “You know Juno Steel, don’t you?”

For a fraction of a second, Richard Ivy looks like he’s stepped barefoot on broken glass, and then his face rights itself into a look of sincere confusion. “Who?”

Ramses can’t help the smile that quirks his lips. “You’re a good actor, I’ll give you that. Not half bad looking, either. You’re wasted in a waiter’s uniform; have you ever considered the silver screen?”

The change of direction is abrupt, but it’s not enough to make him break character. Richard Ivy ducks his head, a flustered blush coloring his cheeks, every inch the ingenue who was just handed his big break on a silver platter. “Oh, I’m not— I couldn’t—”

Ramses jumps tracks again. “So tell me, how do you know Juno Steel?”

“I— I—” Ivy lowers his eyes and he bows his head in a pantomime of surrender. “I don’t know him. Not well. Last year there was a murder where I worked; I helped him solve the case.” He lets the
words linger in the air, carrying the suggestion of other ways he might have helped the detective. “Last I heard, he was working for you. And I thought, if I got a job here, maybe I could see him again.”

Ramses rises from his desk, walking toward the younger man with all the gravity of grief and age. Richard Ivy looks up at him from under a heavy brow. “Is he… really gone?”

Ramses wasn’t exaggerating about the man’s skill as an actor. The cast of his eyes, the tremor in his voice, the slump of his shoulders— every detail is perfect. Ramses knows it’s a lie, but it’s so expertly spun that he wants to believe it. He’s good.

It makes it that much easier for Ramses to slip into his own part. He lays a comforting hand on the other man’s shoulder. “Juno’s a stubborn one. If there’s a way to survive, he’ll find it, just for spite.”

“But that woman said he— she said—” His voice catches perfectly.

“Miss Strong has every reason to be upset with me,” Ramses sighs. “The last time she saw Juno, he was alone in the desert. There aren’t many people who could come out of that alive. But Juno…” He lets the sentence hang in the air, inviting the other man to make the next move.

And he does, all bright and sparkling with teary-eyed hope. “So there’s still a chance? You’re going to go looking for him?”

That’s not what he wants; he’s fishing for more information. Ramses takes a chance and offers him another nibble. “As much as I want to, I’m afraid it isn’t that simple. Based on where he was last seen alive, his best chance is to head to the Cerberus Province. If he’s alive, that’s where I’ll find him. But you have to understand the position that puts me in. If I send a car to look for him, it’ll be stripped down to the screws and sold for scrap before it’s in sight of that lighthouse. If they find out the mayor of Hyperion City wants Juno back, he’s just as likely to be taken hostage and ransomed back, possibly in pieces. As much as I want to rescue him, I would only be putting him in more danger. My hands are tied.”

There’s a calculating gleam in the man’s eye. He’s already got what he needs, and that’s got him confident. He’s willing to push his luck. “What if… what if it wasn’t you?”

“Exactly what are you saying?” Ramses asks, because these things only work if the mark thinks it’s his idea.

“I could go,” he says, his voice growing more certain with every syllable. “There would be no point of ransoming him off to me. I’m nobody.”

That much, at least, is true. Zaynab’s preliminary background check has found half a dozen identities tied to this man, all of them less than a decade old. He would have an easier time than most navigating the back alleys of the Cerberus Province.

“Do you understand what you’re saying?” Ramses asks unnecessarily. “That would be incredibly dangerous.”

“I could do it.” His voice is cracked with stifled fear, but it’s heavy with determination. “For Juno, I could do it.”

This Richard Ivy, or Perseus Shah, or Duke Rose, or whoever he is— he’s probably fairly proud of himself right now, thinking that he’s broken in here and convinced Ramses to give him all the information he needs to get what he wants. And while he goes off playing hero for his leading lady,
Ramses will get his bodyguard back— all without any paper trail, any expenses, any official orders, anything whatsoever to tie him to the staining corruption of the Cerberus province.

It’s like that ancient Earth proverb: diplomacy is the art of letting everyone have your way.
One con to another (part 2)

Chapter Notes

pocketpluto asked:

Can you write more of the fic where Peter was undercover working for Ramses? I'm interested to see how it plays out! I hope you have a great day!

Still PG

Peter makes sure to engage the biometric lock and security protocols on the car before he leaves it. Ordinarily he wouldn’t put much stake in the car– after all, he can always steal another– but he isn’t inclined to add to the price on his head over something as petty as grand theft auto. Besides, this isn’t the time to be making enemies.

He pulls a lead-lined cloak tight around him, the hood pulled low over his face. For a moment he considers donning a debtor’s mask– after all, their pleading eyes search every face, while all other eyes studiously avoid looking at them– but rejects the idea. It would obscure too much of his vision, and he needs to be able to see as much as possible.

He keeps his eyes on the crowd, scanning for dragging feet and sloping shoulders and hands shoved too deep into pockets. Juno’s likely to hide his face, given how many enemies he’s accumulated, but there’s no hiding his slouch.

Fear wells up within him, as quiet and insidious as the radiation leaking through his clothes. There’s no telling how long Juno spent out in the desert unprotected. There’s no telling what Peter will find. What if he’s wearing a debtor’s tag? What if his mind is gone?

Peter grits his teeth. It doesn’t matter. If Juno’s sold himself, then Peter will buy the debt. If his mind is broken, then Peter will just find a way to work with whatever he’s got left. He doesn’t care what condition Juno’s in. He isn’t leaving without him.

He’s reluctant to visit the Cerberus Board of Fresh Starts– even if Juno was desperate enough to need their services upon arrival, they can’t possibly have processed him already. And so he starts with the bars, searching one after another, looking into the eyes of every lonely soul curling around the solace of a bottle.

Days later, there’s no sign of Juno. There’s only one spot of hope in all of this: one of his more reliable colleagues is in town for a lucrative deal. Unlike him, her name is part of her brand, and she makes herself known by knowing everybody. If anyone can help him track down Juno in this shantytown, it’s her.

Buddy Aurinko pours him a drink. “I’d tell you you should’ve come to me with this sooner, but I wouldn’t have had the time for you then. As always, you have excellent timing.”

“I certainly hope so.” Peter raises his glass to her. “So do you think you can find him?”

“Come now, Nemo, you know me better than that. Of course I can find this dame of yours. The
question is how much trouble he’s gonna put me through.”

“Trouble is how you’ll find him,” Peter says. “He’s got a hero complex, a delicate stomach, and a mouth that’s more likely to start fights than end them.” At the tilt of her head, he dives into Juno’s description. “A hundred and sixty centimeters, stocky build, with a prominent scar over his nose and a missing right eye.”

“You don’t say.” Buddy’s smile remains bright as ever, but something flinty slides into place in her eyes. “He got a name?”

She knows him, and she doesn’t like him asking these questions, but Peter presses on regardless.

“Juno Steel.”

That doesn’t surprise her in the slightest. “Exactly what do you have planned for the little lady?”

“Does it matter?” Peter asks. “I thought you didn’t get involved in other people’s affairs.”

“I thought you didn’t go around sniping talent out from under other people’s noses, but it looks like we’re both wrong.”

Peter frowns. “Did you say talent?”

The kitchen door swings open. “Hey Buddy, I thought you said the place didn’t open until–” The space his sentence would have occupied is filled with the flap of the door and the strains of a dented semi-autonomous music machine in the corner. It’s a stirring, sweet melody, all gentle strings. It should be far too soft a sound for the person who stands in that door, with the morning’s stubble heavy on his cheeks and the rough lines of an eye patch across his face, and yet it suits him perfectly.

Peter’s only faintly aware of Buddy glancing from him to Juno and back, but he can’t focus on her. If he looks away from Juno for half an instant– if he so much as blinks– he might disappear all over again, and Peter can’t take that chance.

Buddy clears her throat. “I take it this isn’t about a job.”

Juno swallows. Peter might do the same, but his mouth is too dry.

Buddy rises to leave. “You do what you need to. Just clean up after yourselves when you’re done. The Province might not have health codes, but I do.”
This is the moment you decide you want him: you step through the door only to find him halfway out a window, trying to slink away unseen like an alley cat in the company of strangers. But you’re familiar with the ways of alley cats; you remember being one, so very long ago. You make yourself friendly and nonthreatening, but not so much that he smells a trap, and slowly you coax him back inside.

Judging by the way he looks you over once he’s climbed down from the windowsill, it won’t be difficult to coax him into other places. A bedroom, perhaps. After all, you’ve just had a remarkable view of an equally remarkable ass.

This is the moment you realize you love him: when his legs fold under his weight and you catch him before he falls, lowering him gently to the floor. Between punches that he refused to return and titanium spikes meant for your face, he’s taken your share of pain and kept it for himself, selfish in his selflessness. If he refuses to protect himself from the big mean world, then you’ll simply have to do it for him.

Still reeling from shock and blood loss, he murmurs into your chest: “Anybody ever tell you you got a nice smell? What’s a guy gotta eat to smell like that?”

It takes half a moment for you to respond. All you can smell is blood– your blood and his and the blood of the cameramen, thick and tacky on your hands– but he’s slumped against your chest, his face pressed against your neck.

“It’s–” It takes you a moment to find the word. “Cologne, detective.” While you fetch the first aid kit, you have to take a few moments to ease the flush from your cheeks and steady your fluttering pulse. You don’t know if you’ve ever been flustered before.

This is the moment when you know you need him: when an old contact calls in a favor for a mutual friend and your heart skips a beat when you hear his name. It’s so convenient it must certainly be a trap, but you feel alive in ways you haven’t for half a year or more– since you last saw him, perhaps– and you know you couldn’t pull off such a high-stakes heist without him.

Not just alone– though that, too, would be impossible– but without him.

Ordinarily, coming up with names is the hardest part, but you had this one picked out months ago, during a long night when you were caught up in the fantasy of the adventures you might have had. Your fingers skate over your keyboard, forging paperwork as if you’re writing him a love letter.

