

arsenic wallpaper

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by Anonymous

Summary

an accumulation of immense brevity. a sequel of a sort.

pennyroyal tea

September or October 2017

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

"Guh-" he's long since become immune to the death throes of would-be foes. He pulls down his javelin, and viscera spills out.

He's finicky about the assignments he takes, much to the chagrin of the higher-ups, but there are less than five special-grade shamans, and Megumi has priorities that trump their ongoing war with humanity's scourge.

"Ahhh-" the scream is cut off as the curse user gurgles and chokes on their blood. Kon descends upon the still-warm carcass and begins to feast.

Megumi clutches his stomach as the iron and copper scent of ichor fills his nose.

Nausea overwhelms him, he breaks out into a cold sweat, and vertigo overtakes his vision. His stomach cramps, and he immediately turns to his right to vomit.

Shit.

Positive.

He said never again after the first one, but here he is again. Megumi is a glutton for punishment.

Society says this is what he was made for, the only thing he is good for. With a rise in conservative values, omegas, beta females, and even the odd alpha females faced difficulties. Megumi isn't particularly phased by it; he already exists in a microcosm that vehemently protests his leadership and status as a jujutsu sorcerer as an omega.

It worsened when he was pupped and married.

It'll be more of an annoyance with a second pregnancy.

But what he's most concerned about, is what this new baby will call him.

Now that he is married, he has a more challenging time coming to terms with his titles and gender role. Satoru isn't fussed and refers to him as his partner, and Megumi has taken to using that title as well. Their relationship isn't based on strict gender roles, but there's an understanding of where their strengths lie and how they pick up where the other falls.

Adding in their eldest pup makes their dynamic more unique.

Asahi calls Satoru Daddy or Tou-chan, but Megumi is a different beast.

"Mama!"

"Un."

"What'cha doing?" Asahi's muffled voice asks through the door.

"Plotting your sire's death." Megumi deadpans and stares at the three pregnancy tests. This is what his body was made more for, but Satoru begs to differ; he was built for sin.

"Ohhhhhh, should I warn Daddy?"

"No, this is a surprise."

Chapter 2

September 2017

"As you're aware, no birth control is 100% effective."

Megumi's lip curls in derision, and Dr. Kamado smiles in commiseration.

"Though rare, pregnancy can happen outside of your cycle. Would you like to discuss your options?"

Megumi's first pregnancy was harrowing, and the birth was traumatizing. Unplanned, but not necessarily unwanted, after much discussion, consideration on how it would impact their everyday lives, and possible arrangements since he was in university, they decided to keep Asahi. Satoru's grandparents are still relatively young and agreed to watch over the pup since the child of Six Eyes and the Zen'in clan head is likely to become a target. Asahi's early life likened to Satoru's, under the watchful eyes of a nanny and relatives, except Satoru and Megumi are active parents.

Nevertheless, Megumi had to delay graduation for two semesters after three assassination attempts, medically advised bed rest, and childbirth that nearly killed his pup and almost rendered him infertile.

This made him a skeptic when societal norms dictated that this was what he was made for. Childbirth is a matter of life and death. If he keeps this baby, he's getting a c-section and having his tubes tied.

"I need to talk to my mate first." Satoru will likely be on the fence; Megumi's instincts contradict his common sense and logic. "Then we'll decide."

"Well, you're seven weeks along. We'll book a follow-up appointment for two weeks from now. In the meantime, I want you to start taking prenatal vitamins and the prescribed antinausea medication."

Their apartment has a green space spanning the side of their living room and kitchen. Megumi looks up as the sliding door opens, and Asahi drops his toys and takes off running.

"Hi Tou-chan!"

Between Sanbancho, Shoto, Akasaka and Aoyama, they settled in Aoyama. As nice as Gojo's inherited home and the newly constructed Zen'in compound are, they are a young family that wants space away from the madding crowd and politics.

"Asa-chan!"

After a two-week absence, Gojo Satoru comes home to a glowering omega and a very happy pup. He starts with his son first, scenting the three-year-old, throwing him into the air, and smiling widely at his happy shrieks.

"Daddy, papa has a surprise!"

"Does he now?" And the alpha turns to give the omega his full attention.

Megumi is outright glaring and hisses accusatorily, "You knew!"

"Ah." That all but confirms that he knew, from his scent change to the shift in flow of his cursed energy, gathering protectively to the cluster of cells under his heart.

Megumi's green eyes are chips of ice. "Just for that, I hope this baby inherits all of my sire's looks."

Satoru blanches, "I rebuke that!"

Chapter 3

"Are you sure?"

Megumi pauses in the middle of brushing his teeth and stares and stares at Satoru's reflection in the mirror.

Miles and miles of pale skin, pajama pants slung low on his hips—very little is left to the imagination. Satoru knows how he looks and the impact it has on people, but most of all, he knows how it affects his omega and weaponizes it accordingly.

The stirring of lust fills the bond, and he grins wolfishly.

Megumi's distracted appreciation sours and becomes a glare; he scowls deeply. This is how they ended up in this quandary.

Megumi's irritation is a livewire, and he chuckles as the omega finishes his nightly routine in high dungeon.

Satoru swiftly catches him when he attempts to slip past him in the doorway.

Megumi never grew past his height at sixteen, but Gojo grew a few more centimeters, so he leans down, humming when the omega instinctually bares his neck, both scent glands carrying his mark. He nuzzles his neck, and gathers him close.

"You mad?"

Megumi grumbles.

"Are you sure about this? Asahi is enough, and I don't want to risk your well-being."

Megumi clutches his forearms. "I don't know."

Much like his pregnancy with Asahi, he's conflicted. His nature is already producing oxytocin, turning his brain into cotton at the prospect of a pup. He was not a natural dam; post-birth was a time of acute darkness, and postpartum depression ravaged him for months. Megumi wondered if it'd be any different with this pup, wonders if he should even try, wonders if it's worth it.

Satoru kisses his cheek, "That's okay, whatever you want, I'll support you."

"Get a vasectomy," Megumi says darkly.

"That's funny," he replies, snickering.

"I'm not joking."

Of the eleven members who survived Satoru's massacre of the Zen'in, nine survived. Two were quietly killed when they showed aversion and contempt for Megumi's ascension and staunchly supported the purist views of the old guard. So they joined the old guard in the afterlife, one less hassle, one less battle in the wars to come.

"Congratulations Megumi-dono."

Zen'in Maki joins him as he strolls down the engawa, Round Deer a constant presence at his side. He's done this once and won't let pride keep him from having a healthy pregnancy. Round Deer could have saved him from some of the hell he underwent during his first round with pregnancy, birth, and subsequent depression if he hadn't been so caught up in self-recrimination, pitying himself and why he failed so spectacularly as an omega.

Megumi smiles, "Thanks, Maki-chan."

The younger omega hesitates, but then a familiar determination overtakes her features. "Does this mean I'll be displaced?"

Maki is his heir; like him, she is everything the Zen'in despised and despised. Omegan, power deriving from the invulnerable body of Taira no Masakado, a woman. She is one of the strongest people he's ever had the pleasure of knowing, and the day he hands her the mantle of leadership is the day they come full circle, and Toji's revenge is complete.

Megumi meets her eyes.

"No, we make new traditions; I choose my successor, and that's you." His veracity rings true and her shoulders drop in relief. "That'll never change."

"Thank you," she whispers.

Megumi holds out his arms, and Maki doesn't hesitate to hug him. Although Megumi doesn't consider himself parental material, he's a decent dam by necessity, and he acknowledges that he became a parental figure for many of the Zen'in pups.

Maki subconsciously begins to purl, a pregnant omega is a magnet for children. Megumi stifles his laughter and pats her head.

Chapter 4

"So we have an accord?"

Megumi stabs his omi-yari in the ground and holds out a hand.

The beta eyes it dubiously but takes it nonetheless.

"Thank you, and yeah, we do."

Megumi hauls them to their feet.

The world exists in blacks, whites, and greys. Megumi has dwelled in grey for as long as he's lived. This is why he doesn't hold Kon-san's occupation against him; it's just business. So, while his pseudo uncle helped Geto Suguru set up his "terrorist organization" and profits from his exploitation of mundane humans, Megumi kills the curse users associated with Geto or makes them into turn cloaks.

"Your terms of surrender are the following: You submit yourself to interrogation, and if you pass, you have a six-month probationary period, followed by another six months of supervised missions." Megumi explains monotonously, "If you last a year without dying, breaking the laws, or violating your probation, you'll join our ranks and gain access to our knowledge."

"And the alternative is death," the beta notes wryly.

"Yes," Megumi replies without inflection.

"No binding vows?"

"No."

"Are the benefits good?"

Megumi shrugs, "They're decent, but I have private insurance." And two personal doctors, but that goes unsaid.

"What about PTO?"

"We do have human resources, but I would suggest contacting a lawyer from the law firm Itose & Hamada; they can review your employment contract and make amendments."

"Are they monkeys?" The beta's lip curls in slight disgust.

"Shaman, mundane, or curse, we're all cogs in the wheel," Megumi says fastidiously. "Do you accept the terms?"

The beta still wears a moue of distaste, but sounds resigned as they say, "I accept those terms."

Megumi's mien of apathy splinters, and he allows a small smile to grace his face. "Welcome."

"Thank you," the beta hesitates, and Megumi raises an imperious brow. "Er, not to pry, but should you be doing this in your condition?"

Perception is curious. Megumi stopped taking suppressants after Asahi, but after one pup, he smells divine. Pregnant with another, he smells like spring in all its fecund glory. He has the glow and scent of a pupped omega and the looks of a stereotypical omega, soft and exuding fragility, albeit more refined, or in Satoru's words, exquisite.

His occupation is at odds with his designation, and his lack of neutralizers in such a sensitive state is perhaps mindboggling for some, but Megumi has reached the point in his mastery of jujutsu where he can stare danger and death in the face, blink, and then smirk.

He's not quite Satoru's level; his mate has an intrinsic understanding of jujutsu that he'll never comprehend, but the wonders of jujutsu are one of the pastimes they share and explore together.

"I'm fine," He says dryly, "Baby or not, it's another day."

This is how Megumi contributes to Satoru's vision for the future. The brute force of youth is a bygone era, at least for now, their changes are more subtle, indiscernible until the outcomes are apparent. They are everything the higher-ups, traditionalists and old guard fear.

maneating orchids

"Absolutely not."

Family is a choice.

Megumi is his life partner, an unshakable bond that has seen perils and stood the testament of time.

Their marriage happened with little fanfare. It was another layer of legal protection but also a precursor or sign that they had reached their majority. He and Megumi grew up together, from stupid teenagers to young adults, adding a baby just cemented their dynamic.

Asahi is a choice, a trial, a challenge from conception to birth. A parasite that left Megumi ravaged. A nebulous concept until he was born, someone he fell in love with when he was placed in his arms. He brought upheaval and happiness to their life, but one is enough. He has seen his omega and pup nearly die in childbirth, a sight so traumatizing it triggered the empathy needed to use RCT on others. If he has to choose between Megumi and their new unborn child, he will choose Megumi. Satoru is inherently selfish, and Megumi is his first and foremost, maturity and age be damned.

Gojo Satsumi and Yuusei are a choice. His earliest memories contain them; the others are blurry, inconsequential, and superfluous. Their titles were mother and father until he understood their relation.

His parents are not a choice. They were concerned with the prestige of having Six Eyes as a son, not the actual rearing. Gojo Shion and Takai are persona non grata; their attempts to ingratiate themselves with him now that he's clan head are rebuffed. Megumi had already laid down the law, so that avenue is closed to them. What was left is the most vulnerable, Asahi.

"He's my grandson-"

"No."

She flinches, and Satoru is unmoved and unburdened.

Nothing is sacred. The gimlet eyes of his grandparents did not deter them, so they approached him, the obelisk of protection, daring not to approach the shadow that lurks behind it.

"We deserve to know him; you were kept-"

"You deserve nothing," His words are blades, landing with precision.

Satoru vividly remembers calling excitedly for his mother, grabbing her chu-furisode, and having his hands slapped away, scolded and pushed away. Disgust in the curl of her lip and

the furrow of her brow, disappointment in her eyes as she realized that Six Eyes was an actual child.

"Asahi isn't your second chance; bearing Six Eyes didn't help you overcome your mediocrity." Deadly poison pours from his mouth, "Asahi and I are your family in blood only; son and grandson are terms that do not apply to you. Take them out of your mouth."

"You're so cruel." There are tears in her eyes; she looks particularly wretched. Granddam will be cross that he made her cry. Oh well. "A heartless bastard."

Asahi sighs in his sleep and puts his thumb in his mouth. Satoru smiles and gently removes it. He barely spares his dam a glance and flippantly says, "Did you expect otherwise?"

"I'm your-"

"Oh? Satoru-boyo! You're early." Grandsire comes through the sliding door, silver eyes lighting up at the sight of her great-grandchild. She expertly ignores the tangible tension that pervades the room.

"Oyaji, here's *your* child," He teases and gently moves the toddler from his arms to his grandsire's expectant ones.

She ignores the dig and peers at the sleeping child. "Sleep regression?"

"Yes, but we managed six hours last night, so I consider that an improvement," Satoru says tiredly.

Gojo Satsumi frowns, "I'll let his nanny know we need to reconfigure his nap routine."

Gojo Shion is ignored and deemed irreverent by a son who had severed all connections and a sire who had long since written her off. She quietly dismisses herself.

Chapter 6

Megumi stares at the "ginger high" forlornly.

He misses alcohol already.

Change is tedious; it's fighting an uphill battle tooth and nail. It's mind-numbing when swift, brutal slaughter could very well solve half their problems, but murder isn't always the answer.

Satoru has decided his life's mission is to overhaul the jujutsu administration and society. Being the strongest is a title; it means nothing in the grand scheme of things if he can't implement long-lasting change. And while his reasons are benign, virtuous even, they're also selfish and asinine enough to make Megumi scoff and roll his eyes in exasperated fondness.

As his mate, it's his job to support him, and Megumi does this in his own way. In an ideal world, Megumi would fulfill his dream of becoming a veterinarian since he has a particular loathing for people and avoid anything jujutsu-related, even if he walked with one foot planted in each world. But needs trumped wants, and at the time, Megumi didn't have the freedom of choice. Now, he does, and he involves himself as he sees fit.

Megumi supports the legacy that Satoru is building by recruiting cursed users he's assigned to kill. Those gifted with techniques considered ill-suited for jujutsu, innovative techniques that defy what clans have cultivated for centuries or knowledge passed down between family members.

The lack of jujutsu sorcerers is a failing on the higher-ups' part. Megumi is simply filling the power vacuum left by centuries of stagnation, giving them fresh blood to fill the ranks.

Relying on three of the five special grades is fruitless, and sending unblooded students on miss-ranked missions is irresponsible and insipid. They now have several first and second-ranked jujutsu sorcerers; there's no excuse; this is how they prosper going forward.

"Megumi-san, are you okay?"

Megumi doesn't look away from the glass of whiskey and ginger, "No, Nanami-senpai, I'm not." The omega downs his club soda and pushes the glass of alcohol to Mei-san, who watches him in mirth. "You can have it this time, Nanami-senpai; please take the next one."

"Wha- *Oh*-" The alpha finally smells the scent of puffed omega over the scent of perfumes, sweat, and whatever ineffective neutralizing aerosol the bar establishment is spraying at random intervals. "I guess congratulations are in order?" He questions the glowering omega.

"Congratulate me in thirteen months, " he mutters darkly. "I'll be able to drink again. "

" Why thirteen months?"

" Breastfeeding! " Iori-senpai answers loudly. "Yu-kun is pregnant with your first pup, and you don't know this!"

Nanami-senpai remains blasé in the face of that statement, but his ears turn red. "Fetal development has been a point of interest; I'll look into that next. "

" Eh, Megumi-san, how big did your boobs get when you breastfed?"

Iori-senpai can't hold her alcohol, he can't decide who's worse inebriated, she or Satoru. Megumi indulges her, "It depends on the omega, I was an A cup, but since this is my second, I might get to a B cup. "

" If it happens, let's go shopping for bras!"

Megumi snorts. "Bring Madoka-chan as well."

That makes the beta blush. She, Shoko, and Shoko's longtime omega girlfriend have an ongoing situationship that's interesting to watch from the peanut gallery. Satoru says it makes the uptight beta easier to deal with. Megumi's just waiting to see how it will explode in their faces. The connection between an alpha and an omega is an ancient rite cemented in an exchange of blood; he wonders if there's room for a beta.

"Y-yeah, sure!"

Megumi scoots over when a familiar feeling washes over him. Euphoria overwhelms him and spills into the bond.

