A Matter of Convenience

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Summary

‘twas why the whole thing had been sanctioned in the first place: minimal disturbance of the status quo, just a blip in their routine, no consequences. So what if the Quartermaster had had an untimely, dangerous heat and 007 had been the one assigned to see him through it. Both of them knew better than to let anything come of it. (Alpha/Omega dynamics)

Notes

Not beta-read. EDIT: 09/03/2017: Now beta-ed by the fantastic katieelizabeth :) I couldn’t resist some final tweaking after I got it back from her, all remaining mistakes are mine alone. Oh and I’ve gender-bent Tanner so that it wasn’t a complete sausage fest. If you’d like a visual, try Kate Winslet in Carnage (http://www.filmofilia.com/new-carnage-movie-trailer-73958/). She’s roughly the same age as Rory Kinnear and would make a killer Chief of Staff imho.
“Bond, you have been reassigned.”

“You’re pulling me from Red Volvo?” James couldn’t quite keep the disbelief from his voice. He’d bled and maimed to map this gun-smuggling ring across nine countries and two continents and had finally obtained the intel to nail their European head. It had been his whole life for a little over two months. He needed to be in the outskirts of Brussels in ten hours.

“Something else has come up and it takes precedence. Report to my office within the hour.”

“I’m on my way.”

It had better not be anything short of a globe-threatening biological weapon. Or maybe this was M’s way of punishing him for the Madagascar incident? How the fuck was he supposed to know that shabby little door was a Dutch dignitary’s step-niece’s house?

James’ mood sobered when Mallory took his time activating the room’s soundproof measures. That never bode well.

“Before we begin, I need to make sure you understand that what we’re about to discuss must not leave this room.”

James sat straighter in his chair. He was not known for being subtle or discreet; if Mallory needed either, he had the wrong agent. Maybe he could shake this off and get back to Red Volvo. If he left in the next ten minutes, he’d still make his flight.

“Have you ever seen an Omega through their estrus?”

Not much blindsided 007 these days, but M’s question about did it. Discussing designation-related affairs at the workplace was... just not done. The very word ‘estrus’ was rarely used outside medical contexts. To have it come up in a sensitive debrief could not be good. Bond answered with a short affirmative.

“Excellent.” Mallory rested his elbows on his desk and flattened his palms atop it. “In the name of expediency, I’ll be blunt. Our Quartermaster is an Omega. He was admitted to Medical a few hours ago with what seemed to be a stomach flu but turned out to be the side effects of a bad batch of suppressants. Unfortunately, the doctor says a new dose cannot be administered until the corrupt substance has left his system and the timeframe for that will allow his physiology to resume its
natural cycle. Given that his health is already debilitated, an unfulfilled cycle is highly inadvisable. On the other hand, any instance in which he’s deprived of his discretionary capacities is a matter of national security and as such may only be handled by people with the appropriate clearance.”

“You can’t be serious.”

Whilst James had no problem learning Q was a closeted Omega (which would actually explain quite a lot, especially the boffin’s keenness on being taken seriously), he could not believe MI6 was reassigning one of their best from a major operation to babysitter slash butt-plug duty. Generally accepted opinions aside, Alphas were quite able to see beyond the prospect of an inflated knot, something Mallory himself should know even if the higher-ups played pretend they still lived in an era where both Alphas and Omegas couldn’t think past the stink of their pheromones.

He mustn’t be doing a very good job of keeping his thoughts to himself, because the lines on Mallory’s forehead softened.

“Q understands this.” Then, as a calculated blow, “He was the one who requested you specifically, 007.”

The use of his moniker was a rather unsubtle way of driving home that this was yet another instance of MI6 disposing of James’ knot as they saw fit, which was nowhere near as surprising as the fact that Q apparently trusted him with, well, himself.

The whole thing was absolute bollocks. Anybody who’d ever shared a heat with an Omega would know that they weren’t exactly in a fit state to discuss anything complex enough to let slip sensitive information; MI6’s actual concern could only be that Q would end up mated to an untrustworthy Alpha and be made to quit the Service or backstab them. Either alternative was ridiculous. Long gone were the days when it was believed that bonds could be formed against the will of either mate. Q was one of the most ambitious people James knew and there was no way he was saddling himself with a bond.

However, regardless of his reasonable assessment of the situation, he had to give it to Mallory. The mental image of an Omega in heat was alluring enough, but to picture the clever little Quartermaster saying “Bond” again and again, increasingly breathless and urgent and punctuated by various expletives, irritably correcting his Alpha’s performance until James succeeded at getting them both past words, was quite the incentive. Really, there was only one thing he could say.

“Very well.”

“Go to Medical. As soon as Q is discharged, he’ll be your responsibility. You are to report every twelve hours or if there’s a problem. Dr. Gokhale will be on call. Talk only to her, Tanner, myself or Moneypenny. You may go to either yours or Q’s Service-appointed flats.”

James was already at the door when his boss’ voice stopped him.
“007.” Mallory inhaled slowly, as if what he had to say next bothered him on a personal level. “It goes without saying that a bonded Quartermaster is the very thing we’re trying to avoid here.”

“Of course.”

* * *

Q tugged his cardigan tighter around himself, gripping the fabric to try and lessen the tremors in his hands and hating every second of this. It was all so fucking humiliating. He was extremely careful to monitor his physiology and take every precaution to keep it from becoming an issue, but all it took was a cock-up from the pharmaceutical company for the bloody hormones to take over his life.

He hadn’t had a heat in roughly nine years, not since beginning his doctorate. He’d rather live with the intermittent insomnia, mild kidney overload and low blood-pressure and pass as a waify Beta than fight a thousand battles a day to be taken as a creature capable of rational thought.

Mawdsley had known, of course. She’d actually had a glint in her eyes as she told him that her best people were often the ones with something to prove to the world.

Mallory had been far from ecstatic upon learning about the Quartermaster’s designation, but had seemed appeased by Q’s assurance that it had been a non-issue during his years with the SIS and was extremely unlikely to ever interfere with his professional performance in any way. And up to today it hadn’t.

Not entirely thanks to the suppressants, though. Contrary to their ludicrous advertisement, they didn’t allow one to ‘experience life completely unhindered by the particulars of one’s physiology’. They masked his scent and inhibited his heats, but that was about it. Q was on his own to handle the swarm of bodily responses during day-to-day dealings with various Alphas. Had he been publicly out as an Omega his “delicate sensibilities” might’ve been spared out of socially compliant courtesy, but as it was Q was often on the receiving end of the brunt of a frustrated Alpha’s distress as he walked field agents through all sorts of trouble. When they couldn’t see him he’d often grit his teeth and rub at the back of his head, buying himself a moment to overcome the urge to bare his neck and allow his brain to be shut down so that someone else may take command of the situation. To honestly feel like that, even for a fraction of a second, usually worked like a charm to renew his resolve to get a grip on himself and never, ever let go from being in control of his own life. It made his focus sharp and his voice even, something his minions quickly learned to heed and the agents and other personnel, to trust.

Right now, however, he was about as far from awe-inspiring as possible, laying on his side on an examination bed, hair stuck to his temples with the beginnings of a fever and feeling slightly faint from having retched his guts out not long ago. But the worst part had been the emergency meeting. God, he cringed at the memory. M and Tanner had oozed awkwardness, standing in the little sealed-off room in Medical and listening to Dr. Gokhale’s deliver her diagnosis and recommendations in quiet tones. Might have been the scent he could just feel wafting off himself, and that had to be getting to Mallory, an Alpha, especially in such close quarters. Q wasn’t doing much better himself, although the queasiness had staved off any more embarrassing physiological reactions. Q hadn’t looked away from his knees, feeling fourteen years old as his father and eldest sister discussed what to do with him after his designation had become detectable. That M had looked sincerely apologetic
didn’t make it much less unpleasant when he informed Q that he’d have to be “assisted” by MI6 personnel, since there wasn’t time to clear a civilian. The question that followed was unexpected.

“Do you have a preference?”

He had wanted to laugh. Did he have a preference on who would learn his most shameful secret and be cordially invited to a semi-mandatory sex marathon with a side of being virtually in charge of his well-being while he was a bit too out of it to remember to eat? He had shared a few heats in the past, and not all of them had been pleasant experiences. Some oafs equated biological necessity with lack of discernment and weren’t too happy to find out that being in heat wasn’t the same as being a mindless ragdoll, that an Omega could have preferences and a will of their own even during the maelstrom and wouldn’t gladly have anything done to them for the promise of a big fat knot.

He gave them an answer, was assured that the situation would be seen to swiftly, his Branch’s most pressing projects relayed to R, and then they left him to his own devices. Which mostly consisted of trying not to think about how fast he’d said 007’s name.

He would’ve liked to think that it was because he’d had occasion to witness Bond behaving appropriately towards other Omegas, even between four walls (unbeknownst to field agents, earpieces could be remotely activated even when their bearer had shut them down. Q had once tried to pass on recently-acquired intel to 007 and had been accidentally treated to the audio score of a fellow Omega being very vocal about Bond’s excellence in the sack. Well, the first two seconds had been accidental, and the minutes that followed, not so much. Q just couldn’t bring himself to disconnect, and it wasn’t until Bond double-checked his partner’s interest in being knotted that Q realised his own trousers were tented. He did cut the line then, and zealously scrubbed the audio from the MI6 servers. That night, as he jerked off, his anus even lubricated a bit. He spent the next month biting the inside of his mouth in Bond’s presence, until the careless git obliterated a one-of-a-kind sonar and they could resume their usual, much more comfortable antics of mutual exasperation). But if he were to be honest with himself, it probably had something to do with how Bond was the deadliest person in his acquaintance and Q felt more than a little pathetic and helpless at the moment. Skyfall had been a disaster, but something about how Bond fought tooth and nail, took the matter into his own hands and obstinately refused to concede in the face of impending doom had struck a chord with Q.

He wasn’t so naive as to think he warranted anything resembling the level of dedication devoted to Mawdsley, but Bond had heart and Q could only hope that the same physiological conditioning currently making his sense of smell sharper would trigger the Double-Oh’s better, more protective inclinations.

Dr. Gokhale entered the room. She took his blood pressure, made him drink some Pedialyte and stuck a thermometer under his tongue.

“How do you feel?”
“Look, I stand by my recommendation that you get this cycle fulfilled, but having a random person forced on you can be even worse for your stress levels. Do you want me to talk to M? Because I will.”

“It’s fine,” he grumbled around the thermometer.

She gave him a tired look, probably having seen far too many MI6 personnel choose protocol adherence over their own best interests.

“Your temperature is a bit above normal, but nothing to worry about in your state. Can you stand?”

He cautiously tried to, under her watchful eyes. His balance was passable.

“Washing your face might make you feel better. I’ll be back soon with some light food.”

“Is there a toothbrush?”

As he cleaned his teeth, Q resolutely did not think of how his and Bond’s banter often descended into innuendo, or contemplated how difficult it would be to look the other man in the eye after all of this was over. He concentrated on monitoring his body and keeping from wondering what he would do if Bond declined.

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As 007 made his way to Medical, he adjusted his mental profile of the Quartermaster to include the new information. Q’s actual designation made a lot of sense, if one didn’t buy into the stereotypes about Omegas and high-stress or command posts (and anybody who did would be fast disabused of their notions by sitting through one of Q’s epic scolding’s on behalf of his Branch’s gear, which sent even seasoned Double-Ohs off with their tails between their legs). It even helped clear up a few things, such as the spark underlying many of their interactions and why they never made it past anything that could be brushed off – casual sex between unmated Alphas and Omegas wasn’t unheard of, but it was well outside the confines of office etiquette, or what passed for it in a building full of spies. The whole thing even disappointed James a bit; perhaps the bright smiles he sometimes managed to coax out of the Quartermaster and had, up until now, chalked up to his personal charm were nothing more than Q’s hindbrain getting the better of him, making him susceptible to the baser appeal of somebody he maybe really did think a brute and a dinosaur.