And why not? He’s going to be your husband, after all.
The thing about shapeshifters

Chapter Notes

hanayou343 asked:
So I had a dream last night about Peter and Juno in which Peter was a shapeshifter, but instead of just changing the way he looked, he had to change his species. So he could turn into a dog, or a bird, or basically whatever he wanted, but it was always the same dog or bird or whatever else. The dream went some really weird places, but I'd love to see your take on the idea if you don't mind!

This one's PG

This is bad. This is really, really bad, but Juno can’t afford to panic right now, because animals can sense that kind of thing, and that only makes them run for cover.

The last thing Juno needs right now is for Peter to hide from him, so he presses his lips together and sucks in a breath, making a high squeak that maybe sorta sounds like something a rat would make. The whispered “Here, mousey mousey mousey…” is mostly to ease his own mind.

This never should have happened. They researched this before they went in: the guards employed by the Fairchild family don’t use dogs, and the family itself doesn’t keep any pets. They checked, dammit. The one thing they didn’t check was the Fairchilds’ phone numbers—maybe if they had, Juno would have recognized the same number on the ‘found dog’ posters taped to the street lights, and they would have remembered that even mobsters can have a soft spot when it comes to animals.

But they didn’t, which means Juno didn’t, which means Peter snuck into a house with a dog in it. Which would have been fine if he wasn’t a rat at the time.

Juno slows down. He’s chased this goddamn rat down two blocks, just barely managing to herd him away from street traffic and sewer grates, and the chase has led him to the dumpster outside a kebab shop.

Peter always did always like tzatziki.

At this distance, Juno could probably catch him with a laser, but there’s no telling what even a low-level blast would do to something as small as a rat, and he’s not taking any chances. His eyes focus on one rat in particular: a soft brown with streaks of near-black fur running down his spine.

Juno lowers himself to his hands and knees, approaching the dumpster at a crawl.

“Come on, Peter,” he murmurs. “I’m right here.”

He knows Peter can’t understand him right now. He learned that the hard way in the Martian tomb, the first time he found out Peter could shapeshift. Sure, turning into a lion or a crocodile had seemed like a good idea at the time, but after days of stress and starvation, Peter was as likely to go after Juno as he was to go after Miasma and her assistants. The instincts are always there, Peter had explained. Even after decades of practice, he’s only ever marginally in control of the animals he becomes. When things get intense—like, say, being chased by a snarling dog that’s at least forty times bigger than he
Peter’s conscious mind gets kicked out of the driver’s seat entirely. When that happens, all anyone can do is keep him safe and wait for the panic to wear off on its own.

Juno picks out Peter among the other rats, takes aim, and grabs.

He’s expecting the bite when it comes, sharp and intense on the webbing between his thumb and forefinger, but he holds on. Slowly, carefully, he drags the squirming little thing out from underneath the dumpster, making sure not to squeeze too tightly around its ribs. He’s definitely got the right rat—there’s the brown fur, the black streaks, the notch in the left ear—and Peter’s not happy to be caught. His squeaking sounds more like miniature screams, and his ears are flattened against his skull.

“I know, it sucks.” Juno gathers the rat to his chest and lets himself fall backwards onto his ass, cradling the rat in both hands. “I’m sorry.” Hopefully that rapid pulse is normal for a rat and not some kind of heart attack.

When the rat’s stopped squirming, he holds it against his chest with one hand and reaches the other into his pocket. There’s a handful of pistachios in there, left over from the last time Peter borrowed Juno’s coat. He fishes out one with its shell still intact and offers it to Peter, who takes it in two tiny paws and starts gnawing at the hard shell.

“See?” Juno murmurs. “That’s the good stuff. Way better than anything you’re gonna find in that dump.” His back is stiff against the cold brick of the alley, and his leg is starting to fall asleep. “I know you probably don’t need my help with this stuff. I’m pretty sure if I didn’t catch you, you’d come to on your own in a little bit. I just don’t want you to come back to yourself when you’re swimming in yesterday’s lunch in the sewers, or in the guts of some alley cat. It looks like you already ran into one, once.” He brushes his thumb gently over Peter’s notched ear—then yanks it back when that ear starts to change.

The transformation is fast—one moment there’s a rat nibbling on nutshells in Juno’s hand, and the next moment Peter Nureyev is straddling his lap, his face inches from Juno’s own.

“That one was from another rat, actually,” he says, casually flicking a half-eaten pistachio off to the side. The display might be alluring if they weren’t three feet away from a dumpster full of spoiled yogurt—and if there wasn’t still a twinge of fear fading in Peter’s eyes.

“You get in a fight or something?” Juno asks, because there’s nothing like talking to remind Peter that he’s in control. Peter takes the bait as easily as he took the pistachio earlier, and he starts regaling Juno with a story of inter-rodent conflict dramatic enough to make it to the movies.

And this? This is probably weird. But he’s not sure which part.

Because yeah, storytime while being straddled in a back alley by a man who used to be a rat isn’t something he ever expected to see. But he didn’t expect to date a shapeshifter, either. Or a master thief. Hell, he never expected anyone to fall in love with him the way Peter Nureyev has.

There’s a lot of weird stuff going on here right now.

Juno isn’t complaining.
The New Year

Chapter Summary

Juno mulls over new year's resolutions

Chapter Notes

This one's rated PG

Juno’s trying. He really is.

He lets Rita come over and throw confetti all over his apartment and make obnoxious sounds with party favors. He drinks bubbly with her until she’s tipsy, and then puts it away before he can be tempted to finish the bottle. He sits up and watches a stream with her, and together they count down the end of the old year.

And he’s glad to see it go. He really is. After all the bullshit that’s happened this year– with Dark Matters and Miasma and Nureyev– he wants to just put it behind him.

“New year, new me,” Rita singsongs as she writes down a list of hopes and plans in elaborate calligraphy. He has no idea where she learned to do that– but then, he has no idea where she learned to do much of anything that he didn’t teach her himself. Already her list is longer than Cecil Kanagawa’s rap sheet. “You got any resolutions, boss?”

He doesn’t.

Not because there’s nothing to change– hell, it feels like he’s resolving to do better every three minutes. Every time he thinks he’s got himself pegged, every time he thinks he knows what he did wrong and how to fix it so he never fucks up this way again, and he decides to do everything better and be completely different. He did the whole song and dance a week ago. A month ago. Two months ago. Three.

And tonight, when he should be making all these changes for real this time, it just feels like he’s spinning his wheels in the sand.

As much as he’s trying to feel the spirit of the thing, it just feels empty. It’s not even the new year– Mars doesn’t finish its orbit for another three months– just a new page on a calendar. Just another day, same as the one before.

But he’s not going to tell Rita that, because she doesn’t need to hear it. Let her have a good time.

“Nah,” he says. “I’m still coming up with mine.”

“Oooh, you can help me with mine!” Rita says, bouncing up to show him the list. “See, I’m gonna start workin’ out, but I’ve seen all those machines at the gym and they’re so weird and I just know I’m gonna hurt myself, but you know how to use ‘em, dontcha? Do you think you could show me,
boss? Please?” The last word is drawn out like taffy and just as syrupy sweet, but Juno’s mind is elsewhere.

“You’re hitting the gym?” He tries to make it sound innocent and casual, but internally, his hackles are up. If somebody’s been harassing Rita about her weight, he’ll break their jaw.

If there’s any tension on his face, Rita doesn’t see it. She’s practically bouncing now. “Oh yeah, Mista Steel. I wanna get so strong that the next time I get a date, I can pick ‘em up bridal style and everythin’. I got the idea from your friend Alessandra. It’s gonna be so sexy, Mista Steel, you wouldn’t believe it.”

That’s what does it. All at once, all the anger and tension and gloom hanging over Juno feels a little less heavy, a little easier to bear.

“You know what?” he says. “I could stand to go back to the gym, too.”

“Oh! We can be gym buddies! I can make us matching tank tops, and leg warmers, and those cute little headbands with the sequins, and—”

He lets her go on like that for a while.

Knowing how most new year’s resolutions go, he’ll only have to put up with it for a few weeks before Rita gets distracted and throws all her passion into something else. And if she doesn’t?

That wouldn’t be half bad, either.
Sinking in Tar

Chapter Notes

One of many takes on Juno's depression

PG

It’s one of those days. It hasn’t hit its lowest point yet, but it’s coming.

It comes in quietly at first– Juno’s mind goes fuzzy as he’s filling out paperwork at the PI Registry. The words are there on the page, he can read them just fine, but he still has to go over it three times to remember that the words “name” and “number” at the top of the page are asking for his name and ID, and that he’s been putting them at the top of these pages for fifteen years now. When he’s asked why the crook got away, he has to bite down on his tongue to stop himself from saying ‘because I fucked up, okay?’ He forces himself to eat, but it’s getting harder to finish his meals when he can barely taste what’s in his mouth. He stays up into the pale hours of morning– not because he’s busy, but because he doesn’t want to deal with waking up tomorrow.

And he knows this is only the start of it.

It feels like he’s walking into a tar pit– he’s up to his waist in something thick and sticky that drags him down and makes every move a fight, and with every step he knows he’s getting in deeper. Maybe if he was smarter or planned better or something, he could have avoided this– and honestly, that thought just makes him feel even more like shit. Because that makes it his fault, doesn’t it? Maybe he deserves what he’s getting, because he did this to himself.

And the tar just keeps getting deeper.

The comms in his hand feels too heavy, his fingers too uncoordinated when they hover over the screen. The smart thing to do is to ask for help, but the thought makes him feel sick. The sludge is all over him now– why the hell would he want to get it all over anyone else? Besides, he’s tired. He’s so goddamn tired.

It takes more effort than it should to type the message to Rita, but he gets it through.

I’m taking the day off.

If he felt like lying to himself, he’d call it sleeping. Really it’s more like lying prone on his bed with the lights off and staring at the ceiling. He’s not fighting his way through the sludge anymore– not because he’s magically out of it, but because he’s in that weird place between sinking deeper and floating to the top. In the morning he’ll keep wading, but for right now, he’s going to just lay here and try to rest.