The shift is abrupt; hackles rise on the back of his neck, and the decompression of the distance between the alpha and the omega via point of convergence happens in the blink of an eye.

Satoru appears at his side, smile bright and ridiculously handsome.

Megumi automatically smiles back, and Satoru's euphoria is met with contentment.

Chapter 7

To be known is to be loved, and to be loved is to be known.

When everything was adolescent petulance, over-confidence, and knot-headed-cunt-struck shenanigans, he claimed that love is fickle and fades with time and romanticized that what existed between them was the beginnings of a long-abiding companionship.

He was wrong.

Two things can be true at once; multiple things can be true simultaneously.

Love isn't the ruinous, gut-wrenching affair he'd thought it would be. It's quiet, blooming even in the most intolerable conditions, a hostile environment where the expectations were clear, but instinct blurred the lines.

It's subdued but shows up in the smallest of gestures, in how they sometimes look at each other and speak to each other.

Like this:

Megumi slides a martini glass before him, some fruity concoction that's more syrup than alcohol or liqueur. The omega knows him as well as he knows himself.

And in the bond, love is a slow-burning fire that simmers, never flickers out, nor becomes a roaring inferno.

Steady and unshakable, but seldom said.

Gojo smiles sweetly, leans down, and murmurs, "Love you."

Megumi blushes furiously and mutters, "Love you, too."

Shoko makes her appearance then and gags.

He immediately jeers, "Jelly?"

"Of you?" Shoko rolls her eyes, "Never. Your head is big enough; Megumi-kun keeps you out of the clouds."

"My head is proportional like most of me, well, almost all of me," He leers.

Shoko blinks slowly, "I have the bigger knot."

"Shoko!" Utahime hisses scandalized.

Shoko smiles lazily, "It's true, we measured."

"We did!" He adds proudly.

Megumi scoffs and mutters, "Stupid, fucking alphas."

"Your stupid alpha," He corrects.

"Stay five feet away from me," Megumi demands.

"No! Then I'd be by my lonesome. What am I without my pretty omega?" He says playfully, an impish grin curling his lips.

In the face of his frivolousness, Megumi remains unflappable.

"Still an idiot," He remarks drolly.

"So much vitriol from a pretty mouth, should I-"

Megumi covers his mouth with his hand, muffling his next words. He chuckles and slowly licks the callused flesh.

Half-lidded, satisfied eyes watch as his cheeks bloom with pink again.

Chapter 8

A look around the table provides insight into the last decade; the people lost to the annals of time, and those new to the fold. It's sobering to think that Megumi could have saved his year mates, instead of Yu-senpai.

Megumi's yearmates did not survive their first year. Once he was properly ranked, he was given more assignments with the second and third years of the Tokyo and Kyoto schools, while his classmates were left to their own devices.

Takei Hideki died, eaten by a second-tier curse; Jun quit in the wake of their classmate's death. Between them both, Megumi would have expected Jun to have the grit to survive; while naive and too chipper for his own good, he could have made it through the obvious culling the higher-ups implemented, or perhaps he was too optimistic.

Unless a person is valuable, only the strong survive, and Megumi was raised by a man who killed shaman for sport. He did not understand faltering under pressure. Survival was hammered into the very foundation of his person. He valued himself too much to die. Jun left and he did not hear from him again.

He did not become attached and was vaguely fond of them, but the gross negligence displayed by their administration disgusted him. Perhaps he was too close to the situation, but this stirred Megumi to seek better for those under his care. They would enter a better world where they aren't hammered down nor used as canon fodder.

Megumi watches avidly as he sips his cocktail; he glimpses envy in the bond and stifles laughter.

"Seven more months, Megumi-chan," He says consolingly.

"Thirteen," He retorts tartly.

"Only six months?" Gojo questions. "You did it for a year with Asahi, and it wasn't just for his benefit."

Megumi ignores the double entendre and waspishly replies, "This is your fault."

"Hm," Satoru hums in a lilting voice, and muses, "that's not how I remember it. You were drunk, and Drunk Megumi is Horny Megumi."

"Shut up!" He whisper-shouts in embarrassment, and buries his face into Gojo's side. Megumi's so cute.

"I can pinpoint the week of conception." His voice drops, timbre deep, for his ears only. "Besides that night, you jumped me twice, initiated four times: shower, living room couch,

kitchen counter, bathroom counter, outside, anywhere but a bed." He laughs, low and dirty, "But I'm not complaining; I love your tight, wet cunt, your hot mouth, your tight ass."

Megumi clutches the front of his uniform jacket and presses his crossed legs tightly together. It appears he remembers it as well.

Megumi's fertile scent becomes oversaturated with the scent of ripened fruit, spring blossoms, and the beginnings of slick.

And that's their cue to leave.

Drunk Megumi is fun, but pregnant Megumi is just as insatiable.

Chapter 9

Slight intoxication lands them in the doorway, stumbling over their feet.

Satoru laughs as he trips over a pair of shoes, "Megumi, we're gonna-hmph-" trailing off into a moan as Megumi kisses his grinning mouth and licks into his open mouth. He finds himself overwhelmed by needy omega.

Hands paw at his clothes, pulling the zipper of his uniform jacket open. Satoru pulls away from questing lips, and smirks wolfishly when he whimpers. "Always eager, always cock hungry." He palms the omega's ass, squeezing the firm flesh.

"Yes," Megumi admits without shame. Fucking is a language, and it's one they speak fluently. Pregnancy makes him voracious for the alpha that bred him, but it doesn't take much for Satoru to turn him on. The right glance can make him wet. Megumi demands, "Kiss me."

"Hm," he hums mock-thoughtfully. "Is that all you want?" The alpha resists the hands turning at his collar, grinning at the omega's glare. "Not my dick, my fingers or my mouth?"

"Fuck me, don't care how," He pulls the alpha's button-down shirt from his pants, hands slipping under the material to feel the skin of his taut abdomen. Nails grazing, leaving gooseflesh in their wake. Satoru shudders, and Megumi meets his eyes. "Just fill me up alpha."

His pupils blow wide at that, and he cups the back of his neck, descending upon him. Megumi gasps, and he feasts on his open mouth, sucking on his tongue and exploring him. Swallowing his whimpers as he pushes him against the wall, inserting a thigh between supple legs, pressing against the warm, damp center of him.

"Ah..." He gasps as Satoru bows his head to bite and nip at the skin around his bond bite. Then sucks the scarred flesh between his lips, worrying the membrane of nerves with sharp teeth. The result is instantaneous, slick floods, leaving his damp underwear sodden. Megumi keens and shakes as his nipples tighten, clit pulses and omegan cock hardens painfully.

A large hand encompasses his hip, encouraging the omega to grind against the muscular thigh pressing insistently against his cunt, pulling him close, but the omega has other ideas. He captures Satoru's lips, nipping his bottom lip, then soothing it while unbuckling his belt.

As much as he blames the alpha for his pregnancy, Megumi is equally culpable. The lure of his alpha always exists at the forefront and peripheral of his vision and emotions. Lust, love, and yearning are equally reciprocated; how can he resist?

Unbuttoning the fly, slipping beneath the band, cupping the hot, rigid length of him. "Megumi..." Satoru mumbles breathlessly, hips jerking forward when he begins to stroke his dick with practiced movements.

Megumi wants to crawl under Satoru's skin, under his ribcage, curl around his heart, and become its safekeeper and beholder. Since he can't have that, he settles for what he can have in him.

The omega pushes the alpha back, dragging down his trousers and underwear. He drops to his knees, inhaling the scent of alpha musk, Satoru, Satoru, Satoru, and takes him into his mouth.

He moans at the taste of him on his tongue and sucks on the bulbous head, tongue dipping into the slit. He pulls back to lick the angry red length of him from root to stem.

"*Fuck*," he moans.

"You can fuck my throat," Megumi consents, then takes him back into his mouth, visibly relaxing his jaw.

"You're gonna kill me..."

Megumi urges his hips forward.

Yeah, pregnant Megumi is just as good as drunk Megumi.

blow your mongrel mind

Lips reddened, eyes wet with tears as he breathes steadily through his nose. Drool falls in thick rivulets as his mouth is forced wide with every plunge down his throat. The omega fondles his balls, moaning, vibrations traveling along the dick, sliding up and down his tongue. Verdant meets electric blue, and the alpha groans gutturally, grip tightening in his hair.

The breath deprivation, the painful tugs on his hair, the litany of groans, curses, and bitten-off moans, the feeling of his moist cavern forced open to accommodate the girth and length of Satoru's dick, the broad and blunt head hitting the back of his throat, he loves it all.

Clit aching with need, the omega slips a hand into his pants and sodden underwear. Fingers grazing the slick, swollen folds of his sex and circling his engorged clit.

But most of all, he loves the heady feeling of alpha cum sliding thickly down his throat. In him, where it belongs.

"No."

He gasps as he's abruptly pulled off his alpha's dick, thick globs of spit connecting the rigid shaft to his swollen lips. His hand is ripped from his weeping hole, and he's hauled to his feet.

He's wide-eyed as the alpha drags his tongue from palm to fingertips, licking the slick gathered there. Something wild in his eyes, feral in his face, and growls, "You don't get to come unless I will it. Your needy cunt is mine to take."

Then he manhandles the omega, spinning him around and placing his hands firmly on the wall, commanding him not to move. Pants shoved down, underwear slid to the side, Megumi whines as his sensitive flesh is exposed to the night air.

Pushed down until his back is arched, Satoru shoves three fingers into him, testing his tightness. He lazily thrusts a few times; Megumi fucks back, pleading, "Satoru, please."

The familiar shape of his alpha's cock replaces his long digits, but he isn't kind. "*Nghh*," Megumi utters when he shoves into him, lifting him onto his toes. The alpha doesn't give him a chance to recover, fucking into his drenched passage with precise thrusts, "*Shit...ah..ahhh.*"

His mind clouds as he's filled over and over again, cries of the alpha's name and pleas for more leaving his mouth. Slick channel rippling with the threat of orgasm as Satoru narrows onto his sweet spot.

If it's like this every time, he's inclined to give the alpha all the pups he wants.

Chapter 11

Small, sticky hands touch his belly and then place an ear on the flat surface.

"Papa, is there really a baby in there?"

"Yes, Asa-chan."

The toddler frowns, "Daddy says the baby will be my brother or sister."

"That's right, you'll be a big brother." Asa is pretty easygoing; when he learned of the baby, he'd been curious, asked a few questions, and then wanted a snack and water.

Other than a few redundant questions and a few precocious queries, Asahi is content to go about his everyday routine. He wonders how much of a shit show the introduction of a newborn will be.

"Granddam says he had five siblings. Will I have five?" Asahi smears his berry-stained hand across Megumi's shirt. Nearly four years of parenthood have made him impervious to messes.

No, hell no. "No baby, just one."

"Only one?" The toddler tilts his head, brow furrowing. "What about three?"

"One for now, Asa-chan," Megumi says diplomatically.

The toddler seems to accept that response. He shoves several berries into his mouth, goddamn toddler berry tax, and asks around a mouthful, "Will she look like me?"

Vaguely disgusted, he counters, "You want a sister?"

"I dunno, I just want them to look like me. I'm cute, everyone says so." Megumi fights a derisive snort, like father like son.

"You're siblings, so you'll look alike," he replies neutrally. He hopes they look like his sire; spite is a powerful motivator.

"Granddam says I look like Mama's grandsire," Asahi absently kicks his leg back and forth. "But Grandsire says I look like Granddam and Daddy, but I think I look like Mommy and Maki-nee-chan."

Asahi does favor Zen'in Shigure. Courtesy of Gojo Yuusei, Megumi has one picture of the omega and his mate. His grandsire's genes dominate his bloodline, but Asahi is the result of centuries of selective breeding and careful eugenics. He favors both of his parents and their respective families.

"You look like yourself," he pokes the pup's belly, grinning when he giggles. "Gojo Asahi."

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

November 2017

He watches with a smitten smile as Megumi wolfs down a Nutella-filled crepe.

"What?" The omega demands around a mouthful. The bond reflects their mutual happiness, but Megumi's has tendrils of suspicion.

"It's just that I knew one day you'd see things my way," He replies with self-satisfaction.

Megumi shoves the rest of the crepe in his mouth. Glaring while he chews and then swallows. "What the hell are you talking about?"

Aware that they're in public, he still gets into his space and into his face. Leaning down to lick the dollop of whipped cream lingering on his full bottom lip.

He smirks, "I like sweet things."

Megumi blushes, "I hate you."

The omega pinches him, and Satoru yelps.

Mating, marriage, pup, soon-to-be pup, duties, jobs, and responsibilities aside, it's important they continue to date each other.

Like in their adolescence, they visit cute cafes, go to the movies, visit amusement parks, have beach days, visit spas, etc. Though some of those ventures include their child, they take time out of their busy schedules to be with each other.

This helps keep the communication open between them, share experiences, appreciate each other and create memories.

It's a bit more difficult with Megumi's pregnancy; the strangest scents will cause nausea, so they have to tread carefully. Luckily for him, this pregnancy's cravings center around three things: sweets, sex, and more sex.

Megumi eyes his unfinished crepe, and he gives it to him. "Thank you," the omega murmurs. "Sorry for pinching you."

"No, you're not," He grins in mirth.

Megumi shrugs.

Ten years ago, when he spoke of an equal, he wanted this. Doing mundane things with someone beneath him in power would have been impossible. The lauded strongest sorcerer can't afford a weakness, and being with someone unable to handle his enemies, withstand the scrutiny that came with his position, or stand beside his behemoth of a shadow would create an unending Achilles heel exploited by those who would see his downfall.

Love means nothing if it ends his defeat or death, but Megumi is worthy of love, the protector of home and hearth, and more, so much more.

Nevertheless, no matter how much Megumi can hold his own, he keenly remembers his time carrying Asahi.

"Megumi."

"Yes?" He answers absently, looking over the crowd for their next street vendor. He tugs his hand, and Satoru widens the barrier of Infinity, allowing them to segue through the crowd with ease.

"Have you stopped taking assignments?"

"No, not yet," He says distractedly.

"Stop in December; you'll be five months along." It's not a suggestion or request.

While they don't necessarily adhere to gender roles, there are caveats. When Satoru became Megumi's shelter against the world, his freedom was guaranteed, but not without hard lines drawn in the sand. The alpha doesn't demand much of Megumi, but when he does, he expects compliance. If the omega asks why, he'll explain; if he objects, then it'll likely be with violence, and as rare as that is, when it happens, it's fun, and it usually leads to angry fucking.

Megumi pauses, turns to study him, and nods his assent without fuss.

The last time Megumi was pregnant, not even his burgeoning reputation and ties to the sorcerer killer kept the attempts on his life at bay. Carrying the child of Six Eyes made the most cautious of Satoru's enemies bold, and it did not help that Megumi was known to kill with little cause to repine; people want revenge despite knowing that the deceased gambled with death every day.

The next stop is Taiyaki; Megumi settles for one sweet potato filling and one custard filling. Gojo buys three, knowing the omega will want more.

Chapter End Notes

► Outtake:

Ignore the chapter count.

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Megumi blinks, "Why would you think that?"

Rabbit escape multiplies, then disperses when a finger pokes a copy. The original shikigami rests easy in the arms of a giggling pup.

Laughter erupts near the pond. Gama shoots spurts of water in the face of a sulking teen.

Kon carries two kids on its back; it pants happily and trots along the stone path of the garden.

The children like to play various games with his shikigami. Each of the Zen'in are able to see and sense the curse energy summons, except for two. Maki likened them to cursed spirits, an absence of life, but they smelled like Megumi, spring, and its fertility. How interesting.

The more mercurial and illusive of his shikigami are absent. Mourning Tiger and Orochi are more likely to attack, seeming to embody the deadlier characteristics of his personality. Piercing Ox, Max Elephant, and Nue are of a similar strata of the tiger and snake, but are more likely to wander out in calmer environs.

Round Deer, as always, is a constant companion. His first shikigami and perhaps his favorite. He leans against its side, Asahi cuddled on his lap, tuckered out from playing, and faces his nervous cousin.

Zen'in Ren mumbles, "I don't have as much potential as Maki-nee-chan."

"You don't," Megumi states bluntly, and the teenager wilts and averts his rapidly blinking eyes. "But you do have a unique support technique that will make you invaluable to your comrades."

Ren's head snaps up, and the visible hurt on his face fades into astonishment.

"I want you to have realistic expectations; you have the choice to back out."

"I won't!" Ren shouts, affronted.

"But you can," Megumi says mildly. "Choice is important, and remembering you can leave and pursue something else means you're less likely to believe death is your final option. That's what becoming a shaman means: fighting in a never-ending war with death as your constant companion."