James quickly dismissed that angle. More than smiles or the occasional fond glance, there was a
myriad of doors miraculously opened, hostiles thwarted and silences shared in expectation, relief and exhausted triumph that spoke to the mutual trust he and Q had gradually developed as a highly effective team. Combined with their sizzling physical attraction, it was fair to say that the possibility of a shag had always lurked in their horizon, but this was definitely not at all how James had envisioned it.

He was met outside of Medical by Tanner, who requested his car keys and informed him that the boot would be stocked with groceries and medical supplies. The chief of staff sounded as though she was discussing the weather, but her piercing gaze let 007 know there would be hell to pay if Q had anything bad to say about him afterwards. Fuck, this was possibly the tensest prospect of spending a heat with an Omega James had ever gone through.

He presented himself to Dr. Gokhale with a simple, “I’m here for Q.”

She sized him up critically, then gestured for him to follow.

He was hit by the scent even before they entered the small room. It was a rich, clear announcement of Q’s imminent sexual availability. The lad himself looked almost pitiful in one of his many horrendous cardigans, his black hair even more of a mess than usual, his skin pale except for the spots of colour high on his cheeks. He was nibbling on a plate of crackers. James wanted to put his arms around him at once. Instead, he stood a good few paces away and offered a nod by means of greeting.

The doctor looked between them and listed instructions. They were to make sure Q stayed hydrated. Fruit and biscuits were generally accepted even by the most finicky-stomached Omegas. She would be on call should either of them have any doubts or concerns, she stressed, looking straight at Q until he gave her a vague acknowledging noise.

When it looked like she was done, James checked his watch and addressed Q.

“We should wait a bit longer, if possible. For a quieter exit.”

“That would be preferable.”

“Would you like me to wait outside?”

Q shook his head. “There are things we should talk about.”

“I’ll leave you two to it,” the doctor excused herself and closed the door.

Q looked drained but also alert, strung-up actually. There were many things James wanted to say, both reassuring and playful, but the lad seemed to be keeping upright out of sheer stubbornness. So James stayed exactly where he was, his stance as neutral as possible.
Q’s head was swooning. Fuck. He’d almost forgotten what it felt like, to be near an Alpha at a time like this. And not just any Alpha, but the stuff of his guiltiest sex dreams for longer than he cared to admit. A few more hours and he’d probably be helplessly wet, arsehole throbbing and better judgement severely impaired. Which was exactly why he needed to pull it together for just a bit longer. If any of his professional integrity was to survive this, he and Bond would need to lay some ground rules.

“What exactly did M tell you?”

“That you took a bad batch of suppressants and should be assisted through your cycle.”

Q mulled over the answer, running a finger over the last button of his cardigan. The medical terminology made the whole thing seem manageable, when in fact it was anything but. At least it seemed M had had the grace to keep mum about Q’s preferences. Bond was already plenty smug as it was.

“Well, I suppose at least to one of us it won’t be a completely novel experience.”

“So you’ve never…”

Bond’s voice trailed off. He looked mildly uncomfortable, which was his equivalent of a regular person flushing scarlet. Q was amused enough to almost forget his own predicament for a moment, and was quick to assuage him.

“Oh no, I have! Just never on command.”

Bond, bless him, was quick to bounce back into his customary obnoxiousness. “Hopefully it won’t be too... hard.”

Bond smirked and Q groaned.

“I’m never going to live this down, am I?”

“Wouldn’t count on it.”

“I hear the Triad likes to cut off tongues. Maybe next time I’ll forget to tell you they sealed your primary exit. Would spare us both your sorry excuses for mistreating your equipment.”

“Perhaps. But if you ever want a repeat of this,” Bond gestured between them, “that would make it a lot less fun.”
Q could feel his face heating up. This was exactly why he hadn’t wanted anybody to know that he was an Omega. Everything was bound to become about the four times a year his body desperately needed to get knotted. Never mind all of his studying, his endless work hours, his off-the-charts competence and efficiency; from the moment people started viewing him as an Omega, all they saw was the bloody heats.

His little panic bout stretched long enough for him to witness the dawn of something unprecedented at MI6: James Bond’s contrite expression.

“Come now, Q, you know I’m not one to kiss and tell,” the blond offered.

Q felt himself relax marginally. Now that he thought back on it, Bond’s comment wasn’t very different from their usual back-and-forth, with the exception of referring to an actual situation rather than something implied. The man had been quick to backpedal, probably courtesy of the biological cocktail responsible for Q’s feelings being all over the place, which would make the Alpha in Bond weary of upsetting a prospective mate. Q’s hypothesis was confirmed by the gentleness in the agent’s voice as he next spoke.

“Is there anything in particular I should know?”

Bond was staring at him earnestly, as though prepared to do pretty much anything at his request. It was the same tone he sometimes used in a mission just before kicking down a door and rushing right into danger, a deep breath before all about him was relentless purpose. It always went right to Q’s groin.

_I have a fucking foul mouth, Q wanted to say. I’ll probably make an idiot of myself because right now all I can think about is how soon you’ll be all over me and inside me and I hate it that I can’t seem to look past that and M has probably lost all respect for me and you might too, and I should be assisting Atwell with her exfiltration but instead I’m here and it’s all I can do to hold still and not pounce on you and you’re only here on official request and I can’t even bring myself to feel bad because my stupid body is just so thrilled that we’ll finally fuck and I can feel my brain shutting down do you even have any idea what that feels like except right about now it seems pretty brilliant not to be concerned with anything other than getting buggered into next week I bet you have a huge knot–_

“Q.”

Bond’s near-whisper seemed to rasp against Q’s skin. The Alpha had slipped his hands into his pockets and his shoulders were relaxed, but there was no hiding his flared nostrils and how his gaze had become intent, presumably in response to Q’s state.

Q blinked and forced himself to focus. Bond was removing his suit jacket. Q took a step back in alarm, but the agent held up a placating hand.
“Here, take this. It might trick your body into stopping actively looking for an Alpha.”

Oh. Right. His stupid body must be releasing a bucketload of pheromones. Q put on the jacket, feeling immediately enveloped by Bond’s earthy scent. He took measured breaths, only just keeping from burying his nose in the musk-soaked collar. He felt himself become a tad more centred as his body regrouped for a targeted assault. Warmth started pooling low in his belly.

“My car is on level 3.”

“Then let’s,” replied Q.

For the first time, Q could appreciate the pertinence of Medical having a direct route and dedicated lift connecting it to the carpark levels. Neither he nor Bond spoke as they navigated the hallways, with the Alpha keeping close but not touching. The short lift ride was a study in anticipation, with their scents mingling in the enclosed, stifling space. It wasn’t until they’d both fastened their seatbelts that blue eyes sought Q’s.

“Would you rather stay at yours or mine?”

“Yours.”

Better. First of all because Q felt more than a bit protective of any shred of privacy he could salvage at the moment, secondly because Bond’s flat would likely be imbued with the Alpha’s scent (soothing for both of them at this critical moment), and finally to prevent having awkward memories associated with Q’s own living quarters. This was to be borrowed time, to be later buried away and never ever revisited. He could feel his breathing accelerate at the very thought of what was about to happen, approaching fast regardless of his circuitous trains of thought.

Bond turned the key to bring the DB10 to life and they were off.

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James had spent enough heats with enough Omegas to know that they weren’t all the same. Some things were common, like the heightened sex drive and body temperature and a lack of appetite, but others could vary from person to person or even from heat to heat, such as headaches, mood swings and even, on one occasion, light sensitivity. He’d thought that was what Q meant to discuss back at Medical, but it seemed to be too late for that. They’d just have to course-correct as needed. Luckily, improvisation was one of James’ strongest suits.
Q was uncharacteristically silent as they climbed the four flights of stairs to James’ flat, Q ahead, his frame made to look even slighter under James’ jacket. The Alpha followed close behind, loaded with shopping bags. The scents of his neighbours bothered James in a way they didn’t when there was no Omega to be possessive of. He was relieved to lock his front door and have Q safe in a space that smelled of nobody but them. They were in luck, too; he’d spent the last four days in town and had actually slept here, all highly unusual for him.

Q stood to the right of the door, taking in his surroundings. James proceeded to the kitchen.

“Make yourself at home, I’ll just put these away.”

MI6 had gotten them bread, cheese, cold cuts, sliced cantaloupe, tangerines, yogurt, crackers, jam, bottled water, tea, biscuits and milk, but also toiletries, gauze, disinfectant and, most embarrassingly, condoms. There were two changes of clothes in Q’s size. The kit gave James pause as what he was about to do finally sunk in, and not just the fun part. Not only was he being trusted with one of Britain’s most precious assets, this would be the first heat he shared with an Omega he cared more than “I’d rather you didn’t die if at all possible” since Vesper.

Fuck. Feelings, even vague late realisations of camaraderie, were never helpful. Emotional decision-making was for amateurs; all it did was get one unnecessarily exposed. He’d better get his head level, for the pheromone-free version of the Quartermaster was spiteful enough to send him into the field with nothing but a paperclip and cork should he botch this up. He just needed to be a good shag and never breathe a word of this for as long as he lived.

Fortunately, sex and pretending things had never happened were also among 007’s sharpest skills.

“Bond?”

He inwardly shook off his new, inconvenient self-awareness and turned to find Q leaning against the counter. His stance was relaxed but there was a coiled edge to his gaze as it roamed over James’ body. His scent was thicker, moist with a fresh note, and something flared pleasantly in James’ chest as he recognised a whiff of himself in there, probably on account of his jacket. Part of him wanted to lick a long stripe up Q’s lovely neck and mark him well and good, maybe leave a string of bite marks on his shoulder.

“I think I’m ready.”

“Then c’mere.”

His voice came out gruffer than he’d intended, but if anything Q seemed to like that. He closed the distance between them, staring at James as though he were fascinating. There was a secretive turn to the curl of his lips, as if he knew something nobody else did, or maybe only six people in the world; it was that expression that did James in, and he finally leaned forward to brush his lips against Q’s,
lick against the bottom one and be granted entrance, swallow Q’s quiet moan as he leisurely explored the younger man’s mouth. His hands settled on the slim hips of their own accord, but he wasn’t the one who brought their bodies flush together. Q sighed and broke the kiss to nuzzle at James’ neck, peppering small kisses and licks over his skin and holding onto his upper arm and shoulder as he rutted against James’ left thigh. James swore under his breath and let one of his hands slide down to cup Q’s arse, tipping his head to provide better access to his scent-glands. The Omega was half-hard against him, moving in shallow little thrusts.

James let him explore as he pleased, and soon his mouth was claimed for a more heated kiss as the nibble fingers worked the buttons of his shirt and trousers. Then Q was on his knees and James wanted to get him off the kitchen floor but could only let out a breathy “fuck” as reddened lips closed around his cock.

Q was… really good at this, he soon realised, as his mind became increasingly dominated by arousal. He later noticed that Q had unzipped his own trousers and was touching himself. He was momentarily blinded by the very attractive prospect of having Q cum while sucking him off, but figured the lad deserved a more memorable first time with James Bond. They’d have plenty of time for all variations over the next few days.

He buried his fingers in the dark unruly hair and tugged lightly to get Q’s attention. Watching the Omega slide off his saliva-glistening prick while staring straight at him was easily one of the hottest things James had ever seen, and he damn near groaned when Q added a teasing lick to the head before releasing him.