His thoughts wander blankly to the sound of footsteps on the fire escape, the soft creak of the living-room window sliding open in its well-oiled frame. Really, why did he even bother giving Nureyev the key to his apartment if he’s never going to use it

When Nureyev actually announces himself, it’s with a soft knock on the bedroom
door. “Juno?” When he doesn’t answer, the door slips open quietly, its hinges just as well-oiled as the window, and a thin ray of light falls across the bed.

“Hey.”

“Rita told me you weren’t feeling well.”

“I’m fine.”

Nureyev surveys the dim bedroom, but he keeps his observations to himself. “I tried calling ahead, but you weren’t picking up.”

Juno reaches for his comms, but it isn’t there. He must have put it down somewhere. “Sorry about that.”

“I can run to the pharmacy if you want.” It’s hard to read Nureyev’s expression right now; his back is to the open door, and the light streaming through casts his face in shadow. “What do you need, love?”

A few months ago, Juno would have snapped at him to get off his case. He’s been working on that, though. He’s getting better. “Right now, I think I need to just lay here and pretend I don’t exist for a while.”

Nureyev’s answer is a soft, understanding hum. “Mind if I join you?”

Juno doesn’t really know what to do with that. He’s not exactly in the mood right now, if that’s what he’s after.

But sure. Whatever. “If that’s what you want.”

There’s another low hum, and then Nureyev toes out of his shoes and sits in the empty space beside Juno, not quite close enough to touch him. He doesn’t speak, doesn’t reach out; he only pulls out his comms, the screen dimmed to something soft and unobtrusive, and he reads.

Not exactly a thrilling date night or anything, but Juno wasn’t offering and Nureyev didn’t ask. And that’s… okay.

The sludge doesn’t go away, but slowly Juno can feel himself start to float to the top, the weight of it not quite so oppressive and overwhelming. He’s not sure how long he’s lying there before he feels up to brushing his knuckles against Nureyev’s hand, or how much longer than that before he’s able to roll over and lay his head on Nureyev’s lap.

When Nureyev starts absently petting Juno’s curls, it actually feels kind of nice.

When Juno wakes up the next morning, it’s to Nureyev lying beside him, snoring gently, still in yesterday’s clothes. A smile flickers across Juno’s lips at the sight of him– just for a moment before it’s gone, but it was there. A day ago, he’d forgotten what that felt like.

When he slips out of bed to shower, it feels less like he’s drowning and more like he’s wading again. The sludge is still there, but he can feel the beginnings of solid ground under his feet again.

When he steps out of the bathroom, the chemical-floral smell of bodywash and shampoo fades away, replaced with coffee and burnt oil, because somehow frying an egg is more complicated than cracking a safe.
Not that Juno minds; for the first time since the bad spell started, he actually has an appetite.
Rita’s laid down the law: there will be no more dry spells in the Juno Steel Detective Agency. Juno has two weeks to recover, just long enough for the sunburn to finish peeling and the vertigo to fade into mild dizzy spells when he stands up too fast, and then he’s back on the job.

He should probably thank her for that, at least when he’s done being annoyed at her about it.

After everything that’s happened, the current case is a relief. There’s no conspiracy, no murder, no hostage situations, no rigged elections. Just a run-of-the-mill Uptown blue blood whining because their favorite tiara went missing.

“No, not a tiara,” insists Theophania Frost. “It’s a diadem. An antique from my dearest grandmama.”

“Your… diadem.” Goddamn rich people. “Right. Now are you sure it’s actually stolen? Have you checked with your staff? Made sure it’s not out for cleaning or repairs or whatever?” Hell, maybe somebody left it in the refrigerator by mistake. God knows he’s done that with his eye patch once or twice after a long night.

“Detective Steel, I wouldn’t have called you here if I wasn’t absolutely certain it’s been stolen– and I know who did it, too!”

Juno sighs. The tone of their voice tells him he’s going to be in for a long day. “Do you?”

Frost leans in conspiratorially and drops their voice to a whisper, as if they might be overheard. “Have you ever heard of the Bouquet Bandit?”

Oh god, not this again.

“Is this one of those crooks with a theme song trying to get into the Fortezza? Because this is a hell of a bad time to cash in on that deal.”

“I don’t know, Detective, but I’m not the only one who’s been stolen from. Sam Spare, you know, the botanist? Xir diamond shears went missing a month ago. And Telemnachus Wake’s collection of antique horsehair necklaces was taken two months ago, and on the same day, they were sent flowers.”

“Flowers.”
Frost takes Juno’s exasperation for enthusiasm. “That’s right! Every time he takes something, he always leaves behind a dozen roses.”

“Thus the name, I got it.”

Why did Rita have to pick now to start doing her job?

Whoever this Bouquet Bandit is, he’s good. The crime scene is spotless, and there’s no signs of forced entry whatsoever. While Rita goes over Frost’s security system for footage and signs of tampering, Juno looks into the other alleged crimes of the serial burglar, looking for something they had in common.

The best bet is in the delivery personnel– people this rich get a lot of deliveries, and nobody thinks twice about a person in uniform with a box in hand walking right up to the front door. There are a few people on the security feeds that Juno pegs as suspicious, and not just because of the one thing they all seem to have in common: no matter where they are or what they’re doing, Juno can never get a good look at their faces.

He scours the timestamps on the videos, looking for others that might give a better angle or reveal some kind of other identifying mark, but there’s no luck so far.

And honestly? He’s kind of loving it. After all the shit that went down, he’s been in need of a good, clean, straightforward case. It’s been too long since he’s done legitimate investigating that he could feel good about.

The thought barely has the chance to cross his mind before he hears Rita start talking to someone at her desk. A moment later, she’s poking her head inside his office.

“Hey, Boss? You got a delivery.”

She looks about as concerned as he feels. Because in her hand is a bouquet of twelve red roses.

“What the hell?” He starts to his feet. “Rita, did you see who delivered these?”

“Don’t worry, boss, I already asked. It was just a kid. She said some man stopped her on the sidewalk and gave her a whole bunch of money to deliver these to you.”

“Did she see his face?”

“I asked, but she wouldn’t say nothin’. She just gave me the flowers and ran.”

Juno grabs the card from among the roses and turns it over. “You have got to be kidding me.”

Juno’s still got the card in his pocket when he arrives at the meeting point. Rita insisted she come with him when she saw, but this time he was the one who put his foot down– the last time she joined him on a job, she fell in love with a murderer, and this time he’s going to cut off the inevitable tragedy before he has to buy two pints of ice cream and sit through her forty favorite sad movies.

The card itself is infuriatingly unhelpful. The paper is high-class cardstock, but nothing so fancy that you couldn’t get it at any stationary store in town. The text is digitally printed in a fancy but publicly available font. The message is short:

_Detective Juno Steel_
Meet me at the Jacobi Convention Center at 3 PM on July 5.

Don’t be late.

It screams ambush– which is another reason why Rita isn’t coming.

Even if the ambush is apparently going to happen at the local Y2K Faire.

It makes sense in its own ridiculous way: there are hundreds of people coming and going, half of them in costume, and everyone’s going to be carrying a shopping bag or a replica glock or sword or whatever, and there’ll be enough reenactors demonstrating fake duels that nobody’s going to notice if things get heated until it’s too late.

Old Americana-style signposts mark the different sections of the faire, their directions spelled out in big white letters against reflective green rectangles. One catches Juno’s eye: its metal pole is decorated with a dozen roses. It looks like a regular decoration, but he takes it as a sign and follows its lead. It’s not hard to find a second sign post covered in roses a little further, and another, until he’s on the far end of the convention center. By now the trail is easy to follow, laid out in a path of rose petals on the floor. They’re fresh, not quite dried out yet, not nearly as trampled as they should be, given how many people are here. The bandit can’t have been here more than half an hour ago, tops.

The trail leads to an exotic animal exhibit based on old-fashioned Earth petting zoos. Which… can’t be right. Juno checks all the way around the enclosure, just to make sure he got it right, but no. That’s where it ends.

What the hell is he supposed to do with this?

He stares, perplexed, at children reaching through the bars to offer handfuls of pellets and sliced vegetables to cows and ponies and old Earth species of rabbits– the kind that are fluffy and bright-eyed and small enough to hold in your arms.

The kind I’m used to eat carrots and wrinkle their little nosies.

The thought makes Juno’s heart ache a little bit. Reminders of Nureyev always do.

He’s staring into the enclosure when he notices something that doesn’t belong: a bit of paper, fancy card stock the same stiffness and shade as the card in his hand, carefully pinned to the wool of a star-horned goat on the other end of the enclosure. He hurries over to the spot of fence closest to it, but as soon as he gets there, it’s on the move, meandering around to the other side.

“Goddammit,” he mutters under his breath, and sets his foot on the metal gate. He wasn’t planning to get cow dung on his shoes today, but whatever.

“Hey!” barks a man who smells like he’s been working with these things for a long, long time. “You can’t go in there.”

Juno would ignore him and make the leap anyway, but the guy grabs him, and hot damn does he have a strong grip. Apparently wrangling a bunch of four-legged antiques for a living builds muscles or something.

“I said you can’t go in there,” the caretaker repeats slowly. It’s a warning. It won’t be repeated again.

There’s even odds that Juno would win any fight between them, but no matter how it goes, he’ll end the fight by being dragged out by security, which means he’ll lose his only lead on this case. The Bandit’s got a game to play, and Juno intends to win it.
And that means playing by the rules.

“Sorry about that,” he says as sweetly as he can get away with. “I’m just so excited. I’ve never seen a goat up close before.”

The caretaker gives him a weird look, but backs off. “Yeah, well, you’re going to have to do your watching from out here. It stresses the animals out too much to let people into the pen.”

“Do you think you could bring one over for me to get a closer look?” He points at the star-horned goat with the note on its wool. “How about that one over there?”

“Listen, buddy,” the caretaker says. “We can’t do that. If you want them to come closer, we sell food pellets for a cred a bag.”