Ren is left poleaxed once again, and Megumi doesn't understand why. He's never coddled the children, always blunt about the grim realities of jujutsu and the wonders of jujutsu theory.

All Zen'in were taught self-defense, basic jujutsu theory, how to use a weapon, and how to administer first aid. These were non-negotiable and required; if they asked for more knowledge, they received it.

The beta murmurs, "Maki-nee-chan said the same thing."

"As expected," Megumi remarks, "she is my successor."

Ren flinches, and Megumi's eyes flicker to his clenched fists; that might be an issue later on.

Perhaps he thinks he's a worthy contender, but he's not. Ren lacks the grit and gumption. At seven, Maki threatened to kill Gojo Satoru. At sixteen, she still vows to kill him in revenge for her sister and for ten years of annoying her. Megumi applauds her dedication.

Maybe Ren will prove him wrong, but it doesn't matter; Maki will succeed him.

"I'll make you proud," the beta promises, determination etches his features.

"I don't need you to make me proud," Megumi rebukes, "I need you to live and practice discernment. Leave any ideas of foolhardy heroics behind, learn everything you can, grow, support your comrades to the best of your ability, and live."

Megumi is a fair but firm figure for the pups under his care and guidance.

Leadership did not come easy. Heavy is the crown; Megumi was raised to fight, strategize would be wars; his knowledge of the Jujutsu world was intricate and vague, limited to what his dad knew and what he could ascertain. His shortcomings were glaring in many respects; some days, he handled the position his father maneuvered him into with aplomb, and other times, he fucked up royally.

Support came from his mate, the former Gojo clan head, and her mate. They helped him navigate and manage the eight lives suddenly thrust into his callused hands.

"So I can go?" Ren asks hopefully.

"Aa."

"Yes, yes, yes. Yatttttta!!!!!" The fourteen-year-old hoots and hollers in excitement. He looks like he wants to throw his arms around Megumi but thinks better of it. Shyly, he asks, "Can I hug you?"

Megumi smiles in amusement and nods his assent; omegas naturally attract pups, and though presented, Ren's pup scent still clung to him. Ren carefully positions himself at his side and hugs his side, conscious of the pup on his lap and the slight swell of his belly. Megumi pats his head and scents the beta.

He's never denied any of the Zen'in his natural soothing presence; they were alone in the world, and he understood that feeling all too well.

"Kon-san."

Megumi watches the garden from his study. The rebuilt Zen'in compound takes the form of a traditional home, and his view is scenic as he takes in the makeshift picnic. The older kids sit off to the side as the younger are rounded up and fed by their caretakers. Asahi sits on the lap of one of the older pups, an onigiri in each hand, displaying the table manners he seldom shows his sire and dam. That's something they'll have to work on.

"Megumi-kun."

The lack of inflection in his familiar address isn't alarming. Kon Shui's fondness for him fades whenever he interferes with his cash flow.

"I've found what you're looking for."

"What does it entail?" Since his honorary uncle doesn't want to indulge in banalities, Megumi will return the favor.

"The usual."

In blood then, Megumi isn't a merchant nor a free agent, but he's on the hunt for a particular item. He's collected weapons for years, but this one has alluded him. If he has to do something more unscrupulous than usual, so be it.

"When?"

"November 28th."

That's cutting it close, but Satoru said he has until December.

"I accept."

"Great," emotion finally enters the beta's voice. Megumi identifies it as exasperation. *"This brokerage fee will cover the last three curse users you killed."*

"Sounds like you were scammed," Megumi sniffs with disdain.

Kon-san laughs humorlessly. *"Your vendetta against Geto Suguru is getting tiresome; why resort to killing henchmen? It's petty and beneath you."*

So it's not just business, as Megumi always considered it. Curious.

Megumi makes a noncommittal sound. In total, Megumi encountered perhaps six curse users associated with the defector, and that was over the course of four years. He killed three on orders, maimed one, and managed to convert two. Others were vaguely associated with the terrorist movement and were killed or converted.

Megumi doesn't think of the beta at all; to him, it's just the outcome of the trade. But given the opportunity, he will act on his promise.

"Tell him to hire better help."

Chapter End Notes

► Outtake:

Chapter 14

There are seven swords of Totsuka and twenty swords of Muramasa.

Megumi meticulously collected each sword that piqued his interest. This is the only time he delves into his father's profession. Satoru is aware of his side quests and turns a blind eye to them, just like he turns a blind eye to the atrocities Geto Suguru commits out of some misplaced guilt.

Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil, but evil is committed nevertheless with complacency; he is just as complicit in his war crimes.

Of the seven, Megumi possesses Futsunomitama and Ohabari. The Kusanagi is an impossible dream; even he dared not trespass against those who owned it lest he break the tenuous peace held between the Japanese government, Imperial family, and Jujutsu administration.

The swords of Muramasa are more accessible. Chisuheri is the first Muramasa sword he received, the final gift from his sire. He's collected Edauchi, Shigure, Gokugetsu, Ishizuki, and Tsukiotoshi. Now, he seeks the twin swords Amatsu and Shinmei.

While his grasp on the Ten Shadows Technique has neared mastery, Megumi's true acumen comes from his weaponry.

Maki shares his love of cursed tools, and he continues the tradition of gifting weapons on birthdays with her. When she graduates, he plans to bequeath her a small arsenal of cursed tools from his personal collection.

Given the right circumstances, most of the swords he collects have the capacity to harm Satoru. Particularly Futsunomitama and Ohabari. Better that they in his possession than an enemy's.

The scent of blood still makes him nauseous. A face mask blocks out the worst of the stench; Kon eats the remains of the carcasses while the rest sink into the thick, viscous liquid of his shadows. He'd thought his new shikigami would only know the flesh of curses, but the flesh of their creators is consumed nevertheless.

He leaves not a trace behind.

Two down, two more to go.

The people who hired him remain anonymous, but the telltale signs of their identity are obvious. Usually, they are descendants of the abolished Nobel or Shake class, have intermediate ties to the Jujutsu world, and are prone to infighting and quietly ordering hits on their upstart branch family members.

His quarry must know that whatever slight or sin they committed against their family would be met with retribution threefold. The property is crawling with security, some of the shaman variety.

Megumi is unconcerned; he travels concealed through shadow, with Orochi at his side.

When the snake shikigami abruptly exits, tongue flickering, he follows.

Wearing scent patches, neutralizing spray, nondescript clothing and shoes, head covered and face partially hidden, he emerges from the abyss of darkness.

The snake strikes, wrapping around and constricting their next struggling target. He shrieks, "Help! Help m-" His air supply is cut off.

With morbid intrigue, Megumi watches as the target suffocates to death, vaguely noting the distant noise of rapidly approaching footsteps. As Orochi opens its jaw wide and prepares to swallow their target, Megumi withdraws Edauchi Muramasa. The sword sings with the might of one hundred blades, blocking the blow to kill Orochi and eviscerating the flesh of its would-be killer into 100 pieces.

"Not a curse," a voice calls.

Megumi turns, signing with his hand, calling forth his vile companion. Mourning Tiger crawls from the abyss, viscous liquid dripping from its fur, sizzling from the flames at its feet.

"But then again, you don't care about such trivialities, do you, Zen'in Megumi?"

Megumi blinks languidly and raises an imperious eyebrow. "No, I don't, neither do I claim any moral high ground."

Behind him, the snake shikigami devours its meal in peace, sinking into the thick sludge at their feet.

"Morals and conscience were created to make the strong weak."

Megumi tilts his head and derisively notes, "You got wiser."

His comment is ignored; Mourning Tiger prowls before him, impatient for the hunt to begin.

"I'd prefer to keep the gifted alive, but you remain a nuisance. It's a shame, considering you're a breeder and contribute to our population."

Megumi sighs heavily and calls forth Chisuheri.

Shui stumbles out of bed and makes a familiar trek to the bathroom. The toilet is downstairs, detached from the shower and inconveniently away from the bedrooms.

He trips over a toy, silently cursing his granddaughter. He hops over to the light switch. The light shocks him, but the sight they reveal shocks him even more.

"M-Megumi-kun!"

Covered in mud, muck, mire, and blood, Megumi breathes rapidly, a familiar madness lurking in his green eyes. Dripping blood onto the living room floor, metal shining dully against the light is a sword.

"Listen, it wasn't what you think. I'd never betray Toji's memory by-"

Megumi lets out an unholy scream and swings his sword.

for reasons wretched and divine

"Megumi?"

He breathes heavily.

"Megumi, are you all right!?"

Anger is bad for the baby.

Stress is bad for the baby.

Sadness is bad for the baby.

"Megumi, sweetheart, breathe with me. Inhale and exhale."

He kept the bond blocked like usual on excursions, but the temporary severance failed.

He follows the alpha's directions, slowly calming his heart rate and leaving the high of anger.

The shadows are dark, deep, and lovely. Shui Kon's body slowly melts into a cocktail of muscle, tissue, bone, and viscera. The shadows gurgle and pop, thickening as the carcass is absorbed.

Megumi stares at the sight, unseeing.

"Are you hurt?"

Megumi shakes his head.

"Words, baby, I need you to use words."

"No," he manages to croak.

That's a lie; physically, he's fine; emotionally, mentally, he's undone.

"Tell me where you are," The alpha demands.

"No!" he says panicked.

The alpha softens, *"Then come home, come back where I can protect you."*

"...okay."

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Slumber comes easy by his mate's side; he seldom sleeps when away from Megumi, and if he does, constant vigilance is his bedfellow.

Face pressed into his neck, body a warm shroud laid partially over the omega or sprawled across the alpha, wrapped in strong arms, ear pressed to a bare chest, listening to a strong heartbeat.

Now, their sleeping positions reflected cosleeping. Megumi spooned between Satoru and their pup, who laid splayed chaotically in some corner of the bed. As his gestation advances, Megumi is starting to prefer his left side, and their pup has graduated to his own room and bed.

Asahi is absent, carted off to Satoru's grandparents for the weekend. The elder couple is all too happy to have extra time with their great-grandchild, the toddler dismissing his parents without a backward glance, ready to be spoiled rotten.

Satoru is off, mobile on do not disturb, only select numbers allowed to bypass the barrier. Megumi is likely to field any calls and keep him abreast of any issues that may pop up.

On December 7th, 2017, Megumi turns in bed and watches Satoru sleep.

A few moments later, white lashes flicker open, eyes reflected with the cosmos stare back. He smiles sleepily and then turns and yawns. He settles back down and shuffles forward, laying his head on Megumi's pillow. "Ohayo," he murmurs.

Affection and warmth bloom in the bond. Satoru's sleep soft and painfully beautiful in the early morning. Megumi pushes his fringe from his eyes and rubs his scalp. The alpha's eyes close in contentment; the scent of ginger, zunda, and sandalwood washes over them.

"Happy birthday," Megumi says softly, then leans forward to brush his lips against his. Satoru smiles against his mouth and returns it.

Megumi is distant, remote in a way that doesn't cause alarm. He's used to his moments of reticence; he can pinpoint the moment it began and the probable cause.

He doesn't pry; Megumi will talk about it or remain silent until the episode passes. In the meantime, he's forbidden him from any escapades for the foreseeable future. Official missions once the baby is born are fine, but indulging in his hobby, especially when it threatens his life and leaves him in emotional turmoil, is out of the question.

In the meantime, Satoru enjoys the weekend, and the second to last year of his twenties.

Shoko is one of the few people that can contact him.

"This better be good!" He grouses, *"Me and Megumi are headed for Universal Studios-"*

"Satoru," it is rare to hear Shoko say his first name, let alone hear her cry. He nearly drops the phone at her next words.

"Are you really okay with just walking around the park? You can get on rides, I'm okay with waiting," Megumi questions as he walks into the living room.

Gojo's head snaps in his direction. Glittering pools of cold blue pin him in place. "Was it revenge?"

Fear, acute fear overwhelms the bond, then the connection is severed, the tether cut.

An influx of cursed energy floods the room. Some amalgamation of Shikigami manifest at the omega's side, a hulking chimera, fire escaping its maw with every breath.

Resolution etches his features. The omega looks at him like a stranger, an enemy that seeks to harm him. Megumi withdraws a sword, and holds it protectively over his stomach, ready to draw it at a moment's notice.

It hits him.

No.

He's gutted.

"You don't think-C'mon Megumi, you know I won't hurt you," Gojo implores.

"I don't know what you'll do," he retorts sharply. "Grief is a strange ailment."

"The last thing I would do is hurt you! Especially over someone dead to me." Gojo is appalled.

Megumi scoffs. "Physically, you wouldn't." He scathingly continues. "You just accused me of seeking revenge. Dead to you!? Almost ten years, ten fucking years you ignored the man you claimed was your responsibility, you said you would put him down. Nothing was fucking stopping you! Is it guilt? Is it love? What the fuck is it?"

"None of the above; it's easier to ignore my failures than confront them," he quietly confesses, but he's more concerned for the omega. Emotions flicker rapidly across his face, before he settles on anger. "Calm down, think of the baby."

That's more of an insult to the omega. Insinuating that he's volatile because he's pregnant. Him, an omega that embraces his fight instincts.

Megumi's lips peel back into a snarl, and he rebuffs him harshly, "Fuck you! I should have killed him years ago."

"Then why didn't you?" He asks in a hard voice, "What point were you trying to prove?"

"Maybe out of love and respect for you. Maybe I wanted to spare you pain of losing someone close to you," Megumi reasons. "Maybe Stockholm syndrome, maybe cognitive dissonance, after all, I fuck my sire's killer!" He shouts.

Each word lands like blades, and with the severance of the bond, Satoru cannot discern what the omega feels. It sends him into turmoil. Were the last ten years a farce!? Did he invite the enemy into his bed, give him his bite, his seed, and power over him?

No.

No it can't be. He refuses to believe it, but words said in anger are seldom lies. He laughs bitterly. "You warned me you would kill him, you said you wouldn't ask for permission or forgiveness. If this is you teaching me a lesson, consider me schooled. Wow, Megumi, you are cruel."

There's silence, and the cursed energy dissipates. The bond reopens, and Gojo is stricken silent by the tidal wave of emotions that hits him.

"It wasn't revenge," Megumi says softly. He charily approaches, and wow, doesn't that break his heart? His omega is afraid of him. There are two swords in his arms. "It was a set-up. Kon Shui and Geto had similar interests, and I was disrupting them. They decided to get rid of me. I killed them both."

He places the swords on the table, and quickly backs away. "These are for your birthday, I thought I'd finally share my favorite hobby with you."

Chapter 16

"I should kill you."

Shoko is a marvel, but she lacks the necessary training to render him as he was before.

He is whole, but he is shattered. Covered partially in third-degree burns, nearly disemboweled, throat damaged, thigh and pelvis crushed, covered in lacerations.

He was tortured, shown that the fairer sex does not mean weak. That nature's whore has teeth.

Zen'in Megumi is a monster, an anomaly.

But most of all, he's heartbroken.

Suguru lays on his side, a paltry way to hide from Satoru's disdain and cold fury.

"I should rip your heart from your chest and crush it under my feet. That's what you've done to me. You're just like everyone else. Trash." His breath hitches, and his eyes burn.

"But what's the point in saying this? Words are wind, and violence seems to be the only language you people understand." Gojo's cursed energy is a thunderous presence, his scent an alphan threat, the anticipation of an oncoming storm.

"Out of respect for the friendship we had, but mostly because of Shoko, I'll give you mercy."

"Suguru, you're dead to me; appear in front of me again, and you die; speak to me again, and you die."

That is what sends him over the precipice.

He knows Megumi as well as he knows himself, but the self is mysterious.

The people closest to you are capable of dealing the deadliest blows. The ties between him and Suguru were frayed, but when he attempted to harm Megumi, kill him under some farfetched notion that he was the lynchpin for a series of unfortunate events, a delusion created when the beta found his worldview at odds with reality, the tethers snapped.

He said love was fickle and failed to withstand the test of time, but sentiment is a slow rot that festers and grows, crumbling at the most unexpected times.

He is conflicted.

He is wroth. The beast within demands submission; how dare his omega question him, demand an explanation for decisions made and promises kept? Did he not provide for him? Put him first, make him his priority? Move the stars and heavens for him? Was he not a

competent alpha? Did he not exceed his jaded expectations as an alpha? Was he not the ideal partner? Was the trust, open communication, counsel, and confidant not enough?