“Up here.”

They stepped out of their trousers and he pulled Q’s shirt and undershirt off, ripping a few buttons in the process. Soon they had skin contact from neck to toe. James ran his hands over Q’s sides, buried his nose against the spot where the Omega’s neck met his shoulder.

“When you said you were ready, did you mean…” he let one of his hands trail down, cupping one of Q’s buttocks.

“Yes,” Q sighed as James’ fingertips ghosted over his cleft. It was slick and inviting.

“Condom?”

“I’m clean, and I know you’re required to be.”

“So I can just–”

“Yes.”

“Tell me,” he commanded, then proceeded to nip at Q’s bony shoulder, grinding their erections and rubbing his finger against the Omega’s arsehole.

Q hissed, then latched off in an urgent whisper.
“I want you in me. Your cock, then your knot, again and again.” His blunt nails dug into James’ back and he was thrusting erratically. “Fill me up, Bond. Make me come while you’re inside me. Fuck, I’ve wanted this for so fucking long.”

James slid his hands down the Omega’s thighs and hoisted him up, bracing his back against a wall, then lined himself up and pushed in. He swore against Q’s collarbone, mind overloaded with the feel of Q’s delicious arse around him, their mingled scents, Q’s weight on his arms, his tiny moan then low-pitched keeling as James started to move his hips in potent thrusts, giving his little Omega the good hard fuck they were both hungry for. Q chanted a litany of breathless yes-yes-yes as James kept a steady pace, feeling his knot begin to swell. Q’s enthusiasm doubled as he picked up on that, and he leaned down for a messy kiss.

“Can you reach your cock, love?”

Q could, and snuck a hand between them to stroke himself wantonly, muttering something complimentary about James’ girth. James felt Q’s muscles contract around him, and caught sight of the younger man’s smirk as he came undone in long spurts inside Q. He kept on thrusting until he felt Q spill hotly against his abdomen. With the last of his strength, he slowly spun them around and lowered himself so that he was sitting on the floor with the Omega straddling his lap as they waited for the knot to recede.

Q rested his head against James’ shoulder, sniffing contently at the spot behind his hear, and James leisurely stroked the younger man’s scalp.

*Q quickly familiarised himself with Bond’s flat while the other man put away MI6’s heat-package. There wasn’t much to see, a testament to how little time the man actually spent here. It was a point of passage, of transit in-between the actual events in Bond’s life. In that regard, it was very appropriate for their situation. Q’s struggle with heats had always been the same: just quit being a controlling prat and enjoy it, his body seemed to say. For years he’d used his brainpower and scientific subterfuges to finagle out of heats, and now it had caught up to him with the ludicrousness factor amped up to that of a low-budget porno: medical orders to shag the Alpha of his preference. Bond was being awfully good about the whole thing, and it rubbed Q the wrong way. He resented being the only one uncomfortable with their current arrangement. It killed Q a little that even something he’d really, really wanted wasn’t happening as a consequence of his own choices. Much as he’d like to be able to give in, enjoy the fuck out of this heat and deal with mortification later, he’d struggled too hard and too long for control of his own fate to do anything other than try his best to retain even a modicum of agency. He’d put more thought into doing this with Bond than he cared to admit, and the many reasons why he’d always decided it was a bad idea hadn’t vanished, even though his better
judgement soon would. The periods of lucidity during a heat were relatively few, in the brief windows between having desire sated and its next peak.

Right now, for instance, he was having trouble concentrating. He became increasingly aware of Bond’s scent, of his own breathing pattern, fastening heartbeat, sensitised penis and the beginnings of dampness in his butt. It seemed he’d have to put off thinking for a bit.

Bond needed only to be told get ready, set, go. You’d think he’d never had his cock sucked in his life, the way he stared at Q.

Later, as they caught their breaths on the kitchen floor, Q let himself be anchored by the feel of the Alpha’s knot in him. His mind was still cloudy, making too much of the light, rhythmic touch on his scalp. His arms and legs were limp. His glasses were foggy and askew as he buried his nose behind Bond’s ear, drawing deep, luscious intakes of the other man’s scent.

It took him a moment to realise he wasn’t coming down, but instead gearing up.

“All ready?” Bond gave him an amused smile, then pressed a kiss to his temple and took hold of his tender member. “I’ve got you.”

He stroked Q to completion, lazy at first and then faster as he mapped out Q’s preferences, licked up the side of his throat and then the shell of his ear with a whisper that sounded like “fucking gorgeous”. Q couldn’t be sure because he came right then, with a vice grip on Bond’s shoulders.

He was still panting as he felt the knot swell down. He shifted his weight to his knees and sat back, detaching himself from the Alpha. There was some grumbling on James’ part about old age and joints, but Q paid it no mind. It wasn’t until he’d been helped to his feet, led by the hand to Bond’s en-suite and had his torso wiped clean of semen that he felt his thought process sluggishly slot into gear. His glasses had been removed. He squinted and watched as Bond cleaned himself. The man was in peak physical condition, his toned muscles a promise of power and endurance. He caught Q staring and raised an eyebrow.

“At least let me have some water, will you?”

He followed Bond back to the kitchen and shook his head at the offered bottle of water. He watched the Alpha’s Adam’s apple bob as he drank, then conceded to have a few sips himself. As soon as he was done, he stepped into Bond’s space and reached to tug him in for a kiss. His hands roamed over the other man’s torso and he made approving little rumbling noises, mouthed at Bond’s jawline and pressed their naked bodies together. He was pushed back then, his clinging attempts easily countered by the bulkier man.

“Enough of this tile floor. Let’s get you somewhere more comfortable,” Bond told him firmly.
He tried to dig his heels in, but ended up being frog-marched back to the bedroom and pushed into the bed. Even as he glared up at the Alpha he could feel a wolfish smile tugging his lips upwards, and there was a happy note to the snarl he let out as Bond descended on him, using his superior weight to try and pin him in place. Bad odds had never stopped Q, so he pushed back. They struggled and rolled around, Q doing his damnedest to gain the upper hand while Bond was all controlled and effective movements, up until the moment Q bit his wrist. Something snapped, and within seconds Q found himself on his side, wrists pinned above his head and feet trapped by the other man’s. He could feel Bond breathing heavily against the back of his neck, and slickness dripping between his legs. He was so hard it hurt. He tried to break free, only to have the Alpha’s hold tighten. For a long moment they stayed like that. Then Q slowly, silently turned his head into the mattress, baring his neck.

It was like flipping a switch. His limbs were released. Bond rubbed at his wrists, then down his arm and sides, mouthed at his shoulder and began fondling his balls. Q moaned and folded his top leg, reaching blindly behind himself to tug at Bond’s hair. There was no purchase, but the Alpha seemed to grasp his intention. He parted Q’s buttocks and moved his hips forward, lining the head of his cock to Q’s arsehole. Q pushed back impatiently, but strong hands settled on his hipbones and stilled him.

“Hush,” growled Bond as he took his odious sweet time entering Q.

Q whined his displeasure until the Alpha’s cock was fully sheathed in him. One of Bond’s hands was pressed against Q’s chest and the other had closed around his prick, thumb teasing the head. Q tried to roll his hips, but the hand touching him moved away to hold him in place.

“Shh. Let me take care of you.”

Bond’s mouth was close to Q’s left earlobe, dangerously close to the spot for a mating bite. Q was frozen by that realisation, before it was wiped away by the pleasure waves as Bond started ramming into him in earnest. He kept a regular, relentless pace, a bit slower than Q would’ve preferred but enough to set his body on fire.

Things got faster, and then slower as the Alpha’s knot started to swell again. Q moaned and shuddered, and was pulled close and held still as the white-hot waves washed over him. This, this was what this whole business was all about, and it seemed gloriously worth it as he was filled by the engorged knot. Bond was pumping into him shallowly now, short and slow, dragging it out. He was jerking Q off in time with his thrusts, pushing him to the edge from where he could almost taste bliss. He lost track of time then, hovering in delight for longer than he’d ever thought possible as Bond expertly worked his nerve ends, until an unstoppable crescendo swept him and he had the most violent orgasm of his life.

Not long after, Bond swore hotly against his nape as he came.

They fell asleep sweaty, entangled and spent.
It was still dark when Q woke up. He was alone in the bed. It smelled of Bond, himself and everything they’d been doing. Good God. There was dry cum on his belly, and some of Bond’s had dripped down his thighs. And yet Q felt like a king. He revelled in it for a bit before making it to the en-suite. He didn’t bother getting dressed; his groin was already giving signs that it would want more action soon.

“Q?” There was an alarmed note to Bond’s voice as it came from the bedroom.

“In here.”

He returned to the bedroom. Bond stood at the door, also naked, carrying a tray with two teacups and a sandwich. It was quite the sight. Q snickered. It didn’t seem to disturb the Alpha in the slightest.

“I thought you might want something to eat.”

“Thank you. Maybe not on the bed?”

They settled on the sofa, keeping a companionable distance. The tea was to his taste. He would’ve been satisfied with half of the sandwich, but Bond stared at him so sternly that he rolled his eyes and shoved the rest of it in his mouth. Bond smirked and planted a noisy kiss on his stuffed cheek while he was still chewing, which somehow seemed more inappropriate than everything they’d been getting to. He glared daggers at the other man but, as usual, it seemed to bounce right off of him. And much to Q’s horror, he was turned on. The heat had a part in it, of course, but so did sitting next to a naked James Bond who looked mighty chuffed with himself for having gotten his Omega to nap and eat. Q wanted to slam his forehead against the coffee table. He would never be able to un-see this, it would plague him to the end of his days, the knowledge that Bond was a considerate Alpha. It made the want inside him burn low; rather than all-consuming, it was the (much worse) long-lasting kind. Oh bugger.

He stole a sideways glance at Bond, who had zeroed in on Q’s hardening cock. Good. It would be much, much better to have this whole thing be about that. Q licked his lips slow and deliberate, then pressed himself against Bond’s side, running one hand down his (spectacularly fit) torso. The Alpha’s heartbeat too was accelerated. He closed his fist around Bond’s prick and stroked him a few times, watching closely and feeling heady as the other man grew hard.

He let go just enough to straddle Bond. By then Q’s own erection was up as well, its tip leaving a glistening trail where it brushed against Bond’s stomach. The Alpha rested one hand against the small of Q’s back, cradled his head and leaned up to nuzzle against his temple.
“Shower?”

Q made a noise of protest and pushed his pelvis down, signalling his own plans very clearly. Bond licked the shell of his left ear, causing a tiny moan to get caught in Q’s throat.

“I’ll make it worth your while.”

He nipped down the side of Q’s neck, weakening the Omega’s initial impulse to reject any sort of delay. Maybe they could try multi-tasking.

“Okay.”

Showering was a sensory onslaught. Bond crowded him against the wall as soon as they got inside the stall and claimed his mouth in a knee-weakening kiss. He didn’t let up kissing or petting as he shampooed Q’s hair then diligently lathered every inch of his body. When he realised his cock wasn’t being cleaned as much as jacked off, Q made to push Bond away, not keen on being diverted from his initial goal. But the Alpha was a quick study and licked his ear again, with a husky promise that Q let him take the edge off, “it’ll feel better later.”

Later, Bond kept steadying hands on Q’s hipbones and watched with hooded eyes as the Omega rode him to his heart’s content all the way to completion. Q wasn’t sure about better, but he did last longer and since that extra time was filled with bliss he decided Bond’s next suggestions should be given due consideration.

* * *

Day two was demanding, even by James’ standards. The bedroom air was stale and the sheets ruined before noon.