Sometimes, being a Private Eye means asking the hard questions—like whether he’s going to include “petting zoo food pellets” in his expense report at the end of a case.

He decides to swallow the cost along with his pride and he buys a bag.

And then he buys two more; the one goat he’s after looks hungry, but apparently not as much as the rest of the animals in the enclosure. In seconds he’s swarmed by livestock, and Juno runs his hands over all of them, just in case the goat wasn’t the only one with a note in its fur.

And… okay, so they are really soft. It’s not like this is his first time at a Y2K Faire, but he’s never bothered to pay money for a chance to pet the animals. It’s actually kind of nice. Especially the cow—she keeps bumping his hand with her soft, velvety nose, and scrubs her long tongue over the palm of his hand in a way that should be a lot more gross than it is. It’s a shame there aren’t more of these on Mars.

Sure, a few people are complaining about the smell, but Juno spent half his childhood wading through the sewers with giant rabbits. If anything, the smell of hay and manure and animal fur feels a little bit nostalgic.

It’s not until he trades a handful of pellets to a six-year-old in exchange for a bunch of carrot slices that the goat finally starts heading his way, nosing at one hand while he fumbles to unpin the note from its wool.

Just like he guessed, it’s the a perfect match for the card that came with the flowers, with the same paper, the same font, and the same obnoxious lack of helpful information.

_Hungry, Detective?_

_Meet me in the Foode Courte._

Even without the little heart at the bottom of the card, there’s something ridiculously flirtatious about the whole thing. But that’s this thief’s schtick, isn’t it? Some kind of hopeless romantic who goes around tossing roses all over the place. Just watch, when Juno finds him he’ll be wearing a top hat and cape. Maybe that’s why he picked this place to sneak around in, so his getup won’t cause any suspicion.

After he washes himself off, Juno follows the signs to the circle of kiosks selling “authentic” twentieth-century cuisine—things with bizarre names like “deep fried twinkies” and “mashed potatoes” and “blooming onions”. Thankfully, the trail of rose petals on the floor leads him past the more exotic options to a plain-old popcorn stand that’s offering nothing more historic than cheddar-and-caramel among its flavors. The smell of the popcorn is subtle compared to the other foods
lingering in the air, but when he’s this close, it’s enough to make his stomach grumble.

Just like before, there’s another note, tucked into one of the pre-portioned bags of popcorn, and he swipes the bag the second the cashier’s back is turned. All expenses paid or not, there’s something criminal about charging seven creds for a quarter’s worth of popcorn.

Okay, so the popcorn isn’t half bad. Not good enough to justify that price tag, but still, not bad. And he was just thinking he could use a snack.

The note is spotted and translucent with cooking oil, but it’s still readable enough.

Join me for a game.

“That’s funny, I thought we were already playing one,” Juno says aloud, just in case the Bandit is watching him… which he probably is, dammit.

There’s a section of kiosks dedicated to old Earth carnival games, and sure enough, there’s another trail of rose petals leading him to the right booth: a target shooting game backed up against a funnel cake stand.

He’s not even surprised when he finds the corner of another note sticking out of a cut in an oversized teddy bear.

“Joke’s on you,” he mutters. “I’m great at these things.”

He used to do these all the time when he was in high school, winning the biggest prize he could carry just to show off for his dates.

He pays a couple creds to the lady behind the counter and takes aim. All three shots go wide, barely hitting the target.

Anywhere else, that might disappoint him, but not here. Sure, his aim isn’t ever going to be as great as it was when he had the THEIA on and active, but these games are always rigged. The trick is that now he knows which way the laser is skewed, and he corrects his aim accordingly.

Seven bulls-eyes later, and he’s walking away from the stand with a stuffed bear almost as big as he is. Rita’s going to love this thing—maybe it’ll make up for not letting her come.

He slips the last note out of the little hole in the bear and unfolds it.

If you want to look into my face, you’ll have to look into your own.

I’ll be waiting in the hall of mirrors.

Finally something direct.

There’s no trail of rose petals this time—just an “out for lunch” sign and an unlocked door on the old twentieth-century attraction. He never got the appeal of places like this, where everything is dim and warped and confusing. But then, he never really got the appeal of mirrors, either.

He leaves the bag of popcorn and stuffed bear just inside the door, and he sets out.

“Alright, I’m here,” he calls into the twisting halls. “Enough of this scavenger hunt. Come out and we’ll settle this.”

His only answer is in footsteps. He whirs to follow the source of the sound, but he only manages to
catch reflections of a retreating figure. In the warped glass, he can’t make out a face or a body type, but there’s something about the pattern of the footsteps that feels familiar.

The Bandit is running, so he gives chase. He keeps seeing flashes of the man, bits and pieces that should all fit together but don’t. All of it feels too familiar.

And then he’s out of the hall of mirrors and into another corner of the funhouse, this one full of holograms and wax figurines, all of them of celebrities and historical figures and beautiful people through the ages. Some of them are moving, repeating cliched one-liners and overused quotations, and it’s all coming from everywhere, sending false signals from every corner. His senses are so confused that he’s even smelling things he shouldn’t, animals and food and cologne.

Cologne.

“No,” he whispers. “No, it can’t be.” But the more he looks at it, the more obvious it is.

Pet the fuzzy animals. Have a snack. Play a game. Hell, even the flowers–

It’s so obvious. It’s terrible.

Jesus, why do people keep doing this to him? Sending him on cases that aren’t cases– it wasn’t even a year ago that he got dragged all over Oldtown for Sasha’s performance review, and then Ramses staged a goddamn assassination for a job interview, and then apparently the stakeout that was a bad excuse to get him to rest up from a stab wound, and now this?

“Goddammit, Nureyev,” he snaps. “Is this supposed to be a date?”

Nureyev is still out of sight, lost in the dim lights and mannequins, but his voice wafts over Juno. “Are you having fun? I certainly am.”

“You couldn’t just ask–” No, he couldn’t. Because that isn’t Nureyev’s style, and Juno’s never exactly been the type to openly accept that kind of invitation. So he changes tracks. “I gotta say, the location threw me. A Y2K Faire seems kind of low-brow for you.”

“That’s hardly my fault. It did take you some time to respond to my calling card, after all.”

His… oh, goddammit, the serial robberies. “You’ve been trying to get my attention.”

“For months now, thank you for noticing. And you’ve been playing hard to get.”

Juno sighs. “I wasn’t playing. I was just…” How is he supposed to even put it into words? “My head’s been a real mess.”

“I can imagine,” Nureyev hums, and his voice is soft and so close that Juno can feel his breath in his ear. “Would you like to talk about it over dinner?”
This is a mistake. Or maybe it isn’t. Peter doesn’t know anymore.

The crisp, clean lines that normally separate his trains of thought are getting jumbled and blurred. He has a thousand plans and they’re all piling on top of each other, confusing and upsetting and completely incomprehensible.

It’s anxiety— he knows that— but he doesn’t get anxious. He hasn’t, not since he was still a fledgling thief under Mag’s wing. These days, his mind is perfectly honed for its job, just like every other tool at his disposal.

At least, it usually is. But nothing works the way it should when Juno’s involved.

All the more reason to call this off. He doesn’t need the kind of chaos that Juno Steel will bring.

He doesn’t need it, but he wants it all the same.

Not that he should, of course— not after the way Juno left—

But of course he left. After everything that happened, he’d need to go back to someplace he felt safe so he could regroup and recover. Of course he wouldn’t be up to leaving right away—

But couldn’t he have at least said something? Did he have to leave in the middle of the night like that? Couldn’t he even have left a note?

Of course not, because he’s Juno Steel, Private Eye, who wears his overbearing misanthropy like a second trench coat, and Peter doesn’t need any more of that in his life.

But he wants it—

And this isn’t getting him anywhere.

It’s been weeks since Juno left, and Peter hasn’t even decided if he’s forgiven Juno yet. Maybe his mind will clear once he has a chance to talk to Juno— unless, of course, it gets even worse—

He puts the breaks on that particular train of thought before it can turn into another jumbled mess inside his head.

He needs to focus on the task at hand. He needs to focus on his plan— or, more precisely, he needs to decide on what his plan will actually entail.
He’s going to give Juno flowers, that much he’s decided on. Dahlias and roses, for his Dahlia Rose.

The question is how?

He knows Juno will be visiting his brother’s grave today. He could leave them there for him— but likely as not, Juno won’t even touch the bouquet if he thinks it’s meant for his brother.

He could approach the cemetery under the guise of bringing the flowers to another grave, and give them to Juno instead— though the implications of that are troubling.

Maybe before then, at Juno’s apartment. Maybe he’ll knock on the door, wait for Juno to answer, and then—

Or he could leave the bouquet in front of the door and hope that Juno doesn’t trample it on his way out. Perhaps knock on the door and then leave, just so Juno knows to pay attention?

But what if Juno answers quickly? What if he opens the door before Peter has a chance to disappear? What if he recognizes the flowers for what they are and gives chase?

Peter never did mind being chased by Juno Steel. He wouldn’t mind being caught, either.

And then what exactly is he hoping to get out of this? Does he really think Juno will throw his arms around him? Kiss him? Apologize for the way he ended things? Forgive Peter for the way he handled them in the first place?

And if Juno did that, what would Peter even do?

And what would he do if he didn’t?

Before he can disentangle his thoughts, the decision is made for him. Juno is leaving his apartment, his hat pulled low over his brow and his collar flipped up against the cold, his shoulders hunched up to his ears. No matter what Peter might have planned, Juno wants to be alone.

So Peter gives him that.

He follows at a safe distance, just close enough to keep Juno in view, but no further. There are moments when Juno steps out of his field of view, but that’s no matter; Peter knows where he’s going.

The cemetery lays just outside of the dome of Hyperion City, protected from the elements by a shoddy prototype shield that flickers and sparks when the wind blows. The oldest tombstones have been blasted to nothing by millenia of sand. Benzaiten Steel’s grave is several miles out, close to the outer ring of new graves, though it’s old enough that the marker has lost its glossy finish, but it still stands.