He is desolate; melancholia consumes him. The very thought that Megumi thinks he's capable of hurting him and their pup is a jagged, bitter pill to swallow. That Megumi would cast aspirations on his character, and dub him a miscreant alpha boggles his mind. Violent displays against his loved ones are out of character for him. Betrayal, grievous harm, or an unforgivable affront would tip the scales and conjure his wrath. Even sparring is an issue; he holds back his blows, much to Megumi's chagrin, and spends more time teasing the omega, making him blush and stutter with titillating touches and provocative words. Megumi's trepidation has always been something he hated to see and witness, having it directed at him splinters something within him.

He's dismayed. They quarrel often, but it's harmless bickering. Megumi is churlish most days, and he's levity, occasionally sunshine and daisies. They embody the cliché of opposites attracting. He fears they will lose their hard-earned dynamic.

He blocks out the bond.

It would be so easy to sink into his shadows, sink into a pit of despair, an oubliette to be forgotten.

However that's not an option.

He has a child, a clan to lead, people relying on him.

But he despairs, for the first time in a decade Megumi experiences absolute silence. His emotions and his alone.

Satoru is an open book, uncaring how burdensome his feelings may be, but Megumi welcomes them. A phantom brush in the beginning, small impressions, that became easier discern since Satoru wore his heart on his sleeve. And as the bond grew, Satoru's natural joie de vivre disappeared under a mask of idiocy, a façade to combat the harsh realities of life, but the bond revealed the depths of his emotions.

The connection is severed and Megumi is bereft, he finally understands the devastation he unleashes on his alpha.

The blockade doesn't last long.

It becomes muted.

The bond between alpha and omega cannot be denied, ignored, or severed without undue consequences. Add in a pupped mate, and whatever discord exists between alpha and omega becomes a minor vexation when instincts demand focus on the perseverance, well-being, and development of the babe in utero.

So when Megumi feels Satoru slip into bed behind him, pull him close, and scent him, he relaxes and releases the pillow that holds his lingering scent. The furrow between his brow disappears, his whimpering ceases, and he purrs, finally at peace. The alpha cradles his belly, large hand encompasses the mass, long elegant fingers splayed wide to feel the minute fluttering under the warmth of his hand.

He's left home, finding refuge in the rooms he never uses on the Zen'in compound. Pilfered clothing and bedding sharing their combined scents make up the nest in a strange bed and stranger room. Sleep is impossible to find, and when he does find it, it's fitful until it's not. He stays there for three nights, and each time at the hour of the owl, he feels Satoru gather him close and then awakens to find himself alone, the alpha gone at the hour of the wolf. His presence only found in the clothes he leaves in the hamper, and the duffle bag left in the closet.

The third night he has Asahi, after fielding questions from the elders, putting on a happy, but strained face for his toddler, and dealing with his extended family now that he's in residence and more accessible, Megumi is exhausted. That night, he joins the nest many of the younger Zen'in pups sleep in; Asahi passed out somewhere near his head, within hand reach.

Satoru finds him there, usually considered an intrusion, but the alpha's scent lingers in the undertones of Megumi's, and in their pup, Gojo blood is just as prevalent as Zen'in.

He feigns sleep when Asahi is moved and placed in the cradle of his arms. Then, they are gathered into strong arms, his familiar scent washing over him. Megumi's eyes burn, and he immediately bursts into tears.

"I miss you," he weeps.

Face cradled in the divot of his neck and shoulder, Satoru murmurs, "Then come home."

Chapter 17

"Ohayo, Kamado-sensei, Yagura-san."

Today is a special day.

"Good morning, Zen'in-san." Dr. Kamado greets.

"Are you excited, Megumi-san?" Yagura-san chirps.

He cradles his belly, feeling the flutter of butterfly wings, quick and sure. He smiles softly.

"As long as they're healthy."

Megumi has two doctors, a midwife, and a doula.

Kamado-sensei is an omega specialist and OBGYN, Ando-sensei is a general practitioner, and the doctor for several of the Zen'in children. Kamado is the apprentice of Kondo-sensei, brought into the fold to work for the Gojo clan. Yagura Saki, his omega midwife, and Sekido Atsuko, his beta doula.

At first, he'd thought it was overkill, but after his first pregnancy and birth, he's come around. Since he's taken a step back from his role as a jujutsu sorcerer, he's seen the ladder two more often.

Special care is designated for the clan head's mate. The mate of Six Eyes is held to a higher standard, especially since he has the technique equivalent to Six Eyes and Limitless.

Keen interest is shown in the offspring of the Sugawara no Michizane and Taira no Masakado lines. Asahi turns four in January; the countdown begins when he turns five, and he starts to show signs of curse energy. But Megumi just wants happy and healthy pups. Expecting them to be well-adjusted is a pipe dream, but they're working on making it manageable.

He answers the usual medical questions, frowns when they tell him his exercise routine is too rigorous, and to slow down and pace himself.

"Is Gojo-san joining you?"

Megumi falls short at that; this appointment is marked on both their calendars. He bites his lip, they've reached an uneasy armistice, but they have not addressed the elephant in the room. The bond is still muted, conversations are stilted, they dance around each other on eggshells. They sleep in the same bed, eat together, raise their pup, continue their routines, but the vitality is gone.

Megumi finds it very hard not to cry; he doesn't want this. This is supposed to be a time of preparation and anticipation for their next pup.

He refuses to apologize for defending himself, but he is sorry for what he said; his truth may be at odds with Satoru's, but his feelings are still valid.

He has no remorse for the man who tried to kill him twice out of resentment, unrequited love, loathing, and jealousy.

The alpha can mourn him, but he'll find no empathy from Megumi, only for the words said in anger.

"Maybe." That single word seems to communicate all of his anguish.

Kamado-sensei simply smiles, ever the consummate professional. Yagura-san's concerned expression tells him there will be a discussion regarding the impact of emotional upheavals on the pup's development.

"Do you want to reschedule this appointment for another date?"

"No," Megumi quickly denies. They kept many of Asahi's baby items out of sentiment and practicality. Many of the colors they used were gender-neutral. He'll still need to shop for more items regardless of the babe's gender, but knowing what it is will allow him to look for customized items.

Megumi is due at the end of April and doesn't know how much of an active role Satoru will take with the rest of this pregnancy, let alone once the pup is born. He doesn't want to think of it.

"Okay-"

"I'm late, aren't I?" There in the doorway, helter-skelter white-silver hair, broad shoulders, teacher uniform, sporting a sheepish smile. The sight of the alpha puts him at ease, lessens the creeping anguish festering in the shadow of his heart. "My apologies; I had to deal with rambunctious students."

"Tch!" Yagura-san is unforgiving, especially since the alpha seems to be the reason for Megumi's quiet distress.

Kondo-sensei shoots her a sharp look, and the omega shrugs.

Satoru pouts and takes a seat beside him.

That makes him smile involuntarily; it slips from his lips when he feels Satoru's ever-knowing and all-seeing eyes on him.

He clears his throat. "Please proceed, Kamado-sensei."

The ultrasound imagery is blurry as the doctor moves the transducer across his belly.

"That's the baby," Kamado-sensei announces.

Satoru knots their fingers together, and Megumi latches on like it's a lifeline.

"It looks like a girl," Kamado-sensei continues, "an alpha girl. Congratulations!"

Megumi looks down and smiles. Gojo leans close and murmurs, "Asahi said he wants a sister. Looks like we delivered in spades."

Megumi smiles wider.

A little girl.

Chapter 18

Asahi plays with his toys and hums a melody; the song is familiar, one he recalls being favored by the pup's sire. Megumi leaves Round Deer to survey the pup; drowning in a tub is possible for any child under five. Megumi is paranoid enough to have one of his most powerful shikigami on hand.

Gama is stationed on his head, Kon sleeping on the area rug in his bedroom, and Rabbit Escape is hidden somewhere under the sofa or bed. He feels, rather than sees Orochi slinking curiously around the house, that shikigami seldom wonders out of his shadow, the newest and the last of his summons. If he were at the Gojo estate, Nue, Max Elephant, and Piercing Ox would take advantage of the vast grounds.

He stands in the closet, reaching for the storage bin housing Asahi's infant clothing. If he can reach the handles, Gama can wrap its tongue around its bulk and safely place it on the ground.

"Just a bit more," Megumi counsels himself; conscious of his belly, he slowly maneuvers the box off the shelf.

Strong arms lift the burden, and Megumi jumps. He didn't sense him at all; that won't do, that won't do at all.

Gojo places the box on the floor and lifts the top. "Ah," he says in understanding. "Where do you want this?"

Megumi frowns.

"You can leave it there."

They stand there awkwardly. Megumi fidgets and turns back to the closet, directing Gama to reach for the storage container on the next shelf.

"I can get it for you."

He's a warm presence at his back, but Megumi doesn't turn around. "I appreciate the offer, but no, thank you."

"Megumi," Satoru chides.

"*No*, thank you."

He grabs the container anyway, "Where do you want these?"

Megumi closes his eyes, "By the ottoman."

Gojo stacks the boxes, lifts them easily, and heads down the corridor.

Megumi follows at a slower pace.

After setting them down, Satoru turns to face him; Megumi busy himself by opening a lid and peering into infant supplies.

Hands shoved in his pockets, he begins, "Listen, I'm leaving-"

Words should be measured, sentences meaningful, able to convey intentions.

So when Satoru says "I'm leaving" Megumi begins to hyperventilate, struggling to come to terms with those two words, white noise filtering out the rest of the sentence.

That is until large hands envelop his shoulders and dodge the omegan incisors lunging for his throat.

That idiot has the audacity to laugh; it enrages Megumi. Kon howls, appearing in the hallway, teeth bared, ready to attack. Gojo laughs harder, tears springing to his eyes.

The gall; rage contorts his features into something savage.

Gama't tongue whips out to strangle; Kon aims for the femoral artery.

He lazily dispatches the toad, widens the sphere of Infinity to pin the bipedal werewolf to the wall, and grasps Megumi's neck.

The alpha's eyes have tears of mirth, but he regards Megumi with warmth and affection.
"Omega submit."

All the tension leaves his body, the authority latches onto his hindbrain, and he bares his neck.

"Grandsire was right," The alpha snorts. Megumi glares, green eyes chips of ice. The alpha laughs and kisses his forehead, and the bond comes to life for the first time in nearly two weeks.

Affection and warmth blooming.

He pins him with eyes that glitter with the cosmos.

"Megumi, I'm not leaving you. I'm heading out of town at the end of the month. You didn't let me finish my sentence."

Megumi still glares, but a flush of embarrassment creeps across his face.

"Remember Okkotsu Yuuta?"

He nods reluctantly, recalling the boy Maki lambasted, the boy who carried a monster in his wake.

"We found a solution for his 'affliction'. I'm taking him to the Gojo Shrine."

"Why did you assume the worst?" He asks somberly.

"Because you assume the worst of me," He retorts and crosses his arms.

That gives them both pause.

"Mama! Daddy! I'm done; please help me out of the tub!"

Chapter 19

For the first time in nearly a decade, Megumi spends his birthday away from his mate. It's not as if they were a couple that became so intertwined they neglected all their other relationships. They are tied intrinsically, emotions an open book to the other, candid in conversation, implicit trust.

But now they're not, so Megumi deviates from their *modus operandi*.

"Yu-senpai!" Megumi calls, waving in his usually subdued fashion.

"Megumi-kun!"

The media, TV dramas, movies, comics, manga, manhua, manhwa, books, and whatever people consume, romanticize alphas and omegas. Oftentimes to their detriment, they push stereotypes, false narratives, and information, shaping the heuristics people use to navigate situations and categorize people. However, much of the false information pushed is being debunked now that people have access to the internet and can see real-life examples of alphas and omegas, receive information from subject matter experts, and realize that alphas and omegas are not monoliths.

Nevertheless, despite the progress being made, a pregnant omega is still a symbol of propaganda. As people become knowledgeable, there is pushback, fear of the nature of individuality, that the presumed monoliths are more than their secondary gender. So, the image of a pregnant omega remains steadfast, associated with pregnancy and child-rearing in a country where the birthrate is steadily decreasing. It also harkens thoughts of the more debauched aspects of omegas: heats, the fuck fests depicted so heavily in porn. It aids in the trafficking of omegas, which has reached an all-time high since the government began its campaign of showing omegas barefoot, pregnant, and surrounded by pups.

So the sight of Megumi and Nanami Yu strolling through the crowded streets of Akasaka as pupped omegas is enough to turn heads. Out of respect for Yu-senpai, Megumi wears scent patches; the older omega doesn't like the attention that comes from their pupped scents, let alone the stares they garner as visibly pregnant omegas, and the scars that mar the older omega's skin garners gawkers and whispers.

Megumi is thankful he gathered the courage to venture outside his comfort zone and meet him for brunch.

"The heartburn doesn't bother you!?" Megumi asks, astonished. Yu-senpai's food cravings have steered towards spicy Korean, Malaysian, and Indian dishes.

"It does," Yu-senpai bemoans his faith, "but it's worth it."

There's nothing quite like the company of another omega; it opens him up and relieves the tension he carries from his mate's heavy gaze.

Of course, the conversation heads toward treacherous waters.

"Um, I heard about Geto."

"Tch," Megumi says dismissively.

"Megumi-kun, Gojo-senpai called Kento and asked him for advice. Do you know how rare that is!? Pigs were flying!"

Gojo is cruel, it reared its head more when they were teenagers. It ranged from pointed, mocking commentary meant to denigrate and humiliate the recipient, to outright murder that varied in scale. Nanami Kento was the unfortunate victim of the former, but it changed when the blonde alpha took Yu and left Jujutsu behind, returning two years ago and meeting a matured but still carefree Gojo Satoru.

Megumi rolls his eyes and clicks his tongue.

"Y'know, in school, when I heard he attacked you, I didn't believe it. I always admired him, the more easy-going version of Gojo-senpai. Why would he attack Gojo-senpai's mate? Weren't they best friends?" Megumi listens attentively. Yu-senpai doesn't socialize the way he used to, so when he does speak, Megumi takes his words into consideration. Another point of view can expand his biased perception. "Then I realized Geto was in love with Gojo, but Gojo didn't see him as anything more than a friend, and I thought, wow, I'm surprised he didn't off him. Alphas are known to maim and murder for their omegas."

Megumi huffs and mutters contemptuously. "So did I, but he was the exception."

Yu-senpai stares at him with wide eyes, "Why didn't you?"

"Just because he killed someone dear to me doesn't mean I'll kill someone close to him. The difference is that I know him, but if he were a stranger, I wouldn't have cared how the loss impacted him."

"Do you still blame him for your dad's death?"

Megumi groans and scrubs a hand over his face. Yu-senpai has a curious way of excavating and extracting information and confessions from him. He smiles self-deprecatingly and confesses, "I don't hold my dad's death against him; I came to terms with it. I don't know what that makes me."

"Human, it makes you human," Yu-senpai consoles, but he is not done making his point. "Did you tell him that?"

"No, Satoru has depths as deep as the Mariana trench, but other times, he's as vapid as he looks."

Yu-senpai snickers, "Okay, okay, I think if you tell him that, it might help him understand."

"I doubt it," Megumi traces a finger in the syrup of his pancakes. "I realized Satoru wasn't attached to Geto; he didn't ask about the body or funeral arrangements. Satoru is attached to

what Geto represented, his age of youth."

Gojo was spoiled; his grandparents loved him dearly to the point they derided and ostracized their own kids. The rest of his family lauded him but held him up at a distance, putting him on a pedestal, a trophy on display. Attending Tokyo Metropolitan Curse Technical College, interacting with people with experiences that starkly contrasted with his sheltered and isolated upbringing profoundly impacted him. Geto was his first friend, and he helped Satoru navigate a brave new world. Of course, he's attached to their memories, much to the detriment of his present.

"Then that's a conclusion he needs to reach himself, but you can help him along the way. No matter how smart or perceptive he is, he's still a knothed," Yu-senpai remarks sagaciously. "Now, are you still hungry? I want ice cream."

the plural of mongoose

"I don't assume the worst of you; I think the world of you."

Megumi tenses, feeling a headache build in his temples. It looks like they're having this discussion. Shit. He jadedly responds, "So you say."

"You know so," Gojo retorts, and the veracity of his words rings clear between them. But that's his truth.

"You also said trust and openness are important aspects of a relationship's foundation," Megumi says mutinously.

"Which we excel at, except for this. You're holding my former friendship with Suguru against me; you've never forgiven me for Zen'in Toji's death," Satoru closes his eyes in resignation.

"I forgave you for my sire's death years ago." Blue eyes snap open, and Megumi's guileless words are echoed with genuineness in the bond. "Why else would I have your babies, knowing the danger I'd potentially put them in?" He asks archly, "Because I love you, and love makes us stupid!"