His sleep was interrupted by Q all but humping his thigh. He manoeuvred himself so that they could suck each other off, intending to placate the Omega enough to buy them both a few more hours of rest. But a perfunctory finger found Q slick and still loose from their earlier exertions, and the lad let out the sweetest little moan as James sunk into him, then rocked back greedily, long and purposeful, until James pushed himself in, plastered his lips against Q’s nape and fist ed him all the way to climax.

Afterwards, he had the vague impression he said some embarrassingly sweet things to Q while they were knotted together, but his memory was fuzzy. By the time he could pull out, his stomach was protesting the prolonged neglect. Q started nipping at his shoulder and he countered with a firm,
“Breakfast.”

Q whined, and James chuckled and pressed a kiss against his forehead, then enunciated clearly, “Food.”

That earned him a mock-hurt look with a humorous twinkle in it. Knowing when to keep pushing, he added, “And we could do with some clean-up, too.”

Q rolled his eyes but let James wipe them with a damp towel until he could be reasonably certain they wouldn’t stick to any furniture. He pulled on a pair of old pants and passed one to Q as well. They barely stayed on his slim hips. It was brilliant.

They made it to the kitchen. He gave Q a yogurt and started putting together a cheese and sausage omelette, shooting glances over his shoulder at the lad perched up on his counter. His shoulder holster was also there, and as soon as Q saw it, he lost interest in the yogurt.

James tended not to like anyone’s grubby fingers on his handguns, but to Q he would make an exception. Not only had he sat through more than one clarification as to how the Walther was technically Q’s gun, but it was a pleasant sight, the boffin’s slender fingers running expertly over the muzzle. He knew Q had never shot a living target, but that didn’t keep him from knowing guns inside out and being a decent marksman. He was familiar with weapons and it showed in the easy moves with which he weighted the gun in his hand, made sure the safety was on and took aim at James’ armchair. Something made him frown, and he leaned in for a closer inspection of the Walther.

“What did you do, use it as a crowbar?”

“Smashed a padlock to liberate a getaway yacht.”

Q snorted, unusually inelegant and amused rather than peeved by James’… creative equipment use. Huh.

“Well, it needs to be set straight or the best aim in the world won’t help you. Make sure to bring it by Q-Branch before your next assignment.”

Q’s voice died down at the end of the sentence. It would seem he didn’t like to be talking shop in their current situation, even though something in James’ chest warmed at it.

“Will do. Can you please get the plates and cups? Cupboard right above your head.”

It spoke volumes to Q’s altered state that he let his attention be diverted that easily.

Brief as the exchange was, it would haunt James for the weeks to come, this taste of a life he
could’ve had, coming home to something other than a flag and ideals that had seen better days.

* * *

As the sun set down on day two of his biological time-bomb, Q’s thought process began timid attempts to navigate the pheromone bog.

“I don’t suppose Tanner’s care-package includes cigarettes?”

Bond obligingly got off the bed and rummaged through a drawer in his wardrobe. A packet landed neatly against Q’s chest. Benson & Hedges.

“I didn’t know you smoked,” said Bond around a cigarette of his own, sliding back into bed.

“Only on occasion.”

Bond lit his cigarette, then offered the flame to Q.

“And which one is this?”

“What do you mean?”

“Is this a very good situation or a very bad one?”

Q blew smoke form the corner of his mouth and said, eyebrows raised teasingly, “I thought that would be obvious.”

Bond smirked.

“Well, I am putting my back into it.”

“Just so you know, when you say things like that and get a prolonged silence over the comm, this is what’s going on at HQ,” he informed Bond primly while flipping him off.

If anything, Bond’s smile grew sharper.
“Is the blush a package deal? It’s quite lovely.”

“You do realise it’s very bad form to point out to a blushing person that they’re blushing.”

“Then I pray you’ll accept my sincerest apologies. Perhaps some reparatory fellatio would be in order?”

Bond’s mocking posh tone was ruined by his persistent smirk. Q’s first impulse was to tell him to piss off, but instead he found himself returning the Alpha’s wolfish smile and saying, “It just might.”

So much for wanting something besides sex. But he could hardly blame himself when Bond was eyeing him intently, pupils dilated, cheeks hollowed and lips wrapped rather obscenely around the cigarette, then in the shape of a small “o” to puff out smoke.

“Are you keen to finish that cigarette?”

“Not really.”

Bond took it from him and stubbed both their cigarettes out. He then reached for Q’s hand and began mouthing the very finger that had been used earlier to insult him. He was smirking around it, very aware that he had forever ruined the gesture’s effect, but Q wasn’t in the mood to be anything but pleased in anticipation.

Bond worried his way down the back of Q’s hand, around the heel of his hand and inside his arm, then moved to the shoulder, where he grazed his teeth a hair’s breadth away from the mating bite area. It made Q’s nerve-ends tingle down to his toes, his body tensing up while also heating up. He let out a muffled gasp as Bond pushed him on his stomach and pressed up against his side, laying half atop him, just enough to let Q feel his weight, warmth and stiffening erection. He kissed, licked and nipped along Q’s spine, his left buttock and inner thigh, which was already slick again. Bond lapped at it, lengthy raspy stripes at one thigh and then the other, working from each knee up and ending with his nose against Q’s perineum while the tip of his tongue traced very small circles behind Q’s balls. He kept a hand on the small of Q’s back, large and firm. Q’s breathing was short and fast, and he moaned as Bond mouthed his scrotum. He was feeling exposed, open to exploration and strangely thrilled at it. He’d had his arse eaten before, but never during a heat, when sensitivity seemed to be increased by a billion and the slightest probing against the rim made him want to whimper, rut against the mattress and generally do anything that would get him more. He was achingly hard and just as wet.

Putting two syllables together was a feat.

“That’s not necessary.”

“Hmm-mm,” acquiesced Bond, sticking his tongue inside him.
Q swore against the pillow, canted his hips and spread his legs further apart. Bond tongue-fucked him past coherence, then tugged him onto his hands and knees and entered him in a single motion. He took hold of Q’s prick and pounded into him until they were sated and knotted, a breathy tangle of limbs.

Each of them had a new cigarette after that.

* * *

It was sort of embarrassing, but it wasn’t until day three that it occurred to Q to check on life outside Bond’s flat.

“Do you have a spare charger? I think my phone died the day we got here.”

“I feel like I should be offended,” said Bond, even as he handed Q the charger from his own bedside table. “You’re in bed with me and thinking about e-mails.”

“Maybe you’re losing your touch,” Q teased dryly.

Bond dismissively lifted a shoulder in a minor shrug.

“Workaholics are always hard. It’s tricky, competing with somebody’s actual passion.”

Q didn’t know what to say to that, so he just kept his head down and played it off as though his electronic inbox held his undivided attention. There was nothing particularly urgent; a couple of messages from R, letting him know things were under control at Q-Branch and that everybody wished his family situation would work out well (so that was how Tanner had spun it). There were a bunch of automated system e-mails with updates on ongoing projects, budget projections and other such record-related matters. It was a bit disconcerting to find out that Eve had been right and MI6 hadn’t fallen apart without him for a couple of days (he’d actually only ever absented himself three times since he’d started with the Service, all of them on medical orders, two of which were only technical absences since he’d successfully managed to set up ways of staying effective from the comfort of his living room, just as he’d told Bond he could do on their very first meeting at the National Gallery).

And perhaps the hormones were still overruling his best judgement, but his phone didn’t seem to offer any matters more pressing than the current circumstances – naked on a bed with James Bond stretched beside him, all toned muscles, days-old greying stubble and smelling of them and sex.

Q put the phone away and turned on his side. His gaze swept unhurriedly from the Alpha’s crossed ankles all the way up to the knowing smile Q now knew meant Bond was fully aware of the effect
he had on his Quartermaster and was rather pleased by it.

“What, no national emergency?”

“Afraid not.”

“Good, I have a local one that could use your talents,” Bond purred, cupping Q’s head and pulling him in for a kiss, pressing up against him so as to make his hardening erection noticeable.

The snogging was hot, wet and unhurried, each breath bringing Q another dose of the Alpha’s intoxicating aroused scent. His backside was slicking up anew, his world once more narrowing down to the feel of Bond’s firm body under him, the soft vibration of his moans and the fingertips tracing the curve of his spine.

* * *

A rather vexing number of Q’s wanking scenarios involved sharing a heat with Bond. This was different from everything he had imagined, in that it was dreadfully better. Bond looked every bit as good covered in nothing but a thin sheen of sweat as one could have extrapolated from seeing him in one of his countless bespoke suits, and the way he moved and touched Q, the rumble of his voice and the calm strength in how he adjusted their positions, all that Q could have successfully compartmentalised in a tiny box labelled “grade A Alpha”, but the sensation of something unknotting low in his throat as Bond tutted him away from MI6’s duffle and lent him one of his own soft and worn t-shirts, several sizes too large and with its owner’s scent as good as woven into the cotton fibres, he was honestly at a loss how to deal with.

* * *

Three days. They’d been holed up together for three days, and it still threw James off a little to watch Q wander about the bedroom naked. The last rays of sunlight played across his smooth back, directing James’ gaze down to the swell of his lovely pert arse.

“I’m making tea. Do you want any?”

“Yes, thank you.”

He held up James’ battered robe. “May I?”

James nodded his permission. He lasted an impressive full minute before resigning himself to his fate, hunting down a pair of boxer shorts and settling down on the sofa, ostensibly checking his mobile
while keeping Q on his peripheral vision.

The phone chirped, alerting Q to his presence. The Omega frowned defensively at him.

“I’m quite capable of managing tea on my own, I assure you.”

“I know.”

Something in his answer or tone placated Q, who looked surprised for a moment before turning back towards the kettle. James watched the younger man go about it, moving with relative familiarity in his kitchen. The phone on his hand felt heavy as a brick, but years of training and experience enabled him to keep his voice light.

“Tanner says she’ll come by in the morning to take you to your flat.”

“All right.”

Q’s voice and body language were level, giving no indication of how he took their imminent parting. Even though James wasn’t on a rut, just the overdrive brought on by mounting an Omega through their heat, he wasn’t exactly thrilled at the prospect of having Q yanked away from him.

Well, he’d better get started on stomping away that clinginess. In a few hours they would go back to polite society, workplace regulations and personal space, all of which seemed silly and dispensable as he watched Q prepare their tea and bring it over to the living room, handing James the cup with a splash of milk in it. The lad seemed more focused than he had been during the previous days, halfway to the demeanour James was used to having at the other end of his comm but still made softer by his bedhead and state of partial undress. And, of course, there was his fresh, entrancing Omega scent that would be the absolute worst to banish from his updated mental image of the young Quartermaster, along with his clever quirk of lips as he contracted around James’ knot and coaxed an extra spurt out of him.

Fuck, he really needed to get a grip on himself. The sooner, the better.

“I can sleep on the sofa.”

“Don’t be absurd, it’s your bed.” Q sipped his tea and added in a measured voice, with the barest quirk of an eyebrow, “Besides, I was hoping we could do better tonight than sleep.”

James’ relief had him on the verge of chuckles, but Q was blushing a bit and might not take that very well. And whilst peaking-heat Q was marvellous in his unashamed directness, there was something appealing about this Q, slightly uncomfortable but still motivated enough to stoop down to a little lewdness.
“I’m all ears.”

“You know, after Gibraltar that sentence has lost all meaning, coming from you.”

“I thought we’d agreed to put that behind us.”

“You used nearly an entire month’s budget to whack somebody out!”

“At least you got to report that thing worked at all.”

“It would’ve worked just fine for its intended use if you’d snapped the hatch open like I showed you.”

“Blasted thing was jammed.”