Juno crouches over the grave just long enough to set a fist-sized rock on the tombstone, and then he speaks. Peter supposes he could try reading Juno’s lips from this distance, but he doesn’t try. Some things deserve privacy.

He doesn’t watch Juno so much as he watches the space around him, looking for other mourners or signs of ambush, and quietly plotting ways of distracting anyone who might try to interrupt this moment.

It’s only once Juno prepares to leave that Peter realizes how quiet the inside of his head has been since Juno left his apartment. The anxiety from before has settled into a steady, familiar calm.
It’s half past six; in half an hour Juno will be expected at his secretary’s apartment, just in time for that surprise party she’s throwing him. Juno’s social circle is small, but still, Peter would rather avoid having an audience for their reunion. And so the choices present themselves:

He could stop Juno on the way to the party, perhaps offer him a ride. But Juno’s head is bowed, his shoulders are hunched once again, and he’s walking with an agitated gait that suggests he’d dealing with anxieties of his own. No, this isn’t the time to spring another surprise on him.

Perhaps he’ll calm down after the party. It wouldn’t take much for Peter to break into Juno’s apartment, perhaps wait for him there. He could deliver a different kind of present entirely… unless Juno isn’t alone when he comes home that night.

Peter’s stomach lurches. It’s been weeks. It’s only been weeks. Juno couldn’t possibly have moved on this quickly, could he? He wouldn’t do that.

The anxiety from before is rising up, threatening to throw him back into chaos, and more options present themselves.

He could break in and leave the flowers in Juno’s apartment– but that would feel more like a threat than like affection–

He could stop by the party, and damn anyone who might see– but what if Juno’s startled enough to call him by his name?

He could stop Juno from going to the party at all and whisk him off onto another grand adventure, hopefully with less torture and mutilation this time, and good God why would Juno want to go anywhere with him after everything that’s happened?

He should–

He should–

Like a misaligned wheel sliding into its track, Peter’s mind settles on a plan.

It doesn’t take long to put it together– just a courier’s jumpsuit, a clipboard, and a sheet of paper swiped from some mailing list.

While Juno takes the side entrance to the apartment building, Peter approaches from the front, politely asking the doorman for the proper apartment number. He moves slowly, hanging back until he can hear voices, though there’s only one he’s listening for. His chest aches as Juno’s tone shifts from hostile to weary relief. Peter would give anything to hear Juno speak to him that way, but he doesn’t know how.

And that’s the problem.

He isn’t ready for this. The hurt is too fresh and the ache is too strong. He doesn’t know the proper way to approach Juno, and that means no matter how he tries, he’ll always be going in unprepared, and he’ll always be blindsided by his detective.

There’s only one way this can go.

Juno’s voice filters through the door: “Mind if I, uh, powder my nose before we go?”

Peter takes a breath. He knows what he’s giving up. He knows he has to do it anyway.
He steps forward, rights his uniform, and knocks.
Juno will never be a great man

Chapter Summary

Juno contemplates his gender

PG

Chapter Notes

Anonymous asked:
would you write something focused on juno's gender? maybe him feeling more up to feminine presentation on a good day or first figuring out the language he wants to use for himself? i love the nb lady and i'm eager to see that explored more in fic <3

I have spent a whole lot of the past year trying to untangle my own relationship with my gender, and so trying to figure out how Juno would untangle his… that’s been interesting, I’ll tell you that.

So yeah, I struggled a bit with this. But once I figured out what I was doing, it was a lot easier than I expected.

Juno takes a deep breath and lays back, sprawling across the dumpster lid. Sure, the smell isn’t anything to get excited about, but it’s a place to sit and think and just watch the shimmering lights of the dome overhead.

The thought popped into his head at school today, and it hasn’t left him alone since: he’s not like Ben.

And sure, he always knew that. That’s pretty much one of the fundamental laws of the universe.

But it’s not just that.

Juno isn’t like Ben.

Ben’s going to be a great man someday, one of the teachers said. And Juno agreed. That makes sense. And for a moment, he let himself think about somebody talking about him that way, and it felt… wrong. Clumsy and awkward and so very wrong.

And of course, there’s plenty of reason for that. Because the two of them may look alike and share a horoscope, but Ben is smart, and he’s brave, and he’s dedicated, and he’s charming. He’s not a colossal fuckup like Juno is.

And even if by some miracle Juno were to break those most fundamental laws of the universe and be… okay– no, good– great– he still wouldn’t be a great man. The words feel awkward and clumsy
attached to him, like shoes that are two sizes too small.

He’ll never be a great man, or even a good one. A decent lady, though?

Yeah. That feels… better. More comfortable.

He could be a halfway decent lady someday.

He thinks about pronouns on the way home. Xe and xir hit his ear at just slightly the wrong angle. No, that’s not gonna work. They? No, that feels just a little bit too loose, like a second-hand shirt from an adult. She–

His mind recoils automatically, and he curls in on himself. He can see his mother’s drinking buddies leering down at him.

“Aw, look at this one. Just like your Ma.”

No. No, he’s not going to use his mother’s pronouns. He doesn’t think he’ll ever be comfortable with that.

But you’re fine with being a lady? a part of him hisses.

He gives that part a derisive snort. His ma’s a lot of things, but she’s no lady.

The more he thinks about it, the more firmly it’s decided: he and him. The pronouns he’s got have never felt alien or weird on him. He’ll keep those for now.

In the weeks that follow, he can feel himself relaxing, like he’s finally wearing clothes the right size (or he thinks so, anyway– god knows he’s never actually worn anything the right size to begin with).

He doesn’t fit cleanly into the binary, but he likes it that way. He’s a lady, but he’s also a guy. He’s somewhere in between. He’s something of his own.

It gives him a nice little bit of comfort. If he and Ben aren’t even the same gender, then why should they be measured by the same ruler, anyway? Juno isn’t going to be exactly like Ben no matter what. He won’t ever live up to Ben’s potential because they’ve got the potential to be different things.

It’s freeing in ways Juno never even thought of before.

Ma makes sure that they don’t celebrate their actual birthday, so Juno and Ben have their own unbithdays– private, special days that are all their own. Sasha and Mick and a few other close friends know, but nobody else. Not even Ma. Especially not Ma.

Ben’s is in November. Juno’s is in February, which doesn’t actually mean all that much, considering Mars’s weird relationship with the Earth calendar. It’s in a different season every year.

Honestly, none of it means much of anything these days. It’s a stupid, kiddish tradition. He’s got a broken nose and a black eye, and he’s too tired to care about all this crap anymore. He just wants to get to his room without waking Ma and then sleep until he stops hurting. So… forever. A coma sounds nice right about now.

But when he plops into bed, something hard hits his nose.
“Ow,” he hisses, reaching into the pillowcase to grab out… a little package wrapped in notebook paper. It’s decorated with a cartoon dragon, the words “Happy unbirthday!” coming out of a speech bubble in its mouth.

There’s a lady knight on the other side, but the person in the chainmail isn’t Andromeda. It’s Juno.

He opens the package slowly, careful not to tear the picture when he slices through the scotch tape with his fingernail.

Inside is a tube of lipstick. Really nice, expensive stuff, in the kind of color that he could only dream about pulling off. As soon as the wrapping is hidden under his mattress, he sneaks into the bathroom to try it on.

Even with the broken nose and black eye, it looks amazing on him. The color is perfect. Absolutely perfect.

The bathroom door creaks, and he nearly jumps, hiding the lipstick behind his back. He bites his lips, as if he could ever hide something that fantastically bright.

But it’s not his mother.

Ben carefully shuts the door behind him, grinning like an idiot. “I knew that color would look great on you,” he whispers, practically glowing with triumph and pride.

Juno returns the grin. From the corner of his eye, he can catch his reflection in the mirror. Damn, he looks good. “Thanks, Ben. I love it.”

And Ben ruffles his hair– gently, so he doesn’t disturb the cut on Juno’s scalp. “Just helping you prep. One of these days you’re gonna be one heck of a classy lady.”
The stress of a long day and a rough case melts off Juno’s shoulders when he opens his front door. Instead of the daunting quiet of an empty apartment, he’s met with the soft noise of running water in the shower and the barely-distinguishable sounds of Peter’s humming echoing off the tile.

He walks past the pile of luggage on the living room floor and lingers in front of the bathroom. Thin rivulets of steam are escaping under the door, spiced with Peter’s ridiculously overpriced body wash, and every inhale leaves Juno feeling a little more human.

He knocks at the bathroom door. “Hey. Mind if I come in?”

Peter’s voice is mostly obscured by the rush of water, but Juno catches enough of the tone to know it’s a yes. He slips inside, shutting the door behind him fast so the heat doesn’t get out.

The bathroom is hazy with steam. Peter’s long body is stretching underneath the spray of water, kneading white lather out of his hair. The shower curtain that divides them is transparent, but between the folds of the plastic and the rivulets of water on its surface, Peter’s body is more a suggestion of nudity. Even so, Juno’s pretty sure he’s got the clearer view between the two of them; Peter’s glasses are on the bathroom counter by the sink.

“Enjoying the show?” Peter asks, his voice as soft and hazy as the air.

“Always.” Though it’s less the titillation of a shower curtain than it is the comfort of Peter’s presence– the sound of his voice, the second-hand warmth from water turned up past what Juno can stand, the planes and angles of Peter’s body that are so very familiar even when they’re half-hidden. Just sharing this space with him eases away the hurt and headache of today’s case. “God, I missed you.”

Peter hums warmly, turning off the water and pulling aside the curtain. “Why don’t you come join me, and I’ll show you just how much I missed you?”

It’s a tempting offer, but Juno knows better. Peter fumbles the hot water knob in a way that has nothing to do with his poor eyesight; he’s swaying as he stands, less because he’s trying for sultry and more because he’s having trouble staying upright. Probably the only reason he took a shower instead of going straight to bed is that Peter hates the smell of the spaceport decontamination
“Later,” Juno promises, pulling a towel off the hook and wrapping it around Peter’s shoulders. “Maybe after you’ve had some rest.” A second towel is thrown affectionately over Peter’s head.