"Then why say it? Words said in anger usually have some iota of truth. Why mate, let alone fuck your father's killer? Was it a ploy, a long con-" He cuts himself off; someone's letting their intrusive thoughts out. "Why imply that I would hurt you? Megumi, I've put you first since the day I decided to pursue you. You are the center of my universe, the very reason I breathe."

The upset in his voice, the wounded look on his face, the utter unhappiness in the bond almost makes him fold, almost.

"Am I? Or is that conditional?"

Bitterness swells, pungent and rotten. The profound hurt evolves into anger. "It always comes back to two people."

"Why are you so defensive of a traitor, a madman? But it's not him; you don't give a damn about him," Megumi notes the way his jaw clenches, and the quartz countertop fractures under the pressure of his grip, but he's not afraid; the truth will out itself. "It's what he presented."

The alpha's jaw works, and his eyes remain hidden behind opaque shades. That's fine; the bond is insightful, even if his thoughts remain unknown.

"I know you as well as I know myself; I'm sorry for what I said in anger," Satoru scoffs; Megumi ignores him and continues remorselessly. "But I don't regret anything. You wanted an equal; you chose an omega of old. I protect home and hearth, my territory, I protect myself and my babies. If my alpha fails to acknowledge the danger, I'll take care of it. And no matter

how much I love you, your friend wanted me dead; I waited for you to take care of it, resolve unfinished business, but he forced my hand. I'm sorry you're mourning your age of youth."

The quartz finally breaks under his hands, and Megumi is unmoved. The bond reflects his unrest, simmering fury, heartbreak, and remorse.

"I think a week away," Gojo swallows thickly and clears his throat. "A break will give us clarity."

Megumi nods magnanimously. Let the past die, Satoru; let it stay dead where it should always remain.

It's a curious juxtaposition being the student of the man who killed her sister, a casualty in the Zen'in massacre, and the ward and heir of the reason for the Zen'in decimation.

It's a well-known fact that alphas are feral creatures, and the worst of the lot are newly mated alphas or those seeking a desired omega. Zen'in Noabito lit the match, and Gojo Satoru gave him the bang he didn't expect.

It doesn't excuse the fact that innocents died in a war over possession of an omega, over cunt. The egos of alphas know no ends.

Maki does not respect her sensei, and wants him dead, but she also realizes his importance in their world and diligently learns the lessons he imparts, no matter how unorthodox. Megumi-dono beat the importance of pragmatism into her head; her vendetta of revenge remains, but she finds it at odds with her desire to one day lead the Zen'in. She wants to become everything her father said she had no chance in hell of becoming, and it's there, handed to her on a silver platter by someone who believes she is worthy. That person just happens to be the mate of her sister's murderer.

Speaking of the murderer.

"That idiot's late again."

"Okkotsu's missing too, I wonder if they're on a mission."

"Salmon," Toge shrugs.

The door to the classroom opens and closes. Entering with measured steps, petite in height, pale skin, verdant eyes, dark hair, with familiar features she sees daily in the mirror, and a visible baby bump, is Megumi-dono. At his side is the ever-present deer shikigami; he places a container of fruit on the desk, opens it, and turns to face them. His face is a study in apathy, he looks neither pleased nor displeased to be here.

But his scent is unfiltered, and it reminds her of childhood, curled against his side as he read to their cousins in the communal nest.

"My name is Gojo Megumi; you may call me Zen'in-sensei. I'll be your substitute teacher for the next three days."

Panda raises his hand, "Where's Gojo-sensei and Yuuta?"

Megumi-dono tilts his head, "Redacted, nonya, redacted, that's confidential information, you'll pry it out of my cold dead hands."

They collectively groan at the Gojo-like response. If there's any doubt who Megumi-dono is, there's no doubt after that sentence.

Megumi-dono smiles faintly. "Your sensei has taken Okkotsu-kun out on special training. And he's left you three in my care," his smile becomes feral, and Maki shudders in fear. "Maki is familiar with my tutelage; I hope the rest of you find it to your liking."

Megumi-dono is a taskmaster; they're so fucked.

Round Deer eats from the container, ears flickering, unbothered.

"This is Shinmei," Gojo holds out the blade reverently. "This is one of the twenty blades created by the swordsmith Muramasa. This will be your weapon of choice for this field trip!"

"But sensei, my sword works just fine!"

Shinmei is one of the three swords of divinity, Muramasa's attempt to recreate the swords of totsuka, it wasn't meant for combat, it was a tool for shamans to exorcize and guide souls to the purelands, all three however, yield a different result. Megumi gave him two swords of divinity, another protection against possible death.

"Sometimes you gotta step outside your comfort zone. Don't you trust your teacher? Your distant cousin? The blood of your blood?" He cajoles, dimpling, all pearly whites on display.

"N-No," Yuuta replies immediately.

Smart kid.

Chapter 21

The Gojo Shrine is one of the last relics of the Heian era. A shrine to Tenjin, the Shinto god of scholars, of learning. It can be likened to the 12,000 Tenmangu Shrines dedicated to Sugawara no Michizane around Japan, but unlike them, here their wrathful founder is bound, his betrayal still fresh, his wrath ongoing, his revenge unquenched.

Not all those who wander are lost, and as a descendent of those who wandered and faded into obscurity, only to rise again with the boon of their ancestor, it's only fitting that this site is the ending for Rika and the beginning of Yuuta.

Yuuta wages the war of love against the girl he cursed. Welding Shinmei Muramasa with prodigious skill, the title of the strongest will become a bygone era with this child at the forefront.

Perhaps Rika's entrance into the purelands will inspire their ancestor to let go of his wrath and embrace his divinity.

He doubts it.

This venture has provided distraction and enlightenment.

Instead of circling, he poked and prodded at the wound, justifying his defensiveness and then questioning why he would lash out at his mate, the one whom he claimed and claimed him in the most ancient of rites: *I am his, he is mine*. Then he took it a step closer, shrugged off his obstinance, rose-tinted glasses, and looked at it from another point of view.

He should have killed him the first time; conscious reared its head, stopping the heinous rage that consumed him when he heard of Suguru's attempt on Megumi's life.

In that era, conscious and morality were easy to ignore; they outright disappeared when his wrath was stirred, and at that time, Megumi was the trigger.

Gojo is a veritable god, and despite how terrifying he is to many, he is still human, and the flesh is weak. He'd been cherished by his grandparents, but seen as a means to an end for many of his relatives, an object instead of a person.

He attached his first memories of his humanity to Suguru, someone he saw as an equal until he outgrew him. But they are just memories; he makes them every day with his mate, novel things, mundane things, commonplace things. With his child, he rediscovers the world, the curiosity at what is commonplace, the wonder at their differing points of view.

The past shaped him; there's no point in lingering in them; chasing yesterday will bring nothing but misery and ruination.

"Megumi?"

There's silence on the other line, and the omega heaves a sigh, *"Aa."*

"Let's go on a date."

He stops breathing, caught off guard and stutters out, *"O-okay."*

Chapter 22

He sits on the ottoman as Megumi packs, legs splayed wide, leaning back on their bed, the picture of alpha virility and arrogance, but the omega visibly flinches, and that right there, that cannot be borne. That reaction is a palpable hit to his ego; his jaw clenches, eyes narrowing, lips pursing. That is the response of an omega that is insecure in their bond with their alpha. One on the defense, that sees the necessity of having their guard up in their alpha's presence, the implicit trust he once had is gone, and now he questions it.

If Gojo's presence and scent weren't needed for the development and well-being of their unborn pup, Satoru has no doubt he would have taken Asahi and left him without a backward glance. That would have been a test of their vows, and the omega would truly have a reason to fear him. The resulting rampage would make the Zen'in massacre look like child's play, and Satoru would have little cause to repine. Megumi would know no shelter but his by the time he was done with him.

But that did not happen; they are all the better for it.

He and Megumi exist in a microcosm; it's time to reforge its shaken foundation.

He settles on a safe topic, "Have you thought of any names?"

"Yeah," Megumi doesn't look up as he methodically packs his clothes and toiletries into the suitcase. "Suiren, Aia, Ena, Suiha, Mio, Miho, Miaki, Kagami, or Takara."

"The two yeses, one no rule?" He questions.

"Aa," Megumi says noncommittally. Satoru can't tell if he's being his usual recalcitrant self or would prefer to be anywhere but here, probably both. He continues on, dauntless to a fault.

"Suiren, pass," He shakes his head, pondering, "unless you're spelling it like water lotus, then maybe. Aia is cute, so yes. Suiha could work depending on the spelling. Ena, no; Mio, yes; Miho, no," He lists, "Miaki, no; Takara, yes." He pauses, "I really like Kagami."

Satoru named Asahi after shortlisting five names. They decided to use the two yeses, one no rule and factored in the characters used in each name since the meanings differed based on spelling.

It's Megumi's turn to name their daughter.

"I really like Mio; it's in my top three." Megumi finally looks at him, all long lashes, high cheekbones, and green, green eyes. He smiles faintly, lovely, and heavy with his child, effervescent delight bubbling softly in the bond. "So it's down to Suiha, Aia, Kagami, Takara and Mio."

"Whatever we don't use, we can consider it for next time," He says boldly, pushing the limits, wanting Megumi's amiableness to last.

"Next time?" Verdant eyes narrow.

"We have two alphas; what about an omegan pup?" He posits, grinning winsomely.

Alpha and omega pairs are more likely to beget alpha and omega pups. Satoru is satisfied with whatever Megumi gives him, and if he's done after their daughter, then that's fine as well. However, an omega pup would be nice.

"And if they are a beta?" The very fact that Megumi entertains this conversation means that he might be impartial to more children. This pregnancy is smoother than the first. Aside from the recent upheaval, Satoru will say it is his fault for causing unneeded stress for his omega.

"That's fine, they're half you, I'll love them all the same."

Several emotions flicker rapidly across his face before his features are etched into an inscrutable mask. "Ask me again in five years."

"Daddy," the pup's lower lip wobbles. Wide pale eyes glisten with unshed tears. "Do you have to go? You were gone for nine days, almost *ten*, I counted!"

Satoru is far from a negligent parent and tries to be involved in every aspect of his child's life. Determined to be the parent his weren't, and take a different approach than his grandparents. Nevertheless, it doesn't change the fact he is occasionally absent for long intervals of time.

Compared to his teens and early twenties, this has been mitigated by Megumi's rigorous recruiting of curse users, many of whom have become second and first grade sorcerers and others with the potential to climb the ranks. One or two have shown the possibility of becoming special grades but are blocked by the higher-ups, who are still unwilling to recognize progressively innovative techniques. In his four years of teaching, he can count on one hand the number of students with the potential to surpass him. The incoming freshmen are twice the average class size, and have a mixture of traditional and non-traditional techniques and differing backgrounds. That shows the changes he and Megumi are striving to create have bared fruit.

So, while he would love to spend more time at home, there is only one Gojo Satoru, and he is in high demand despite the number of shamans that exist globally; special grades are scarce. He counts on Megumi, his grandparents, and Asahi's nanny to make up where he cannot.

"I'm sorry, Asa-chan, Papa and I have important business to attend to. When we return, we'll spend time together," Satoru promises.

The tears don't fall; instead, he looks suspiciously at them both. "The indoor park?"

"Sure," He agrees instantly.

"Ice cream?" Asahi adds.

A haggler and an opportunist, he smiles in amusement, "Done."

"Snacks and candy?" He negotiates.

"No, ice cream is enough," Megumi says firmly.

"Candy with ice cream?" Asahi wheedles.

"Don't push it," Megumi warns.

"But Mama!"

"Asahi," he rebukes sharply and silver eyes widen, face crumbling.

"It's too cold for ice cream; you can have hot chocolate instead," Gojo intervenes before the waterworks ensue.

"With marshmallows?" Asahi sniffles.

"Yes, pup."

"Okay then, bye!" Asahi turns, dismissing his parents. He reaches out to hold hands with Gojo Yuusei, who's struggling not to laugh.

"No hug, Asa-chan?"

"Oh!" The pup turns back and allows himself to be hugged and scented, cuddling into his parents' arms and sighing in contentment.

Chapter 23

"I think I had the vague notion you would be the one to do it, take the burden off my shoulders. Not out of vindictiveness, just practicality."

There are levels of vulnerability, many of which he readily shares with his mate, but this layer of vulnerability is anathema to him. Pride and ego are hammered down; they have no place here, so he makes the environment inhospitable and comes to his mate humbled, awaiting his judgment and seeking his penance.

He's treated him ill.

A series of conversations will be had over the course of the weekend.

"You would still blame me; if you had done it, at least you would have done your basic duty as an alpha. You call me your equal, but you're our protector, especially when I'm pregnant and more vulnerable with a pup I have to care for."

Megumi's gaze is unforgiving, and the bond remains tranquil from his end while he tries and fails to settle on one emotion.

"Just so," he grits his teeth and agrees. "I vow to always put you and our children first."

Harsh truths fall upon reluctant but obliging ears. Pride goes before the fall.

"Words are wind; actions speak louder. You're a man of your word to an extent, but your actions made me trust you. Don't make promises you can't keep."

He's half asleep by the time the appointment ends.

His midwife and doula recommend prenatal massages, but he hasn't had one in three weeks. If this is Satoru's idea of an apology, he's starting on the right foot.

"Gojo-san?" The masseuse calls.

"Hm?" He hums sleepily.

"Do you need assistance?"

"No," he replies.

"I'll leave you to get dressed."

Megumi augments his loose muscles with curse energy and pulls himself up. Satoru scheduled four massages for the weekend; Megumi has no doubt he'll need them.

"When I got my head out of my ass and looked at it from another point of view. I realized it was negligence on my part, severe negligence. If I lost you or Asahi..." He trails off, "I don't think I'd survive it."

"Considering our shitty society, you're a competent alpha, and you always exceeded my expectations, but you're still fallible, still prone to human error," Megumi stares out the window. "It's not an excuse or leniency, just my perspective."

"From that perspective, the bar isn't that high," He comments. He isn't offended; most of their conversations are candid.

"All I have are statistical facts, some anecdotal stories, and my own experience. I'm lucky in that respect, I guess."

Megumi has always held his cards close to his chest. What he feels isn't indicative of what he thinks, and Satoru is patient; Megumi is worth it.

"Megumi, are you unhappy?"

Megumi's lips twitch, "Happiness is fleeting, I'm content."

"Don't be obtuse and purposefully misunderstand me," He chides lightly, "Are you unhappy with me?"

"It doesn't matter."

"It does," He insists.

Megumi sighs, "You pulled your head out of your ass, that's enough."

"I don't think it is, I think you deserve the world," He says truthfully.

"I'm neither happy nor unhappy," Megumi replies evasively.

Gojo throws down the gauntlet, "And if I fuck up again?"

"Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice; shame on me, and the third time. There won't be a third time; the third I'll leave," Megumi meets his eyes, "And after you throw your temper tantrum, I'll kill you or die trying, killing us both."

Gojo doesn't seem shocked by his response. Instead, he eyes him intently, "You'd risked my wrath?"

Megumi shrugs.

"I'd become your worst enemy; you'd unleash a monster on the world, and everyone would blame you." A crazed glint enters his eyes, "You'd risk your autonomy and the lives of everyone you know. And I'd drag you back, kicking and screaming, and imprison you."

"I once thought that if I wasn't prone to violence, being your omega would be the greatest slavery. Maybe benevolent slavery," Megumi smiles sardonically and looks off into the middle distance, "I've never had the freedom of choice, just the lesser evil in a shit hand." His tone is severe, and his words are ruthless. "I got used to my lot in life and made the best of it. We've built a great life together, and love grew, but leaving you would be a choice between the lesser evil. Our children would be parentless, but I trust Yu-senpai, Maki-chan, and Shoko-san to raise them well."

Satoru takes that in and realizes there's no moral high ground here, just shades of dubious grey. Megumi is ever the pragmatist, understanding that he will haunt his footsteps no matter where he goes. There's no winning here, only making the best of what exists.

Even in a concrete jungle, a flower will still bloom.

"At least we'd still be together in death."

Megumi rolls his eyes, "Fucking alphas."

Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"If we'd never met, where would you be?"

Megumi pauses, puts down the monaka wagashi, and thinks. "In an ideal world, I would have never mated or had pups."

"And if we did meet?" he asks, genuinely curious at the prospect of an alternate Megumi—one where he was not coerced into his arms but may have come into his parlor willingly.

"I'd fuck you and get you out of my system and move on," Megumi says bluntly, a small smile tugging at his lips, "You're the culmination of all of my daddy issues."

"Damn Megumi, tell me how you really feel," the alpha grumbles.

"I'm a war omega; I never needed an alpha; I just didn't know that then."