There it was, the ever-present thrumming energy between them, only now it was far too easy to make out its sensual undercurrents. Q had a determined glint in his eyes that made James want to enter him nice and slow and then see how fast he could get him to become unable to articulate snappy sentences.

Except it might be interesting to drag this out instead; their banter was familiar enough territory to allow James a chance to regain his footing.

“How about we get some proper food into you?”

“My culinary expertise ends at tea and toast.”

“We’ll order in.”

“Are you certain you won’t rip the delivery boy’s head off?”

“I don’t know what Graham’s been saying, but I’m a paragon of self-restraint,” James assured him, mock-offended.

“Are you now?”

“But perhaps you could stay in the bedroom when they get here. And suck me off beforehand. Just to be safe.”

Q rolled his eyes and tried unsuccessfully to conceal his smile behind his teacup.

“I suppose it would be irresponsible to endanger a civilian.”

“Dreadfully.”
Later that night, as they lay worn out and on the outskirts of sleep, James missed out on Q’s wistful whispered thanks.

* * *

The following morning, Q was roused by sounds of someone moving about in the bedroom. He blinked owlishly and reached for his glasses. Bond stood by the bed, freshly showered, clean-shaven, buttoning up a crisp shirt and looking entirely more put together than anybody had a right to after three days of something ‘debauchery’ didn’t quite begin to cover.

Q didn’t groan, but it was a near thing.

“Good morning. I’m going to make breakfast. Would you like some eggs?”

“Just toast, thanks.”

Bond nodded and left the room. Q sat up, running a hand through his hair. This was it. This was day one pheromone-free and 100% aware of the absolutely bloody mortifying situation he was in.

He spotted Bond’s phone on the pillow and took it, intending to check the time. There was a message from a private number.

< * ETA 35 minutes. MT * >

There was a message history between Bond and Tanner, six messages spaced in 12-hour intervals all the way back from when this madness had begun.

< JB: NTR >
< JB: NTR >
< JB: NTR >
< JB: NTR >
< JB: NTR >
< JB: NTR >
Nothing to report. Bond had probably been told to keep MI6 informed of… developments in their situation, and chose to protect their privacy. Q’s privacy, really.

He put the phone back. It was too much. His sex life had become his boss’ concern, a colleague had been pulled from an important project to see to his personal issues, and the Chief of Staff was wasting her time in London’s morning traffic, all to his benefit. Now, Q was well-aware of his value to MI6 as an employee, but this was something else. Something like loyalty.

Well, there’d be plenty of time to be at a loss for how to feel. Right now he needed to show them all that his uselessness was strictly confined to biological inevitabilities, and that he could bounce back fast.

He made the bed, showered, brushed his teeth and put some effort into making his hair presentable, then binned his disposable toiletries. Feeling self-conscious, he opened the window to try and get the room as close as possible to what it had been before he’d taken up three entire days of Bond’s life.

He located his used clothing, bundled it up and as he stufed it inside his messenger bag, he heard the front door open. There were greetings, then high-heeled footsteps.

When he entered the living room, it was to find Bond and Tanner having tea at the small dining table. He joined them, sitting down in front of a plate of toast.

“Hello, Q.”

No sooner had Tanner addressed him than an acrid smell hit his nostrils. Apparently, the Alpha in Bond had put up a territorial stink, not happy about the encroaching on a potential mating space, even by a Beta. Q kept his head down. He wanted to reach under the table and offer some tactile reassurance, a brush of fingers against Bond’s knee, but Tanner was giving the Double-Oh her strictest no-nonsense scowl. Any action that indicated either Q or Bond had even the slightest intention of letting anything from the past few days carry into their further dealings wouldn’t be welcomed.

Nobody spoke as Bond got up, went to the fridge and returned with some of the cantaloupe. Tanner sipped her tea, and Q poured some for himself.

“Bond, you’ll resume work this afternoon. Q will only come in the day after tomorrow. The official story is that Q was away on a family emergency and 007 was pursuing a lead on Red Volvo.”

Quiet acquiescence all around.
Minutes later, Q followed the Chief of Staff down the stairs trying his best not to get hung up on how Bond had visibly swallowed as he stood under the doorframe to see them off, eyes darting between him and Tanner and, to a connoisseur’s eye, looking absolutely gutted. Q hadn’t managed better than a weak wave goodbye.

The car ride was the shortest report Q ever gave the SIS (“I’m fine”), followed by a briefing. He received a small case containing new suppressants, which he was to inject himself with the night before going back to work. He should see Dr. Gokhale first thing for a follow-up, and he was also not to be 007’s handler for a minimum of six weeks.

“Delegate, make excuses, do whatever you have to, but put some distance between you,” stressed Tanner, both manicured hands on the steering wheel and thankfully not looking at him. Then, in a kinder tone, “It’s for his own good. Handlers need to be level-headed.”

Q nodded numbly.

His flat was comforting, safe and entirely too quiet. It smelled of the faint nothing the suppressants made his scent into. For the first time in a long time, his dulled scent felt chaffing.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys had fun with this chapter :) Prepare for DRAMA *cackles*
007’s return to MI6 wasn’t very different from touching the ground after any strenuous field mission, except there was no written report to dodge. He received his orders: he was to be outfitted and leave to continue pursuing Red Volvo in two days time.

He went about his half business day without incident and was able to neatly push aside his latest assignment right until the moment he entered his car. The upholstery was imbued with Q’s scent, rich with moist heat notes and flooding James with sensory memories of the past three days.

His flat wasn’t any better. It had seemed fun at the time, but now there was hardly a piece of furniture that didn’t have echoes of gasps and moans. The whole place smelled of him and Q, way past what could be dispelled by changing the sheets or letting in some air. The cigarettes brought him no comfort or relief.

* * *

Being a delicate little Omega, Q was granted two extra days of leave after his and Bond’s joint ordeal.

Rationally, he knew that spacing their return was a tactically sound choice to prevent people from connecting the dots between his absence and 007’s, and that MI6 was handling the situation about as well as could be expected (well-meaning and bloody intrusive). He could understand their decision, but couldn’t bring himself to respect it; not when it left him with heaps of free time that his hormone-addled brain seemed bent on filling with sodding self-awareness, of all things.

There was the heat’s toll on his body, not particularly fit to begin with and worn rather thin by the extended exertion. His arse and legs were sore from all the unusual activity, and there was this odd knot of the loose-limbed ease that followed a good shag and a pinch of restlessness too vague to pinpoint.

Well, that may not be exactly accurate.

All right, so he missed the fuck out of Bond’s physical presence. It was only to be expected. Three days were the documented heat duration average, but some Omegas had it stretch a little longer.
was a stark contrast to bear a hormonal onslaught surrounded by olfactory reassurance that one’s needs would be fulfilled, and then to deal with the dregs of it all by his lonesome in his scentless flat.

It most decidedly was not feelings. Couldn’t be, after three lousy days of chemically-induced proximity. It had tasted like intimacy and closeness but had only ever been desire, on both sides. Both he and Bond were too independent for anything else, ‘twas why the whole thing had been sanctioned in the first place; minimal disturbance of the status quo, just a blip in their routine, no consequences.

Q’s heartfelt resolve to quell these attachment pangs wasn’t at all helped by the trivia knowledge he now had on James Bond, including but not limited to the fact that the man needed reading glasses, shaved with a straight razor and owned a complete set of high-end drinking glasses but only a handful of plates. That he had a drawer filled entirely with handkerchiefs, kept a spare ammo clip and an Eickhorn combat knife on his bedside table and was adept at neat intimate grooming. That Mawdsley’s ceramic bulldog held pride of place atop the coffee table on the otherwise barren living room.

He reached out to R whom, unfailing as ever, forwarded him the godsend of a programming pickle: a needed update on a system designed by a former MI6 employee that had likely been sacked for failing to follow protocol on code documenting & commenting practices.

Never had incompetence been more appreciated.

* * *

James deliberately didn’t take his Walther to be repaired until the day Q was to resume work. It was a tight schedule, but he thought it was important to assess their working relationship before he left. Q had seemed on board with everything back at his flat, but their parting had been stilted and the fact that the lad had gone lengths to keep his physiology private suggested their rapport might be a bit worse for wear. It was not uncommon, following instances of shared intense experiences; there were men James had served with in the Navy that he would give his right arm not to run into, ever.

And even though he’d half expected it, it still felt bleeding wrong when Q brushed him off with barely a look and an absent-minded instruction that his minion saw to the barrel of 007’s gun, “it needs realigning, make sure to use the newer equipment, the old one’s fixed base isn’t exactly fixed anymore”.

Fifteen hours later, when James checked in with Q-Branch to request a digital pharmaceutical security clearance badge, instead of the usual rehash of the innovation versus tried efficiency debate he got a chirpy minion’s “it’ll be on your phone in a moment, 007”.

It was entirely possible that Q was needed on a more sensitive mission at the moment. For all he was constantly accused of having a toddler’s sense of self-importance, James knew the Quartermaster was a scarce resource (002 had once whinged at length about him hogging Q, at which the boffin had thrown his hands in the air in exasperation and clarified that her motorcycle repairs were taking
months because he was actually having to rebuild the blasted thing from scrap).

At last, all plausible deniability fell flat two days later, when James’ face was scrambled from east Brussel’s CCTV by a very competent, very professional, very not-Q person.

It was further cemented when the remainders of his kit were collected with no scolding, just a slightly-shy-of-starstruck question of whether the Walther’s barrel alignment had been to his satisfaction. James mustered a tight smile and assured Wai that it had worked just fine, even as his chest collapsed at the knowledge that Q was actively avoiding him.

It wasn’t at all surprising. And if James ached to run his nose up the length of that lovely neck and burrow in to make sure there were no traces of distress in Q’s scent, that was well outside mission parameters and his own fucking problem.

* * *

All things considered, the official directive to keep away from Bond and carry on gave Q some much-welcome breathing room.

There were a handful of out Omegas at MI6, but none in senior positions or anything related to field operations; mostly they worked what was deemed low-stress jobs – canteen, secretarial pool, office supplies. Nothing officially entrusted with split-second decisions that could cost a human life.

It didn’t seem complete bollocks at the moment. The new suppressants Dr. Gokhale had recommended he switch to had a more targeted effect, acting specifically on his cosmic joke of a reproductive system. It was less taxing to his digestive and circulatory systems and thus more appropriate for long-term use, but required him to rely on scent-blocking deodorant or body lotion to mask his designation. The good doctor had assured him those products had come a long way in the decade since he’d last used them, and did indeed work, but trusting blockers was a far cry from knowing the scent was never being produced in the first place.

The result was that Q spent the first week looking over his shoulder and fully expecting to be accosted and publicly debunked as a pitiful pretentious little cumbucket at any moment. And if he hovered over Zurer’s workstation and nitpicked his minion’s handling of Bond’s needs and safety, well, he could hardly be blamed for impressing on his personnel that it was paramount to upkeep the highest of standards with the Double-Oh programme.

* * *

Rather than wondering about the possible causes for Q’s retreat, James dealt with the fact of it. Honestly, it didn’t bother him as much as how he had allowed it to have any impact on himself at all. While it was acceptable or even expected of Omegas to have emotional reactions to straightforward situations, Alphas were better at drawing a line.
Dr. Whatshername wanted to see James, follow up on his... diligence towards the Quartermaster. It was pointless. There was bugger all anyone could do but wait for it to wear off. It was bound to pass in time, as everything did. All he had to do was soldier through it, and he was very good at that.

There was a gym near his flat that he sometimes preferred to use, because even though MI6’s facilities were better equipped it was never long before a small crowd gathered to watch the legendary 007’s performance. And while on most days James didn’t mind an audience (especially if he was wiping the floor with 005’s sorry arse), today he just wanted to run until his lungs were bursting and it was physically impossible to think past his next breath.

