

Sentence prompt by @/TheEasternEmpress:

1. *Juno + Spark* – Juno spends the next three hours contemplating the pros and cons of her gloves, given the spark of Tech's kiss continues to sear its way through her palm.
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A respectful kiss on the hand. That's all it was. And yet, it *bothered* her.

Juno had spent the better part of three hours walking circles around her new quarters, her mind (and cheeks) ablaze as she tried to quantify this new feeling. Her face scrunched together in thought, and the hand unsullied by loving touch rested on the side of her face. Everything about this was uncharted territory she was woefully unprepared for. That, in and of itself, was odd and new.

Scientists were built for the unknowns. They thrived in the idea that things unknown to them could be experienced and learned, and that there would always be something new to discover, whether it be physical, mental, or otherwise. Juno would never admit that the unknowns terrified her. Doing so would be a disgrace to her career and occupation.

This feeling, in addition, was another thing that terrified her.

It was new, this low simmer in her head and chest that crackled like a fire during times of unrest. It burned the palm of her hand where he had kissed her, despite the precautionary gloves that should have deterred him (though they never did). It was as if they seared a hole in the rubber and were now branded onto her hand. And it was *warm*. She felt that the feeling alone could power her for days in the wastelands of Hoth, that she would never feel cold again so long as it remained with her.

But she didn't know what it was. And that scared her. It was an overwhelming feeling, even if a good one. She didn't understand why her hand tingled when she looked at it for too long, or why her heart did the same when she tried to recall the exact events. Every train of thought was a new question - *why* did she feel this? What *was* this feeling? Could it be replicated? How long was it supposed to last? Was it good, bad, or some strange limbo between the two that her brain simply couldn't understand, or didn't recognize? Did the feeling always lead back to him?

So, she sequestered herself to her quarters to deliberate alone. Because that was always what she did when confronted with a new formula that challenged her.

A thought struck her—something about some strange mythos she'd read when visiting new planets. About how 'demons' and other twisted entities could be expelled when exposed to

something truly and unequivocally good, such as water blessed by some divine deity, or books filled with holy intent.

Maybe that was why her hand burned. Because Tech was—without a doubt—*good*. And her hands were the far opposite, tools of destruction that had never done any good deed, forced to spend the rest of their lives making up for the wrongs they had committed.

Juno stopped pacing for a moment, looked back down at her hand, and then laughed a bit. She was going crazy. It was far too early to start looking at foreign scripture for ‘evidence’. No self-respecting scientist relied on those, anyways. This was just... something new. She’d simply have to conduct more tests to figure it out, right? An experiment was never run just once.

Then, an idea came to mind.

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“Juno?” Tech looked up from the workbench as she entered the room, where he’d been carefully crafting a new explosive for Wrecker to try out. He instantly clocked her stiffer posture and veiled face—It was easy, now that he’d seen her, to envision her troubled expression behind the helmet. “Is something the matter?”

Well, if Juno had any reservations or doubts, it was too late to turn back now. He already had that worried look to his face, and she knew he wouldn’t be satisfied if he wasn’t given an answer. She moved to sit beside him at the table.

“Nothing is wrong-” Juno clarified, “I just... need some advice. And input. For an experiment.”

Tech, hearing the request, placed his tools down and gave her his full attention. “I would be more than happy to assist.”

“Only if you’re sure. It’s a bit odd.”

“I’d certainly hope so. What is the point of an experiment if it is not unusual?”

“Hm,” Juno grinned, though her face quickly went back to being conflicted. “I suppose so. It’s nothing complicated. But, just... earlier today. When we were in the briefing room?” She gestured with her hands, as if mapping it out in physical space. “At the tail end, when we all split up to go work on our individual assignments-”

Tech’s eyes widened as he realized what she was leading up to, and his face grew concerned. “Are you referring to the kiss on the hand? I apologize, I-”

“No, no—It’s okay,” Juno assured him gently. “It didn’t trouble me.” That was a lie. “I had actually come to ask if you’d... do it again.”

Tech, taken aback, did his best to mask his surprise as simple confusion. “I will most certainly help, but I am... not certain as to how that will aid in any experiments.”

“That would make two of us, then,” Juno smiled weakly, already feeling that tumultuous burning in her chest again. Extreme emotions were not unknown to her, but she needed answers. She needed to know if it was truly connected to him. If it was something to be cured or ignored, or if it would fester until it blossomed, and she would be forced to deal with the consequences.

Little did she know that Tech was in the same boat, contemplating his own feelings as he moved to grab her hand and bring it to his lips. He was not aware that the very thing he’d spent the last three hours questioning was the same—but he wanted to help Juno in an objective matter, and that surpassed any other worries in his mind.

After hesitating for a moment, eyes unreadable, he pressed a soft kiss onto her palm. Though the gloves covered her hand, they were still warm and inviting towards him.

Juno tensed upon feeling him kiss her hand, but that tenseness quickly faded as she noted the results. Most notably, the fact that she felt entirely the same, if not more... whole. It was all encompassing, like being wrapped in a blanket.

Tech pulled away from her hand and slowly placed it back down on the table, his own face full of some new emotion neither of them knew the name of, nor had experienced before. He still held her hand within his own as he watched the rubber reflect the light overhead. Juno didn’t pull it away. His touch felt like it could cleanse her hands of any wrongdoings they had committed in the past, wiping away the invisible blood that stained her scars. Maybe, if she stayed a little longer, she could become *good* like him.

“Did you acquire the results you were hoping for?” He asked quietly, watching the helmet look back up to meet his eyes.

For a moment, Juno was silent, simply watching his fingers rest over the palm of her hand. “...I’m not sure.”

In truth, it only made things more confusing. The feeling did not ebb. It came back in full force, and it confused her. Why did she feel so elated, yet so afraid? She was not trained or taught to be afraid. Scientists were not afraid, and yet, here she was. Terrified and wishing the feeling never ended.