"Most alphas would see that as a challenge; an omega defying societal norms is something to be conquered," He tells him, not unkindly. But this is something Megumi already knows, eyes forcibly opened to the nature of beasts long ago.

What stands out to him is the word something, as in object, not human, not a person.

And as much as Satoru may respect and love him, he is still a possession, an object hoarded closely by the two-faced god Janus, his beginning and end, affable and monstrous.

Omegas like him are coveted.

Be it the Heian period, the Edo period, or the Muromachi era, particularly the Sengoku, where war omegas were at their height. Omegas like him brought their clans and mates glory; they were coveted, and they were something to be tamed. Even if an omega reached great heights in governance, martial, or scholarly endeavors, they were still breeders that could be bitten, bent over, and bred like any omega bitch.

Was it not the same even now? In modern times, the Heisei era, where Megumi is an anomaly. Satoru saw him and immediately wanted him.

"Like you?" He snarks.

"Well, in a sense," Satoru says sheepishly and tilts his head in contemplation. "But if we go by the archaic jujutsu laws, you're also a war prize, compensation for the battles fought and ultimately lost. Your dad knew your worth and made arrangements accordingly."

"And presented me like a lamb to slaughter, served on a silver platter," Megumi replies wryly.

"Not a lamb," Satoru corrects. "A monster of his own making. Our first encounter altered my brain chemistry, from your looks and your smell to your demeanor. It blew my stupid teenage, alpha mind."

"I thought you were pretty," Megumi says dryly.

"C'mon," Satoru goads good-naturedly, "you wanted to kill me."

"Yes, you were annoying," Megumi places a monaka into his mouth. "Still are."

"Hey!" He pouts.

"It doesn't matter; in an ideal world, I never would have been left alone. After we fucked, you would have hounded me until you got your way."

Satoru opens and closes his mouth several times. "Ah."

Megumi eyes him knowingly.

"Conformity is important, right? And kids are cruel. We should think of the schoolyard and playground dynamics. Mio is probably our best bet, but I'm starting to like Suiha."

Megumi puts the thermostat into the water: 37 degrees Celsius. Good enough. Satoru helps him step into the blistering waters of the hot spring. He answers once he settles.

"If she inherits the Gojo or Zen'in genes or my eyes, it won't matter; kids will think she's a foreigner or mixed and make fun of her." The Gojo clan and the Zen'in's unique coloring are the result of centuries of careful breeding and decisive eugenics. Asahi's dark hair will blend into the crowd, but his silver eyes will make him stand out. However, his easygoing personality may save him from trouble or make him a bigger target since his beauty is apparent even at three.

"I know it's important to you that they interact with children their age and gain empathy and whatnot, but she'll have enough problems as a female alpha." He muses, "Should we send her to a private or international school? One is likely to have stricter rules; the other is more likely to be tolerant."

Megumi's head lulls back from the heat. "It doesn't matter, public, private, or international schools, she'll face some kind of discrimination. Be it her name, secondary gender, the way she looks, or her parentage, it doesn't matter; people are cruel and project their inadequacies on others."

"So you're saying bullying builds character?" He prods.

Megumi fights the urge to glare. "No, childish disputes teach them problem-solving skills and how to handle differences between them. Bullying is a non-factor. All of my kids can fight, and some people only understand violence."

Satoru snickers, recalling when he was called to bail Megumi out of school for fighting. Official letters were sent, threatening to sue the parents of each student, the teacher, and the principal for discrimination and sexual harassment. When the principal and one of the parents kicked up a fuss, Itose-san threatened to drag it out and ruin their future prospects and reputations.

He says as much, and Megumi looks faintly annoyed, an alarming flush suffusing his face.

"Stop talking; you're giving me a headache," the omega grumbles, swaying slightly. "And get me out of this water before I faint."

He quickly gathers him into his arms, "Didn't your midwife clear you for this?" Satoru climbs out of the hot spring, taking measured steps to avoid jostling his mate.

"Something like that," Megumi mumbles and settles against his chest, lashes fluttering.

"Megumi," He scolds.

"As long as the temperature is below 39 degrees, and I leave after ten minutes."

"Megumi! Are you trying to boil our daughter alive!"

"The boiling point is 100," He says unhelpfully.

"What am I gonna do with you?"

"Take me to my 3 o'clock massage."

Chapter End Notes

► Chapter notes:

scheele's green

The conversations continue.

"What's your threshold?"

"What do you mean?" Megumi questions sleepily, caught between the waking world and Oneiros' domain.

"What will cause you to leave or try to rip out my throat?"

Exasperation becomes an exposed nerve, raw and pulsing. Satoru winces as it encompasses the bond.

"Okay, okay, okay," Satoru tries and fails to mollify the pissed-off omega. "M'sorry, what can I say? I'm curious."

"Curiosity killed the fucking cat," Megumi hisses between clenched teeth, feeling the tension that was worked out of his shoulders and lower back come back. "If you're really sorry, you'll shut up and hold me while I nap."

The omega's makeshift nest contains their clothing and all of the pillows the resort's staff was willing to depart with. Megumi lies in the center of it, wrapped around a pregnancy pillow. Satoru carefully settles behind him and pulls him close.

When he thinks Megumi has gone to sleep, he answers him.

"Betrayal." He says curtly.

"That's a broad spectrum," Gojo notes.

"Betrayal, gross negligence, willful blindness."

Gojo closes his eyes in recompensation. "If something's wrong, will you tell me?"

"Depends on your reaction," Megumi murmurs.

"That's fair. I'll work on that and try to withhold judgment until you explain your plight." He then asks another question that has plagued him: "Do you think you'll ever forgive me?"

Megumi is silent, and the bond is empty—not blocked, just empty. The momentary loneliness is crippling.

"There's nothing to forgive; we know our boundaries. Let's bury it and move on."

He buries his face in Megumi's neck. "I want your forgiveness; I just don't think I'm worthy of it. I've treated you like shit; I wouldn't blame you for never giving it."

"Anata," his breath catches. Megumi seldom uses terms of endearment. "It's behavioral; it's something you'll have to work diligently on. In the same way, I'm mindful of my cynicism, but it still gets the best of me sometimes."

"Yeah, but your pessimism is usually right."

"So is your optimism," Megumi yawns. "Forgiveness won't resolve anything; time will."

"Hehehehe."

"Sensei! You didn't tell me extra training would include Maki-san!"

"Are you scared?"

"No!" Yuuta says quickly and mumbles, *"It's just..."*

"Yuuta-kun!" Grandsire's voice filters through. *"Come and join us for tea!"*

"Be right there, Satsumi-dono!"

"Well, what's the problem?"

"She's terrifying!" The younger alpha blurts out. *"I'm not scared, just overwhelmed."*

"Is that a bad thing?"

"I dunno know, can't you find someone else?"

"Nope!" Maki is the only cursed weapons specialist he trusts besides Megumi. With his mate out of commission for the next few months, he wants Yuuta to learn the art of the sword and hopefully impress Megumi enough to haggle a legendary blade off him.

"Arrghhh, sensei, what am I gonna do?" He says miserably.

Gojo grins, *"Ohhhh, you have a crush. That's cute."*

"No! No, I don't!" He denies vehemently.

"Sure," Gojo says patronizingly and sings. *"Yuuta and Maki sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-"*

"I have to go, bye sensei."

Gojo cackles and turns to find Megumi in the doorway, arms crossed, expression irritated. Uh-oh.

"Maki hasn't presented yet."

"A crush is harmless," Satoru voices calmly. "He'll hardly have time to act on it. Yuuta has promise, I'm contemplating on my successor and he's a top candidate."

"If she thinks or her instincts think he's suitable alpha, then the choice will be taken from her," Megumi points out.

"If it even came to that point, she could always reject him. They aren't our second coming," Gojo says flatly. "The circumstances are different, and Maki isn't the type to suffer fools, especially alphas. Yuuta is shy and sensitive; he'll respect her decisions."

"But he's not harmless; after all, he cursed his first love, and love is the most twisted curse," Megumi says humorlessly.

"Megumi," Satoru says carefully, "what do you want me to do?"

As their teacher, he is their in loco parentis; if anything untoward occurs, he'll stop it and mete out punishments. However, if a consensual courtship between alpha and omega takes place, he will not interfere. Only point them toward Shoko for medical information and provide advice if they seek it.

Yuuta has become a ward of the Gojo clan, so perhaps he can influence the younger alpha. Without the Rika hanging over his shoulder like a bad omen, he'll come out of his shell, but Satoru highly doubts he'll be anything like himself as an adolescent alpha.

"Nothing, I just want it to be her choice. Maki deserves to have options," the silent where I didn't goes unsaid.

"Okay," he nods. "She will," Satoru says firmly, "I'll ensure it."

And he will; he owes Maki that much.

Megumi searches his face and says, "I believe you."

Some great philosopher said we are more than our instincts.

Megumi has to question that. Is his secondary gender a separate entity from him? Some forgotten remnant of biology that evolution forgot to shrug?

His instincts, thoughts, and emotions are seldom congruent. When they are, it's heat, where all rationality leaves, and only the fever that burns remains, leaving him empty and insatiable.

His inner conflict is a constant feature in his life, and instead of lingering on it, he embraces what will keep his sanity and some facsimile form of happiness.

Fake it till you make it, or what have you.

That's why when he awakens a few hours before they are meant to check out, clit aching, underwear sodden with slick, he questions his instincts.

Do they deem his alpha worthy once again, or is this self-preservation to keep the alpha enthralled and their child alive and thriving?

Satoru's carnal presence was missed, but Megumi's attention was focused on nesting, his child, his clan, and his pregnancy. Did his body now deem their dynamic important?

Megumi isn't sure what to think of that but welcomes whatever peace of mind it brings him.

Chapter 26

It calls him.

Titillates him.

Beckons him to awaken, to indulge, to devour.

Megumi's arousal is a siren call, ripened succulent fruit, and spring blossoms. It overwhelms, leaves him dizzy, blood rushing and painfully hard.

It's been weeks since they fucked; the absence shows the pains of sobriety and the sudden exposure, an anaphrodisiac that sears his senses, settling on the back of the tongue, dousing his taste and smell.

Megumi's thrall pulls him under.

White lashes flutter open, revealing blown-wide pupils. He hisses as a panting Megumi grinds back against the long, rigid length of him. He stills his hip, pressing his cock firmly against the cleft of his ass.

Megumi whines and tries to move. Satoru lifts himself and takes in Megumi's flushed face, teeth-bitten lips, and blurry eyes filled with yearning.

It's been too long, but he has to be sure. Fucking is a language they speak fluently, but sex, mating is an affirmation of their bond. A renewal of what was, what is, and what will be.

"Yeah?"

"Yes," He nods quickly.

"Are you sure?" He asks urgently, leaning in close, breaths mingling with Megumi's. He searches lust-filled green eyes.

Clarity gleams through, Megumi nips his lip and murmurs, "Please."

What's in a name?

A ghost from his past said his name with care and fondness, others with exasperation, but no one says it like Megumi: an epithet, a plaintive cry, reverence with every pronounced syllable.

"Satoru, *Satoru*, Sat-" Megumi moans high in his throat, voice breaking into a wounded sound as he licks into the hot, wet center of him.

Hands on his ass, Satoru holds him with ease. Keeping steady as he grinds on his face. Cunt split open on his tongue, warm and wet, every glide of his hips let him lick from hole to clit.

"Fuck...*ah*...*Sa-toru*."

Slick gushes from his weeping cunt. Satoru swallows it all. He could spend hours between Megumi's legs, supping from the source. The heady taste of spring in all its fecund glory. Nose, chin and neck wet as he ravages him.

Megumi's hands tighten, tugging on white hair when he groans around a mouthful. Megumi whimpers from the vibration, hips jerking, passionate little grinds increasing.

Between his moans and fervent cries of his name, the sloppy sounds of his cunt fill his ears as he laps at his fleshy pink folds. He moves one hand and tightens his hold with the other. Fingers probe his entrance. Megumi pants. They push into the tight clutch of him and he immediately clenches down, something finally filling the empty space inside him.

When he flicks his tongue across his engorged clit, crosses his fingers, and rubs against his inner walls, Megumi's hips hitch and thighs tighten around Gojo's head. Satoru looks up, electric blue catching verdant as Megumi breathes rapidly through his mouth, whimpering and biting the palm of his hand.

His lips part, and he sucks his nub into his mouth; Megumi keens, thighs clamping around his face. Head thrown back, the hand clutched in Satoru's hair pushes his face harder into his cunt. Pussy fluttering around his fingers and tongue.

If he was hard before, he's aching now, but he can wait until Megumi gains his bearings.

Megumi comes down slowly, the grip on his hair relaxing, tight muscles unwinding as he desperately tries to catch his breath. He gently maneuvers Megumi off his face and onto his chest. The omega all but collapses against him; the alpha carefully places him on his side, kissing his forehead, cheeks, and chin, and meeting his lips when the omega seeks him, moaning at the taste of him on his lips. Fingers intertwine into dark strands as he sucks on his tongue and explores his mouth.

Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Fuck, Megumi." Iridescent eyes watch keenly as the omega sits astride him and works four fingers into his pussy. "You'll be the death of me. Are you tryin' to make me cum?"

Fingers squelching as he fucks himself open, Megumi laughs breathily. "In me, yes; on yourself, no."

Gojo groans, and Megumi pulls glistening fingers out of his cunt, grips the alpha's poor, neglected cock, and slots it between supple thighs.

Hands braced against his hard chest. Slick, dampened folds are spread wide as Megumi slides back and forth across his cock. Liberally coating the alpha's length in slick, Megumi moans with each pass, teasing his twitching hole and grazing his clit and omegan cock.

Mouth wet, he grips his hips, "Definitely not gonna l-last."

Satoru holds him aloft, hands encompassing his thighs and hip as small, callused hands guide him to his dripping entrance.

"That's-*ah*," He's breached, swallowing the broad head. "S'okay, just want you inside, wish you could knot me."

"Fuck, baby, fuck, you can't say things like that."

Thighs tremble as he slides up, cunt squelching as its lips cling to his thickness, then down, taking more of him. Breath hitching, the omega braces a hand against the alpha's knee and opens himself up with three hard thrusts, swallowing him to the hilt.

Satoru moans; he's warm, wet, and tight as usual. His walls flutter with the threat of orgasm, milking him, encouraging him to give in, to come.

"Big, so big," Megumi slurs, head tilted back, eyes fluttering at the penetration.

"But you take me so well." Gojo plants his feet and grinds into his rippling channel. Megumi keens, high and reedy.

He sits up, somehow settling deeper, and Megumi makes that sound, like he's wounded, like the air has been knocked out of him. His eyes roll back, his mouth slack.

He kisses his open mouth, fingers slipping under the hem of his shirt, feeling the taut skin of his belly and grazing over the slight swell of his breast. Satoru squeezes the mound and pinches the erect nipple, squeezing and plucking, swallowing Megumi's whimpers and cries.

He pulls away to lift Megumi's shirt over his head, and their mouths meet in a messy slide of lips and tongue. Satoru guides Megumi's arms over his shoulders and crosses his legs. He grips his hip and thigh, fingers digging into the omega's soft skin.

He sucks Megumi's full bottom lip into his mouth, kisses him wetly, and pulls away, husking, "Ready?"

Megumi buries his face in his neck and nods fervently.

He slowly pulls him up and pushes him down, seating him, letting him feel every ridge and vein as he takes him from root to stem. Megumi pants in his ear, sweet voice keening when he speeds up and bounces him on his lap. His arms tighten around Satoru's shoulders, nails scoring into his pale skin.

Satoru grits his teeth as Megumi tightens with every descent, grip unforgiving around his dick, cries hoarse, pussy sopping. He feels the familiar warmth build in his lower belly, spreading to his legs and the base of cock. "Gonna cum," he rasps in warning.

"I-inside," Megumi implores brokenly, "please come inside me, alpha."

His dick thickens impossibly harder at that. "Fuck."

Megumi reaches between them to find his swollen clit, rolling the bundle of nerves with expert fingers. His inner muscles ripple, and he stutters and gasps.

The pressure builds, and Gojo keeps fucking into him, moaning lowly. Hands on his lower back and ass, guiding his movements. But when Megumi winds tight, clenching rhythmically, then clamps down in a vice grip, it snaps.

He moans as he comes in hot spurts. Groans gutturally when Megumi latches on to his bond bite and blacks out when he sucks on the scarred flesh.

Alpha cum floods Megumi's womb in thick ribbons.

Chapter End Notes

► Chapter notes:

Chapter 28

Self-satisfaction curls in his panting chest, and he allows himself a small smile of victory.

Strings cut, the alpha collapses onto the bedding, heaving for breath.