The local gym had the added benefit of being a good place to pull. As James chugged down some water in-between sets at the rower, he noticed a young chestnut-haired man’s eyes on him. Glances were exchanged throughout the last steps of James’ workout routine and he enjoyed the gradual build-up of arousal as his eyes roamed over the man’s body, tall, strong and slick with sweat.

He approached his mark at the chest-press.

“Are you busy after this?”

“Why?”

“I live a couple of blocks down, you can use my shower.”

“Sounds good,” the answer came with a smile.

“I’m James, by the way.”

“Trevor.”

Trevor had a beard, a dark orange duffle and enough sense not to attempt small talk as they walked to James’ flat. It was all very promising, and James was caught completely off-guard by the unease that clogged his throat as they set foot on his block. By the time they’d reached the front gate, all libido had drained out of his body to be replaced with a churning stomach and internal roaring about how bleeding wrong it was, the very thought of letting anyone else into the bed where he’d curled up with Q, finally gotten to dig his fingers into that wild hair as they laid knotted together in peaceful silence.

He retrieved his phone from his pocket, even though it hadn’t rung.

“Hello.” Pause. “Now?” Another pause. “Have you tried Anne? She said she’d sort it out.” New pause, then, in an appropriately defeated and cross tone, “Fine, I’ll be right over.” He put the phone down and offered Trevor his most apologetic expression. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright. Maybe I can give you my number?”

“I’m always at Errol’s, I’m sure we’ll meet again soon.”
Trevor’s pleasant smile turned sour, very fitting for James’ absolute pillock behaviour.

“Sure.”

James ended up having a pathetic wank in the shower and an early session with a scotch bottle. M’s bulldog scowled disapprovingly at him from the coffee table. She may have been a cold-hearted cow, but she’d been right more often than not, especially when advising he get the fuck over himself.

It was James’ duty as an Alpha to take the brunt of the discomfort, to spare his Omega as much as possible. Q’s steady avoidance of him left no doubt as to how the boffin felt about the two of them amounting to any more than they had, regardless of the history James had believed had long been brewing between them.

During their first meeting at the National Gallery Q had overreached, tried desperately to impress him. James had taken the bait, more miffed with himself than anything else, because when there was senior office personnel younger than you it meant retirement was right around the corner and he had no idea what to do with himself other than risking life and limb for Queen and Country.

Could this be his very own middle-age crisis? A bright, hot young Omega and this unsurmountable certainty that something wonderful laid ahead, that his future didn’t have to consist of being slowly stripped of everything that made life worth fighting for? God, it was so much to lay at a person’s feet, no wonder Q had retreated. James should too, if he had an ounce of sense or self-preservation left in him.

* * *

His humongous crush on Bond fond exasperation had been a fine enough line for Q to walk without an inconvenient supply of memories of being repeatedly and superbly knotted.

It would be career suicide, if on Q’s very first heat while at MI6 he ended up attached, and to one of their top agents no less. He couldn’t be one of those Omegas. After years of conquering his biology, he was finally where he’d long dreamed of being: his own person, independent and with a high-responsibility job. He had never let his hormones run his life, and he was not bleeding likely to start now. Bond had been attentive, kind and thorough, but even all three did not affection make, regardless of what Q’s sodding glands would have him believe.

Never mind that it had been frightfully easy, hadn’t felt at all outlandish but rather like an extension of his day-to-day life, with bits of shop talk, familiar bantering and discreet enough coddling so as to make many things Q had decided about who he was, what he did and didn’t want, could and couldn’t have, seem rather precarious.

Amidst the shambles of his personal integrity, Q was left piggybacking onto the audio feed of 007’s missions. He learned that other handlers weren’t treated to Bond’s flirty sass, only to strictly professional demands. It shouldn’t have pleased him half as much as it did.
Wrap-up procedures weren’t any better. He had other people receive what was left of 007’s equipment but found himself making excuses to be in the room right after Bond left, to catch a whiff of him.

It was sad.

Even as time wore on, he couldn’t bring himself to stop.

* * *

Upon reflection, James had to concede that 002 might have had a point. After nearly a month getting none of the Quartermaster’s time, it became apparent that he had been terribly spoiled before.

Before, Q’s presence had been a fixture, permanently available. James may not always have been strictly professional about it.

“Just wanted you to know I almost took you into the bathtub with me, but I remembered.”

“Excuse me?”

“The comm. I’m taking it off to have a bath.”

“Well, I’ll be sure to mention it come personnel evaluation,” was Q’s wry reply.

“It always does seem to be worth mentioning when you do it.”

“You mean when I remind you that comm units are supposed to last a year, not a mission,” Q corrected him tarty.

“It can be difficult to estimate equipment damage in your pyjamas.”

“I sure would like to be wearing my pyjamas, it’s past two a.m. here. Is there a point to this?”

“Not as such. But now that you mention it, it does seem to me that a thoughtful agent surely must be eligible to try the new neuroscrambler.”

Q had sighed the sigh of the tremendously put-upon.

“You just can’t stand Noble getting it first. But since it’s a tool to aid questioning, we thought we could get a better idea of its effectiveness with someone whose suspects were alive enough to talk.”

“Who says I want to use it during business hours?”

“Before you say anything else, let me remind you that all comm audio is logged, transcribed and reviewed.”

James clucked his tongue dismissively while reaching to shut the tap. He stepped into the tub and
made himself comfortable.

“I can make it worth your while,” he teased, infusing the beat-up line with heated promise and just a hint of humour.

There was a muffled curse from Q’s end.

“It’s like Jack Harkness and Han Solo had a trigger-happy baby obsessed with tuxedoes.”

“A tuxedo is second-best only to what I’m wearing right now.”

“The rest of it went right over your head though.”

“Nothing goes over my head. My reflexes are too fast, I would catch it.”

(The truth was, he got most of Q’s pop culture references, but admitting so would cut down on the relic/jailbait well of bantering that had seen James through many a dull night on a rooftop with a rifle.)

“Fine, I’m duly impressed,” Q conceded. “Bring your kit back with any functionality left in it and I’ll consider you for the scrambler.”

* * *

Protocol adherence lasted a little over five weeks. All of Q’s careful, sensible resolutions were promptly shoved aside when 007’s dot turned yellow on the screen he wasn’t supposed to be watching, signalling that the agent’s vitals were edging into dangerous levels.

He overrode the assigned handler without batting an eye.

“Bond, this is Q. What’s going on?”

A pause. Too long. Q’s heart was hammering in his chest. Then Bond’s voice came online, slightly cracked.

“I’m out of bullets, trapped inside a bloody air duct with my left arm shot and Miss Ocampo can’t give me a route that will have me out of here before I bleed to death.”
“First of all, don’t make this about Karen.” He said with finality. “Also, don’t you fucking dare die on me. You and I have both seen you pull through way worse odds than these. Now, I’ll find a way to buy you some time and you will drag your arse down two floors, into that bleeding car and stick the flashdrive into the panel so that I can get you home safe. Are we clear?”

“Yes.”

“Then get a move on. Beep if you need me.”

He muted his microphone and looked around. There were quite a few gobsmacked faces. He was too pumped up with adrenaline to care either way, and started barking orders.

“Someone get me the specs of the comm devices of the tossers in Bond’s location. Karen, is there anything in the infrastructure we can rig to jam them?”

“Working on it, sir!”

“Sir, the specs are on your terminal,” supplied Szabó from his seat.

By the time he’d remote-parked a stolen car inside a safe house with a medic two minutes out, Q’s tea had grown cold. He didn’t get up for a new one until the medic reported 007 was stable.

* * *

The two bullets on James’ arm were removed by the Geneva team, the wounds closed up in much neater stitches than his usual bodge jobs. It had been quite a shock, to have Q’s presence over the comm. It had startled James into action, renewed resolve surging through his body fuelled by the knowledge that his Omega was counting on him to make it back.

Of course, he didn’t really have an Omega, but the chemicals were no less effective for it.

As he approached Q-Branch to turn in what remained of his kit, he was greeted by the usual cacophony of scents: the mix of its various personnel, oil, grease, stale coffee and burnt metal. More than what was present, however, he couldn’t help picking up on the distinctive absence of the scent he now knew to be Q’s. Except it had never been part of the Q-Branch bouquet, what with the suppressants.

So there wasn’t anything to prepare James to the sight of the Quartermaster himself standing behind the workbench, talking with a minion over the contents of one of the plastic trays used as inboxes for returned gear.

James had a moment to collect himself before both boffins looked up at him. He distantly registered the girl’s greeting, all of his attention taken up by the fact that Q was in such close proximity, green eyes fixed on him for the first time since… for the first time in weeks.
He looked well. He was his usual office self, hair in disarray and a mismatching tie/shirt combination visible through the neck of an equally horrid cardigan. There was nothing about his person to suggest he was going through anything like the internal turmoil eating at James’ sanity at the sight of the one his blasted body had fixated on as his mate.

“Bond. It’s good to see you’ve made it back in one piece.”

James said nothing, just placed the duffle in front of him. He thought he detected the slightest downward turn to Q’s lips at that, but it could well have been a trick of his imagination.

“Let’s see,” said the Quartermaster, unzipping the bag and ruffling through its contents. “It all seems to be in as much working order as expected. No pistol, but then again, we already knew it had been lost. Clara, would you log Cheung’s kit for me while I get started on Bond’s?”

The girl left, and the workbench seemed simultaneously too wide and too narrow to stave off the storm building between himself and Q.

“Too bad you didn’t get to drive the Mercedes. I imagine you must’ve been looking forward to it.”

Q’s words blended into unintelligible soot. It was too much. His smell was all wrong, his voice was too measured and he was— he was weary of James, shoulders tense, breath rate a tad too high.

It was like a kick to the teeth. James was distressing his Omega. It had to stop.

He looked down, trying to make himself smaller, non-threatening, and croaked out, “We should avoid being alone together.”

“Of course.”

He left without another look at Q. His arms and hands felt heavy, his thorax empty as though a chunk of it had been forcefully wrenched out.

Even as he acquiesced to Bond’s request, Q could feel something in him shift irrevocably.

He had tried his best to act normal, as though Bond’s shape beneath the suit wasn’t achingly familiar and nothing world-tipping had ever taken place between them. To try and propose a new balance,
some way they could begin to inch back towards a state of things where it was feasible not to be completely apart.

The man had looked strung-up and exhausted, and Q would’ve given pretty much anything to kiss him, to give in to the urges swarming through his limbs and only barely kept in check. Except he’d always been (entirely too) good at keeping his head level during a crisis, and that’s what this was, a colossal cock-up where Bond could barely stand to look at him, because all of Q’s self-control had deserted his facial muscles and he was radiating his stupid, unwarranted emotions all over and Omega drama was the very thing his boss had been trying to avoid by getting everybody to agree to treat Q to a heat with 007. They had all trusted he could be professional and his abysmal failure was not fair to anybody; not to himself, not to M and most of all not to Bond, who had actually been stellar throughout the whole ordeal.

Shit shit fuck. During their time apart Q had had ample opportunity to wonder whether upon their meeting Bond would be condescendingly nice, knot-head smug (unlikely, but not negligible) or simply act as though nothing worthy of notice had happened. He had not considered the possibility that he himself would behave so mortifyingly as to make the Alpha ask him to stay away, in as many words no less.

Shit.

* * *

Nine weeks after playing Alpha to Q in an official capacity, it was getting harder and harder for James to avoid admitting that he might be in a spot of trouble.