“That does sound—” However that sentence was supposed to end, it’s lost in a yawn wide enough to show off his molars. “I should take care of my things first, though. I’m afraid I left my luggage all over the living room.”

“Don’t worry about it.” Juno offers him his glasses, though they’re too fogged to be much use. “I’ll put everything away.”

Peter leans in, sweet and sleepy. “Only if you put me away first.”

By the time Juno shuts the bedroom door, Peter is already snoring gently, cushioned on half a dozen pillows and wrapped in as many blankets and kissed so thoroughly that he’ll be finding second-hand lip stain until his next shower.

It’ll be hours before Juno’s wound down enough to sleep, and so he busies himself with the four oversized space chests on his living room floor.

Usually Peter travels light; he knows better than to bring his latest prizes home with him. He rarely ever travels with more than a single carryon and whatever he can fit in his pockets.

Bringing back this much all at once? That’s unusual.

(“It’s evidence, mostly,” Peter had said, nuzzling against Juno’s chest with still-damp hair. “I caught wind that one of my old safe houses was slated for demolition. Those things are old, but some of them are still incriminating. I probably should have sorted through them all back on Trappist 1B, but…” He paused as his lips found bare skin. “I was in a hurry to get back.”)

He taps in the code that Peter gave him before he drifted off and opens the first of the chests.

He has half a mind to call Rita over—between his eyepatch and the chests of mysterious treasure from a space-faring rogue, she’d be squealing about pirates for the rest of the week— but Peter deserves his privacy as much as his rest, and Rita won’t give him either. Best to leave her out of this.

Besides, he’s too curious to wait for her to come over.

In the smallest of the boxes are piles of passports for confederacies that no longer exist, and stacks of money that are barely worth the paper they’re printed on, except maybe to a collector. He remembers some of these names; he was still in the HCPD when the news hit that these systems surrendered. The passports he sets aside to be properly destroyed.

In another box he finds little knickknacks—jewelry and statuettes, little pieces that might have looked at home on a rich person’s coffee table, puzzle toys and technology so out of date that even Juno can recognize it. Nothing in this box is so large that it couldn’t be squirreled away in one of Nureyev’s pockets, which suggests that these are the little souvenirs that Peter took without thinking, carelessly picked up and just as carelessly discarded. There are a few items in there that might be worth keeping; the rest can probably be pawned, after Rita’s had a chance to dig through them.

The next contains real pirate treasure, by Rita’s standard. These are the kinds of things Peter would have gone out of his way to steal, art and artifacts carefully wrapped to protect them from time and
unsteady hands. He knows enough about art to recognize the skill that went into some of these pieces, and he’s worked with Vicky long enough to know that she wouldn’t mind fencing these on Peter’s behalf.

And in the last, clothes. They’re old and a little musty, but otherwise they’re in good condition. Some are the kind of clothes that Juno might see in a vintage shop, but most of them are uniforms of one variety or another, along with the little props that sell the disguise. A janitor, a delivery person, a health inspector, businessman, and a few other odds and ends. And there, buried among the rest, is a military dress uniform.

He quickly shuts the lid of the trunk, looking around to make sure Peter isn’t lounging in the door. It’s a stupid thing to think– Peter’s exhausted; there’s no reason why he’d wake up just to watch Juno rifle awkwardly through his luggage.

He tells himself he’s being an idiot, but his face still heats as he opens the trunk again.

It was just a phase, and it was a long time ago. Mick had (infuriatingly, accurately) guessed that it was just the natural extension of Juno’s childhood fixation on a certain Chainmail Warrior. As a teenager, Juno couldn’t decide whether he wanted to be someone like Andromeda or be with someone like her– and in a world without dragons or talking lions, the best place to find both was in the Solar military.

So maybe there had been some fantasies. Maybe, in the last years of the war, he’d hooked up with more than a few people in uniform. Maybe all of that is rushing back to him right now. And maybe, just maybe, he’s imagining what Peter Nureyev would look like in a uniform like this, with the sharp lines and the broad shoulders and the classy boots that you could see your face in.

Maybe Peter had the right idea with that shower.

Juno never thought he would see this side of Peter.

His willowy thief is gone, replaced by straight lines and hard angles. When he moves, all that slinking elegance is replaced by measured, precise motions. His back could be used as a straight-edge. His slender shoulders are made sharp and broad by a captain’s epaulets. The tailored uniform clings to his body the way Juno wants to, the gold trim leading Juno’s eyes on a tour of Peter’s chest, his hips, his thighs. Peter wears it like a declaration, every inch of the uniform conveying absolute power and unquestioned control.

And Juno does what anyone would, faced with a sight like that: he sinks to his knees and surrenders.

Peter’s boot comes down on Juno’s shoulder, heavy and imposing and just threatening enough to make Juno’s heart pound. He tips his head, pressing his lips to the lab-grown leather. The scent of the polish is so sharp and acrid that it leaves him dizzy.

A rigid hand catches Juno under the jaw and forces him to look up. Even bending over him, Peter’s posture is perfect.

“Juno.” His voice is clipped and hard, two syllables of pure command, and all of Juno rises to attention.
A natural-born telepath

Chapter Summary

PG

Juno doesn't need the Martian Pill to let him read minds

Chapter Notes

wearestarstuff618 asked:

Sooo, What do you think would have happened if Juno had been born with telepathy rather than getting it from a pill?

With a man like Juno Steel, you have no choice but to do research and observe from afar before you make your first move. There's simply no other way to outsmart a man who can know everything you're thinking. So I've collected a small pile of facts.

1. Juno’s mother spent some time as a charlatan fortune teller, but evidence suggests that she was monetizing her son’s gift, rather than manifesting any of her own. There is no further evidence to suggest that other members of Juno’s family share his abilities.
2. There’s no conclusive proof that Juno Steel was actually descended from Ancient Martians. His family tree has been transplanted too many times, and too many of his ancestors had dubious parentage for any hope of tracking them all.
3. Miasma wants to study him anyway.
4. He demonstrates genuine surprise at the things people say to him, which implies that he doesn’t necessarily read other people’s thoughts all the time.
5. During my observation so far, I’ve noticed two particularly intense expressions that arise when he’s actively trying to read minds. The first is merely an intense stare, like he’s straining to read ungodly fine print or make out whispers from across a room. The other is haunting— it’s like he’s not looking at you at all, but through you, and into your very soul.
6. While Juno can hear the thoughts of entire crowds of people, but he avoids it when he can, probably because of the immense strain it puts on him. Of the two events I’ve observed, one of them ended with Juno staggering into his secretary’s car so she could drive him home; the other… well, the other is happening right now.

Juno grabs at his phone, but he seems to be having trouble remembering how pockets work. He pats frantically at his jacket, but to no avail. He starts moving, running, but he seems to have lost the ability to walk in a straight line. He stumbles to the side and crashes into another pedestrian, who cries out and shoves him away. Another ducks out of his reach when Juno tries to steady himself. He hesitates, tripping on a curb, and lands in a sprawl across the sidewalk.

Some of the crowd scoot away from him. A father shepherds his children hastily away from the fallen man. Others walk right past, not even pausing except to yank their feet out of Juno’s grasp
when he reaches out to them. One distracted passerby doesn’t even notice that he’s heading straight for Juno.

I shouldn’t intervene. I shouldn’t. I know better.

I do anyway.

“Oh, pardon me,” I say, stepping into the crowd. The distracted man bumps into me, but at least he doesn’t step on Juno when he veers away. “Now, as for you…” I catch Juno’s hand, and immediately his fingers clench around mine. He scrabbles against me like a man drowning, but I let him cling.

“There, there,” I say. “It’s alright, I’ve got you now. But let’s get you up and out of here, shall we?”

He’s too heavy for me to lift, but I manage to get my arm under his and guide him in a general upward direction.

His eyes are wide and bloodshot, his skin clammy, his lips forming words that he doesn’t vocalize. He looks, in short, like a mess.

“Damn junkies,” another pedestrian mutters.

“Pay them no mind,” I tell Juno, though I’m not sure if he can hear me. “Just keep walking.”

I call us a cab, though I have to pay the driver extra to persuade him that Juno won’t vomit onto the back seat. I give him Juno’s address; I don’t know how else to help him, but that place should feel safe to him, at least. I know where he lives; I’ve been watching him closely enough to know his apartment number, his relationship with his neighbors, even which pocket he keeps his keys in. That knowledge is particularly useful now. His hands are steadier than they were on the street level, but he’s still moving as though through molasses.

I guide him inside and ease him into the couch, but when I step away, his gaze follows me. He still looks lost, still dazed, but there’s something more to it than that. He’s looking through me. He’s looking into me.

I was prepared for this, but that doesn’t keep my spine from crawling. What is he seeing right now? Which part of my mind is he dissecting?

“Peter Nureyev,” he says distantly. It’s the first time I’ve been called by that name in twenty years. “I need a drink. Scotch. You already know where it is.”

There’s no point in pretending otherwise, so I fetch the bottle and a glass from the shelf where Rita keeps hiding it from him, but I hesitate before handing it over. “Are you sure you should be drinking in this state?”

“Positive.” He doesn’t even bother with the tumbler. As soon as the bottle is in his hand, he takes several long gulps. He makes a face when it hits his tongue, but slowly his expression softens as it starts to take effect. “It doesn’t stop the voices, but it tones them down a bit. Add that to your pile of interesting facts.” He drains a quarter of the bottle before he hands it back to me. “Thanks.”

“I take it you’re feeling better.”

“You could say that.”
An awkward silence passes between us, made all the more awkward because he may well be reading my thoughts.

To my credit, that means that it can’t possibly get more awkward. So I extend my hand. “Juno Steel, my name is Peter Nureyev, and I’ve been spying on you for the past several months on behalf of a moderately deranged xenoanthropologist.”