The alpha's scent thickly permeates the air, alpha musk and cum mixing with pupped and fertile omega. Megumi revels in it, scraping his nails along his broad chest, over his nipples, smiling when he flinches.

Megumi finds himself momentarily distracted as each deep inhale and exhale emphasizes his toned abdomen. Fingertips stroke over the taut skin, skimming the barely visible pale hair on his belly. Down, down, down, where the hair is denser and wet from slick. Where they're connected, and Satoru pierces him like a brand.

Megumi squirms.

He feels the banked embers of lust stir, his thighs tighten around his trim waist, and his cunt clenches around Satoru's flagging erection.

The alpha hisses and manages to open one eye, and the refracted universe regards him incredulously. "Already?"

"It's been a while." Megumi writhes in his lap, channel fluttering. "I-*ah* missed it, missed you."

He winces, "I missed-*shit*-you too, but we have to leave soon." He ignores Megumi's whine, and gently lifts the omega off his overstimulated dick, pausing to watch as his spend leaks in thick rivulets from Megumi's cunt. He pushes his cum back into his fluttering hole, and the omega chases his fingers, looking for stimulation.

"Shower," Megumi says stubbornly; he pushes away Satoru's hands and sits astride his belly, smearing slick and cum across the alpha's skin.

"That's dangerous in your condition." He reasons distractedly; he looks dazed as he rubs his cum into the omega's inner thighs.

"I trust you." Megumi's arousal blooms to life again; it demands attention, reciprocation, and relief. It leaves him reeling as his cock valiantly tries to rise for the occasion.

White lashes blink sluggishly, "What?"

"In the shower, we'll save time," Megumi tries to slide off him, and the alpha growls deep in his throat, hands clamping down like iron manacles, holding him in place.

"Where are you going?"

Megumi takes in his dilated pupils, slurred speech, and overwhelmed expression. Cunt struck, indeed.

He cups his jaw and strokes his high cheekbone.

"We're taking a shower, alpha." Slender fingers intertwine into white-gray hair. Blue eyes close in bliss as they scratch his undercut. "You'll fuck me in there, and when we get home, you'll take me in our nest. Sound good?"

Satoru leans into his hand.

"Whatever you want."

Chapter 29

If there's one thing he excels at, it's compartmentalizing his emotions.

It's a necessity, a defense mechanism he developed when his sire passed away, and his world tilted on its axis. It helps him navigate the duality of the world, the shades of gray, the levels of good, the levels of evil.

Megumi loves his mate, but Satoru loves him more, which is a double-edged sword. Love is a nebulous construct. For Satoru, it's philia, a deep and abiding companionship, ludus, and eros, but underlining them all is a mixture of philautia and mania. His ego, obsession, and possession are a lethal combination tied intrinsically to his personality and secondary gender. They are Megumi's greatest weapon and probable downfall.

So, while it is a boon that Satoru loves him more, that love has conditions. The alpha may work on curbing the worst of his tendencies and now knows his omega's threshold, it doesn't change what happens in the worst-case scenario.

A wrathful god on a warpath, hunting down his woe-begotten mate. Once he's left destruction in his wake, and his quarry deems their children safe and meets his wroth mate, they will likely meet their ends at each other's hand, echoing their predecessors from four hundred years prior.

Gojo Satoru may be a god, but Zen'in Megumi is a god killer, and that's what makes them equal.

So yes Megumi loves his mate, yet he will do what he must, like he has always done, feelings be damned.

"I've been thinking."

Satoru's voice interrupts his musings, and he turns from the window, leans back in his seat, and stares at his side profile.

"With a baby on the way, we need a bigger apartment or a house."

The last thing he wants to do is organize a move, enter a space without their unique scents, and deal with a fussy toddler. A new place is unnecessary; their daughter will co-sleep with them until she is three years old, and by then, he won't mind permanently moving into Gojo's inherited home.

"Not yet; I'm nesting for the baby. Maybe after she's a year, maybe two."

Satoru glances at him from the corner of his eye. "And you want to host Asahi's fourth birthday in the same place you're nesting?"

Megumi glares. Yeah, all of those extra scents are likely to drive him into a cleaning frenzy afterward, but like his first pregnancy, there are three places he considers his sanctuary. The closer he gets to his due date, the less inclined he is to leave these places and venture out into the wilds. Besides, he has his reasons for the venue; he tells him as much.

"The Gojo ancestral lands are sacred, so are the Zen'in, non-shamans are unwelcomed. Are we changing those unspoken rules for Tsumiki-san and my college friends?"

Satoru scowls. As progressive as the alpha is, he's also elitist trash. It's difficult to shrug off his innate prejudices; despite spending part of his adolescence and most of his adulthood amongst non-shamans, he doesn't hold them in high regard. However, his dislike of Tsumiki stems from other origins, reasons Megumi understands and finds amusing.

"I thought so."

a degree of death

They meet in a clash of blade and staff. Megumi's eyes narrow at the weapon the traitor uses, recognizing it.

Chisuheri's attacks lose ferocity, and he becomes more reliant on Mourning Tiger's flames.

The traitor grins mockingly, "Recognize it!? Yun-un was wasted on a monkey. It's poetic justice to use it to kill that mongrel's spawn."

Megumi ignores his commentary and sheathes Chisuheri; tonight, he'll walk away with more than two Muramasa swords.

Pointer and middle fingers intertwined, Megumi calls out: "Domain Expansion: Chimera Shadow Garden."

Suguru's eyes widen.

*Curse energy explodes. The shadows thicken and become viscous liquid, covering his surroundings in a tar-like substance. At his back, a behemoth of a beast forms. From shadow, a white pillar, **nay**, a spine forms, thickening and molding, bone growing ribs, shoulders, arms, hand, and finally into a skull. Nerves create a web-like formation connecting the apex of the spine to the shadows. A heart manifests under the skeleton's rib cage, and when it begins to beat, the empty eye sockets burn with two beams of infernal light.*

Gashadokuro.

"Oh? Nature's whore has teeth." He grins viciously. "It doesn't matter; I'll carve your pup out of your belly and bleed you dry."

A graveyard of weapons emerge from darkness, javelins, swords, crossbows, spears, and legendary cursed swords.

"Who knew my vagina and reproductive ability would drive you to terrorism and mass genocide. But," Megumi smirks, drawing Ohabari out of the sludge of shadow, "All is fair in love and war, right?"

A blood-curdling scream echoes throughout the space.

There, at the top of the stairway, is an elderly woman who he identifies as Keiko, the wife of Kon Shui. On the rare occasions he saw the man in a social setting as a child, she was kind to him. She and her husband even met Asahi as a baby. How curious it's devolved to this.

Megumi is covered in blood; it's seeped into his hair and clothing, but the nausea the metallic stench once caused him is gone.

At his feet is Kon-san's headless body, his head in the sharp maw of Kon. That's funny: Kon eating Kon.

The laugh burbles from his chest, up his throat, and out of his lips. It starts low and quickly escalates into manic laughter.

Nue emerges from the abyss; its wings flap several times, electrocuting the shrieking woman. The stench of charred joins the slaughter. The owl shikigami quickly descends on its immobile victim, powerful talons clawing out her eyes and desecrating her once kind face.

No witnesses left behind, no end, no mercy, no forgiveness for those who have trespassed against him.

Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

That idiot was right.

"Told you so," that idiot crows and places a loud, wet kiss on his brow, much to the embarrassment and amusement of some of their guests, and quickly goes back into the melee of gallivanting children.

Megumi flips him off and finds his hand slapped down by Yu-senpai. "Both of you are like little kids."

The older Zen'in pups snicker and conspicuously glance away when he raises an imperious brow in their direction.

He'd underestimated how many people would attend. He'd thought twenty-five max. The lot of them children, but there are forty people in their admittedly large apartment. Forty invasive scents, though many of them are family and hold familiar notes, this will likely cause him to have a meltdown later and send him on a cleaning frenzy. Their only saving grace is their apartment's soundproof walls and state-of-the-art ventilation system, a necessity they learned they needed after his first heat.

But what surprised him the most was the attendance of the older Zen'in children, in particular the idiot squad, teens neck deep in their crusades of contempt. He thought they would take the day off and be free of the younger pups. Their affront and protests at his surprise were mildly amusing and slightly heartening, especially when they complained about his absence on his birthday, and why wouldn't they come to Asahi's birthday when he planned and attended all of theirs? And duh, that's what family does, and is Megumi-dono becoming senile in his old age? If so, they still love him, but please let Maki take over. It left him slightly awed to know how attached they are to him and that they hold him in high regard.

"Something to say?"

"Not at all, Megumi-dono," Zen'in Sho pipes up.

Zen'in Hinata purses his lips and tries not to laugh. Sho smacks the back of his head. "W-what? Megumi-dono! Tell Sho to keep his hands to himself!" He whines.

"What are you five!?"

Hinata's face contorts into an exaggerated expression of annoyance. "Hah!? Is that the best you can do? Lame, so lame!"

"How about I kick your ass? What do you gotta say to that!?"

Megumi levels a flinty, lethal glare at the two boys. They flinch in unison and downright tremble when two hands land on each of their shoulders, grip bruising.

"What's this? I wasn't aware the Zen'in were raised by mongrels. I remember boys raised with integrity and comportment," Gojo Yuusei says pleasantly, his dimples and eye-smile incongruent with his menacing aura. "Despite the riff-raff you're surrounded by, you're held to a different standard. Now, what do you say?"

"Sorry, Megumi-dono," They both mumble, more embarrassed than sincere.

Before he can reply, he's interrupted by a hesitant voice.

"Ano, Megumi-kun."

Gojo Yuusei's open expression becomes haughty, and his lip curls in disgust.

He turns slightly and acknowledges one of his college acquaintances, "Hi, Chika-san. One moment."

"The lack of manners is appalling," He hears the elder omega say in a stage whisper, and Chika-san flushes in embarrassment. "But what can you expect from the-"

"Thank you, Granddam," Megumi intercedes.

This was a bad idea, but Megumi will never admit that.

His displeasure spikes in the bond, amusement answers him, and he can hear Satoru's obnoxious laughter across the apartment.

He lies against Round Deer's side, secluded in a closed-off section of their home. It serves as a library and secondary living room. Here, they read to Asahi, Satoru grades papers and completes paperwork, and Megumi answers emails, makes business decisions, contemplates burning down Jujutsu HQ, and looks forward to the day the Zen'in pups take over his responsibilities.

He feels overstimulated, his feet are swollen, the baby is active, and he has heartburn. Satoru took over the bulk of the hosting while he gathered himself. He told his mate ten minutes, but it's been thirty, and he's likely to fall asleep any moment now.

His eyes droop when strong arms gather him close, carefully rearrange his limbs, and place him on his mate's lap. "You can call it quits if you want. I've got it."

Megumi groans, head lulling back on the alpha's shoulder, "No, it's Asa-chan's birthday, I don't want to miss anything, and it'd make me a bad host."

"You're growing a person; you're plenty excused," Satoru says dryly, "And I'll wake you up before we sing happy birthday."

"I can't leave you to your antics; someone's feelings will get hurt," Megumi grumbles.

"Ye of so little faith," Satoru's smile has too many teeth, his canines abnormally sharp. Megumi flicks one of them, voice dry, "And that's why I can't leave the sheep alone with the wolf."

"Megumi-chan! You're hurting my feeling, don't ya trust me!?" He dramatically wails.

"I trust you, but you're also a man-child, so I don't expect much."

"How can you say that to *me*, the love of your life!?" The alpha drags Megumi against his chest; the omega is used to his antics and doesn't bother to fight him. "I am the paragon of maturity!"

"A special kind of crazy," Megumi says drily.

"A crazy that matches mine," He boasts.

"Unfortunately that, and good sex that addles the brain," the omega replies wryly.

"Only good?"

Megumi takes in the alpha's flawless skin; he's never seen a pore on the man, and considering all the sweets he consumes, it never fails to amaze him. He studies his noble nose, blue eyes that reflect the refracted universe hidden behind dark lenses and long white lashes, pale, pink lips that are predisposed towards smiling, sharp jaw, and prominent Adam's apple.

"More than good, it helps that you're good-looking," Megumi answers.

"So you're only with me for my looks, how shallow~"

Megumi rolls his eyes, "I can say the same for you."

"That and your tight cu-"

"Oh my!"

Of course, they are caught in a somewhat compromising position in their home.

Megumi tries to sit up and move out of his arms, but the alpha doesn't budge.

He grits his teeth, identifying who walked in on them and tries to put on a friendly smile. "Tsumiki-san."

"Sorry, Megumi-kun and Gojo-san, we were looking for the restroom and got lost."

That's a lie. She's been here twice before and, like most of the guests, was informed where to find the restroom.

"That's all right; you made a wrong turn."

Lurking behind her is her current boyfriend, someone who looks disconcertingly like him or Satoru's words, a poor imitation.

Tsumiki ignores the obvious dismissal and peers at him, "Are you okay, Megumi-kun?"

"I'm fine, just tired, I miss coffee."

"I read that green tea is a decent substitute during pregnancy."

"It is, but it doesn't replace coffee, and I can't have any for at least a year." Megumi politely answers.

Tsumiki's brow furrows, "Why?"

Satoru is far from idle. He nuzzles Megumi's neck, blatantly scenting him. Tsumiki continues to ignore the signs that she should leave, and Megumi absently notes that the omega boyfriend casts Satoru surreptitious glances, his face slightly flushed.

He doesn't blame him; Satoru is a beautiful man.

Satoru places his hand on his belly, and their daughter kicks. He winces at a particularly hard one, and Tsumiki perks up, "Is the baby active?"

"Yes," Satoru answers in his stead.

"Have you guys found out the gender? Decided on a name?"

"You'll find out when everyone else does," that sharp, predatory smile is back, exposing all of his pearly white teeth and incredibly large canines. "There are two bathrooms, one by the entrance, the other two doors down. Choose one. Please and thank you."

"Satoru," he chides.

"Tch."

Tsumiki opens and closes her mouth several times, but her boyfriend answers, "T-thanks!"

"Ugh," Satoru's face contorts into horror, and he shudders. "He gives me uncanny valley vibes."

Megumi snorts.

Chapter End Notes

► Chapter note:

Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Megumi-chan, you're so very cute and glowy today!" Emiko-senpai chirps.

Three of his college acquaintances are in attendance. Emiko is one of them and a fellow omega with six-year-old twins.

"Your mate posted your OOTD on his insta, but it looks so much better in person!"

Megumi blinks. He doesn't pay much attention to what he wears. Of course, he has preferences. He occasionally shops for himself and his kids, but 90% of the time, his mate dresses him, Asahi, and the Zen'in pups. Shopping and styling them is one of the few hobbies the alpha indulges in, and Megumi isn't inclined to change that.

Nevertheless, he is aware that his mate ignores price tags. While Satoru follows the budget, he sets out for his wards; this doesn't apply to his immediate family. A special grade's salary is significant, but with his family's assets, Satoru's spending habits are frivolous.

What he wears today is breathable, doesn't irritate his skin, chafe around his belly or breasts, and keeps him warm. Satoru knows him well enough to understand what he prefers while gestating.

"Thank you."

"But, but, but," Emiko's eyes widen comically, and she gestures for him to come closer. "Your mate never posts himself, just you, and blurs out Asa-chan's face. Well, he does post himself, just never his full face. As a matter of fact, he barely posts your face." She prattles, but Megumi is patient. Emiko is a sweetheart, so he allows her this idiosyncrasy. "I wouldn't know it was you unless you told me."

Satoru's Instagram is private. Emiko is one of the few non-sorcerers Gojo tolerates, but only out of Megumi's genuine fondness for her.

"Anyhow, the point is, I never met your mate! I suspected from the pics, but I didn't know he was like," Her eyes widen further. "Like a seme from a manga, but with the face of an uke!"

"...What?" Megumi's flummoxed.

"He looks like a fae prince!"

"Oh."

"But I was thinking-"

"Hehehehehe!"

"Tou-chan! You're not playing fair!" Asahi's indignant pout is hilarious.

"You've got the great Inugami, Taira no Masakado, Takiyasha-hime, Tamamo-no-Mae, Gashadokuro, and Sugawara no Michizane on your side!" His mate points to each child playing the role of a legendary figure. "You wear Susano's armor and have the sword Futsunomitama! The odds are in your favor, Asa-chan!"

"Not if you tickle us!"

"All is fair in war, Asahi! Now rally your troops! Here I come!"

The kids take off giggling.

"He seems like a good sire," Emiko comments.

"He does his best; that's all we can do."

Emiko mock frowns, arms akimbo, "So dour Megumi-chan!"