Not only was he having difficulty getting into mission headspace, but during downtime his mind would ignore Q’s repeated signs of wanting absolutely nothing to do with him and dredge up what the Omega had said when they first shagged, about having wanted James for a long time. It should have been easy to brush that aside; it could well have been the heat talking, and besides, it was in 007’s job description to be someone people fantasised about. It was a fine-tuned combination of natural gifts and skill, effective even in those such as Q who were privy to the backstage of grit, a glum body trail and drinking.

Since rebuilding after the Vesper wildfire, James had managed to settle comfortably into being an unmated Alpha. This whole business with the Quartermaster had upset that balance, and instead of wearing off it had grown into an imperious need that gripped at parts of himself James had long believed to be dry and dead.

He thought of Q’s legs, of his long fingers, wild hair and secretive smiles. And just like that, something that had been completely out of the question for the better part of a decade now seemed… unavoidable; now that he had picked up the scent of the one-in-a-million person with whom he could have everything, his body refused to let go. His bloody reliable memory went over the many moments something had sizzled between himself and Q as they disagreed over R&D priorities, shared expectant silences while waiting for an explosive to go off or simply worked together to allow James to live to have his head bitten off another day.

Simply put, they were a good fit.
That he was even thinking about mating without having ever been on a single date with the man illustrated the indisputable fact that James Bond was the absolute furthest thing from mating material. He did fine when it was just dazzling people and being an adventure, but no discerning person would want him for anything more substantial than scratching an itch. And he couldn’t blame them; it wasn’t like he had a whole lot to offer, with too many fractures improperly healed, too many ghosts keeping him up at night, too much time spent elsewhere. Too unstable, too unsafe.

It shouldn’t have been possible for an inanimate object to mock anybody, but that didn’t stop the jacket he’d loaned Q for the ride to his flat. It sneered at him from where it laid folded over the back of a chair and with only the faintest trace of their mixed scents left.

* * *

Being himself, Q had, during his moments of weakness, looked into official mating dispositions regarding MI6 field personnel; if there was one thing he knew for certain it was that, like himself, James Bond loved his job to bits.

The existing data on mated operatives didn’t look good. Since the beginning of the twentieth century there were records of 19 field personnel in Alpha-Omega relationships, 7 of which were or had been bonded, of which a grand total of none had been Double-Ohs. As a matter of fact, the mated agents had a much slower career advancement rate and only one had made it to senior status, on an entry level.

That didn’t help much. It was the same considerations that had always stopped him from letting anything come out of his and Bond’s flirting: even though the man was now in on his designation, how would they even go about being together? Would seduction be cut off from 007’s arsenal, or would Q have to listen in? He didn’t know which was worse. Not to mention the small matter of having to be publicly out as an Omega.

It was a good thing, then, that all of this research was for purely conjectural purposes. Regulations aside, an actual relationship was something Q had written off years ago. It certainly didn’t matter that his days seemed bland without Bond faffing about the workshop, disrupting personnel concentration with his silly scent, inspecting delicate gear he shouldn’t even be allowed to look at and nagging people about that sodding exploding pen.

* * *

James found out that the farther he was from his flat, the less his body protested him keeping his bed warm.

* * *
Q’s least favourite part of his job was hands-down rendering it intelligible for the layman higher-ups that signed off on their budgets. It involved cramming months of complicated work into a few short sentences. After much trial and error, he had settled on splitting Q-Branch into sections and having the respective heads compile results, leaving it to him to combine everything into something Zurer could make visually appealing. Decision-makers liked numbers and colourful infographics that made them feel as though they understood a lick of what was going on.

As Q approached the desk of his cyberwarfare section head, he was surprised to find two people huddled over the paper stacks, one of them being Jane, the handler assigned to 007’s current mission.

“Thought you were assisting Bond.”

“He three-tapped, sir,” Jane informed him blushing faintly. Three taps was the agreed code for field agents being in need of some privacy. “So I thought I could help Clara sort these reports for a couple of minutes.”

“Again? It’s like he’s trying for a bleeding record,” Flint chirped in.

Flint was a loan from Accountings to help expedite the digitalisation of old schematics. Despite having been with them for nearly half a year, he had yet to pick up on the fact that it was acceptable for Q-Branch personnel to wear headphones during business hours. He was also completely oblivious to the difference between being within earshot and being a part of a conversation.

Jane shrugged, looking for all the world as though she’d rather be anywhere else.

Flint added with a wiggle of eyebrows, “Too had be hasn’t been over recently, I wouldn’t mind lending him a hand. Or anything else he preferred.”

Q could practically feel his blood boiling. It took him a moment to realise he wasn’t the only one staring reproachfully at Flint. Clara came to the rescue.

“Oi, let’s keep it professional, shall we?”

“Aimed. Clara, please come see me when you’re done, I need to include your results on the charting I’m working on. It’s due in three hours.”

Without waiting for a reply, Q turned on his heel and left the room. He missed Clara’s unwavering glare at Flint.

“What?”
“Let me put it this way: you may not be cut out for espionage.”

“Last I checked, keeping track of habits was part of profiling.”

Clara rolled her eyes and chose not to comment on the fact that failing to pick up on your immediate boss’ massive infatuation with a certain Double-Oh painted a rather dim picture of one’s profiling skills.

* *

That evening, Q braved the recesses of a drawer to dig out his orange dildo, the one with an inflatable knot. It was nothing like being enveloped in the body heat and entrancing smell of a living, breathing, husky-voiced, sassy and distressingly fit Alpha, but it eclipsed the void and eased him into sleep.

* * *

The beginning of winter saw one of 007’s rare office days in-between field assignments. The drizzly weather was a promise of increased rush hour traffic, but these days James didn’t much care to linger at HQ after his shift was over.

He was joined in waiting for the lift by two men he knew only in passing. Probably field agents too, judging from their build and stance. They offered him a polite nod of acknowledgment, which he returned, then resumed their conversation.

“Do you want to head to the pub?”

“Sure. Just need to stop by Q-Branch first. He wants to see me. Get my measurements for a custom ‘chute.”

“Now that’s no hardship,” said the shorter fellow, with a hint of malice.

“Not at all. I sure wouldn’t mind bending him over one of those workbenches.”

James saw red.

He didn’t register his own snarl, his knuckles splitting, breaking out of a chokehold or the tranq dart that embedded itself in his back.
For the most part, Q could concentrate through more noise than the average man. Q-Branch wasn’t a very silent place, even though especially loud activities such as metalsmithing, hammering or anything that had over a 30% chance of causing any sort of explosion were to be conducted in designated, properly outfitted areas. Much of their work was done collaboratively, and there was also comm-duty, so all in all there was a fairly constant stream of talking, typing and the not-so-occasional clattering followed by cursing directly proportional to the damage done to the dropped item or the person’s toes.

However, whereas talking faded into background noise, everyone pricked their ears at urgent whispering that had people leaving their workstations to crowd around someone’s screen, because it could only mean a particularly sensational piece of office gossip. Q was no exception, and besides, he could do with stretching his legs and getting a fresh cup of tea.

“–and broke his nose!”

“Savage,” tsked Szabó, shaking his head in disapproval.

“What’s savage?” said Q as he joined the group.

Nobody replied for long enough to make it awkward. Some people even fidgeted. At last, Clara showed her usual initiative.

“It seems 007 attacked Blackwell over some crude comment about you, sir.”

“How quaint.”

Q did the calculations in his head, even though he didn’t really have to. Twelve weeks and a day since his disastrous heat. Fuck.

He looked over the room. There were a lot of covertly expectant faces. All right.

“Everybody, can I have a minute? Please gather round.”

There was shuffling as people swivelled around in their chairs, removed headphones and shut down power tools. Q waited until he had everyone’s attention.

“As some of you might have figured out, I’m a designation Omega.” He paused to gauge the collective reaction. There were no manifestations either way. “It may come up in conversation over
the next few days. Now, I believe I have proved myself plenty to everyone in this building, but people can always surprise you. I sincerely hope you won’t.” With that, he turned to R. “Kate, could you step into the tank for a moment?”

“Yessir.”

The pair of them made it to the small soundproofed cubicle used to discuss sensitive matters.

“That was very brave, sir.”

“It was only the first move. We’ll see how things go.”

He chanced a look outside. Most people were returning to their seats, no doubt not wanting to seem like they were gossiping about their boss, even though that’s probably exactly what they would do from their computers. It showed a shred of decency and respect, at least. Except… he narrowed his eyes, then turned to his second-in-command.

“Is that money exchanging hands?”

“To be fair, boss, most of us had money on kill.”

“Kill?”

To her credit, Kate didn’t look down or away.

“Fuck/mate/kill.” A small smile curled her lips. “It was four to one that you would throttle Bond before the year was out.”

Well, fuck. This whole time he’d been worrying himself sick over secrecy, his subordinates had been running bets. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and scowled.

“The ‘mate’ option. You lot knew,” he spat accusingly.

Kate’s smile became gentle.

“Some of us, yes.”
Q looked at her, then back out at his Branch personnel. It would seem he wasn’t quite as alone in this as he’d believed himself to be.

There was someone who was probably feeling mighty alone right about now. Q knew then exactly what to do. It was one of those rare occasions when what he wanted to do was the exact same as what needed to be done and what should be done – which of course meant it wasn’t going to be easy.

“Then I don’t think anyone will be surprised if I leave right now.”

R was beaming at him.

“Not particularly, sir, I don’t think.”

* * *

Dr. Gokhale didn’t seem surprised to see Q either. She told him about Bond’s incident, as per Blackwell’s friend’s account.

“Can I see him?”

“You’re probably the only one who can.”

“How’s that?”

The look the doctor gave him told Q she thought him more than capable of making an educated guess, but her tone was kind.

“His bloodwork is consistent with the early stages of a rut. It might not have come to this, if he had followed up with me as he was supposed to. But then again we both know that’s not how he operates.”

“I suppose not.”

Q’s calculations had been correct, then. A rut. That meant Bond’s body had fallen in sync with Q’s.
It was the sort of thing that happened to couples over the years, or to mated pairs. A lousy shared heat shouldn’t have been enough to bring this on, at all.

“What happens now?”

“It’s mostly up to the two of you. If there’s no attachment, there are drugs we can give him to help overcome the connection. It’s not pleasant, but results do tend to be good this early on.”

It was what Q did, securing Bond a safe way out first and foremost. It was good to have one, even if something in him rather hoped it wouldn’t be needed.

“And if there is an attachment? I understand there are drugs to help Alphas manage their physiology, much like what I’m on?”

“Yes. But Alpha-Omega couples also need to worry about separation anxiety.”

God, there was that. Why must their bodily specs be so bloody overwhelming?

“I see.”

“Why don’t you just go sit with him for a bit? I know this place wants six months warning of everything in triplicate, but some things happen in their own time.”

Q mulled it over. She was right. He’d had months to approach the problem of himself and Bond from multiple angles, gather data and make projections, and had been unable to reach any satisfactory conclusion. Maybe it was time to talk to the man with vast experience about when or not triggers ought to be pulled and other irreversible decisions.

“Doctor. If there’s ever… any sort of lab equipment upgrade you need, electronic ankle monitors for difficult patients, or even if your printer doesn’t work, just let me know.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” she said with a smile.

James was awake when Q let himself into the curtained-off infirmary space. He hadn’t been restrained. His vision was still slightly foggy from being chemically knocked out, and he’d been drinking water and trying to wrap his head around what the doctor had said about him having given
some sod a concussion and multiple fractures over… Q.

Q, who now stood in front of him, eyes glinting unreadably and a hesitant half-smile on his lips.