“Yeah, I kind of figured that out on my own.”

“Oh, I’m well aware,” I tell him. “But we might as well be formally introduced.”

“Can’t argue with that logic,” he says with a shrug, and he takes my hand. “Juno Steel, private eye.”
Too many rescues

Chapter Summary

G

After Juno decides to walk into the desert, way too many people decide to come to his rescue

This was getting ridiculous.

Sure, it started out okay. Alessandra managed to get the door open and yank Juno back inside, and they sheltered there to wait out the sandstorm while Juno bandaged her hand. Unfortunately, the kill switch on the Freedomer’s compound meant that the pod was stuck in the tunnel, blocking their only exit, and even Alessandra hadn’t thought to pack a blowtorch in that enormous backpack.

There was only one thing to it: apply some anti-radiation sunblock, tighten the laces on their boots, and start hiking.

Then came the limo.

“What the hell?” Alessandra asked as the chauffeur got out and opened the door for them.

“Mister Steel, Miss Strong. Mayor O’Flaherty sent me.”

And right then, Juno felt genuinely conflicted. After everything he knew, the last thing he wanted to do was go back to the man responsible for putting all this blood on his hands– but maybe Ramses didn’t know that Juno knew, and if he did, that would give Juno the upper hand in bringing him down. And there was Alessandra to think about–

“How far is it to the nearest outpost?” Alessandra asked, cold and unforgiving as the Martian desert.

“There’s a research station five miles that way, ma’am,” the chauffeur said, pointing into the distance.

“I’ve done longer,” she said, and adjusted her backpack. “You do what you need to, Steel, but I’d rather walk.”

And just like that, Juno’s problem was solved. “I’m sticking with her. We’re going on foot.”

“Very well, sir.”

You had to hand it to Ramses– the people he hired were tenacious. Because the driver didn’t just turn the car around and drive back to Hyperion City, oh no. He put the damn thing in drive and idled beside them for a mile and a half.

Actually, he kept idling after that, too, but that was when the Dark Matters transport touched down beside them, and a pair of agents in dark glasses and black uniforms climbed out.

“Mister Steel,” said the one on the left. “Miss Strong. The Subdirector would like a word.”
At some later point, Juno would regret his choice right here—after all, who better to have his back with all this mess than Sasha?—but right then, all he could think about was what had happened to him the last few times he’d crossed paths with Dark Matters. He’d been betrayed enough in the last two months to last a lifetime. Judging by the dark look Alessandra gave those uniforms, her opinion wasn’t too far off from his own.

“Thanks, but I’ll pass.”

You would think that would be the end of it. You would think that an organization as big and shadowy as Dark Matters would have better things to do than to hover beside two hikers and a limo in the middle of the Martian desert.

You would be mistaken.

Then came an unmarked van painted the same dusty red as the sand. The windows were tinted, but Juno recognized the outline of a broad-shouldered man. The man in the brown coat who’d been following him all this time.

Not one of Ramses’ men—there was no point in sending two cars to do the same job—so he had to be working for somebody else. A part of Juno was a bit disappointed that he didn’t get out of the car and introduce himself, but a part of him was relieved that he didn’t have any more conspiracies to deal with right this second. Brown Jacket could spend the rest of his life idling behind that goddamn limo for all he cared.

The windows of the next car were tinted, too, and the license plates had clearly been changed, but Juno would recognize that car anywhere: the Ruby 7. His heart skipped so many beats that he thought the radiation might finally be getting to him—and maybe it was, because right then he wanted nothing more than to run to the damn car, throw open the door, and throw his arms around Nureyev. He didn’t, though. Not in front of two Dark Matters agents and Ramses’ driver.

He gave an awkward little wave and kept walking, trying hard to pretend that the red on his face was just a sunburn. The Ruby 7 sidled up behind the Dark Matters transport, bold as brass—bold as Glass—and joined their little parade.

“Didn’t realize you were so popular, Steel,” Alessandra said. “So what’s it feel like to be the prettiest girl at the dance?”

Juno considered arguing that last bit, but he shrugged it off. “I could’ve used a whole lot more of this in middle school.”

“Any thoughts on which one of these lucky people gets to take you home tonight?”

Juno considered his options. The limo was a trap, the transport was a crapshoot, the Ruby 7 would put Nureyev at risk, and who even knew what was going on with that van?

But then another car pulled up beside them, the window rolled down, and his question was answered for him.

"Mistah Steel!” Rita shrieked, halfway between relieved and exasperated. “You were gone for three days, Mistah Steel—three days! And you weren’t answering your comms and you weren’t at home and I was worried sick and when your comms finally goes back online I find you out here, doin’—doin’—” She looked around wildly, taking in the scene for the first time. “What exactly are you doin’, anyway?”

“We’re going that way for another…”
“Two miles,” Alessandra supplied.

“For another two miles, apparently,” Juno said.

“Mistah Steel, you’ve got a lot of explainin’ to do.”

“Yeah, I figured.” Most of these people would want explanations, probably. Except for Brown Jacket. Who even knew what he wanted. But right now the desert was cold and quiet, and Juno could use another forty minutes or so to figure out what to say to them all. “But later.” In the meantime, though… “Rita, have you ever wanted to lead a parade?”
Chapter Summary

A story for the Ides of March

PG

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Few people bother learning English anymore; the old Earth dialect isn’t good for much these days except for academia, making dialogue in films sound suitably magical, and impressing the uneducated. Naturally, Ramses made a point to become fluent. As such, he’s the only one in the room who appreciates the lyrics wafting through the speakers as anything more than the indecipherable babble of classical music.

*Human beings in a mob*

What’s a mob to a king?
What’s a king to a god?
What’s a god to a non-believer?

Still, he wonders if Mayor Pilot Pereyra ever bothered to look into the song in any detail. It’s a popular song in Northstar productions, after all, almost always played in the throne rooms of the soon-to-be-deposed.

If they did– which Ramses has reason to doubt– they don’t show any sign of feeling threatened. To them, it’s simply a bit of elegant background music, suited to Ramses’ age and his inability to keep up with the times.

“Come on, pal.” Their smile is somehow even brighter when framed by that awful pastel lipstick. “It was funny at first, but this joke’s getting stale. You’ve had your chance to make a big speech and see everyone chanting your name. Cherish the memory, and go back to whatever retirement home you crawled out of.”

“Is that why you do it, Mx. Mayor?” Ramses muses. “Might I suggest television? The lives of Hyperion City’s citizens don’t belong in the hands of someone who exists to feed their own ego.”

“Television.” That too-wide grin twists into a sneer. “Is that where you got your ego, Mister Northstar? Or just your money? It’s not enough for you to be the richest person in Hyperion City– you also have to be running the show.”

“If you have any other ideas on how to clean up this mess you’ve made, I’d be happy to hear it,” Ramses says evenly. “Clearly soup kitchens and charities aren’t doing the job.”

“Because you’re such a saint, aren’t you?” Their overpriced heels click on the polished floor like cracking knuckles; their mouth is less of a smile and more a display of bared teeth. “You keep pretending you’re so high above all this, O’Flaherty. Keep going on about how you keep your hands clean. It’s just a matter of time before the truth comes out.”
“If you had anything on me, I would already be rotting in prison,” Ramses says, entirely unconcerned. If Ramses had any crime on his record– a jaywalking charge, an unpaid parking ticket, an overdue library fine– Pilot would have used it against him by now. But he doesn’t, and so they can’t. Even Hyperion City’s brute squad won’t make an arrest entirely without provocation. It’s the only reason he has any faith that this city is still capable of being saved.

Pilot glowers at him, looking like they would love nothing more than to ram their heels down his throat, but they don’t dare. They’re on Ramses’ estate, surrounded by his security detail, and being watched by his cameras. Ramses has certainly considered provoking an attack, just so he can kill them in self-defense. Of course, that would absolutely ruin Ramses chance of becoming the mayor himself, and he can’t have that.

He flashes a cordial smile. “Is there anything else you wanted to discuss, Mx. Mayor? I was just sitting down to do some light reading. A really fascinating story…”

Pilot flashes another sneer. “Get back to your book, old man.” And they turn away with a derisive twist, their heels clicking disdainfully with every step, confident that their power is absolute.

They’re hardly the first person in power to hold that delusion.

Ramses picks up the volume and traces the faded ink across the page.

*Remember, Caesar: thou art mortal.*

Chapter End Notes

Lyrics are from No Church in the Wild by Jay-Z and Kanye West. The quote is (surprisingly) from Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451.
A front row seat to the show

Chapter Notes

likeactuallyroselalonde asked:

Hey uh could I get a reunion fic? Maybe something to do with the Rita minute about Juno’s birthday?

It happens all at once.

Juno wades through a sea of paper spaceships to the bathroom.

Rita sighs with relief that somehow, inexplicably, everything turned out alright for her boss’s birthday.

The door rings, and all that relief turns into renewed panic.

She opens the door, ready to shove Mister Mercury down the stairwell if she has to, because she ain’t ruinin’ Mistah Steel’s birthday.

And then she finds herself with a face full of flowers instead, presented by a sharply dressed man from Tzar Shipping.

And maybe if he moved an instant quicker, that might have been all she saw. But her eyes reach his face. His hair is two seasons out of style, his enormous sunglasses have been replaced by a pair of thin rectangular specs, and his face is contoured all different, but Rita’s got lifetime experience with spotting familiar actors in different roles, even through inches of prosthetics. She never forgets a face.

And so when he extends a clipboard to her with a curt “sign here, please”, she grabs his wrist instead.

“Agent Glass!” she cries in delight.

“Who?” he asks, and he must be a real good actor, because he doesn’t break character at all, but Rita isn’t fooled.

“I ain’t seen you in ages! What are ya doin’ at my apartment? Is this—” She lowers her voice conspiratorially– “super secret spy business?” And then it dawns on her. “Oh! Oh! Did you come for Mistah Steel’s birthday? Because he was just tellin’ me that he wasn’t feeling up to anything big, but—”

Behind Rita, the bathroom door opens.