"No," a voice interjects. "He's right. As parents, we can only do our best, and sometimes that's not enough."

It's a cliché, such a cliché.

The person is nondescript until they're not.

Perhaps they thought he'd be surprised by their appearance, but Megumi or Satoru greeted every person who entered their home.

"Though the game is a bit on the nose, don't you think?"

"What do you mean?" Emiko asks, caught off guard by the newcomer but enthusiastic about including another parent or family member of the hosts in conversation.

Dark eyes flash with amusement, and what Megumi identifies as malice, short and fleeting, "Have you noticed that some of the children refer to Zen'in-san as Megumi-dono?"

"Who is Zen'in-san?" Emiko queries.

"My given surname," Megumi answers, curious to see where this goes.

"You see," He says conversationally, "Taira no Masakado and Takiyasha-hime are two legendary figures, but Taira no Masakado is one of Japan's three wrathful spirits, and Zen'in-san's family is descended from him through his daughter Takiyasha-hime."

"That's a cute fairy tale," Emiko laughs.

"Ah, but it's not; that connection and former nobility makes Zen'in-san here a powerful man."

"Megumi-chan, is that true?" Emiko asks, all astonishment.

"To an extent," He says noncommittally.

"His husband, Gojo-dono, is similar to Zen'in-san. It shocked many to learn that the two families united after centuries of antipathy!"

"Oh! It really is like a fairytale! You two really are a match made in heaven," Emiko claps.

"I suppose you could say that," Megumi replies monotonously.

"Mommy!" Several heads turn in response to the cry, and Emiko curses under her breath, nods in apology, and excuses herself.

Megumi excels at compartmentalizing his emotions, so he stares into a familiar face with familiar features and feels nothing.

"Kon-san," He greets.

"I'm shocked you recognize me," Kon Min replies.

"The little girl with yellow bows called you dad earlier. Your dad likes to show her pictures and brag about his granddaughter." Megumi relays, demonstrating that while Kon-san knows an unhealthy amount of information about his clan's lore, Megumi also knows who he is and who his family is and that pregnancy, so-called nurturing omegan instincts mean nothing in the face of a supposed threat. "You also resemble your mother but have your father's features."

"Wow, you're informed," he laughs.

Megumi's lips quirk, "So are you."

"You're probably wondering why I'm here instead of my dad."

Megumi shrugs, "Not really. We invited your daughter. I'd prefer if Keiko-san came instead. Shui-san would have goaded my mate into a drinking contest, and nobody wants that."

And there it is, that malice. "Why? Is he a lightweight?"

"Something like that, he'd likely cause an incident and bring down several buildings," Megumi reveals.

"He is proclaimed the strongest, who knew alcohol could bring him down."

"It doesn't; that's what RCT is for. Nothing can bring him down, but many things can set him off." Megumi's face is a study in apathy.

"Oh? What can cause the great Gojo Satoru to lose his composure?"

"Candy, our son, me," Megumi replies; doublespeak is annoying.

Kon-san raises his eyebrows, "And what about people who oppose him?"

"Mild annoyances, you know? They're like fruit flies, pests that you swat," Megumi explains.

"Is that what he did to your dad?" And there we go; he unveils himself and raises his monstrous head.

"No, my sire was a worthy opponent that made him confront his hubris and made him invincible. Zen'in Toji lived as he died, but he at least died with dignity."

"That is the nature of the beast, the business our fathers thrived in," He says bitterly. "But unlike you, I don't have a body to bury."

Megumi's brow furrows, "What do you mean?"

"Don't be coy," he says caustically. "You know what happened to my parents!"

"I really don't, I talked to Shui-san in December, but long gaps between calls are pretty typical between us. I expected to—"

"Stop lying!" He demands through gritted teeth, and visibly calms himself down. "Let's not cause a scene."

Megumi is not going to cause a scene. There are non-shamans present, and to others, they seem to be carrying on an amiable conversation. However, to the shamans present, those who are especially sensitive to curse energy feel Kon-san's subtle spike in curse energy, and all of them are on alert, most of all Satoru, whose all-knowing and all-seeing eyes fall on him.

There is a question mark in the bond.

"You were one of the last people my dad called; the other three he contacted were missing. No bodies, nothing left behind, just traces of a cursed signature. Isn't it curious that all five went missing the same night?"

Megumi blinks languidly, "You have my sympathy; I hope Shui-san and Kieko-san are fo—"

"Don't you dare say their names," He hisses; he gets into his space into his face, using his superior height to intimidate him. Megumi's green eyes spark with some unknown emotion, and it pisses Kon-san off enough to reach for his nape.

Crushing curse energy flares, causing everyone to freeze and fall into a cold sweat. It disappears before anyone begins to heave for breath or pass out, but it is followed by the primal, thunderous scent of a pissed-off alpha—ozone, the humid anticipation before a storm.

Their guests shout or talk in hushed whispers. The children whimper and cry, and Megumi smiles as Satoru's hand crushes Kon-san's windpipe.

"What do we have here?" Six Eyes glows eerily. "A conversation? I want to be a part of this conversation! What are we talking about?"

"N-nothing!" Kon-san wheezes out, Satoru's grip tightens.

"Parents," Megumi answers.

"Well, most of us are parents here, some of us parents to be. After all, this is a birthday!" His smile is broad, canines unnaturally long. "But I wasn't aware that menacing a pregnant omega was a part of the schedule!"

"I just learned Kon-san's parents have passed," Megumi reveals.

"OHHHHH! You're overwhelmed by grief, that's okay!" Satoru relinquishes his crushing hold, but his hand remains on his nape. "How about we give you your party favors early so you can excuse yourself? Mourning is a private matter, after all," he lets him go and slaps his back. Infinity renders Kon-san immobile, and the alpha turns to Megumi, cupping his face in his hands. Searching his face for distress, Megumi's expression is blank; the bond is peaceful. He presses his forehead to the omega's murmurs, "I love you," and then turns to Kon-san.

"**Come,**" the alpha command is thunderous.

Several people descend upon Megumi, asking about his welfare, what happened, and the like, but Megumi excels at compartmentalizing his emotions.

Chapter End Notes

Bear with me, there's a method to the madness.

Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"I think I give everyone grace, try to understand their circumstances and motivations, and make the most sensible decision, or I dunno make life easier to bear."

He recalls Megumi saying he's made the best of his life, choosing the lesser evil in a bad hand. Then he recalls his response to that and winces. Gojo is aware of how selfish he is, but this isn't about him; it's empathy and understanding Megumi needs. And despite his god complex, Megumi and their son have taught him to occasionally step outside his perspective and be mindful, a skill he's working on.

"You neglect yourself," He concludes. "And try to find happiness despite it."

"Yeah, but sometimes I get tired."

"Happy birthday to you!"

It's strange to see his extroverted baby suddenly shy.

His third birthday was a huge affair. Three is considered a lucky number, and extended members of the Gojo family turned up to celebrate the birthday of their clan head's child. Asahi spent most of the party giggling and clapping happily when they sang Happy Birthday to him.

Now, the pup hides his face in his sire's shoulder, round cheeks red as he bashfully peers at the crowd that sings Happy Birthday to him.

Megumi pokes his side, and Asahi smiles, all cherubic cheeks, eye creases, and dimples. Several cameras flash as the Zen'in pups enthusiastically record their youngest cousin and scream Happy Birthday.

Satoru is amongst the loudest, pure chaos and nonsense, and comes to life towards the song's end, gesticulating wildly. Asahi grips his shirt tightly, eyes wide as he stares at Megumi, pleading with his dam to remove him from the madman.

Megumi is unmoved; in response, Asahi lets go of Satoru and lunges for his dam.

Satoru expertly adjusts his hold and tucks his son under his arm. The alpha wags his finger, "I won't fall for your circus tricks! I'm onto you!" He pokes the pup's nose.

"Cake time!" One of the kids yells.

Later, much later, after the cake cutting, seeing their guests out, opening presents, and putting Asahi to bed, Megumi stares blankly out the window as Satoru showers.

It's a delayed reaction, out of sight, out of mind.

Megumi is more than aware that his sire and Kon Shui were not good men, but that's a matter of perspective. Kon Shui was one of his last lingering attachments to his father. He held onto the connection, held onto someone who knew him and who he was from a bygone era.

Megumi can recall the man from some of his earliest memories and held a fondness for someone he considered a wayward uncle. He thought Kon Shui had a similar attachment to him, he was wrong.

He doesn't mourn him, not the way he mourned his father. Megumi thinks the moment Kon-san prioritized business over his relationship with Megumi, conspired with Geto Suguru, and looked at him as an asset, Megumi had already begun his grief journey and was just waiting to bury the casket.

There's irony here, parallels between his father's actions and Kon-san's. But Megumi-

Satoru plops on the bed next to him, and several copies of Rabbit Escape disperse under the pressure of Infinity. He hadn't realized a cloud of fur surrounded him. More often than not, his shadows responded to his moods; Rabbit Escape soothed his anxiety and his need to hide from the world, providing the omegan need for soft things and comfort. After a decade and some change together, with the bond aiding him, Satoru can read the depth of his moods through the manifestation of his shikigami.

"Talk to me, Megumi."

"Is Kon-san still alive?"

"For now," he says darkly.

"Should we leave a little girl without her dad?" He asks tentatively.

"No more loose ends," The alpha says resolutely.

"It's just suspicion-"

"No." The finality in his voice snaps Megumi out of whatever whim of irrationality suddenly overtook him.

"...okay."

"Do you regret killing Kon Shui and Kieko?"

Megumi leans back onto the cloud of fur, the original Shikigami perched on his lap. "No, I think I empathize with Kon Min."

"Whelp, you're outta luck there," the alpha adds unhelpfully and stretches.

Megumi throws a clone at his head; it bounces harmlessly off his barrier. Satoru laughs obnoxiously. "How violent~"

Megumi throws another, and the alpha sticks out his tongue. "Don't overextend yourself," he adds patronizingly.

It's an obvious attempt to goad him into a stupid argument that will likely end up with Satoru's head between his thighs. A distraction from whatever plagues him, he wants that, always wants that, welcomes him gladly, but-

The bond shows his anxiety.

The alpha sighs, "Lingering on it will give nothing you but headaches and heartbreak."

"I already mourned Kon Shui. I empathize with his son, and I'll get over any regrets regarding his death."

"Tell me what's bothering you," his mate pushes the clones out of his way; Megumi holds the shikigami in his arms and allows the alpha to place his head on his lap. "If you don't, you'll bury it, and it'll unconsciously stress you out."

"Honestly, it's just reflections. I think I give everyone grace, try to understand their circumstances and motivations, and make the most sensible decision, or I dunno make life easier to bear."

Satoru places his hand on his belly; their daughter is silent, likely sleeping. He pushes up his oversized shirt and kisses his belly.

"You neglect yourself," He infers, mumbling against his skin. "And try to find happiness despite it."

"Yeah, but sometimes I get tired."

The alpha traces the faint lines on his expanding stomach. Some new, others old, each has a tale, a story of life growing under his heart.

"Then stop, live for yourself; it's okay to be selfish sometimes."

There are limits to that statement, "Maybe."

The alpha glances up, "Wanna fuck?"

A chance to decompress and relieve the stress in his shoulders and neck. But he's exhausted from the day's events and should sleep while their daughter does.

"I'm tired."

Satoru smiles, "I'll do all the work."

If that's the case, he nods quickly, eagerly, and Satoru laughs.

Chapter End Notes

► Outtake:

Chapter 34

Aia.

Gojo Aia.

She yawns widely, rubs her cheek against his chest, and settles to sleep. She smells vaguely of her parents' combined scents, milk, sweet, like his, like theirs.

She looks like an Aia.

She's wrinkly like a sphinx cat, her face squished, she looks angry, almost like him, but who she favors is unknown, amorphous for now.

Megumi traces her features. Her brows are barely visible and likely to darken as she ages, but from the indiscernible wisps of hair on her head, she likely inherited her sire's coloring. Her eyes, on the other hand, are dark and unlikely to reveal their true hue for a few months. He hopes she has his eyes, his sire's eyes.

Asahi was born with a head full of dark hair and pale eyes that would have concerned the doctor if she hadn't worked for the Gojo clan for over a decade. She is smaller in comparison to her brother, and her birth was easier compared to the tearing and blood hemorrhaging he suffered during Asahi's. Not to say hers did not have its difficulties.

She was a week overdue and took her sweet time. Frankly, Megumi was over it, uncomfortable, cantankerous, and tired. He hadn't slept well in weeks, but he still had work to do, still had to parent, and still had to be a spouse/mate.

Ugh.

So he got induced.

Six hours of labor, and she was here.

Satoru makes grabby hands; he's tempted to slap them away just to be contrary, but why should he deny the alpha his child? She's transferred from her dam to her sire and makes nary a sound. "Aia-chan, we're so happy you're here. Papa and I love you."

He held her an hour ago, right before she nursed. The omega watches as he gently rubs her round cheek, inhales her newborn scent, and begins to hum to her.

His eyelids droop. Satoru catches him nodding off and smiles. "Sleep, Megumi. We'll be here when you wake up."

He falls asleep to Satoru's humming.

poison wood tree

Chapter Notes

► Fic notes

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The fruit between Sugawara no Michizane and Taira no Masakado is green.

Scheele's green, the color of arsenic wallpaper.

Megumi eyes.

Eyes that gleam with amusement as Aia cries and screams with each attempt at tummy time.

The omega could help, but watching Satoru figure out what works with their infant is funnier. Aia rolls onto her back for the nth time, face red, verdant eyes, Toji's eyes, wet with tears, pissed off.

Satoru rubs his neck, genuinely stumped.

"Can I call a friend for a clue?"

"No," Megumi says mercilessly, amusement bubbling in the bond.

"Enjoying our suffering, et tu, Megumi?"

Megumi snorts, "Yours, yes, Aia no, but she'll be okay."

Satoru picks up their daughter, wipes her face with her bib, and gently rocks her. Her whimpers quieten, and she looks less betrayed.

"Megummmmmmi," The alpha whines.

"Fine," and proceeds to give the vaguest explanation. "Water in a container."

Of course, the alpha gets it immediately. Asahi's infancy was filled with advice from child-rearing veterans: When one thing doesn't work, try options b, c, and d.

"Ohhhhhh, put her toys in a container filled with water."

"An eighth of the container, and if the toys move even better," Megumi says absently. He watches Asahi and the Zen'in pups play in the garden.

"Or," Satoru continues excitedly. "I can make them float."

"As long as it's eye-*Shit*."

There in the garden miasma forms and with it a spine. There are rules for play and roughhousing, and that includes no curse energy outside of sparring and lessons. But for those newly anointed with curse energy, who are unaware of their technique, this rule does not apply.

Megumi's on his feet and out the door before he knows it.

The children are in an uproar. The elder pups and caregivers try to calm them, but they are more fascinated by the sight unfolding before them. They shout in excitement, cry out encouragement, and jeer as the pup cries.

Thick ribs grow from the spine, shoulders, upper arms, and finally, a skull.

It's green.

A sickening green.

Scheele's green, the color of arsenic wallpaper.

Megumi eyes.

A spiked helm forms from its eyes, and armor grows like flesh around its bones. But as it continues to form, Asahi's curse energy fluctuates dangerously.

"Asahi, listen to Mommy, calm down."

Megumi trails and fails to breach the ghastly green miasma surrounding the boy.

"Wahhhhhh! Papa, it hurts!"

The half-formed apparition continues to form, growing taller and wider.

"Mama! Mama help!"

Asahi's terrified and panicked cries stab his heart, but he is unsure how to help without inflicting harm.

"Here," Satoru says brusquely, placing Aia firmly in his arms.

The specter shifts at his approach, a ghostly sword forming. Infinity cuts through the green miasma, and the alpha swiftly reaches into smoke and knocks the pup unconscious.

Asahi falls into his sire's waiting arms, and the armored apparition disappears into wisps of green smoke.

"How old were you?"

Aia sleeps soundly in her bassinet.

"Four," Satoru recalls, "I killed my first assassin and used Blue. You?"

"Same, Round Deer appeared," Megumi answers and rolls his shoulders. "So it isn't an anomaly."

"No, it isn't," Satoru rocks back and forth, Asa passed out on his shoulder. "But wasn't it cool?" the alpha gushes. "Of course, our kid is awesome!"

Megumi cracks a grin, "It was. Can you tell what it is?"

"Yeah, looks like a combo of Gashadokuro and Limitless. The more the avatar forms, the stronger its defense becomes."

Megumi hums, "I saw a sword; I wonder what its offensive capabilities are."

"We'll see as he grows," Satoru grins.

Megumi smiles back.

Chapter End Notes

► Outtake

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!