“I hear you got in trouble defending my honour.” Q’s voice was prim with a playful edge, the way he had sounded over the comms what felt like a lifetime ago. “You’ll have to get better about that. Chins are wagging, this time tomorrow my designation will be public knowledge.”

He’d outed Q. Fuck.

“ ‘m sorry,” he rasped.

Q shook his head.

“No, I am.” He paused, preparing himself to say something important. “Dr. Gokhale says your blood-test results are compatible with a rut. And the timing matches my cycle.”

Oh. Well, that would explain why James was having so much trouble processing this very conversation.

Q pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and set his mouth in a determined line.

“Tell me what I can do to help.”

“Help?” James echoed, feeling not very bright.

“Yes. I’m the one who dragged you into this.” He licked his lips, then rushed out the next bit nervously, “Would you like me to spend a few days at yours?”

The offer cost him visibly. James felt exhausted, heart and limb heavy and weary. He wished he could be halfway across the world licking his wounds in private instead of being pinned under this boy’s intense gaze. His every instinct roared at him to take Q up on his offer, but James knew that it would only lead him somewhere dark and cold. He needed to brace his bloody needs and have some sort of handle on the situation.

In the end, there was nothing he could offer but the truth.

“Last time wasn’t a charity fuck for a colleague.”
He forced himself to hold Q’s stare. Different emotions flashed through the lad’s features, too quickly to be deciphered by someone battling both a hormonal flood and the lingering tranquillisers.

“What are your feelings on cats?”

“Cats?”

“I have two, a sly ten-year-old and a nosy three-year-old that’s black, white and orange for maximum display of her fur in human clothing.”

James frowned uncomprehendingly at him. Q scoffed and cursed under his breath, placing his hands on his hips.

“What I’m trying to say is… I think we should get dinner. Afterwards. If you like,” he added uncertainly.

Part of James wanted to say that what he’d really like was for his life to get back on track, but looking at Q he couldn’t help the shiver that ran down his spine. It was the familiar one that visited him as he ran over a rooftop calculating whether he could make the jump onto the next one. He always had, so far. And right now dinner sounded almost outrageous, if not for the hopeful look in Q’s eyes.

He patted the cot and budged up to make room. Q promptly stepped off his shoes and climbed in, settling comfortably against his side.

James felt something loosen in his chest as he was able to put his arms around the younger man and burrow his nose on the curve of Q’s neck. There, beneath the artificially-induced blankness, he thought he could detect a hint of Q’s real scent. He drew deep, contented breaths and adjusted the position of his palm so as to keep track of Q’s heartbeat.

Some time later, he noticed that Q was gently massaging his scalp.

“Come home with me,” he blurted out, voice muffled between Q and the pillow.

“Of course, James.”

He could feel the vibration of Q’s voice in his throat and ribcage as the Omega said his name tentatively. It was brilliant. Q continued in a quiet, careful voice.

“I was told to put some distance between us… right after. It seemed sensible. I couldn’t look you in
the eye and feared my instability would put you in danger during a mission.”

James said nothing.

“But it bothered me, to have a blank scent.”

It was barely an admission, but Q’s hold on him tightened, a reflex that was almost childish and immensely appealing to the more basic aspects of an Alpha’s emotional wiring. Emboldened, James licked up the length of the younger man’s throat. Q shuddered in his arms.

“Let me just set things up at the office, then I’ll come take you home.”

The prospect of letting Q out of his sight made James’ skin crawl. His arms tensed. Q pressed a kiss against his head, then said in a comforting voice, “I’ll only be a few minutes.”

James came embarrassingly close to asking Q if he’d agree to be scent-marked, but managed to rein himself in.

“Alright.”

“I’ll be back soon.”

Q was choosing him again, with a clean head. It was mental, brave and exhilarating.

* * *

As he left Medical, Q quickly worked out a plan and priorities. This just might be one of the arenas where he was actually more formidable than 007: bureaucracy. If there was even the slightest chance they could keep each other and their jobs, Q was absolutely ready to argue his case with a truckload of scientific articles, statistics, blackmail and anything else he could use to convince the people in charge that it was in their best interest to be on his good side, which included allowing his Alpha to continue active in the Double-Oh Programme.

He texted Tanner.
< Q: Do you have a moment? >

< MT: How urgent is it? >

< Q: It’s about Bond. >

< MT: I’m in my office. >

When he got there, Tanner’s secretary showed him right in and closed the door after him.

The Chief of Staff tidied papers into a neat pile and pushed it to one side, placing a snowglobe paperweight over it.

“How’s he doing?”

“He’s only in this state because of me.”

Q didn’t sit down. Tanner arched an eyebrow at him. They had a candid work relationship and mutual appreciation for each other’s lack of interest in wasting time with inane niceties.

“I suppose. Are we talking damage-control or long-term?”

“Still unclear, but there’s chance of a permanent arrangement. If it comes to that, I think we can manage reasonably well with medication.”

He’d have to talk it over with Bond, of course, but two shared heats a year were the national standard employee leave agreement and didn’t seem unreasonable.

The redhead stared at him right in the eye and laced her fingers, sitting back.

“We knew going in that that was a possibility.”

Q wondered whether the possibility had to do with the stunt they’d been forced to pull on account of his untimely heat or the simple fact that he was an Omega. Probably a little bit of both. Even though he sometimes forgot, it was Tanner’s job to foresee people and situations just as much as it was Q’s job to foresee system possibilities and work it all to their best advantage.
“Anti-climatic?” She smirked.

“More of a relief, actually.”

Q allowed himself a quick smile before schooling his features into the seriousness warranted by the next topic.

“Will he face a disciplinary hearing?”

“Under normal circumstances, he would. But since, as you put it, his altered state is of our own doing, we’re doing what we can to stifle it. Blackwell has agreed to let the whole thing go if you don’t charge him with designation-targeted harassment.”

“Sounds reasonable.”

Tanner fixed him with a stern expression.

“Now, I want to be clear here. We like you and Bond. You’re propelling us into the 21st century, and there are things only he will do, for better or worse.”

“That is… an apt description.”

“We’ll back you, but both of you have got to continue giving us the results to shut up naysayers.”

“There’s nothing I want more.”

“Excellent.”

“I’ll coordinate with R. And have my phone on my person and check it every four hours.”

“Don’t overdo it. And… congratulations, I guess.”

“Thanks, Martha.”

“Don’t thank me yet, we still need to clear it with M.”

Her sharp smile made Q very, very glad that she was on his side on this one.

* *

“I don’t like it,” was M’s immediate answer. He stared straight at Q across his desk for a long moment, so as to effectively convey the weight of his feelings on the matter. “However, both you and Bond have earned the benefit of doubt.”
“Not to mention none of this might’ve ever happened if we hadn’t interfered with the personal lives of our employees,” remarked Tanner.

M made a dismissive gesture, still staring piercingly at Q.

“They waived that off when they signed on with us.”

“You already have three months’ worth of data, sir. I think you’ll find neither of our performances has suffered this far,” Q said, as neutrally as he could.

M’s mouth became a hard line.

“Are you aware that I myself am a mated Alpha?”

“I’d figured as much, sir.”

“Then I think you’ll believe me when I say I’m in a unique position to evaluate your request. And to advise strongly against it. Being mated brings a whole new set of demands, not all of them physiological. Juggling them with our lifestyle is challenging, to say the least.”

“I’m aware of that, sir.”

“I’m not certain that you are.” M smiled wistfully. “We do this, every eye will be on you. There’s no margin for error, no do-overs. Do you understand those terms?”

“I’ve been living by them my entire adult life, sir.”

That seemed to surprise his boss, if only a little. From the corner of his eye, Q saw Tanner watching him encouragingly. He steeled himself and charged.

“The rumour mill has already started on my designation. My privacy’s moot by now and I’ll already have to deal with the backlash, so I see no reason to prematurely dismiss a potential opportunity for... well, happiness.”

It wasn’t until he said it out loud that he realised he honestly believed he and Bond could make a decent go of it.

M’s eyes softened and Q knew then that he’d won his chance.
James was out of it enough to let Q drive.

As soon as the door was closed he was on Q, mouth claiming the younger man’s in a ravenous kiss, hands roaming everywhere in sheer joy at finally not being denied his Omega’s warm presence.

Q responded in kind with teasing little tongue caresses that ignited something in James’ blood. A hand grasped for purchase in his short blond hair and Q let out a quiet sigh as James broke the kiss to fumble with the fastenings of his trousers. The tamed scent was throwing him off, and he needed to feel that Q too needed this, that he wasn’t alone at the cliff’s edge with his heart racing and his mouth dry.

His fingertips found Q’s cleft deliciously moist. He buried his nose on the curve of the Omega’s neck and let out a pleading moan.

Lips pressed gently against his scalp, and he felt Q moving to step back. He reflexively tightened his hold.

“Here, just let me,” asked Q in a soothing tone.

He forced himself to release the younger man and watched as he took off his clothes to reveal a flushed torso and the darkened, slender erection James had come to know so well. But instead of continuing where they’d left off Q walked up to a wall, then braced both forearms and positioned his legs spread slightly wider than his hips. And James nearly toppled over because the Omega was presenting, a move well past archaic that he wouldn’t in a million years have expected from the likes of his Q.

Q then turned to arch an expectant eyebrow at him over his shoulder, making James feel slightly more grounded by the familiar expression. He came to stand right behind the younger man, one possessive hand over a jutting hipbone and the other sliding down his naked back, tracing the slickness trickling down between the Omega’s thighs then back up his arse. He watched entranced as one finger entered Q easily, then another.

“All of this on the car ride over?”

Q nodded. His breathing was becoming more laboured and his shoulders and arms were tense. Ready. James pulled his fingers out and pressed flush against Q, nipping at the spot where jawbone met ear. He could feel the lad’s heart pounding against his chest. He then lined himself up and closed a hand around Q’s cock, earning a half-strangled curse that made him smile.
“Fuck, I love it when you’re wet and hard for me,” he whispered gruffly.

When he pushed inside Q, the world finally stopped shattering around him. He did it again, and again, working up to a rhythm that matched the pounding in his veins. Not wanting it to be over so soon, he made a fist for Q to fuck and let himself bask in the great pleasure of being there as his Omega’s gorgeous body moved chasing his own pleasure, ramming back against James’ cock.

“I’mma come,” Q said raggedly at one point, at which James redoubled his efforts to push him over the edge. He soon followed, his knot swelling and binding them together. He pressed a sloppy kiss against Q’s nape, loving the little shudder it elicited in the Omega.

“Are you ok standing, love? You can lean your weight on me.”

“I’m fine.”

From James’ vantage point, Q’s knees didn’t seem very stable. He braced one arm around the younger man’s middle and began the careful process of pivoting them around so that he was the one with his back against the wall. Sitting down was another matter made delicate by their joined bits, but he succeeded and before long had Q sprawled on his lap, leaning back against his chest, glasses pushed to the top of his head. He nuzzled against the riotous dark hair, taking deep, steadying gulps of Q’s scent. He thought he could detect faint notes of the real thing.

“I think there’s pasta,” he said against Q’s temple.

“Are you hungry?”

“Not yet.”

* * *

But I don’t think either of us is leaving anytime soon, he didn’t say.

A smile crept up Q’s blissed-out features.

* * *

It wasn’t simple or peaceful, but they had never cared for either.
In the height of summer, Q came in to work wearing a turtleneck jumper and a persistent little smile that tipped off about everyone and their mother as to the reason for his unseasonable choice of attire.

(“What if I die?”

“These bloody well better come back.”)

~ Fin

Chapter End Notes

If you want to talk 00Q and watch me flail in despair over keep up with my current fic projects, I'm junetangerine on tumblr.

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