“Rita?” Juno calls. “Who was that?”

And finally Agent Glass breaks character, and it’s with a look that Rita has only ever seen in the really good streams. It’s heartbreak and longing and the desperate need to run away all mixed together, but he’s stuck in place. He doesn’t even pull away when Rita lets go of his hand.
“Rita?” Juno calls again. And then again, “Ri–”

And the rest of the word is lost in a sharp inhale.

Rita scuttles out of the way, determined not to interrupt the major drama that she’s somehow got front row seats for.

Agent Glass extends a bouquet of flowers—gingerly, like he isn’t sure Juno’s not gonna throw them back in his face. “Happy birthday, Juno.”

Juno’s eyes fall to them for just an instant before they return to Glass’s face.

“You came back.”

He still hasn’t taken the flowers.

Glass says nothing.

“I thought you you said you were leaving Mars for good.”

Maybe Glass’s hand is getting tired, or maybe he’s losing hope, because he slowly lowers the bouquet. “I understand if you don’t want to see me, Juno. I wasn’t trying to intrude.” He clears his throat. “I’ll be on my way.”

It’s a good thing that Juno reaches out with a cry of “wait!”, because otherwise Rita was gonna do it, and that would have gotten all kinds of awkward.

“Please,” Juno says. “Don’t go.”

He’s closer now—close enough to take the drooping bouquet in one hand and Glass’s hand in the other. Their eyes are locked on each other, entirely caught in a world of their own.

Rita has to bite down on her lip to keep from squealing. She knew the boss had a thing for Agent Glass, she knew it!

But maybe she should have bitten down just a little bit harder, because suddenly the moment is broken and the two star-crossed lovers both turn to stare at the camera— that is, right at her.

She can’t help a high-pitched giggle as she waves them on. “Oh, don’t mind me. Go back to what you were doin’, Just pretend I’m not even here.”

Agent Glass clears his throat again. “I seem to have caught you in the middle of something.”

“Actually, Rita and I were just heading to see a movie. Would…” He glances at Rita, who nods so intensely that it leaves her dizzy. “…you like to join us?”

There’s a moment of hesitation, and if this wasn’t happening live there’d definitely be a swell of music right here. “I would love to.”

And the music would keep going as they look into each other’s eyes again— but just for a moment, before Juno pulls back to look at Rita. “So. What are we seeing?”

And for maybe the first time in her life, Rita doesn’t give a damn what’s going to be on the silver screen. She’s got a much more exciting show on her hands.
**Chapter Notes**

hyperactivehedgehog said to ernmark:
Hey!! I just saw your post where you said you were taking promts again? And I was so excited! So I hope your still doing that and I'm not annoying you (in which case, I'm really sorry). Could you write something about ace!peter? I haven't been able to find anything about that and I just love the idea of him being this super seductive type while having no idea why that's working.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You wanna get your hands off me?” Juno snaps, pulling away from Peter so hard that he almost falls to the floor. “This isn’t a goddamn honeymoon suite.”

And for a moment, Peter can only stare. Not because of the violence of Juno’s reaction-- the detective has had plenty of those in the short time that Peter has known him-- but... *honeymoon suite*?

He’s so utterly baffled that he manages to get out only a single word: “Alright.” Just an acknowledgement. He’ll keep his hands to himself, then.

Or... something.

He replays the previous few minutes over in his mind.

When Juno first got up, Peter pushed gently at his shoulders to get him to lie down. And... maybe that has something to do with it? He’s had plenty of marks react to a neck rub in ways that have absolutely nothing to do with loosening up their knotted muscles. Is Juno one of those?

Or did it have anything to do with that at all?

Was it the conversation? Talking at length about the way the Ancient Martians reproduced? It hardly seemed like a sexually charged subject of conversation to him-- rather pointedly the opposite-- and Juno certainly seemed put off by the subject.

(Really, Peter will never understand how the same people will be driven to a lustful frenzy by some sex acts and utterly repulsed by others. Some differences he can make sense of, of course, but there are other distinctions that will forever remain a mystery.)

Or was it the way Peter caught him when he stumbled? One arm around his waist, the other on his shoulder-- but that was obviously just Peter keeping him steady, wasn’t it? And when he touched the side of Juno’s face to get a better look at his eye--

Ah.

Yes. That was it, wasn’t it?
Some of the tension unwinds as the mystery resolves itself.

It’s hardly the first time, either, come to think of it. There was another time when Juno was covered in his own blood. He’d been slumped against Agent Rex Glass, delirious with pain or blood loss or something else entirely while Peter lowered him to the ground as gently as he could manage.

“Hey, anybody ever tell you you gotta nice smell? What’s a guy gotta eat to smell like that?”

Peter had been taken aback then, too. He hadn’t been unaware of Juno’s attraction to him, but the detective was bleeding. A few minutes before he’d been in a fight for his life, staring down the certainty of his own death, and that was where his mind went?

And then, just like now, as soon as Peter tried to reciprocate, he was immediately shut down.

Juno liked pain— or more to the point, he liked being taken care of when he was in pain. It made him soft and affectionate and needy, but— yes, that made more sense— a dame so determinedly hard-boiled didn’t want to let himself be soft, did he? Not when danger still loomed just out of sight.

But that was something Peter could understand.

Chapter End Notes

I think part of the reason that ace!Peter is so hard to find has to do with how very sexual he acts— and, you know, them having sex onscreen and everything. But like you said, he’s a conman who’s very good at reading what his mark wants and playing into that, and there are plenty of aces (myself included) who aren’t sex-averse.

A lot of this comes from my own (rather baffling) experiences with my own partner, which largely amount to me going "wait, you thought that was sexy? Really?"
Chapter Notes

I got stuck thinking about the fact that Juno and Peter are on a spaceship and that Peter has Legs, and this happened.

This one's rated M

The thing about Peter Nureyev is: he’s got legs for days, and he knows it, and he is willing to go to ridiculous lengths to make sure that Juno can’t forget it.

As if he could, when so many nights end with those legs folded around him, squeezing him between sinewy thighs, silky-smooth as they slide against Juno’s skin– so he really doesn’t have to try so hard to make Juno hard.

Consider the case of the blown fuse, lodged deep inside one of the long aux shafts that runs the length of the ship. To get to where they are now, Peter had figure out which panel Jet needed Juno to fix– without getting roped into doing it himself– then get here, neatly clear off the arrangement of knick-knacks that Rita displays on the aux shaft like it’s a goddamn mantel, dust it off, get up there, and then pose like he’s a car model being paid on commission– all of it before Juno arrives to actually do the job.

And after all of that, he still has the nerve to act like he’s surprised to see him.

“Funny running into you here,” he says, as convincing as an actor in porn.

“Why? Did you fix the fuse already?” As comebacks go, it isn’t Juno’s best work, but it’s hard to concentrate when Peter’s sitting up like that, coyly hugging one angular knee to his chest.

“Is that why you’re here?” He grins, and the sight of those teeth really isn’t helping Juno focus.

“I take that as a no?” Juno doesn’t wait for a reply before he grabs the screwdriver– manual only, Jet still won’t let him near the power tools– and looks for the seam that marks the edges of the panel. It takes him a second, mostly because Peter’s leg is dangling right in front of it.

There was a time when Juno would have gotten pissed and snapped for Peter to quit fooling around, but he’s getting better. Without a word, he loops a hand around that long, muscular calf and slides between it and the panel, letting it hook over his shoulder. The other leg remains bent against Peter’s chest, and the way the fabric stretches and folds along his thighs draws several clear lines that Juno would very much like to follow. All he has to do is stand up a little straighter, and some very interesting pieces of anatomy will be at mouth level.

“I’m working,” he reminds Peter as he works on unscrewing the panel and leaving his partner unscrewed.

“A blown fuse shouldn’t take long.”

“It’ll take longer if I don’t do it right the first time.”
Juno looks up from the panel just enough to see Peter smoldering at him with unspoken innuendo, itching as much to say it as Juno is to put his mouth on him.

They’ve learned from experience that sound carries a long way in the passageways of this ship. It’s convenient enough for getting out of compromising situations at the first echo of footsteps, but it also means that dirty talk has a bad habit of making its way to people who don’t want to hear it.

Not that Peter needs to say a word, of course. Not when he’s looking at him like that.

Juno misses the screw twice before he tears his eye away from Peter’s face. This is hard enough without depth perception; he needs to focus.

Preferably not on the calf that’s flexing against his shoulder blade.

With a grunt of satisfaction he gets the panel open and sets it aside, then digs in the box Jet gave him for the spare fuse. He marks the blown fuse with a finger, then flips the breaker for the fuse box. Instantly the passageway is plunged into pure, inky black as the lights collectively die around them.

Juno can feel the leg remove itself from his shoulder. There’s a faint sound of fabric sliding against burnished metal. And then: a slender hand cups the back of his neck, and an eager mouth finds his. Sharp teeth nip at his lower lip, intense and inviting. More than almost anything, he wants to wrap his arms around Peter and drag him down on top of him.

In fact, right now the only thing he wants more is to not lose his place on the fuse box, because that would mean fumbling around in the dark for his comms so he can light up the hallway and grope around for the fuse and possibly wind up stepping on it in the process and having to explain to Jet what happened to the first one.

Not that he’s speaking from experience or anything.

He’s still kissing Nureyev when he fumbles the old fuse out of its slot and slides the new one back in, running his finger over it to make sure it’s secure.

The finger running over his collar is probably making sure that it’s a lot less secure.

Juno shivers, and not just because he’s just turned off the passageway’s heating unit.

Almost reluctantly, he flips the breaker again, and one by one the lights flicker on. It’s still half dark when Peter slips away to sit upright. His pupils are wide from the long minutes in the dark; his cheeks are flushed; his lips are dark, especially where they’re pinned underneath those sharp teeth.

Juno scrambles to fasten the panel back to the wall. The faster he can finish it, the faster Peter can finish him.

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